Scaffolding Literacy

An integrated and sequential approach to teaching reading, spelling and writing

**Beverley Axford,
Pam Harders
and Fay Wise**

Scaffolding
Literacy

Scaffolding Literacy

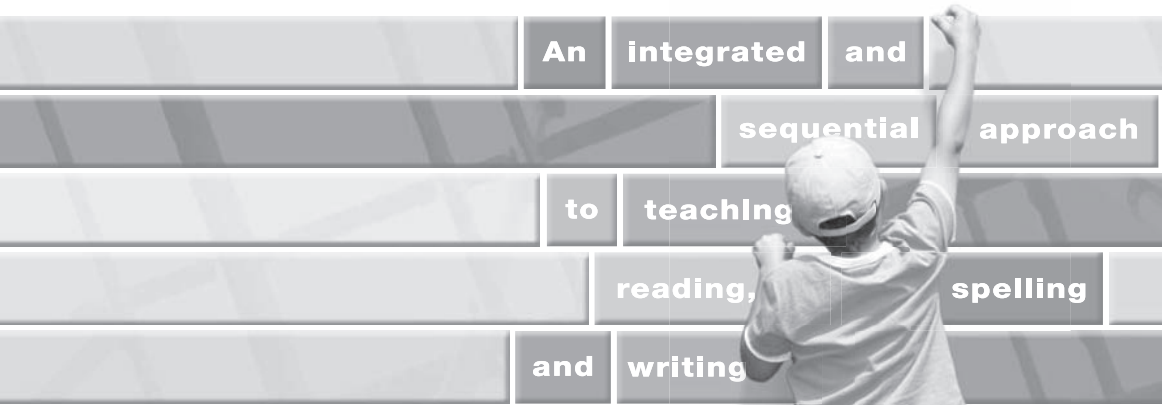An integrated and sequential approach to teaching reading, spelling and writing

**Beverley Axford,
Pam Harders
and Fay Wise**

ACER Press

This description of the Scaffolding Literacy *practices used to teach reading and writing is dedicated to all the families who have participated in the Parents as Tutors Program at the University of Canberra over the past twenty-five years.*

It is also dedicated to the tutors who have worked with these families. Their dedication and commitment reminds us why teaching is a noble profession.

CONTENTS

Part C

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This book is the result of a project funded by the School of Education and Community Studies, University of Canberra. The purpose of the project was to write up the *Scaffolding Literacy* practices used in the *Parents as Tutors Program.* The project team was made up of:

Dr Beverley Axford, Research Fellow and Director, Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra, 2004–2008. She has worked as a teacher and as the Executive Officer of a national professional association of educators. Her PhD, awarded in 2003, researched the changing nature of professional work, especially teachers'. She is presently a freelance researcher.

Pam Harders, an ACT Department of Education and Training language and literacy teacher, worked on placement in the Schools & Community Centre, 2004–2007. Pam has had extensive experience as a teacher in ACT primary and secondary schools. In addition to teaching in the *Parents as Tutors Program* she has taught in the units *Scaffolding Literacy for Teachers* offered in both the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) and Graduate Certificate in Inclusive Education courses at the University of Canberra. She is currently teaching at-risk learners in an ACT achievement centre.

Fay Wise, an ACT Department of Education and Training language and literacy teacher specialising in the primary years. She was a teacher in the *Parents as Tutors Program* at the University of Canberra, 2004–2006. She is currently using the *Scaffolding Literacy* pedagogy and teaching sequence in a kindergarten classroom in an ACT primary school.

The 2005–2006 *Parents as Tutors* teaching team, whose practice informs this book, were: Robyn Almond, Pam Harders, Sandra Kelly, Jane Stirling (coordinator) and Fay Wise. This teaching team represented experience in early childhood, primary and secondary school settings. As teachers in the *Parents as Tutors Program* at the University of Canberra they each also had considerable experience teaching *Scaffolding Literacy* as a one-on-one literacy intervention and in teaching the strategies to parents and carers.

PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to describe the literacy teaching sequence used in the Schools & Community Centre at the University of Canberra. This teaching sequence is the practical application of the *Scaffolding Literacy* pedagogy developed by Brian Gray and colleagues in the Schools & Community Centre in the period 1992–2003. This pedagogy represents over two decades of research and development into how to help young readers and writers become users of 'literate' text. The research has largely focused on how to teach those identified as at risk of not developing age-appropriate literacy skills. However, because the *Scaffolding Literacy* pedagogy places the emphasis on learning about how the language choices authors make shape the meanings they convey to their readers, this approach is effective for learners whatever their experience with text.

THE PARENTS AS TUTORS PROGRAM

Central to the research that underpins this approach to literacy learning has been the *Parents as Tutors Program*, a literacy intervention that has been provided to ACT families through a unique partnership between the University of Canberra and the ACT Department of Education and Training.

The description of the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence provided in this book is based on the practices of the ACT Department of Education teachers working in the *Parents as Tutors* Program during 2005–2006. In attempting this description, it is not assumed that the *Scaffolding Literacy* currently practised in the *Parents as Tutors Program* is the only form of this practice. Nor is it assumed that this is a static practice. In fact, the history of the *Parents as Tutors Program* is testament to the way on-going research interacts with practice to evolve more effective literacy interventions.

Initially, under its founding director Max Kemp (Schools & Community Centre Director 1983–1992), the *Parents as Tutors Program* had a progressive focus that advocated the role of parents in the education of children. Kemp introduced a number of strategies still in use in the program today,

including the study of sentence structures known as 'Transformations' and the formative assessment method known as 'Miscue Analysis' (Kemp, 1980; 1985a; 1985b; 1987).

By the mid 1990s, under the directorship of Brian Gray (Schools & Community Centre Director 1992–2004), the *Scaffolding Literacy* pedagogy as currently practised was developed. Dr Gray's main research was on ways of addressing the needs of marginalised groups of learners, especially Indigenous learners (Gray 2003, 2007). Basing his research on Vygotskian learning theories, Dr Gray and colleagues adapted the literacy practices developed in the *Parents as Tutors Program* to include the needs of these marginalised groups. With the help of Australian Government funding, projects such as the *Scaffolding Literacy with Indigenous Children in Schools* (Rose, Gray & Cowey, 1999; Gray, Cowey & Axford, 2003) and the more recent *National Accelerated Literacy Project* (Cowey, 2005, Gray, 2007), the *Scaffolding Literacy* approach has been taken up in public schools in the Northern Territory and Indigenous schools in Western Australia. At the same time, David Rose and colleagues at the University of Sydney have developed the *Reading to Learn* program based on similar principles but looking at literacy practices across the curriculum (Rose, 2008; Acevedo & Rose, 2007; Rose & Acevedo, 2006; Rose, 2006; Culican et al., 2006).

WRITING OTHER PEOPLE'S PRACTICE

As noted earlier, this description of the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence is based on the practices of the teachers working in the *Parents as Tutors Program*. The project to write up the teaching sequence involved a researcher with a background in educational sociology observing and describing the teachers' practices. Describing other people's practice brings with it a particular set of research challenges. The teachers whose practices are described in this book are, by definition, embedded in their practice. They live and breathe it. They tend towards the particular; they pay attention to detail and the infinite variability of individual learners' experiences. Sociologists, on the other hand, tend towards abstraction. They look for the general principle rather than the particular.

What happens when a sociologist attempts to document the practice of a group of teachers? For one thing, the notion of different language codes takes on a special meaning as we talk across the divide of our ways of seeing the world. The practitioners struggle to make the sociologist 'see'

the nuanced variability of their practice; the researcher struggles to make the teachers 'see' the need to provide a text that abstracts the detail and emphasises the overall structure of their practice. We engage in a strange dance of definition and redefinition, of advance and retreat. Good humour and respect for the overall objective of the project get us through.

The result is an amalgam. As researcher and chief writer I take full responsibility for errors and omissions. I also take responsibility for the theoretical overview that makes up the Introduction. The sections on reading and writing (Parts A and C) are the result of collaboration between Pam Harders and me. The 'Scaffolded Writing Plan', as described in Part C, was developed by Pam while she was working with a Year 9 class in an ACT high school. Unpublished teaching notes prepared by Gray and colleagues have also been drawn on for these sections (Gray, Cowey & Graez, 1998a; 1997a).

Part B was prepared by Fay Wise and me. The description of *Transformations* owes much to Max Kemp's original description (Kemp 1985b) and the later reshaping by Gray and colleagues to reflect the 'scaffolded' approach (Gray, Cowey & Graetz, 1998b). The *Scaffolded Spelling* procedures were adapted by Fay Wise from earlier unpublished teaching notes prepared by Gray and colleagues (Gray, Cowey & Graez, 1997b; 1996).

In writing up this description of the teaching sequence we have drawn heavily on current practice and on both published and unpublished papers and teaching materials from the Schools & Community Centre archive. Where it seems appropriate to do so, we have acknowledged the source. However, after twenty-five years of on-going development, attributing the original source of an established practice is not always easy. We hope that those involved in the development of this unique approach to literacy teaching and learning over its long history will accept this description of the strategies used in the current program as our tribute to all those who have played a part in the program's development and, especially, to the two academic directors, Max Kemp and Brian Gray and Dr Gray's main collaborator Ms Wendy Cowey.

COMPLEXITY AND MEANING MAKING

The project to write up the teaching practices used in the *Parents as Tutors Program* started as a plan to produce a number of small booklets, each

describing one aspect of the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence. It soon became clear that booklets did not capture the extent to which this approach to reading and writing is built on the assumption that the whole is greater than the parts. By attempting to break up the sequence into 'bite-sized' guides the inter-relationships between the parts kept getting lost: between, for example, reading and writing; or between syntax (grammar), conventional spelling, and meaning-making; or between decoding individual words and understanding whole sentences.

The initial booklet structure was abandoned. The resulting text is organised in three main parts, each of which describes one part of the teaching sequence. An introduction briefly outlines the pedagogical theory that underpins this approach. Readers with little interest in curriculum and learning theory might like to skip the introduction and come back to it once they have an overview of the actual practices. In summary, the shape of the book is as follows:

Introduction: Why scaffold literacy learning?

This section provides a general description of the key pedagogical considerations that underpin the *Scaffolding Literacy* approach. It looks at the reasons why this approach is text-based and why it requires teachers to rethink the role that teacher–learner dialogue and teacher modelling of effective literacy strategies play in improving literacy outcomes for learners.

Part A   Scaffolded Reading: Modelling meaning-making

In this section we describe the 'preparing for reading' and 'fluent reading' strategies that make up the first part of the teaching sequence. Scaffolded Reading can be described as the joint 'deconstruction' of a text, undertaken by the teacher and learners together, to establish the text's meaning. This provides a scaffold for learners' prediction skills and enables them to read a piece of text that would be beyond their independent reading abilities. This piece of text can then be used as a resource for further language work.

Part B   Which words? The joint analysis of sentence and word constructions

The strategies that enable the teacher to move the focus of attention down to the level of sentence constructions (*Transformations*) and to individual words (*Scaffolded Spelling*) are described in this section. This detailed work

on the syntactical, semantic and graphophonic structure of individual sentences and individual words can be described as the bridge that links reading and writing. This analysis enables the shift from 'deconstructing' an author's text (reading) to 'reconstructing' that text (writing). The essential points are that this language work is conducted on a piece of text the learners have been scaffolded to read; that the teacher and learners continue to work together to negotiate the author's meaning; and the teacher and learners continue to work together to establish why the author has made particular language choices. This makes the work on language features and author choices highly contextualised and explicit and enables the teacher to distribute knowledge about the text's language features to all members of the group.

Part C   Scaffolded Writing: Thinking (and acting) like writers

This section describes a set of strategies that build greater comprehension by 'reconstructing' the author text previously worked on and then using that text as a model to construct new text that is authored by the learner. In this way, the writing strategies together make up a series of progressively more demanding writing tasks linked directly to the text used for reading.

There is also a Conclusion and References.

DEMANDS ON TEACHERS

It can be seen from this brief description that the *Scaffolding Literacy* approach is highly integrated and sequential. Consequently, this teaching method makes demands on teachers—and on parents and carers when they are taking on the role of literacy teacher with their child. These demands are different to those made by more 'traditional' approaches. In particular, teachers need to see themselves as 'more knowledgeable others' engaged in a shared journey with the learner or learners. The purpose of this journey is to build a shared understanding of how written text works to convey the author's meaning. This requires the deconstruction and reconstruction of a passage of 'literate' text, and the construction of new text. No easy task. But the experience of the teachers in the *Parents as Tutors Program* shows that, through the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence, even the most reluctant readers/writers can be assisted to read

with more fluency and comprehension, and write with more imagination and gusto.

Finally, throughout this book we refer to 'the teacher' and the learner or learners. We hope parents and carers will be able to identify themselves in the role of teacher when they are working with their child on literacy tasks.

BEVERLEY AXFORD
Director, Schools & Community Centre
University of Canberra, 2004–08

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

QUOTATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WHY SCAFFOLD LITERACY LEARNING?

scaffold: (i) a temporary structure for holding workmen and materials during the erection, repair, cleaning or decoration of a building; (ii) an elevated platform on which a criminal is executed.

scaffolding: (i) a scaffold or system of scaffolds; (ii) the materials used for building scaffolds.

Macquarie Dictionary

THE SCAFFOLD AS METAPHOR

As the *Macquarie Dictionary* definition indicates, in the building trade scaffolds are enabling structures. They enable workers to move up, down, around, and across a building to 'erect, repair, clean …' A scaffold supports the workers but it also enables them to move about the site in order to carry out their assigned tasks. Also the scaffold remains in place for the whole time that the workers are working on the building. Although a temporary structure, it can be dismantled and used again on the next job. Significantly, the scaffolding is attached to the building, not the workers.

An alternative kind of scaffold is the gallows—a platform on which a person is executed. In this case, the scaffold has also been erected so that some 'job of work' can be done. The scaffold enables the executioner to do the grisly work required, but we would not say that the scaffold 'supports'

either the executioner or the one executed. In this instance the scaffold supports the institution of the law and asserts its authority.

The curriculum as scaffold

In curriculum terms, the idea of a scaffold can carry elements of both dictionary definitions cited above. To take the latter use of the term first: the curriculum is itself a scaffold (platform) upon which the teacher and learners play out their respective roles. Just as the executioner and the executed must, in structural terms, play out their separate roles, so too must teachers and students.

In our society no teacher and no young person is exempt from participating in the assessment and credentialling systems that are central to the authority of schools and to the authority of the knowledge and skills that schools measure. The measuring, labelling, and sorting begins early in students' school lives and continues, with increasing intensity, until they exit formal schooling. Those who are measured and found wanting in the early years are likely to experience a wide range of remedial interventions that will often have the counter-intuitive effect of locking them into a 'remediation cycle' that, with each year of their schooling, increases the gap between what they can do and be and what their more competent classmates can do and be.

Individual teachers cannot operate outside the structural imperatives of the schooling system. They can, however, ensure that access to the knowledge and skills schools measure and reward is provided to all. What 'scaffolding' approaches to literacy teaching and learning have in common is this basic assumption that curriculum practices need to be more inclusive. They take up what Martin (2007), drawing on Bernstein, describes as 'a subversive position' in relation to pedagogic discourse. Using Bernstein's 1990 'topology of theories of instruction', Martin places these 'scaffolding' pedagogies in the 'subversive' quadrant in that this pedagogy is overtly interventionist (see Figure 1.1). Rather than looking to change the role of schools, these pedagogies aim to make the existing curriculum accessible to those who demonstrate consistently poor academic outcomes from their school participation. They also emphasise the agency of the teacher in the teaching–learning relationship.

The teaching and learning scaffold

To return to our first dictionary definition of a scaffold: a temporary structure for holding workers and materials. When it is used in educational contexts, many current uses of the word suggest that 'scaffold' has become
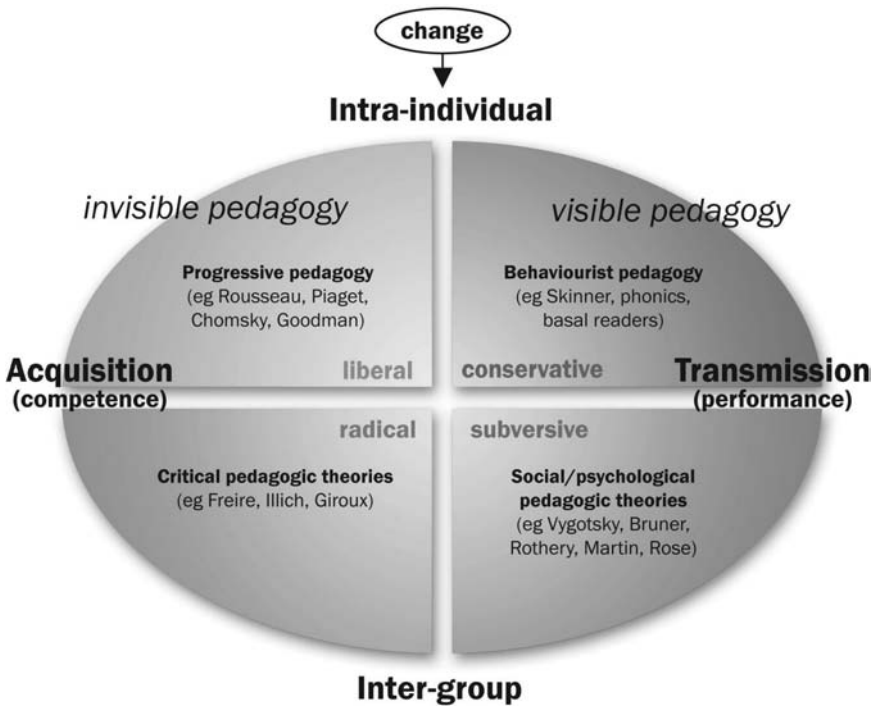
Figure 1.1   *Types of pedagogy*

(Martin, 2007, p. 99)

synonymous with support. Hence, a teacher who provides some 'advanced organisers' to their lessons can claim to have 'scaffolded' their students into the task. This use of the term indicates the extent to which the scaffolding metaphor has been incorporated into the rhetoric of what Martin describes as the more dominant 'progressive' (or child-centred) pedagogy. However, as the dictionary definition indicates, a scaffold is much more than support. The scaffold allows the workers to move about a construction site in order to perform the necessary tasks. Yes, it supports the workers and provides (relative) safety and security for them as they go about their work. But it also facilitates the performance of the required tasks. It enables the tasks to be performed.

   In the context of teaching and learning, support is necessary but insufficient. Support alone does not address the question of how to provide opportunities to *all* students to participate in real and meaningful literacy tasks. In addition, support on its own encourages dependency and inhibits access to full participation in the tasks schools value and reward. This is a significant point if we think about what happens to learners who are not

progressing well at school. If a learner is failing to make what schools refer to as 'age appropriate gains' they are often streamed into 'lower ability' groups and given tasks judged to be within their current 'ability range' or 'competency' and/or they are placed in special remediation programs. 'Appropriate' curriculum materials are provided. As pointed out earlier, one outcome of this strategy is to lock individual learners into a 'remedial cycle' in which they are churned through one remedial program after another and given low-level curriculum materials considered suitable for learners of their 'ability level' or 'stage of development'. Meanwhile, their more competent peers in the mainstream press on. The gap between those in the lower streams (or classroom groupings) and those in the higher grows wider with each year of schooling.

This widening gap has been used to explain why many learners fall further and further behind with each year of schooling. Gray (2007) argues that the controlled and 'oral' language structures in the materials provided for struggling learners give little information to these learners about what they need to do to become participants in the 'literate discourses' of schools. Consequently, although everyone starts in much the same place, once learners move beyond 'early readers' the gap between competent readers and struggling readers grows greater with each year of schooling. This is because, as indicated in Figure 1.2, competent readers grow in competence as the texts become more demanding while the less-competent stay on a more even trajectory.

It is extremely difficult for struggling literacy learners to bridge this 'gap'. In part this is because their lack of specific experience with 'literate' texts locks them out of the higher order work required as they move from early primary into the middle and upper primary years.

Recent results from national testing programs in Australia give support to Gray's argument that the gap will increase with each additional year of schooling. Roy Martin (2007) points out that one of the features of the information gained from recent national testing of basis skills is that the number of students who fall below the benchmark increases the older the students get. Using numeracy results to illustrate his point, Martin writes:

> *For instance, in 2005, the percentage of students not meeting the benchmarks in numeracy in Year 3 was 6%; however, by Year 5 this had increased to 9% and by Year 7, 18% of students were not meeting the benchmarks. This suggests the analogy of a long distance race. Obviously the longer the race goes on, the more spread out the field becomes. (p. 11)*
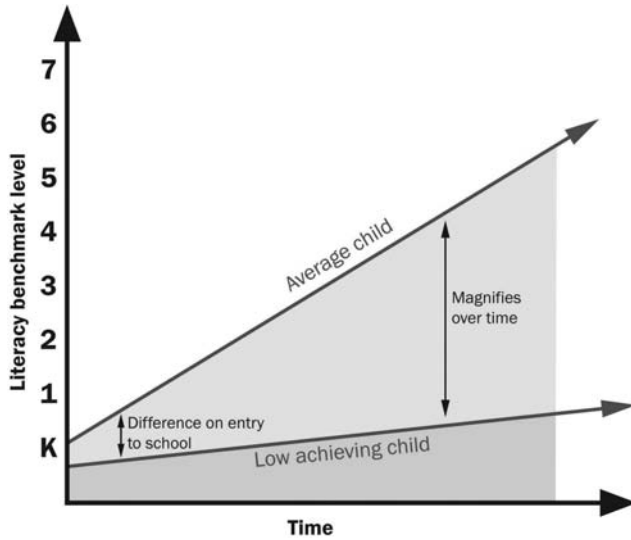
Figure 1.2 *The consequences of working on low-level tasks over time*

(Adapted from Gray, 1980)

And failure reinforced has a psychological impact. The low achieving learners are soon convinced by their school experiences that either school is 'dumb' or they are. Either way, it is better to preserve one's self respect and personal integrity by opting out—through passive compliance and 'learned helplessness' or aggressive and disruptive classroom behaviour. The psychological impact of failure on low achieving learners has been well documented (see for example, Gentile & McMillan, 1987). For classroom teachers and parents the question of how to respond to children who are failing at school tasks, and failing to thrive psychologically as a result of their failure, is paramount. Clearly, 'support' is necessary but insufficient. What is needed is what Hammond and Gibbons (2001) call 'high support/high challenge' curriculum.

Providing high support/high challenge curriculum

The nexus between support and challenge is discussed by Hammond and Gibbons (2001). Drawing on the research of Mariani (1997) Hammond and Gibbons show the relationship between the two as being highly correlated (see Figure 1.3).

Hammond and Gibbons point out that in classrooms in which the teacher provides high challenge but low or inadequate levels of support learners will experience frustrations, insecurity and anxiety because these

5
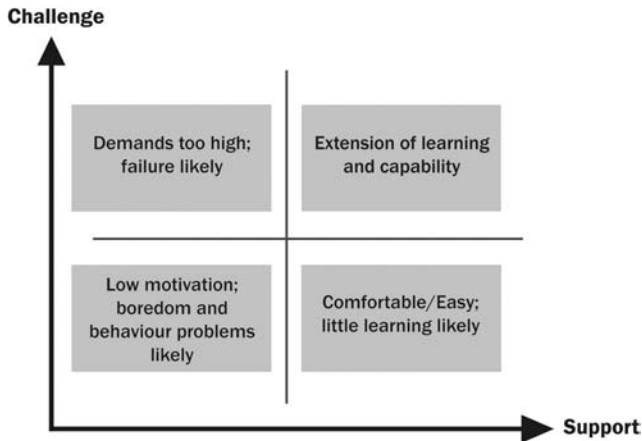
Figure 1.3 *The relationship between support and challenge in learning contexts*

(Hammond & Gibbons, 2001. Adapted from Mariani, 1997)

classrooms 'present students with demands that are beyond their capabilities and are likely to result in failure'.

On the other hand, in classrooms where the teacher provides high levels of support but little challenge, learners will 'operate within their comfort zone and may enjoy their classroom experiences, but they are unlikely to learn a great deal'.

Nor are classrooms in which teachers provide low support and low challenge likely to be effective learning places. Hammond and Gibbons point out that in these classrooms:

> … students are unlikely to be motivated to do much at all, with the result that little learning will occur and students are likely to be bored, and perhaps express this boredom through misbehaviour. (p. 4)

It is in classrooms in which teachers provide both challenging tasks and high levels of support that the most effective learning is likely to take place. This is because, in such learning environments, students will be working beyond their current capacities, in what Hammond and Gibbons borrowing from Vygotsky, describe as the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (or ZPD).

Working in the 'zone'

The 'high support/high challenge' formulation described by Hammond and Gibbons makes sense if we consider the learning theory that underpins 'scaffolded' curriculum approaches. The Russian learning theorist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) is credited with demonstrating that learning takes

place when the learner, through interaction with more competent others, is operating above what he or she can do independently. From this observation, Vygotsky was able to go on to argue that learning is highly socially and culturally based (Gray, 2007; Hammond & Gibbons, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). That is to say, learning is a transactional process. It is driven through interaction with more knowledgeable others.

Vygotsky argued that learning is what takes place in the 'zone' just above what learners can do independently. This is what he called the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) and he defined it as:

> *… the distance between the actual developmental level (of the learner) as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)*

Vygotsky also argued that learning drives development—that is, through interaction with others, learners are able to take on tasks they cannot yet do independently and, in the doing, develop the necessary 'skills' (physical coordination, mental structuring of tasks, verbal skills and so on) necessary to become more independent at the tasks. Language is central to this process, not only because it allows transmission of information but because it allows the learner to mentally structure the sequence of actions needed to undertake tasks—to 'imaginatively recreate' the doing of the task.

A simple illustration of this theory is learning to ride a bicycle. Children generally learn to ride a bicycle through their interactions with an adult or more experienced peer. Generally, the more experienced rider provides both a model of what 'competent performance' looks like, and the necessary verbal instructions—such as you have to keep pedalling or the bicycle will fall over. The learner then tries, with the other person supporting the bicycle by running along beside. Closer and closer approximations to independent bicycle riding are achieved until the learner has mastered the task. Mastering the task has involved a whole range of interactions between the learner and the more competent other, from modelling the desired outcome, providing verbal instructions, explanations, and encouragements, and providing physical support through the 'learning by doing' stages.

The bicycle-riding example above illustrates Vygotsky's point that learning is what is happening in the period *before* the learner can do the task independently. In our bicycle example, the learner is *learning* to ride during the period in which the more competent other is modelling the task and supporting the learner. Once the task has been mastered,

the learner is no longer operating above what he or she can do independently. As will become clear later, the concept of the ZPD underpins virtually all the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching and learning strategies. The text chosen for reading is chosen on the basis that it will be above what the learner can read independently and the supported tasks will be beyond what can be done independently. The role of the teacher is that of more competent other who must make explicit to the learner not only what is to be done, but why it is done that way. The would-be cyclist must not only keep pedalling but must understand why this is necessary. The would-be reader must not only know how to decode the individual words on the page but understand why these words were chosen by the author and what meanings they take on when they are grouped together in certain ways with other words.

Language learning and learning about language

In literacy teaching and learning, providing the kind of high support/high challenge learning contexts that Hammond and Gibbons describe requires that teachers structure their literacy education program in a way that teaches both the necessary literacy practices *and* an understanding of how language works at the deeper structural level. As Christie (2006) puts it, an adequately conceived program will 'embrace teaching and learning language, and teaching and learning about language'. She goes on to argue that the concern of such a teaching and learning program will be:

> … *both for the meanings constructed and negotiated in language, and for the language structures in which such meanings are expressed. This dual concern involves holding a robust theory of the nature of the language system and its purposes, and an equally robust commitment to a pedagogy that makes a knowledge of this system explicitly available to learners.* (p. 45)

Christie goes on to point out that it is when teachers themselves lack a 'comprehensive sense of language, its meanings and its structures' that they tend to fall back on 'some rather tired formulas for teaching a range of 'language skills', such as 'phonics'.

Similarly, in their study of a Year 9 class of low-achieving boys, Harders and Macken-Horarik (forthcoming) set out to demonstrate that part of the significance of the scaffolding approach lies in the 'shaping of consciousness' about language that this kind of pedagogy promotes. Harders and Macken-Horarik describe the way the shared classroom talk about the meaning of the text they are studying demonstrates, for these learners, 'that reading is not just about decoding the print (reading the

lines) but also about engaging with the meanings encoded in these word choices (reading between the lines)'.

As the description of the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence set out in the later sections of this book demonstrates, in situations where *Scaffolding Literacy* is being practised (both in classrooms and in one-on-one situations) the teacher is required to take an active role in making explicit to learners both what strategies effective readers/writers use; and also how to use these strategies to build skills for interrogating a text and uncovering its layers of meaning. The teacher is not only teaching about reading and writing but is teaching skills and understandings that will help learners to think about how authors make particular language choices to structure the meaning of their text. Not only that, but the teacher works through various 'layers' within the text—from the broadest level of text genre and overall structure of the story or non-narrative piece to how individual sentences and words are structured and why the author has chosen particular words to convey meaning.

LEARNING TO BE LITERATE

One of the primary aims of the approach to literacy teaching and learning described in this book is to make explicit to struggling or confused learners the strategies effective readers and writers use. This includes being able to make meaning from text that is complex in its grammatical and syntactical structures and that can be said to draw on 'literate' language codes rather than 'oral' language codes; and, reproduce these 'literate' language codes in their own writing.

In the context in which these terms are used here 'literate' and 'oral' are not the same as 'spoken' and 'written'. Gray (2007), drawing on the work of linguist Michael Halliday, points out that these terms have more to do with:

> … the manner in which abstraction of concepts and images are built-in as properties of the text themselves through the careful manipulation of word and grammar choices. (p. 8)

That is to say, from the perspective of discourse analysis, 'literate' texts are those in which particular grammatical constructions are used to convey more abstract ideas and concepts, and deal with the more distant and abstracted relationships that exist between the 'speaker' and the 'receiver' of the message. The grammar used in 'oral' communications implies a

direct and immediate relationship between speaker and the one spoken to. On the other hand, 'literate' language codes imply a more distant and abstracted relationship (between, for example, an author and a distant reader). The different 'grammars' involved in these different kinds of communication have major implications for literacy teaching and learning.

Oral text and literate text

As already pointed out, one ongoing problem for weak readers in schools is they become locked into a cycle of books 'appropriate' to their current reading ability. These books are often 'oral' in their language structures. They are made up of a number of simple sentences that employ contrived and controlled vocabulary. To illustrate we cite a very basic example of the type of 'home reader' that teachers and parents of children in early primary will be familiar with. Our sample book has the title: *Can I play?* The text of the book is as follows, with one phrase per page, along with an accompanying illustration of a child approaching small groups of children undertaking different activities in a playground. Each phrase is shown as a speech balloon, giving explicit emphasis to the 'oral' nature of this text. The text reads:

> *Can I play?*
> *No.*
> *Can I play?*
> *No.*
> *Can I play?*
> *No.*
> *Can I play?*
> *Yes, you can play.*

These 'early readers' (or 'basal readers') can play an important role in providing the teacher or parent an opportunity to talk to the child about significant social and relationship issues (in this example about feelings of exclusion/inclusion and so on). They can also help orientate some young learners towards text. They reinforce, for example, an understanding that English text is written and read from left to right, top to bottom; that there is a relationship between the text and the illustrations; that individual word meanings can be identified both through decoding the word in isolation and in relation to the other words that precede or follow them.

However, this kind of material does not give the teacher or parent much to work with if the aim is to interest learners in text as narrative, fire the imagination, or to use text to teach about language construction

(including grammar and spelling). If we look at the structure of our sample text, we can see that it has a very limited vocabulary (six words) and the longest 'sentence' (speech balloon) is made up of the phrase '*Yes, you can play'.* Apart from teaching the learner to memorise the look and sound of each of these six words, there is little the teacher can use in this text to make explicit how authors use words to structure sentences in ways that carry a story forward.

These kinds of 'stories' also provide little information to the learners about what constitutes appropriate written language for narratives. As it is not unusual in the early primary years to allocate controlled vocabulary readers to learners on the basis of the learner's assessed current 'reading ability' some struggling readers will, inadvertently, miss out on any exposure to more complex narratives. When this happens, these learners' own early writing attempts will often reflect the oral, minimalist writing style of the texts they are given to read. The following example, written by a Year 3 student, demonstrates the parallels between the kind of writing struggling readers will produce and the text of the books they are given to read. The following piece of text was written as a continuous sentence (that is, the learner had not grasped the idea of punctuation). The breaks (shown as /) have been added to emphasise the similarity to the style used in the controlled vocabulary readers. The learner was instructed to write about what he did at the weekend, with the teacher providing the opening: *On the weekend I...* Spelling mistakes have been corrected in transcription:

> On the weekend I went to bowling/
> it was fun/
> we went to Hungry Jacks/
> we went to the shop/
> it was fun/
> we went to our friend's house/
> it was nice/
> we saw a video/
> it was cool/
> it was so cool.

One of the characteristics of this kind of writing is that it amounts to a list of activities. There is little or no narrative structure. Separate events happen but without reference to their time or space relationships.

We can compare this with another piece of writing by a Year 3 child who had worked with a *Scaffolding Literacy* teacher on the text *The Twenty*

Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race, a book benchmarked at Year 4 level, over a six-week period. One of the extracts from the story, worked on by the teacher and learner reads:

> *Every morning, when it was still dark and ordinary hippopotamuses were still asleep, with the sky like velvet and the stars just starting to go out, Edward leapt from his bed, out of his pyjamas and into his bathing trucks. Wasting not a second, looking to neither left or right, he ran for the river at the end of the garden, and dived in. (Lurie, 1977, p. 14)*

Using this extract for *Text Patterning* (see 'Scaffolded Writing' in Part C) this learner was able to produce the following text. Note the control over punctuation and word choice as well as this learner's ability to write (and read with understanding) complex sentences. Again, spelling errors have been corrected in transcription:

> *About eight o'clock last Thursday night, with the wind howling like wolves and the blossoms on the plum tree falling like snow, and our neighbour practising the piano, my Mum got dressed like a tornado. After checking her luggage she whirled right to the front door, gave her two boys a kiss and a quick hug, threw her bags into the car and waved goodbye as she drove off to the airport.*

The difference between 'oral' text and 'literate' text is made clear by these two examples from two young writers. Learners who only read, or only have read to them 'oral' texts tend to produce text that mimics oral language. To learn how to decode more literate texts, and to reproduce the kind of grammatical constructions used in them, learners need to be given opportunities to work with 'literate' language texts. This is what the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence is designed to do.

It is only by working with text that is more complex in its structure and language choices that learners can come to 'think like writers' (Gray, 2003, p. 4). In part, learning to 'think like writers' means reading with more critical awareness and writing with an audience in mind. Reading for meaning moves to the foreground and with this goes the need to write in ways that draw on sound sentence structures (grammar) and conventional spelling. 'Thinking like writers' means learners need to get their message across as clearly as they can. Spelling and grammar become important, not as rules to be followed but as aids to communicating in writing. 'Does it look right' and 'does it make sense' become more important than remembering a specific grammatical rule—and learners are not only thinking like writers but also like editors.

In the two learners' texts quoted above we can see that, while both learners are in Year 3, the learner writing about his weekend is struggling to imaginatively engage with the writing task set by the teacher. By contrast, the learner writing about 'last Thursday night, with the wind howling like wolves …' is clearly beginning to creatively play with language. This learner is developing a sense of the drama of storytelling, of connecting with a reader. This learner is already beginning to 'think like a writer'.

The high level of integration of literacy tasks within the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence, achieved in part through continuing to work with one text throughout the sequence, means that reading and writing tasks, including spelling and sentence construction, contribute to developing learners who can 'think like writers'. This is because, as Gray (2003) puts it, *Scaffolding Literacy*:

> … *addresses development issues to do with the processes through which learners learn to think critically about texts and to think like writers who understand not only what language choices mean but also why they might be made in the first instance. (p. 4)*

'Thinking like writers' has another dimension—that of learning to enter into dialogue with others about reading and writing. For literacy tasks to have real meaning in their lived experience, learners need to be able to talk about text. They need to have access to the metalanguage of text—to the 'how' and 'why' questions about the author's decision to write this particular text, in this particular way. 'Thinking like writers' is therefore, in part, about being given entry into membership of the learning community of readers and writers and coming to see oneself as an active participant in that community.

Contemporary classroom practice does not always provide this experience of becoming a member of the community of writers. In her recent study of the preparations for the set writing tasks that were provided in a number of primary classroom settings, Bennett (2007) explores two areas of preparation for writing: first, how the 'field of enquiry' (the *what* to write about) was established and, second, the extent to which the learners in her study were shown *how* to write an appropriate text in this field (modelling). Bennett writes that:

> *Little effective preparation for writing was found in classrooms dominated by 'whole language' orientations, especially where writing lessons were based on personal experience. However, use of literate texts provided more powerful access than personal experience to effective writing. The*

> *most productive classroom teaching resulted from building shared*
> *experience based on a model text which itself provided the resources for*
> *the teaching of writing. (p. 4)*

Bennett's findings add support to the need to build an integrated reading/
writing program and for good 'model texts' to be available for the teacher
to use to make explicit to learners how language structures work to convey
meaning. But before we move on to how this is done in *Scaffolding Literacy*
contexts, it is useful to look a bit more closely at what is known about the
strategies effective readers/writers use.

What makes an effective 'literate' language user?

Another way to approach the question of what fragile or weak readers/
writers need is to describe what effective text users do. Research in this
area is unequivocal in emphasising the range of strategies effective readers
draw on to make meaning from text. Harris et al. (2003, pp. 33–5) argue
that effective readers simultaneously access a complex set of skills,
strategies and knowledge, including:

- knowledge about the semantic, syntactic and graphophonic sub-
  systems of language
- strategies for accessing and integrating information from these three
  sources
- knowledge about texts and how these are structured within different
  contexts
- strategies for activating the Luke and Freebody four 'families of
  practices' of the reader, namely: code breaker practices, text participant
  practices, text user practices, and text analyst practices. See Luke and
  Freebody, 1999.

We would argue that the same skill set is necessary for writing (along
with some knowledge of how to spell common English words). The
Scaffolding Literacy approach acknowledges this complexity by assuming
that beginning or fragile text users will need explicit and structured help
if they are to undertake the journey to become literate language users.

What *Scaffolding Literacy* aims to do is work from meaning prediction
first (by 'front-loading' information about one selected text). The
'Orientation' strategies discussed in Part A are designed to enable
teachers to build learners' predictive skills. Individual learners are only
asked to read the text when the teacher is sure the learner has enough
meaning prediction information to support successful reading. This
reduces the mental overload confused readers experience and enables

learners to access what graphophonic knowledge they do have, even if this is very limited.

It could be argued that the learner who is accessing information the teacher has provided is simply engaging in a memory game. The learner is 'remembering' what the text is about and what happens rather than 'reading' the words. It might be pointed out, for example, that the learner would not necessarily be able to 'read' each individual word out of the context of the text that has been 'scaffolded'. This is true. However, the aim at the beginning of a *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence is not to produce independent reading (or word recognition) but to orientate learners towards positive engagement with a particular text that is 'literate' in its language structures and that would be beyond their independent reading level. As will become clearer as we work through the sequence in the following sections, the underlying assumption is that while independent reading and writing is the *goal* it is not the *means* by which language understanding can be built.

Meaning cues

Descriptions of the complexity of the reading task, such as that quoted above by Harris et al. (2003) draw attention to the 'semantic, syntactic and graphophonic subsystems of language'. It is worth providing definitions of these three terms at this point so that we can draw upon them later. Max Kemp, founder of the *Parents as Tutors Program*, provides a user-friendly discussion of these 'cue systems' (Kemp, 1980, pp. 15–20). He gives the following brief definitions of each:

- Graphophonic describes the relationships that exist between clusters or items of print [words or groups of words] and the sounds that they make.
- Semantic describes words and their meanings, either as single [words] or 'chunks' containing these and [other words] in phrases that have a unitary meaning. To over-simplify, it means 'vocabulary'.
- Syntactic describes the predictable patterning of orders that words may take. 'Grammar' means the rules of acceptable patterning; 'syntax' means the systematic arrangement of words in acceptable order.

All English language reading systems draw on these three subsystems of language.

Scaffolding Literacy assumes that for effective reading—that is, for reading that is fluent and accurate enough for meaning-making to take place—learners will need to develop strategies for accessing all three cue-ing systems simultaneously and automatically. The significant question,

however, is how to facilitate this, especially when working with learners who have had little experience with 'literate' texts and/or have become confused and frustrated by their encounters with text.

As already pointed out, the *Scaffolding Literacy* approach assumes that learners cannot learn the necessary strategies for meaning-making if they are only exposed to 'oral' texts. But to read the more complex texts that require them to draw on all three cueing systems is too difficult for them to do independently. The aim of the teaching sequence is to provide a structure in which the teacher and learners together can access these different cueing systems using text that, unsupported, would be beyond the learners.

This helps explain why the teaching sequence is structured as a sequential and integrated approach in which all the parts of the sequence are of equal significance. *Scaffolding Literacy* is not a set of separate activities that can be plucked from the sequence and used in isolation from the other activities in the sequence. Teachers can move backwards in the sequence if they judge their learners are not yet ready to undertake the next set of activities. They cannot, however, leave out a part of the sequence, or move in and out of the sequence without undermining the 'scaffold' the learners need.

The first part of the teaching sequence is designed to give learners a great deal of information about a chosen text and about the author's language choices in that text. This work enables learners to fluently 'read' a part of the selected text (it may be a page of a picture book, or a paragraph of a longer text, depending on the age of the learners). This is called 'supported reading'. It does not follow that a learner who has been 'scaffolded' to read the selected extract can independently read the whole text. But the supported reading provides a starting point from which the teacher can build other literacy activities that will strengthen the learners' understanding of how to combine their word decoding skills (no matter how basic) with the context cues the text provides.

To put this another way, using this approach, learners can be explicitly shown how to bring together both the phonemic awareness skills they have (such as their knowledge of the alphabet and basic letter patterns) and their prediction skills. Their prediction skills (the semantic and syntactic elements of the text) can be greatly enhanced through the teacher's initial text and language orientations (see Part A). This strengthens fragile readers' access to the meaning cues, reduces the mental overload, and enables them to better access their phonemic awareness skills. In our text-saturated society, most young learners will have acquired 'awareness' of letters/words by the time they are in early primary—that is, by the time

they are being actively 'taught' reading comprehension. Bringing together both phonemic awareness and prediction results in a more nuanced and complex approach to the task of drawing meaning from the text.

Just as significantly, this strategy allows teachers to enable poor and non-reading learners, including those whose first language is not English, to meaningfully participate in literacy-related discussion on text that is appropriate to their age. This can have a dramatic effect on their sense of personal agency and on their sense of themselves as contributors to the community of learners. This gets us back to the matter of literacy learning as a 'communicative act' and the importance of being able to enter into 'academic discourse' about text.

BECOMING MEMBERS OF A LEARNING COMMUNITY

In *Scaffolding Literacy* learning environments, teachers and learners need to work together to 'uncover' (or deconstruct) the text's meaning. In practice, this means that the teacher (or parent in one-on-one reading situations) needs to take up the role of more experienced text-user, willing and able to enter into dialogue with learners about the text. Through dialogue the 'more competent other' can make explicit to the learners the strategies they use to make meaning from the words on the page or screen. To do this, the teacher needs to understand teaching and learning as relational. The teacher needs to understand the teaching role as that of an active, and more experienced, partner in the quest to uncover the way the author has used particular language features to convey his or her meaning.

In this way, knowledge and understandings about the text under consideration can be constantly negotiated through structured talk in which the teacher leads the learners in a way that enables the group as a whole to build up a set of understandings about the text.

This process of building common knowledge about the language features of a particular text when shared by the teacher and learners is the way of building a shared metalanguage about text in general. The teacher is, in effect, letting the learners 'in' on the strategies readers/writers use to make meaning from text. Building a shared metalanguage helps the teacher and learners build a dialogue for talking about—and thinking about—particular texts that is transferable. It allows learners to identify the common elements of written text and to take these common elements on board when they are either reading text or writing it.

How authors structure their text as a whole (chapters, sections, paragraphs, sentences), how they structure sentences, and how and why they have chosen particular words—all provide elements of this metalanguage about text. Building this metalanguage, however, can only come about when the teacher is an active participant in the dialogue and when the discussion is kept tightly focused on the text itself.

This is one of the most significant points of difference between this approach to literacy learning and other, more child-centred approaches that position the learner as the 'discoverer' of text and text meaning, while the teacher is positioned as a facilitator who will make a wide range of literacy experiences available to learners but not direct the learners' use of those materials. *Scaffolding Literacy*, by contrast, requires the teacher to be a direct participant in the process of interpreting the author's intention and meaning.

This explicit attention to 'uncovering' the meaning of the text has an additional advantage. It makes it much easier for mixed ability groups of learners to work productively together on the same text. The strategies used in the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence provide direct access to information about written language, and to the language codes used to talk about writing. Consequently, more competent readers and writers in the group are not held back as they can use this knowledge for more complex independent reading and writing. At the same time, the less competent readers and writers are included in the type of classroom discourse that will help them understand how meaning is conveyed through written text. They will not be locked out of participation either because they do not have the information/language codes necessary for participation or because they have been removed from participation by being placed in streamed classes in which language work is of the most basic kind.

Another element in this dialogical approach to teaching and learning is that it enables the teacher to emphasise that reading and writing are both 'communicative acts' (Axford, 2007). As will be shown in the later descriptions of the actual classroom practices, emphasis is placed on author intentionality: *'Why do you think the author chose those words to describe how Joe felt?'* This emphasis on intentionality helps the teacher focus the learners' attention on the actual language structures used by the author, and draws attention to the constructed nature of the text. Text is something 'handmade'. It has human purpose and meaningfulness built into it.

Many curriculum models treat reading (text decoding and comprehension), spelling and syntax (grammar) and writing (text construction) as separate 'skill sets'. This isolates both the learner and the text.

Struggling or confused learners often have difficulty seeing any link between, for example, decoding words in a sentence (reading) and learning to spell individual words from a list. This is particularly so when the words set for spelling are words learners are not able to read or whose meanings they do not know. For these learners every 'text encounter' is a new encounter. There is little transference of knowledge and information from one 'encounter' to the next. This inability to see different literacy tasks as all related to the business of communicating through words arranged on the page or screen undermines any sense of purpose or personal meaning-making. It robs learners of the necessary sense of growing mastery over tasks that others (parents, teachers, peers) value and appear able to do easily.

Scaffolding Literacy, by contrast, through its highly integrated and sequential strategies that emphasise dialogue between the teacher and learners about author intent, carries with it the notion of human intention and purposefulness that underpins the idea of literacy as a social practice. It carries the message that the text has been made by a person, and by a person whose intention is to communicate.

Furthermore, purposefulness positions readers and writers as active social agents. Most of us do not give much thought to the fact that when we read or write we are entering into a social practice and that we have, by that action, become part of a 'community' of readers and writers. For struggling learners who do not have much sense of themselves as active agents in relation to their school experiences, this emphasis on the purposefulness of reading and writing is an important aspect of their literacy learning. It has the power to lift them from their current status as passive receivers of instruction to that of active participants in the making of meaning.

LAYERS OF MEANING

How to draw meaning from an author's text, or convey meaning to a reader through writing, requires an understanding of the basic structural elements of text. By drawing attention to the author's choices at the level of words and phrases, *Scaffolding Literacy* enables teachers to draw attention to aspects of sentence construction (syntax) and common letter patterns (spelling) in words without losing sight of the overall meaning and register of the text. The Language Study components of the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence specifically address this aspect of literacy learning (see Part B).

Rose (2006) talks of the 'layers of language' within the text. He illustrates these layers with a model that places any given written text within a particular genre field (the type of text) and register (the 'tone' or 'voice' of the text). As Figure 1.4 demonstrates, within these broad fields of genre and register, Rose places:

- aspects of the overall structure of a given text (or 'patterns within the text'—such as chapters, sections, paragraphs—that shape the overall text);
- aspects of the sentences within that text ('patterns within the sentence'—such as clauses and phrases that shape the sentence); and,
- aspects of word recognition ('patterns within the word'—such as the common letter patterns that shape English words).

This image of language as 'layered' is powerful because it nestles parts of literacy language—such as paragraphing (structure) sentence construction (syntax/grammar) and spelling—within the broader context of the overall purpose of the text and the message or information the author wishes to convey.

Rose's 'embedded' circles can also be used to highlight the integration that is required if learners are to develop the repertoire of skills needed for fluent reading and imaginative writing. By drawing attention to the 'layers of language', Rose's model also emphasises the need to convey the inter-relatedness of these 'layers' in the teaching of effective reading and writing. Learners need to be able to effectively 'see' the patterns of meaning that reside at each layer. The *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence provides a way to make these different language layers explicit and accessible to group analysis and discussion.

Rose's 'embedded' circles of language provide an effective alternative model for illustrating the movement of the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence. The sequence is most often represented as a linear progression moving from left to right (see Figure B.1, p. 54). This linear progression emphasises the sequential nature of the strategies as a whole and the importance of only undertaking the Language Studies and Scaffolded Writing strategies once learners have been 'scaffolded' into fluently reading a piece of text that can be used for the later activities. If however, without losing sight of the sequential nature of the teaching sequence, we also superimpose the image of literacy learning as a series of concentric circles we can see another feature of this approach. The teaching sequence moves through the teacher's introduction of an individual text, using Text Orientation and Language Orientation strategies (these are described in Part A). These strategies open the text
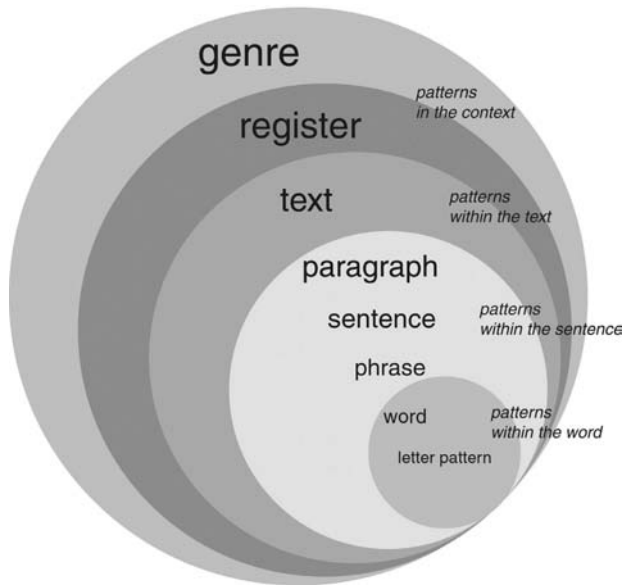
Figure 1.4 *Layers of language*

(Adapted from Rose, 2006, p. 11)

up for discussion at the broadest levels of textual analysis—that is, at the levels of **genre** *(What kind of text is this?)* and **register** *(Whose 'voice' is speaking, what audience is being addressed, what mode of address is the author using?)* and **text structure** *(Is this a story set out in chapters, a report set out in sections? Does it have a shape of the 'beginning-middle-end' type or is the end foretold at the beginning?)*.

The Language Studies strategies (described in Part B) take the examination of the text 'inwards' to the level of sentence and word structures. Using 'Transformations', the teaching sequence is able to draw attention to the structure of individual sentences. In this way, aspects of functional grammar (syntax) can be explored.

Scaffolded Spelling takes the focus down to the level of the structure of individual words.

Finally, through the Reconstructed Writing and Independent Writing strategies, described in Part C, the teaching sequence moves 'outward' again through the layers of language as learners attempt, initially, to reconstruct the author text and then use that text as a model for generating new text.

Whether depicted as embedded 'layers' or as a more linear progression, the essential point is that an effective literacy teaching strategy must

address the structure and meaning of 'literate' text at these various levels and the inter-relatedness of these levels of text construction must be made explicit to learners. The following three sections of this book describe how this can be done in practice through the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence.

SCAFFOLDED READING: MODELLING MEANING-MAKING

READING: A COMPLEX HIGH-ORDER TASK

Young children begin using language in a highly literal way. There is a one-to-one correspondence between word and object; between subject and object. *'Dog'* is the four legged furry thing the child encounters in the street; *'I see dog'* is a literal description of a subject–object relationship. However, by the time the average child enters formal schooling they have learnt to use spoken language in a much more sophisticated way and can infer a great deal of information from the context in which words are spoken, who is doing the speaking, the placement of words within sentences, and the stress and intonation used by the speaker.

Similarly, when children begin to read, they will at first use written language in a highly literal way. Often the first written word they can automatically decode (that is, can see as the same word no matter where or how it is written) will be their own name. But to become a fluent reader of continuous text the child needs to not only be able to decode the individual words on the page (or screen) but be able to automatically interpret the meaning given to these words through the wider context of the text as a whole. From this perspective, reading can be seen as multiple acts of interpretation and inference. The reader must interpret the author's meaning through cues such as the type of text being read, who is 'speaking', how parts of the text relate to other parts, and how individual words and 'clusters of words' relate to other words in the text. These multiple acts of

© Schools & Community Centre 2007   University of Canberra
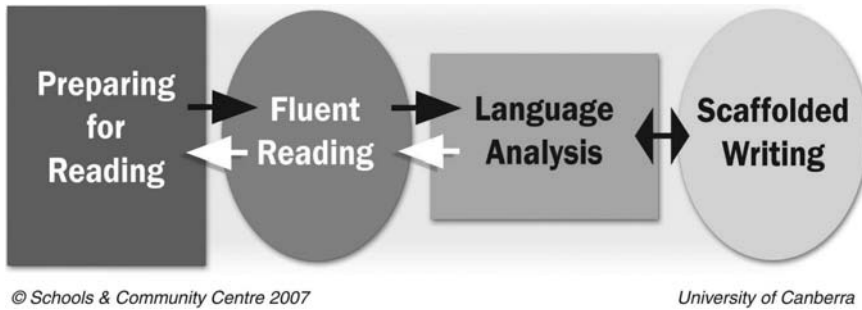
Figure A.1   *The* Scaffolding Literacy *teaching sequence*

interpretation require sophisticated decoding skills combined with an awareness of the semantic and syntactical cues that help convey the author's intent.

How can teachers make this complex process more explicit to novice or struggling readers? The teaching sequence described here has been developed over some twenty-five years of research into what learners are doing when they attempt to make meaning from text. The sequence is a set of integrated activities that make the strategies good readers and writers use to make their text encounters meaningful. This sequence of activities is itself complex. Each part of the sequence relies for its success on the other parts. The activities that make up the teaching sequence are not stand-alone techniques that can be lifted out of the context of the sequence as a whole. They cannot just be added to a teacher's 'tool kit' of eclectic teaching approaches. The teaching sequence can be represented diagrammatically, as shown in Figure A.1.

In this section, the first half of this sequence is described: **Preparing for Reading** and **Fluent Reading**. The key to success with the later *Scaffolding Literacy* activities lies with these first stages of the teaching sequence. It is these stages that provide the 'scaffold' upon which the teacher and learners stand and jointly 'deconstruct' the author's language and meaning and in doing so see how, using the author's text as a model, they might construct new text. The activities that make up this first part of the teaching sequence have two main aims. They aim to:

- provide high levels of support to learners to enable them to read a text extract that would be beyond them if not 'scaffolded'; and,
- 'front-load' sufficient information about the selected text to enable individual learners to successfully participate in literate discussion about the text.

© Schools & Community Centre 2007   University of Canberra
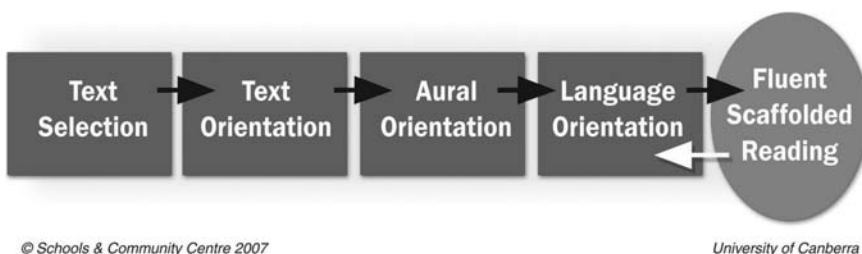
Figure A.2   *Preparing for reading*

This opportunity to participate—by being able to do a supported reading of an extract from the selected text *and* by being able to engage in dialogue about the text as a whole—provides the platform upon which the teacher can build further supported learning about how to read and write 'literate' (structured and complex) text.

As can be seen in Figure A.2, this part of the teaching sequence consists of a series of activities that together support the learners' prediction skills in such a way that they can read fluently an extract from the selected text.

Good Text, Aural, and Language Orientation work by the teacher is paramount and requires effective teacher preparation. The length of the extract each learner will be 'scaffolded' into reading will depend on the fragility of the learner and his or her age and past experiences with text. With young or highly fragile learners the aim may be for them to read one or two sentences of a high quality children's picture book. For older learners it might be several paragraphs of an age-appropriate novel or non-narrative text. In general, the strategies are the same whatever the age of the learners, their experience with text, or the type of text. In addition, except where indicated, these strategies can be used in one-on-one teaching and learning situations (such as a parent working with a child), in small groups, or with whole-class groups.

Strengths of the Scaffolded Reading approach

This approach to reading has many advantages over more traditional approaches:

* The teacher can choose a text for language work that is beyond the unsupported reading ability of the learner. This aids motivation in learners with negative views of themselves as readers (or negative views of reading). Also struggling readers can engage in discussions of text in ways that support the development of more effective decoding

and meaning prediction skills and this enables the teacher to model 'on-task' behaviours and strategies.

- In combination, Text Orientation, Aural Orientation, and Language Orientation set up learners for success. The first two strategies structure the complexity of the reading task by 'tuning in' learners to the text's meaning and cadence. The third tunes them into the author's language choices. Together, these strategies support the syntactical and semantic underpinnings of the text and reduce the learners' cognitive load and anxiety associated with reading. This in turn enables learners to more easily employ both meaning prediction and graphophonic knowledge (or the sound/sight associations).

- This approach reduces 'learner overload'. Many weak readers actually know a lot about phonics but are unable to tap into this knowledge. This is because the reading strategies these learners employ are counterproductive and produce memory overload and stress. Following the *Scaffolding Literacy* orientation activities a significant amount of the learners' processing capacity is no longer overloaded, enabling them to approach the use of graphophonic cues in a more relaxed and constructive way.

- Text Orientation and Language Orientation employ a non-typical approach to teacher questioning. A conventional literacy practice often used by teachers is to encourage learners to predict what the story might be about before listening to the teacher read it. *Scaffolding Literacy* teachers, by contrast, shape their questions in ways that allow them to display, expand and distribute shared knowledge about the text among the learners. In this way, teacher questions and reformulations of learners' responses act as an information exchange. This keeps the weaker learners on task as it cuts down on diversions and misunderstandings of the task at hand.

- Giving the teacher the task of ensuring that all the learners have the information they need to discuss the story *before* any reading takes place removes the guesswork often associated with meaning prediction. It also allows the teacher to make explicit to weaker or less experienced text users the strategies good readers use to draw meaning from text.

- In classroom situations, both struggling and stronger readers benefit from the teacher's explicit attention to author intention (meaning-making through attention to structure, function and word choice). This makes *Scaffolding Literacy* an effective teaching method for use with mixed ability groups. For stronger readers this approach opens

up many more aspects of the text for interrogation and analysis. At the same time, the weaker learners are not locked out of the discussion or enjoyment of the text, even if their individual ability to independently read text at that level is limited.

- Parents can be trained to use these strategies as a way of working on literacy tasks with their child (see Axford, 2007). It has also been shown to be useful in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts (see Adoniou & Macken-Horarik, 2007; Harders & Macken-Horarik, forthcoming; Macken-Horarik, 2005).

SCAFFOLDED READING: GETTING STARTED

The rest of this section describes the teaching of scaffolded reading strategies as a series of steps the teacher would go through to implement *Scaffolding Literacy* in a classroom or one-on-one teaching situation. We suggest readers read the whole section through first to get an overview of the activities as a whole, then go back and consider how each part might be made operational in their particular context. This is a way of saying that, although we have tried to structure our description as a series of steps, these are not steps as in a 'step-by-step' guide. The teacher will need to understand the process as a whole to understand each individual *step*. Like reading itself, the strategies are complex and can best be described as a sequence in which the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts. At the end of this section we also provide a brief discussion of the reading assessment used in *Scaffolding Literacy*. 'Miscue analysis' is used because this form of assessment enables the teacher to assess the kinds of strategies each individual learner is bringing to the reading task rather than merely identifying the number of errors individual learners are making.

Step 1: Text selection

As the aim of the *Scaffolding Literacy* approach is to make explicit the practices good readers and writers use, the teacher needs to go for depth rather than breadth. Teachers are in a better position to teach students about how texts work by examining a few well-selected texts in great detail, and over time. This applies even to young readers. This approach is the opposite to that of many programs that encourage learners to race through large quantities of reading materials (the 'reader-a-night' approach). Too often, such material is poorly comprehended and reinforces

the use of ineffective reading strategies that block progress towards drawing meaning from more complex text.

Because the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence assumes that one piece of extracted text will provide the resource that will underpin a number of language activities—including spelling and writing—the text must be interesting enough, as well as linguistically rich enough, to sustain this work. For example, in a classroom situation, this one text could form the basis of a series of activities that move from reading to writing over several weeks. For older learners working on a novel this might be as long as a term. Text Selection is therefore an important first step. A suitable text for *Scaffolding Literacy* work will have certain characteristics. These are explored below.

Rich and complex language

The selected text will contain examples of complex and syntactically rich language. We have already explained why young readers need to work on texts that use rich language and complex structures (see Introduction). To re-iterate, one ongoing problem for weak readers in schools is that they become locked into a cycle of books 'appropriate' to their current reading ability. These books are often 'oral' in their language structures and made up of a number of simple sentences that employ contrived and controlled vocabulary. These texts do not introduce readers to the more grammatically and syntactically complex written language they need as they move beyond the early years of schooling. Nor do these texts provide access to the deeper layers of meaning that more 'literate' texts contain. A diet of 'oral' texts provides no access to the strategies good readers use to get at the author's deeper meanings. To put it another way, these texts do not teach readers how to 'read between, and behind, the lines'.

Difficult, but not too difficult

Russian learning theorist Lev Vygotsky provides the theoretical basis for the assumption that for learning to take place the learner needs to work on tasks that are above their existing level of competence, but not so far above that success at the task will be beyond their reach (see Gray, 2007).

Vygotsky also argued that learning is a social activity that takes place when a more 'knowledgeable other' is able to engage in dialogue with the learner about how the task is performed. Vygotsky assumed that learning through social engagement and dialogue (language exchanges) drives a child's mental development forward rather than developmental stages setting the pace at which individual learners can learn. Hence, the

emphasis on the need for 'reflective dialogue' (Gray, 2007) and negotiated meanings around a particular text. It is through talk about the language used in the text that the teacher can ensure that knowledge and skills can be distributed throughout the group.

In addition, this 'social engagement' provides not only opportunities to learn through direct instruction but also to see performance modelled and to 'imaginatively' enter into that performance. The example of learning to ride a bicycle, discussed earlier, provides a good demonstration of the effect of this 'imaginative engagement' with the task to be performed. Through his or her social engagement with those who already ride bicycles the learner is not only motivated to learn this practice but can imitate the performance of riding in their 'minds eye'—that is, they can 'imagine' the desired goal before they can perform it and can rehearse it in their imagination. They can 'see' themselves as a bicycle rider even before they have mastered their performance of this task. As Gray (2007) points out, this aspect of what is more usually called 'imitation' is critical in that it provides the learner with 'a strong awareness of the goal to be achieved'. Gray also points out that:

> *Understanding the nature of the goal and the intentionalities held and operated upon by participants in an activity allows the imitation process to move beyond 'rote' performance.*

Consequently, the teacher's modelling of reading as a joyful and fascinating 'search for meaning' is as important as the teacher's verbal instructions about what is to be done.

The text will be interesting

The selected text should be interesting for *both* the teacher and the learners. Both teacher and learners need to share a great deal of dialogue around this text so it is important that the teacher likes the book. It is a hard sell to prepare and carry forward a series of lessons on one text if the adult chooses a book he or she doesn't particularly like but thinks is 'appropriate' for the learners. Teachers are also the more experienced readers and should rely on their experience and judgement rather than assuming learners are in a position to know what makes a 'good book'. For many reluctant readers a 'good' book will be short and have as few words as possible. This will get them through school reading sessions with minimal pain. However, such books will also lock them into future minimalist reading experiences.

Scaffolding Literacy teachers usually choose a narrative text when working with beginning, weak or struggling readers. This is because

narratives generally have a structure that is familiar even to young learners. There is a wealth of interesting and engaging story books and young-adult fiction available, and authors of good children's and young adult fiction use richer and more carefully chosen language than most non-fiction writers. For these reasons, a well-chosen storybook (or novel for older learners) can be most rewarding for both teacher and learners. Nevertheless, as the work of David Rose and colleagues demonstrates, this approach to teaching effective reading/writing strategies can also be used with non-narrative texts (see Culican, Milburn & Oakley, 2006).

The text will be age-appropriate

Working from Vygotsky's learning theory, *Scaffolding Literacy* allows teachers to choose texts that are close to the learner's chronological age rather than their reading age. Because the strategies allow learners to work on texts they would not be able to read independently, teachers can choose texts with age-appropriate themes and language. This is a great motivational aid for older learners who may previously have been restricted to a series of low-level controlled vocabulary texts. It also gives learners experience on literacy tasks that are sufficiently complex that higher 'code-breaker' skills are called into play. This in turn provides greater opportunities for teachers to model, and hence make explicit, the strategies that good readers employ to decode and comprehend new text, and that good writers use to construct new text. In this way, the teacher can also aid the 'imagination engagement', not just with the text but also with the idea of what it is to be a competent reader.

Direct links to writing tasks

The selected text should include examples of the type of writing style or technique the teacher wants to teach the learners. The text will be used to model both good reading strategies and good writing strategies. Consequently, the teacher will need to be mindful of the writing stage of the teaching sequence when selecting the text. It may be, for example, that the writing aim is to show learners how they can generate effective character descriptions or the writing purpose may be to teach about narrative structure, paragraph structure, scene descriptions, dialogue, the author's positioning of readers or how arguments are structured in non-narrative pieces of writing. The challenge for the teacher is to find material by a good author that incorporates these elements. In this sense, even at the first stage in the teaching sequence, the teacher needs to be mindful

that the teaching sequence is a way of integrating reading and writing—including spelling, functional grammar, and punctuation.

Step 2: Text Orientation

The purpose of Text Orientation is to introduce the learner to the text as a whole. The teacher starts by providing learners with an overview of what the text is about. The teacher *does not* invite learners to speculate or guess what the text might be about from clues given by the title or by illustrations. This 'uninformed speculation' can be very confusing to weak readers. It can also result in discussion that draws attention away from the text and gets both teachers and learners 'off task'.

The teacher identifies and explains aspects of the overall text. This might include identifying what type of text it is (the text *genre*), information about the *author* and when the story was written—and where this information is printed in the text. Emphasis on the author is important at this stage because it carries with it the message that this is a piece of writing that someone—a real person—has created to communicate with the reader. This is an opportunity for the teacher to convey the message that reading and writing are related 'acts of communication'. For learners who do not see a connection between reading and writing, or who do not see themselves as active agents in relation to reading and writing, this emphasis can be very important.

Whose 'voice' is telling the story or providing the information is another important element to which the teacher needs to draw explicit attention. This will be followed by a brief synopsis of the *plot* (or argument in a non-narrative text). Information about the *setting* and the *characters* will be included in this plot outline.

Also included in the overview will be an explanation of the reasons why the teacher and learners are going to work on this particular text—for example, the story has been chosen to learn more about how this author builds suspense, or strong characterisations, or a strong sense of place—and that the teacher and learners are going to use this text to study how the author's techniques can be used in their own writing. This strengthens the sense of purpose in undertaking the study of the text. Many learners in schools often do not see any clear purpose in the individual tasks they are asked to do and see no connection between one learning session and the next. These learners tend to demonstrate little transference of learning.

Text Orientation then takes slightly different forms depending on the level of difficulty of the book or extract studied. The following discussion

assumes the selected text is a narrative text. As previously noted, narrative texts generally have a structure that is familiar even to young learners. Narratives also come in a wide range of interesting and engaging texts in which the author has used rich and carefully chosen language. In what follows, we look first at a Text Orientation with a book with illustrations, then a book without illustrations. The similarities will become apparent and they emphasise the point that, whatever genre of text is chosen, the basic principles of the Text Orientation strategy are the same.

Text Orientation with an illustrated book

Illustrations in books for young readers often contain meanings that are not included in the wording. In the Text Orientation for a picture book the *Scaffolding Literacy* teacher provides a 'literate reading' of these illustrations. That is to say, the teacher provides an interpretation and description of the characters and action illustrated that links the illustration to the story by keeping in mind aspects of the story such as:

- what is happening in the illustration and how this links with the characters or action of the text
- how the trajectory of the plot is played out in the illustrations and how the illustrations expand on or qualify the action that carries the plot forward
- any significant inferences implicit in the illustrations that extend the information in the narrative and that help the reader understand, or identify with, the characters, their motivations, and their actions. To give a simple example:

    In a story in which a fox is one of the characters, the illustrations might show the fox looking sneaky or shifty and this is helping 'colour' readers' perceptions of this character as the bad guy in the story. The teacher can draw specific attention to this feature and, in so doing, encourage readers to understand how these features help convey the author's meaning.

- how the larger themes of the narrative are reflected in the illustrations. For example:

    In a story in which a sneaky and dishonest fox is used to illustrate the moral that we should not believe everything we are told, the illustrations might show the fox slinking off with his ill-gotten gains while his gullible victim is left looking bewildered. In such a story, the illustrations will be reflecting the moral of the story—that the reader should avoid being taken in by slick-talking conmen.

In good storybooks the illustrations and text form a single narrative. The teacher can therefore 'interpret' the illustrations and text in this way. This will help keep the dialogue about the illustrations purposeful. Teachers should not talk about aspects of the illustrations that are irrelevant to their Text Orientation intent and they need to model on-task behaviours for their learners. To illustrate, a learner may bring into the discussion 'personal experience' stories during Text Orientation as in the following example:

> *In discussion about a story in which a fox is a central character, a learner contributes the information that he saw a fox on a recent visit to the zoo.*
>
> *The teacher can acknowledge the fact that real foxes don't necessarily act like the one in the story. The teacher might also suggest that the learner could look at how and where real foxes live later.*
>
> *Without being drawn into conversation about the visit to the zoo, the teacher immediately refocuses attention on the task at hand: '… we are looking at how the author of this story used Fox as one of the characters in this story, and how the illustrations reinforce the author's message that this character is a bit sneaky. See here how Fox is looking out from behind the rock, keeping himself hidden while he spies on the other characters'.*
>
> *In this way, the teacher affirms the learner's contribution but makes it clear that these matters are not going to be discussed now.*

Many teachers will think this unnecessarily directive but it is important to keep in mind that reluctant readers are very good at task avoidance when it comes to literacy tasks. Distracting the teacher's attention away from the task is a very effective avoidance strategy. Also, the teacher is making the point that information about the text's meaning is provided in the illustrations.

In delivering the Text Orientation the teacher should avoid making it laboured. The point is to 'frontload' sufficient information about the selected text to generate interest and to provide a meaningful scaffold for the work to follow. To do this, the teacher needs to incorporate as much of the language from the text as possible. This alerts learners to the language features and vocabulary they will encounter when listening to, and reading, the text.

At the same time, the teacher should not make a task of 'learning' individual words in isolation before reading the text. Orientating the students to the sound of the words in the text by incorporating the words into the overview is all that is required at this stage.

And not all aspects of the narrative need to be dealt with at any one time. Rather, over a series of sessions, as the teacher and learners work on

the extract from the text, one or two features of the story as a whole can be revisited and discussed in greater detail.

Illustrations for older learners

Illustrations in books for middle to upper primary aged learners may be fewer and less integral to the overall story. In non-narrative texts, illustrations might include diagrams or charts. *Scaffolding Literacy* teachers still draw attention to these illustrations and interpret them in similar terms to those set out above.

Text Orientation with a story or novel without illustrations

Text Orientation is equally important for books without illustrations. It provides a context for the teacher to discuss how a literate reader could interpret the text. For example, in addition to the points made above, the teacher might consider the following:

- how the relevant circumstances within the story are portrayed: these relevant circumstances include explanations of the setting and what is happening within the text at different stages of the story
- how plot structure and plot devices work within the text: in books for older students there is not always a straightforward orientation-complication-resolution structure. Authors may foreshadow the story's complication at the beginning of the story and there may be several complications in the course of a novel. Complex relationships between characters are often developed that are difficult for inexperienced readers to follow. All of these literary techniques can be explained through Text Orientation.
- the author's stance, purpose, or theme: the teacher needs to make it clear to the learner what role the 'authorial voice' plays and how the reader can tell when the author is speaking rather than one of the characters. This knowledge is central to 'reading critically' and with increased comprehension.
- how authors 'signpost' information necessary for plot development and what reader inferences are necessary to link one part of the text with another: for example, the ways in which information in the orientation of the story is linked to what happens later.

It may be worth emphasising here that, initially, the teacher is providing a Text Orientation to a whole book (or short story or non-narrative text). Later (see Language Orientation) the focus will be on an extract from this text. This initial Text Orientation for the *whole* of the selected text will

need to be supplemented with a Text Orientation for the chosen *extract* before language work begins. That is to say, the teacher will revisit the Text Orientation (the outline of the whole story) briefly in each subsequent session in order to place specific extracts in the wider context of the story as a whole. The teacher may need to use the phrase '*Remember when*' quite a bit. For example:

> Teacher: Remember when, in our last session, I told you how, in this novel, such and such happened … Well, this part of the story we are looking at today is taken from Chapter 1 and describes the location of the village the children lived in …

Careful preparation of the Text Orientation is therefore worth the time spent on preparing it. This preparation will provide the tools for the learners to navigate around the author's language as they undertake the language activities described later. It is much more than merely providing an overview. It is providing a navigational tool.

Step 3: Aural Orientation

Once the teacher has provided a well-grounded Text Orientation, he or she then reads the whole text to the learners (Aural Orientation). The teacher's reading will tune learners into the sound of the words and the rhythm of the text. It is important that the teacher reads the text at a normal reading pace. The teacher needs to model fluent reading so that the learners know what they are aiming for. While they need to read at a pace that allows learners to follow the text, they should not slow the pace too much. Part of what the teacher is doing is providing an opportunity for the learners to hear the cadence of the text. Hence the teacher needs to model an appropriately modulated and expressive reading.

This Aural Orientation to literate language is a highly neglected aspect of literate language learning, particularly for learners in upper primary and beyond. However, providing an opportunity to hear the cadence of literate language structures is an important aspect of the development of fluent reading in that it enables learners to more easily pick up the author's syntactical structure.

The Text Orientation will have provided learners with a considerable amount of information about the text, particularly regarding who the story is about (the characters) and what happens to them (the plot development). This information will prepare the learners for more focused listening when the story is read to them. They will be able to better comprehend and enjoy the story because of the Text Orientation.

During the reading, younger learners can follow along on a 'big-book' copy of the text if this is available. Teachers can also project the pages onto a screen so learners can follow along and/or see the illustrations. Older students might be encouraged to follow along on their own copy of the text. However, the teacher should not mind if individuals, especially young learners, get engrossed in listening to the story and forget to follow along. For those learners not often read to, the pleasure of this activity can be more important as a starting point than worrying about whether they are on task with the 'following along'. The teacher will easily be able to tell if the listeners are 'on task'. For example, many young learners tend to watch the storyteller's face rather than following along on the text. This is a clear sign that the learners are listening intently.

It should be stressed, however, that in subsequent work on the text the learners should follow along on the text using a line guide. A transparent plastic strip is ideal for this purpose in that it enables the learner to keep pace with the reader while at the same time keeping individual lines within the context of the preceding and following lines. The use of the line guide will help learners build up the sound and sight correspondences necessary for sustainable reading strategies to be developed.

Step 4: Language Orientation

Language Orientation provides a more focused examination of the author's language features. While the initial Text Orientation introduces learners to the selected text as a whole, Language Orientation narrows the focus to the specific language choices the author has made and why these choices have been made.

It is carried out on an *extract* from the text. For young or highly fragile learners this extract might be only one or two sentences. For older or more competent learners it might be one or two paragraphs.

Drawing attention to the author's language choices

The Language Orientation strategy enables the teacher to draw careful attention to the actual language choices made by the author. This close attention to language recognises that, for learners to develop effective strategies as readers, they must do more than 'crack the phonics code' that allows them to identify words. They must learn to control and exploit the syntactical and semantic meaning cues, even for relatively straightforward texts. For example, in reading the following opening to the story *Why the Bear has a Stumpy Tail*, a traditional tale retold by Maurice Saxby (1993), the reader must decode the individual words and phrases but must also

infer a great deal of information if they are to draw meaning from these sentences. They must then hold this meaning in their heads and carry it on into the story as a whole. As the discussion below highlights, these processes can be aided through the orientation work. In this example, Saxby opens his story with the lines:

> *One winter's day when the world was young, Bear was out walking. Coming from the other direction was Fox, slinking along with a string of fish that he had stolen.*

If the learners have been appropriately 'tuned in' through the Text Orientation, and have had the story read to them (Aural Orientation), they know the whole story before being asked to focus on these specific sentences. They also know the type of story this is. Because they have this prior knowledge, the significance of *one winter's day* and the meaning of *when the world was young* can be made explicit to the learners and, as a result, the language is rendered comprehensible. In this way, it is possible for the learners to process the two pieces of information that the author conveys through the relationship between the words *One winter's day* and *when the world was young*. The author is letting the reader know that:

* It is very cold. This is a piece of information the reader needs to know to make sense of the plot development later in the story.
* The events in the story happened *when the world was young*. These words signal that this is a folk legend and that the events happened a long time ago.

Furthermore, because of the Text Orientation, learners can more easily comprehend that, in this text, the words *Bear* and *Fox* are used as names as well as telling the reader that the characters in the story are animals. Because these are their names, the author gives these words capital letters. Hence, information about punctuation can be embedded in contextualised discussions of the author's chosen words.

Similarly, unsupported comprehension of a sentence that starts with the words *Coming from the other direction* will not be easy for many readers. It would be far more like everyday speech to say *Fox was coming from the other direction*, but in this particular text the reader encounters *Coming* with no prior referent, and must hold the information until he/she reaches the word *Fox*. Language Orientation allows specific attention to these kinds of 'tricky' sentence beginnings and is an opportunity for the teacher to discuss with the learners why the author might have written the sentence that way. This puts the stress on the need to pay attention to the specific words and phrases the author used rather than decoding each word individually

and not focusing on the overall meaning or reading words that the learner thinks should be there (inferring the meaning) rather than the actual words on the page.

Through this close attention to the author's language, an understanding of the significance of words like *slinking along* in this context can be discussed and teacher and learners can analyse why it was that Fox was *slinking along*. This allows the connection between the words *that he had stolen* and the group of words *string of fish* to be made explicit. For many readers with poor levels of comprehension, this level of detailed analysis is necessary for them to begin to understand that they need to look for the relationships between words or groups of words rather than merely 'translating' each word in isolation.

The teacher's presentation of this information draws heavily upon familiarity with 'literate' as opposed to 'oral' speech. Unravelling a text's full complement of meaning requires careful attention to the actual language choices made by the author. This does not simply mean the vocabulary within the text (semantic meanings), but rather the way in which the author has brought the words together (the interaction of the semantic and syntactic meanings). If learners are to become effective readers (effective meaning makers) they must become highly proficient in this type of language analysis. This is why it is virtually impossible for weak readers to move beyond simple reading materials—such as graded readers with controlled vocabulary—if they are not specifically taught the strategies that 'good' readers use to 'decode' more complex texts in which the semantic, syntactic and graphophonic meanings work together to convey more than the surface meanings of the individual words on the page.

Asking questions: Which words tell us ...?

It has already been pointed out that discussions about the author's language choices need to be embedded in the actual words on the page. Asking questions in *Scaffolding Literacy* classrooms is therefore about drawing learners' attention to these actual words. This is one of the reasons why learners are never asked to draw inferences or speculate about what might happen next. Such speculation takes the focus away from what the author has actually written. It draws the learners' attention away from the actual words of the page.

Through the Text Orientation and Aural Orientation the learners have been given a great deal of information about the text. They can now draw upon that information for more focused discussion of the author's

language choices. Because of the earlier preparation, the teacher can ask questions that focus attention on the exact words the author has used in the text:

Teacher: What words tell us that Fox had stolen the fish he was carrying?

The level of analysis of the language features will depend on the age and stage of the learners. However, especially in the early stages of work on a text, the teacher will need to pay close attention to ensuring that learners' answers remain firmly anchored in the language of the text. To do this, teachers should frame their questions in three parts—the *preformulation*, the *question*, and the *reconceptualisation*, as illustrated below:

Preformulation

The teacher makes the purpose and logic of the question clear:

Teacher: You remember that this story is about how Fox tricked Bear into holding his tail into the icy water until it snapped and broke off [rearticulation of Text Orientation].
    On the first page, when we meet Fox, the author tells us that Fox is not an honest character. See, here is Fox slinking along with a string of fish that he had stolen.

At the same time, the teacher holds the line marker under the appropriate answer. In the example above, under the words *that he had stolen.*
    In group or whole-class situations the teacher can use a line marker on a 'big book' or can use an overhead projector or interactive whiteboard for this purpose.

The question

This should arise naturally out of the preformulation so that everyone in the class is able to follow along and stay on task:

Teacher: Can you underline the words that tell us that Fox had stolen the fish?

Reconceptualisation

The teacher accepts and confirms whatever answer the learner makes to the question and, where appropriate, restates [reconceptualises] the

Photo A.1   *A teacher uses an overhead projector and a line marker to focus learners' attention on the exact words in the text that provide the answer to her Language Orientation questions.*
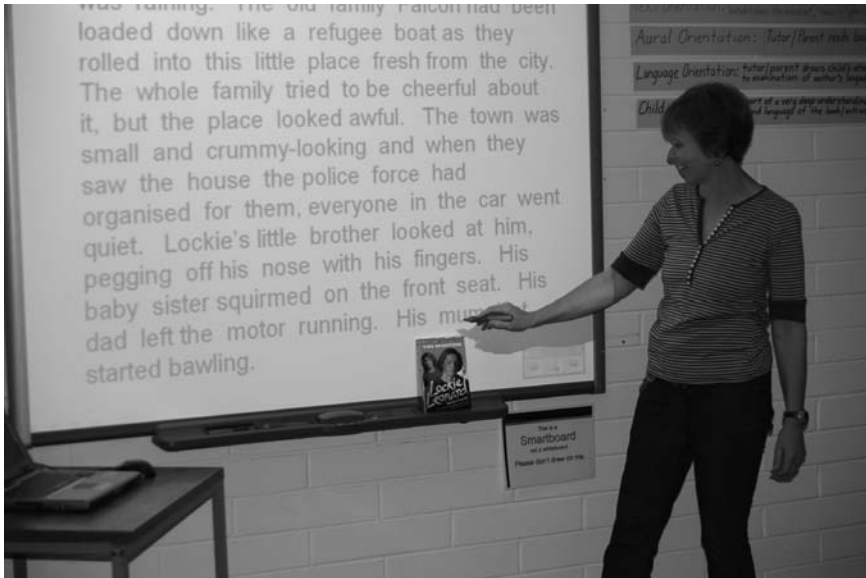
Photo A.2   *A teacher uses an interactive white board for a Language Orientation.*

Photos A.3 and A.4 *Using an overhead projector, learners mark the group of words that answer the teacher's Language Orientation questions.*

answer in a way that more fully answers the question. For example, if the learner says (or underlines) the word *stolen* in answer to the question asked above, the teacher might reformulate as follows:

Teacher: Yes, that's right, the author used the words ***that he had stolen*** (and points to, or underlines, the group of words).

This draws attention back to the 'meaning-group' of words, rather than the word *stolen* in isolation. The teacher can then add more information about the author's purpose [elaboration]:

Teacher: The author is letting us know that Fox is not to be trusted and this explains why he was slinking along.

The teacher should frame questions so that the learners can answer with the exact words from the text. The teacher uses the line guide to focus the learners' attention on the part of the text where the answer can be found. It is important that the question be framed in the same *tense* as that used in the text, and the teacher should ask questions in the same *sequence* as

the text to ensure that the sequence of questions is moving the focus from left to right across each line of text and forward through the text.

Once the learners have become familiar with this way of talking about text, the teacher can reduce the level of preformulation and reconceptualisation. The teacher should not, however, return to asking questions the learners have not been scaffolded to answer. Nor should the teacher ask learners to speculate on story lines or story outcomes that draw the learners' attention away from the actual words used by the author.

Providing a literate analysis

In order to undertake the detailed level of text analysis required, the teacher will need to prepare. When preparing for a specific Language Orientation the teacher might consider the following aspects of the author's language choices. This is not an exhaustive list and teachers working with older students, or with non-narrative texts, might have other aspects of the author's language choices they wish to draw the learners' attention to. To illustrate this list, we have used the text quoted above in order to link this list with the discussion set out above. Things to consider include:

- How the author has structured the sentence or passage: there will be specific language choices that indicate the staging of the story or when events in the story took place. For example, drawing on the opening sentences of the story quoted above, it has already been noted that the following groups of words function in this way:
  One winter's day
  when the world was young.
- How the author has written about what is happening in the story: the author may have used colourful, descriptive language choices or simile and metaphor to build rich, mental images. For example:
  slinking *along.*
- The author's stance, purpose or theme. For example, the use of *when the world was young* and the inclusion of talking animals who behave like people to signal that this is a myth or fable.
- How the author uses inferences to link one part of the text with another: the author may have provided information in the orientation of the story that is linked to what happens later. For example, the connection with the opening *One winter's day* and the events that follow in the story: Bear loses his tail when he is tricked into holding it in the water. This latter event only makes sense if we know that it is winter and the water is icy cold and freezes Bear's tail.

- How the author positions the reader to make certain judgements, evaluations and interpretations. For example, the author positions his readers to dislike, and be suspicious of, the character Fox by giving us information that he is a thief and a liar as well as describing him *slinking along*.

It is important to note in this brief examination of just the opening sentences of a story suitable for young readers that discussion about meaning needs to be highly embedded (contextualised) and focused on the actual words on the page.

To reiterate

Text Orientation and Language Orientation require the teacher to provide a literate interpretation of the text. This is combined with the teacher providing an aural (reading-aloud) experience of the text for the learners. This high level of preparation will pay off. After appropriate Text Orientation, Aural Orientation and Language Orientation, learners feel they know this text and can 'read' the selected extract. When they come to read they will be more relaxed and be better able to draw upon the full range of word decoding and context cues they have available to them.

This does not mean they can independently read the text as a whole. As pointed out earlier, independent reading is not the aim at this point in the teaching sequence. The aim is the development of a 'text resource' that the teacher and learners can jointly use to build explicit and sustainable decoding and meaning prediction strategies for reading, and an understanding of how text functions as a foundation for writing.

In reading, as in other activities, success empowers and success is addictive: even the most reluctant readers get excited about their new-found ability to 'read' the text extract. Thus successful, fluent, reading of the text extract provides a powerful scaffold for the teacher and learners to stand on while they undertake further language work. The written description of these strategies gives the impression that this part of the *Scaffolding Literacy Teaching Sequence* will be long and laborious. In practice, however, these activities should be lively, enjoyable and rewarding.

The key point for the teacher to remember is that these orientations must be more than 'just talking about' the text. These activities are about 'cueing' the learners into the meaning of the text and building a 'meaning prediction' platform for learners that gives them access to the kinds of elaborated and nuanced meanings that are typical of written text. And, as a rough guide, when asking Language Orientation questions, the teacher might lead a detailed discussion of a sentence or two for up to five minutes,

then ask the learners to read the section of the text that has just been worked on. In this way, discussion and reading can flow together.

Step 5: Fluent reading

The preparations for reading provide learners with a scaffold of meaning cues they can draw upon to carry out the task of reading the text extract on their own. The teacher has, by this stage, 'front-loaded' sufficient information about the overall meaning of the text to enable learners to listen with enhanced comprehension and enjoyment when the text is read to them. The teacher has also read the text aloud to provide a model of fluent reading. Through the Language Orientation work the teacher has drawn learners' attention to the meaning cues provided by the author's syntactic and semantic choices.

It is now time for the learners to read the selected text extract. In one-on-one situations, the learner should be given control of the line guide and the teacher should not interrupt unnecessarily (see 'Prompting Strategies' below). For younger learners in class situations unison reading can be used. With older learners the teacher can ask for volunteers to read—but remember, the learners are only asked to read the section of text that the class has worked on for Language Orientation.

Teachers can provide appropriate *prompts* during reading and these are discussed below. In essence, appropriate prompting will provide minimum interference with the reading and will emphasise the strategies of meaning-making. To avoid the need to provide prompts during reading the teacher should cue the learners into the strategies to try *before* the learners begin reading. These strategies include re-reading from the beginning of the sentence, reading on, and leaving out the unknown word.

Prompting strategies

Once the learner is asked to read, control of the reading should pass from the teacher to the learner. If using a line guide the learner will now have control of the guide. The teacher should sit back—physically distancing themselves from the text but still close enough to follow along with the reader.

Interruptions and interjections should be kept to a minimum. If the reader cannot continue, or appeals for help, the teacher can provide a prompt. However, the prompts the teacher uses should encourage self-correction. This is an important skill that good readers use. Poor readers find self-correction extremely difficult to learn and are more likely to

either continue to appeal for help from the adult, or 'read' words that make no sense in the context of the sentence but start with the same letter or letters (first-letter recognition). Self-correction skills can be encouraged by observing the following three rules for prompting:

Rule 1: Wait

When the learner hesitates in the reading, the teacher should provide plenty of time for the learner to solve the problem (wait at least 10 seconds).

Rule 2: Use an appropriate prompt

If, after waiting, the learner is not able to proceed, the teacher can use a prompt that draws on the strategies good readers use. The teacher can suggest:

- *Try that again:* that is, suggest the learner re-read from the beginning of the sentence. This enables the reader to draw on the syntactic and semantic meaning cues to reinforce their ability to decode individual words.
- *Read on:* this strategy should not be used with young readers but for older readers 'reading on' past the word to the end of the sentence can be a useful strategy for supporting their individual word decoding by drawing on the meaning cues provided by the rest of the sentence.
- *Does that make sense*? When readers decode individual words without reference to the syntactic and semantic meaning cues (that is, they 'read' words that clearly make no sense in the context of the sentence being read) the teacher can draw attention to the importance of meaning-making by asking whether what the reader just read makes sense.

Rule 3: Avoid unnecessary interruptions

Not every mistake the reader makes needs the teacher to interject. If the reader makes a mistake that maintains the meaning of the sentence, the teacher can let the reading flow and can take up the substitution when the reading is complete (see below for advice on how to give feedback after reading). An example of the kind of error where meaning is maintained would be:

> *Text: One winter's day when the world was young, Bear was out walking.*
> *Reader reads: One winter's day when the world was young, Bear was out wandering.*

If the reader makes mistakes that alter the meaning, or make no sense in the context of the sentence being read, the teacher should say: *Try that again* or *Does that make sense?* (see above).

If the learner self-corrects the teacher should refrain from comment. Even comments that are meant to provide encouragement such as: *Good, keep going* should be avoided. Such comments are superfluous and may act as a distraction. The teacher should note the self-correction and comment on it after the reading.

It should be emphasised that the earlier Orientation work is what underpins this approach to supporting the learner's reading in that good Language and Aural Orientation has provided the syntactic and semantic platform that allows the learner to read the selected text fluently—that is, with both decoding accuracy and meaning-making intact.

Providing specific feedback and praise after reading

While during reading is not an appropriate time to teach about reading, immediately after reading is a good time to make explicit, and hence reinforce, messages about the strategies the learner has used to read the text. Once the reader has finished reading, the teacher should give highly explicit and specific feedback on accurate and fluent reading, successful self-correction, and successful reading after prompting. To illustrate:

Accurate and fluent reading

Teacher: I liked the way you changed your tone of voice to show that it was Bear that was speaking; or,

I liked the way you paused when you got to the full stop. That clearly marked the end of that sentence and the beginning of the next one.

Successful self-correcting

Teacher: When you went back to the beginning of the sentence and re-read up to the word 'direction' you showed that you could self-correct. That is what good readers do when they get stuck on a word.

Successful reading after prompting

Teacher: I really liked the way you were able to see that 'sliding' didn't make sense and you were able to work out that Fox was slinking along.

After reading is also a time when you can return to one or two mis-read words that did not change the meaning of the sentence (such as 'wandering' and 'walking' in the example above). The teacher can praise the learner's attempt and ask him or her to look more closely at the letters in the word.

Is a higher level of support needed?

It can be seen in Figure A.2 (p. 25) that a dark arrow joins the preparations for reading activities to fluent reading. At the same time, a light arrow points back to Language Orientation. This is to emphasise that if a high level of reading fluency is not evident when the learner is asked to read the scaffolded text extract the teacher should go back to the Language Orientation strategy and build a stronger scaffold. A high level reading fluency can be defined as at least 90 per cent accuracy—or decoding errors of less than one word in ten—when reading the supported text extract. It is important that this level of reading accuracy is reached because this is what enables the teacher to use the selected piece of text for the focused language analysis that comes next in the teaching sequence (see Transformations and Scaffolded Spelling in Part B).

When working with highly fragile readers, additional support may be necessary to help them get to fluent reading of the extract. The following two strategies—'Read-along' and 'Text marking'—have been successfully used in special learning situations in which individual learners with special needs are unable to take the initial steps into fluent reading. These strategies are only suitable for use in one-on-one situations. It should be stressed that both 'Read-along' and 'Text marking' are supplementary activities to the Orientation strategies. They cannot be used without the support provided through the Orientation work and they can only be used one-on-one.

Read-along

This is a strategy that can be used if, after the Orientation activities, the learner reads slowly, word by word, 'reads' words that make no sense in

context (for example, the learner is guessing words from the first letter only), reads without expression, ignores punctuation, and/or phrases incorrectly. It is also appropriate for students whose first language is not English and who need help with the pitch, stress and intonation used in English.

The term 'read-along' has been adopted to distinguish this strategy from 'paired reading' in which readers take turns to read separate sections of the text. 'Paired reading' is not appropriate for fragile readers. In 'read-along' the learner is reading along with the teacher.

How to use read-along:
- Teacher and learner sit side by side, so both can easily see the book they have been working on.
- The teacher and learner then read the selected extract together. The teacher uses a coloured transparent strip or similar as a line guide. The teacher controls the strip and reads at a normal reading pace for good fluency and expression. If the learner stumbles the teacher does not pause. This step can be repeated if necessary until the learner is able to read along smoothly.
- Next, the teacher asks the learner to read the same extract alone. The learner now controls the plastic strip and the teacher sits back to signal that the reader is now in control of the reading.
- If the read-along is successful the learner will read the extract with fewer than one mistake in 10 words and should be able to self-correct mistakes. If this is not happening, re-read the extract to the learner and provide further Language Orientation or shift to text marking (see below).

Remember, for highly fragile readers the text extract may only be one or two sentences.

Text marking

This strategy can be used if the learner is highly reluctant to read or has become accustomed to reading early reading books with controlled vocabulary and is fearful of trying more complex texts. It requires the learner to mark the extract in some way. The teacher will therefore need to provide photocopied pages of the text extract to work on.

How to use text marking
- Ask the learner to follow along as the extract is read. The teacher should use a plastic strip to mark the line of text being read and the learner should follow along.

- The teacher explains that the learner is going to read part of this text with the teacher—that is, teacher and learner are going to share the reading.
- The teacher hands a highlighter pen to the learner and explains that he or she is going to mark the parts of the text they are going to read.
- Using the preformulation/reformulation approach to questioning outlined above, the teacher leads the learner through a discussion of the language choices in the text, focusing on the units of meaning phrases that make up the sentence. The learner can mark the groups of words he or she can correctly identify. Mark units of meaning rather than single words—for example, drawing on our earlier example, mark the words *that he had stolen* rather than *stolen.*
- If the learner does not predict the actual words in the unit of meaning, point out what the words are and how you know, then leave that part of the text unmarked and go on.
- Reading the text together: the teacher then reads the unmarked text and the learner reads the marked words. If the learner stops, the teacher waits at least 10 seconds and then re-reads their section. If the learner is still stuck, the teacher reads that part and moves on to the next part of the sentence.
- Re-reading the text: this may take place at a subsequent session. The teacher will need to judge what to do next depending on the fragility of the learner. One option is to re-read directly from the text marked previously. The other option is to go through the text again and provide support for the learner to mark more of the text than they marked the first time.

To reiterate, 'read-along' and 'text marking' provide exceptionally high levels of support and will only be necessary with very fragile learners. This level of support cannot be provided in a classroom situation but can be effectively used by specialist Learning Assistance teachers or by appropriately trained parents of learners with special needs.

ASSESSING SCAFFOLDED READING: MISCUE ANALYSIS

Miscue analysis is a diagnostic tool. It is used to assess what strategies readers are employing when they read. Within the *Scaffolding Literacy* pedagogy, miscue analysis is also used by the teacher to judge the

effectiveness of his or her teaching. It allows the teacher to judge whether their Orientations have been good enough to allow accurate fluent reading of the chosen passage of text. It is essential that the teacher is able to assess this before the teacher and learners move on to the next stage of the teaching sequence. More Orientation work will be necessary if the learners cannot yet read the selected text accurately and fluently because this text is the resource the teacher and learners will use to examine more closely the author's language choices in the next stage of the sequence.

Miscue analysis was initially developed by American psycholinguist Kenneth Goodman and his colleagues in the early 1970s. In a recent reflection on his initial work, Goodman revisits his initial observation that readers did not passively receive information as they read but constructed a meaning (Goodman, 2005). Working from this assumption he was able to develop a method for monitoring this process of construction using the mis-readings (miscues) individual readers made. He writes:

> *I defined miscues as mismatches between expected and observed responses. My assumption … was that these miscues were never simply random but involved use of the same cues available to the reader as the expected responses in the transaction with the text and thus could give me a window into how the reader made sense of print. (Goodman, 2005, p. 2)*

In Australia, Max Kemp, the founding Director of the Schools & Community Centre at the University of Canberra, adopted and adapted the miscue analysis procedures for use with learners with literacy difficulties (Kemp, 1980, especially Chapters 3 & 4).

Many primary school teachers in Australia and New Zealand will recognise similarities between miscue analysis and the 'running records' method used in the New Zealand *Reading Recovery* program developed by Marie Clay (see, for example, Clay, 2000). Kemp, writing in 1980, notes that miscue analysis shares many similarities with Clay's 'running records' but that there are also some important differences (Kemp, 1980, p. 50 ff). He sees these differences as lying in the different purposes of each. Clay's 'running records' focus on the reader's attention to, and perception of, print. This, Kemp argues makes this method more suitable for younger children and early level ESL groups. However, once children are beyond basic reader stages, Kemp recommends miscue analysis because it orientates the assessor to the issue of what meaning the reader is making of the text as they read. It can therefore more clearly identify readers who are continuing to focus on word accuracy at the cost of text meaning.

The procedures introduced by Kemp in the early 1980s are still in use today. They are particularly suited to the *Scaffolding Literacy* approach because they allow the teacher to undertake a close analysis of the kinds of errors—the kinds of ineffective reading strategies—the learner is employing. For this reason, we recommend that teachers, even when they are familiar with the 'running records' approach, consider reading one of the many 'miscue analysis' guides currently available if they plan to implement a *Scaffolding Literacy* program.

As the purpose of this book is to provide an overview of the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence, it is not appropriate to attempt a detailed description of the miscue procedure here. Briefly, however, as with 'running records' the teacher needs a transcript of the text the learner is to read. The teacher explains the procedure to the learner and sits beside them but a little further back so that the reader is not distracted. The learner reads aloud from his or her copy of the text. The teacher notes on the teacher transcript all errors and self-corrections the learner makes. It is important to use a standardised marking system for this so that an analysis of the types of mis-readings and self-corrections can be scored. There are a number of useful guides to miscue analysis currently available. It is suggested that teachers wishing to know more, or wishing to use this method of evaluation on a school-wide basis, consult one of these guides. Sandra Wilde (2000) and Ruth Davenport (2002) provide excellent contemporary discussions and easy-to-follow guides. Wilde, in her guide, argues that in order to understand the strength of this diagnostic tool it is necessary for teachers to actually use it rather than have it described to them:

> I can't emphasise too strongly that the most important aspect of miscue analysis is its influence on teachers' thinking, and that you need to have implemented the entire procedure, not just read about it, to truly understand it. (Wilde, 2000, p. 37)

We fully endorse Wilde's view. Miscue analysis can provide a powerful window into what individual learners are doing when they read. It thus opens up ways to help struggling readers develop more effective strategies. In this sense, although *Scaffolding Literacy* is an approach that allows teachers to work with groups of students who may individually bring different literacy competencies and experiences to the learning situation, it also has built-in strategies for identifying individuals who are employing ineffective strategies when they read. Once identified, the teacher can discuss these ineffective strategies with the learner and make explicit to

the individual learner what other strategies he or she could use to help them become more effective meaning-makers.

It should be emphasised that miscue analysis is a diagnostic tool. As there is now extensive standardised testing of reading in place in all Australian schools it is not necessary to discuss evaluative assessment of reading here. However, those interested in this subject may care to look at how *TORCH* testing (Mossenson et al., 2003) is being used in the *National Accelerated Literacy Project* to assess Northern Territory system-wide adoption of the scaffolded approach known as *Accelerated Learning* (NALP, 2007).

WHICH WORDS? THE JOINT ANALYSIS OF SENTENCE AND WORD CONSTRUCTIONS

WHERE ARE WE IN THE TEACHING SEQUENCE?

In this section we look at the language studies that bridge Scaffolded Reading and Scaffolded Writing. If we look again at the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence as a whole (see Figure B.1) it can be seen that these language activities follow on from fluent reading using an extract from the selected text the teacher and learners are working on together. It should be remembered that if the teacher finds the learners are not able to fluently read the extract (that is, decode fluently enough so they can comprehend the overall meaning), the teacher should revisit the Orientation strategies with the learners before proceeding further into the sequence.

At the same time, it can be seen in Figure B.1 that a double-headed arrow joins Language Analysis work and Scaffolded Writing. This is to indicate the dynamic relationship between sentence construction, word choices, spelling, and writing.

As indicated in Figure B.2, these language studies are in two parts:
1   **Transformations**: the study of selected sentences
2   **Scaffolded Spelling**: the study of individual words

These parts of the Scaffolding Literacy teaching sequence build on the fact that learners have been scaffolded to read fluently a specific text extract. Once learners have been supported into reading this piece of text through the Text Orientation, Aural Orientation, and Language Orientation activities (see Part A), the text becomes a resource the teacher can use to

© Schools & Community Centre 2007   University of Canberra
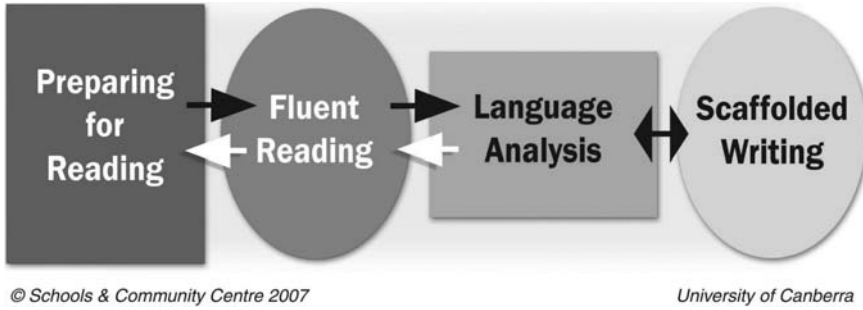
Figure B.1 The Scaffolding Literacy *teaching sequence*

focus on language choices and sentence constructions using the Transformations strategy.

In the introduction we used David Rose's notion of 'layers of language' (Rose, 2006) to illustrate the way in which the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence can be represented as shifting the focus of attention from the text as a whole 'inwards' to the level of individual sentences and words without entirely losing sight of the wider context. In this section, we see how this notion of 'layers of meaning' is used to make detailed language study explicit and accessible to shared discussion and analysis.

Attention to individual words and groups of words through the Transformations strategy also provides an easy transition into teaching spelling. Once learners can fluently read a piece of text, and can recognise some words in the text both in and out of context, these words become a resource the teacher can use to teach the common letter patterns used in English words. Teaching spelling by drawing attention to the common letter patterns in words the learners have been 'scaffolded' to read is another significant feature of this approach to literacy teaching and learning.

© Schools & Community Centre 2007   University of Canberra
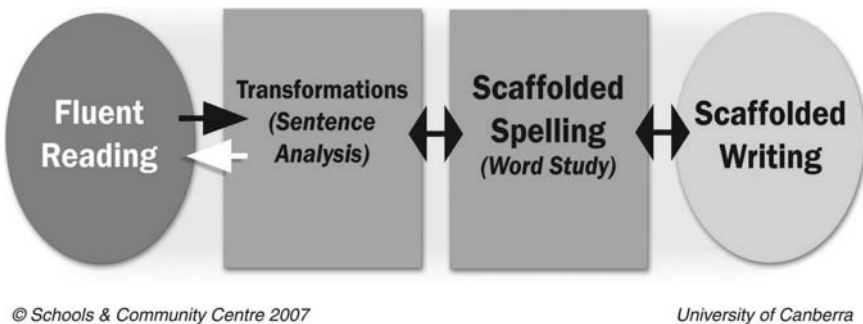
Figure B.2 The two parts of the Language Analysis *strategies*

1 TRANSFORMATIONS: ANALYSING SENTENCE CONSTRUCTIONS AND MEANING

Strengths of the Transformations strategy

This strategy involves choosing a sentence or sentences drawn from a longer piece of text the learners have been scaffolded to read and transcribing the sentence on to strips of card. The text on the strips of card can then be cut into units of meaning for further discussion. The use of the cardboard strips makes this a highly concrete and physical way to manipulate parts of sentences. The advantages of this strategy include:

- The highly physical and visual examination of individual sentences assists learners who have difficulty maintaining focus on literacy tasks, who have poor word recognition skills, or who need assistance with understanding the author's language. It helps those who are still decoding each word in isolation and those who use strategies such as first-letter recognition. It does this by supporting the transition from the focus on individual words to reading in larger 'units of meaning' within the sentence.

- The focus of attention is narrowed to one or two sentences that learners are familiar with and that they know they can read. In this way they are supported and in control when discussing the author's language choices. This increases their ability to participate and reduces their need to engage in task-avoidance behaviours.

- Learners are able to manipulate text without concern for their ability to write the words. Counter-intuitively, this makes this an excellent preparation for writing in that learners can be taught about language in a way that is transferable to their own writing later in the sequence.

- While this strategy enables less competent readers/writers to participate in language discussion, the focus it places on author intention, word choice, and aspects of functional grammar makes it just as effective for more advanced readers/writers. This makes these strategies suitable for use in mixed-ability groups and classrooms.

- Transformations provide a multi-dimensional 'bridge' that links fluent reading and writing. In one direction, the focus on sentence form and structure links with the study of individual word form and structure (spelling) to build more fluent reading through an emphasis on both decoding and overall meaning-making. In the other direction, it links the study of sentence and word form and structure with writing (creating new text). This is a bridge that links the author, and the

language choices he or she has made, to the reader of the text. At the same time, it begins to position the learners as authors of new text by making explicit the techniques the author has used and that the learners will be able to 'borrow' to create new text that is, in its turn, meaningful to the readers of this new text.

Preparation

This strategy requires the teacher to select a sentence or two from a passage of text the learners have been scaffolded to read fluently. If fluent reading is not yet happening the teacher needs to support the learners further through more Text Orientation and Language Orientation (see Part A).

The strategy can be used in both one-on-one situations (such as a parent or teacher working with an individual learner) and in small group or whole-class settings. In one-on-one situations, the sentence strips and the text from which the sentence is taken from can be laid out on a table. Resources needed include:

- long strips of cardboard
- a felt-tipped pen
- scissors
- a copy of the text from which the sentence/s is taken.

In group or whole-class situations, the teacher can use a Transformations Board (see photo B.3), overhead projector, or interactive white board. A Transformations Board can be made by gluing wallboard-edging strips to a thin sheet of ply or particleboard. To ensure that each learner can easily see the sentence in its wider context, photocopies of the passage the sentences are taken from need to be available. An overhead projector or interactive whiteboard can also be useful for this.

Selecting suitable sentences

The teacher does this as part of the initial *Scaffolding Literacy* book selection (see Part A). From the beginning, the teacher needs to have in mind the language structures he or she wants the learners to focus on and the writing strategies that will follow.

The sentences chosen for Transformations need to be sufficiently 'literate'. That is, they need to be complex in their structure and contain several 'units of meaning'. A unit of meaning may be a single word, such as a proper noun, or a cluster of words such as a phrase or clause. To illustrate, as noted earlier, many early school readers are 'oral' in structure rather than 'literate'. They follow the simple pattern of:

Photo B.1   *A teacher and learner begin work on a Transformation at a table. The learner is identifying each unit of meaning and the teacher is writing the words onto a strip of card.*
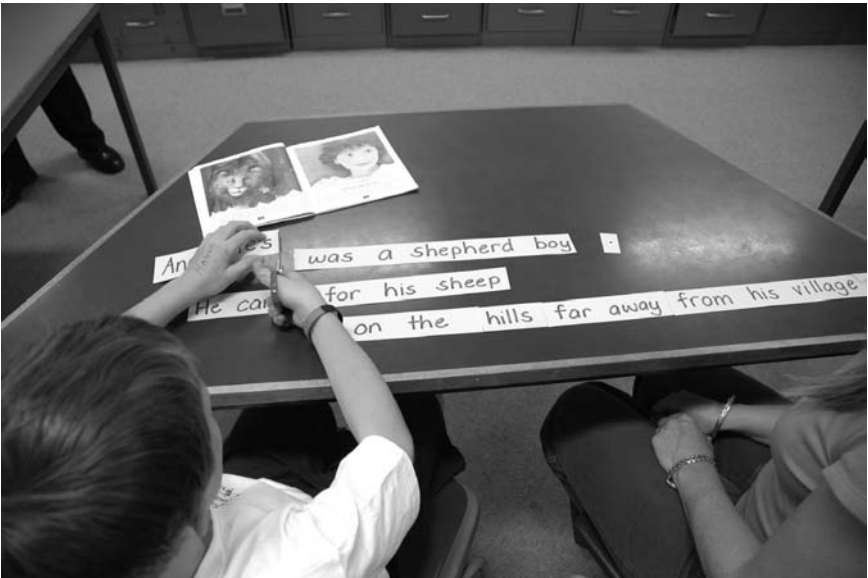
Photo B.2   *A teacher and learner begin to cut a sentence into units of meaning. Note that the learner has responsibility for cutting the sentence and that the punctuation mark has been cut away from the word but is still in view.*

Photo B.3 *A teacher and learners work on a Transformation using a Transformations Board.*

> This is Betty.
> Betty can skip.
> See Betty skip.

By comparison, the opening sentences of the story *Androcles and the Lion*, a story retold by Patricia Scott, and benchmarked at Year 3 level, is a rich piece of text:

> Androcles was a shepherd boy. He cared for his sheep on the hills far away from his village.

The language is evocative, with many layers of meaning. The author conveys a considerable amount of information about the central character and the setting in these first two sentences of the story. The author:

- introduces the main character
- provides information about this character: he was a shepherd; he is also a young boy
- provides information about the kind of boy he was: we note that he *cared for* his sheep, suggesting more than merely doing his job
- provides information about the setting in which he did his work: he cared for his sheep: *on the hills far away from his village*. The fact that he did this job *far away from his village* also implies that this boy would need to be brave and resourceful as the job was done in isolation.

Many readers, even some fluent ones, are unable to interpret these layers of meaning from a text. They may, at best, decode the individual words and follow the action but not comprehend the inferred meaning in a unit of meaning such as 'he *cared* for his sheep'. This severely limits their ability to comprehend the language of books (both fiction and non-fiction). The Transformations strategy is designed to help make these layers of meaning more explicit.

Types of questions teachers can ask

Teachers and parents are artful questioners. They are usually familiar with the idea of asking what are called 'who, what, when, where, how and why' questions. *Scaffolding Literacy* teachers ask these kinds of questions but ensure when asking them that learners stay focused on the actual words used in the text when they answer. To explain what we mean by the 'who, what, when, where' questions, here is a simple elaboration:

- **What** happened, and **who** it happened to. These will be the easiest parts of the sentence for learners to identify.
- **When** and **where** questions alert learners to parts of the sentence they may not have noticed and can lead to an understanding of how the sentence is organised. For example: Using the sentence quoted above, the teacher could use the **'who'** (*Androcles*) question, and the **'what he did'** question to identify the parts of the first sentence. The first part of the second sentence (*He cared for his sheep*) **elaborates on what he did,** while the second part tells us **where** he did it.
- **How** and **why** questions can lead to discussions that greatly increase the learners' understanding of the way the sentences under discussion link back into the context of the text as a whole. Because of the reading strategy that has preceded Transformations, learners know the story as a whole, and have heard the text read aloud. This puts them in a strong position to engage in discussion with the teacher about the sentence/s under study in a way that enables the teacher to make explicit the ways these sentences link to the author's overall intention. For example, the questions of why and how Androcles *cared for his sheep* opens up for discussion the way the author's choice of the words *cared for* help build a picture of the boy's character (that he was kind and compassionate) and how that relates to what happens later in the story when he was saved by a lion. Similarly, the author's intention in telling the reader that Androcles was *far away from his village* can be explored in terms of the author wanting to let us know that Androcles was both vulnerable and resourceful.

This ability of the strategy to enable teachers to draw explicit attention to the relationships between different parts of the text through the teacher's questioning strategies is a powerful way to encourage reading for meaning and showing how text is structured—and how learners might structure their own writing. This kind of questioning is explored further in the examples set out below. It cannot be emphasised enough that this kind of focused dialogue between teacher and learners is made possible because of the earlier preparation the teacher has done in Text Orientation (see Part A).

GETTING STARTED WITH TRANSFORMATIONS

In the following description we have set out the strategy in a series of steps. We have also chosen to describe what the teacher says rather than the learners' responses. This is because, for this strategy to be effective, the teacher needs to take a strong leadership role in directing the dialogue and ensuring that the discussion remains focused on the actual words that make up the selected sentence.

When asking questions, the teacher can use the *preformulation* and *reconceptualisation* approach described earlier (see Part A). This provides the teacher with an opportunity to accept the learners' responses, no matter how approximal, and reconceptualise or rephrase them using the author's language. In this way, the learners are not attempting to guess answers to questions they have no context for answering and, as a result, stay on task longer.

Step 1: Teacher and learners jointly identify the units of meaning

The teacher shows the learners exactly where the Transformations sentences come from in the text and explains why these sentences have been chosen for closer work. At this stage the teacher is flagging that the teacher and learners are going to be working towards some writing. For example, the teacher may have chosen the sentences because the author has provided a strong opening to a story, a strong character description, or created a scary atmosphere or gloomy mood. It can be pointed out that the learners might be able to use this technique in their own writing later.

The teacher asks the learners to read the sentences in units of meaning while, simultaneously, the teacher writes the words on the cardboard

strips. The teacher asks who, what, when, where, why questions to support the learners to do this. The teacher needs to take care to frame the questions in the same tense as that of the author.

When the sentence/s is written on the card, the teacher asks the learners to read the sentences from the cardboard strips to check it. This gives fragile readers another opportunity to read the sentences fluently as well as making the checking the learners' responsibility.

The teacher then guides the learners to cut the sentences into units of meaning by using the same who, where, when, why questions (see Example B.1). Learners should say the words as they cut each unit of meaning.

Punctuation marks are discussed in context and the teacher ensures that the learners know the names and function of each mark as they cut them away from the sentence.

When asking questions, the teacher accepts all responses (*Yes, that's right…*) and rephrases the response to match the exact words used by the author. For example, if the question *What was Androcles' job?* elicited the answer: *He looked after sheep,* the teacher could respond:

> *Yes, that's right and a person who looks after sheep is called a shepherd. Androcles was a shepherd boy. Can you find the chunk of words that tell us Androcles was a shepherd boy?*

It is important that the teacher keeps the focus on the words in the text and is not drawn into tangential discussions—in this case about such things as visits to a sheep station.

When asking Transformations questions, the teacher also needs, where possible, to use the exact language from the sentence and reconceptualise words or phrases in order to expand or elaborate upon their meaning (see, for example, the teacher's use of *'cared for'* in Example B.1). This further aids learners' orientation to the more formal grammatical constructions used in 'literate' language as well as to word pronunciations.

At the same time, the teacher should avoid the temptation to use the Transformations activities as opportunities for formal English grammar exercises. It is important to remember that the aim is to build fluent reading and writing by encouraging learners to move from word-by-word reading to reading in meaningful phrases and clauses and to be aware of the way sentences are structured. The aim is not to teach the parsing of sentences. This difference can be seen in Example B.1 when the units of meaning in *Androcles was a shepherd boy* are shown as *Androcles/ was a shepherd boy*, with the *was* (the past tense indicative) left attached to the words that follow.

Example B.1 *Cutting the sentence into units of meaning*

TEACHER TALK	UNIT OF MEANING
Show me the word the author uses to tell us **who** this story is about Yes, that's right. Cut off the character's name.	*Androcles*
Can you find the words that go together to give us the chunk that tells us **what** Androcles was? OK. Can you cut off *'was a shepherd boy'*. That tells us what his job was. It was a very responsible, important job for a young boy to have. [Reconceptualisation].	*was a shepherd boy.*
Cut off the chunk that tells us what Androcles **did** as a shepherd boy? That means he looked after his sheep very well. The author tells us he **cared for** his sheep. The author wants us to know that Androcles was a special person—a kind and caring person.	*He cared for his sheep.*
Now the bit that is left tells us **where** he cared for his sheep. Can you read that? Yes, *'on the hills far away from his village'*	*on the hills far away from his village.*
There are two chunks that tell us where Androcles and his sheep were. They were '*on the hills*' and these hills were '*far away from his village*'. Can you cut off '*on the hills*'? He was on the hills because that was where the grass was that the sheep needed to eat. [Reconceptualisation]. And, he was far away because the hills were a long way from his village. That would mean he couldn't go home to his village every night. [Here the teacher is drawing an inference that relates to later events in the story.]	*on the hills/* *far away from his village.*

As we will discuss below, with more advanced readers/writers, the was/were and is/are word matches could provide a useful point of departure for discussions about tense where they appear in a Transformations sentence. But with early-stage readers, or fragile readers, drawing attention to tense would be an unnecessary distraction.

Example B.2 *Discussing structure and sequence*

TEACHER TALK	UNITS OF MEANING
If we take away the words that tell us where he cared for his sheep ('on the hills far away from his village') does the sentence still make sense? What wouldn't we know if the author had left that bit out? [We wouldn't know **where** Androcles cared for his sheep.]	He cared for his sheep
If this was all that this sentence said it would need the full stop wouldn't it? Can you put the full stop at the end. That's right. That would make it the end of the sentence, wouldn't it? [Teaching punctuation in context]	
Could Patricia Scott have told us where Androcles cared for his sheep first? Why did she choose the order she wrote it in? In discussion, the teacher might say: Authors put at the beginnings of their sentences the bits of information they want to emphasise. Patricia Scott wanted us to read 'He cared for his sheep' first because she wanted us to understand that Androcles was a kind compassionate boy, before she told us that he was far away from his village. [Such discussion draws attention to sentence construction/ author intentionality.]	on the hills far away from his village He cared for his sheep

Step 2: The structure and sequence of the units of meaning are discussed

Once the sentences have been cut into units of meaning they can be 'transformed' through physical manipulation to show the effect of changing or removing sections. This emphasises the constructed nature of text and how the author's language choices and word order can affect meaning. Discussion of the language of the transformed sentence can include the 'who, what, when, where, how and why' questions outlined on page 59. In Example B.2, it can be seen that the teacher focuses the discussion by turning some 'units of meaning' face down. This leaves only part of the sentence visible and makes it easier for learners to see the role particular units of meaning play in the sentence.

Example B.3 *Further discussion of structure*

TEACHER TALK	UNITS OF MEANING
What is the word that tells us that Androcles wasn't very old? What happens if we take the word 'boy' out of the sentence 'Androcles was a shepherd boy?' Can you cut away the word 'boy'? Does it still make sense? What don't we know if this word is taken out? Yes, if he is a boy that means he is young. What a lot of responsibility this boy had!	Androcles boy was a shepherd ^
What is the word that tells us what Androcles' job was? What happens if we take the word 'shepherd' out of the sentence?' Does it still make sense? What don't we know if this word is taken out? If we didn't know that he was a shepherd—that this was his job—we might just think the sheep that he cared for were his pets. But from the words Patricia Scott chose we know that this was his job and that is how we know that he had a lot of responsibility for a young boy.	Androcles shepherd was a ^ boy

Step 3: Teacher and learners play with sentence structures and meanings

Further cutting of individual units of meaning can then take place (for example 'a shepherd/ boy'; 'on the hills/ far away/ from his village'). This gives the teacher an opportunity to discuss the impact of removing certain words or rearranging the words. The teacher can ask questions such as:

* Does the sentence still make sense?
* Why/why not?
* Does it still mean the same thing?
* What don't we know if that bit is left out?

As illustrated in Example B.3 above, the teacher can use this activity to reframe students' answers, provide more information, or extend and elaborate on students' answers. This is also an activity in which the teacher and the learners 'dismantle' the sentence in order to gain

a greater awareness of the word patterns that convey meaning within the sentence.

Step 4: Using the Transformations activity to prepare for spelling

The Transformations activities provide a natural link to spelling activities because they are a bridge between considering the units of meaning within the sentence and considering the role individual words play.

Scaffolded Spelling draws the learners' attention to the structure of individual words as a way of making explicit the common letter patterns within these words within the sentence. However, before beginning to work on spelling, the teacher will need to ensure that individual learners can automatically read the individual words both within the context of the sentence and in isolation. Word games such as *The Prediction Game*, described below, allow the teacher to check word recognition within the context of the surrounding text. The *Your Pile/ My Pile* game provides a quick and easy way for the teacher to check that the learner can easily read the words out of context. This activity needs to be used in one-on-one situations or small groups. It is unsuitable for use as a whole-class activity.

Stage 1: Checking that words can be read in context

Once the Transformations sentences are cut into individual words, the teacher can use these sentences to reinforce recognition of specific words in context. *The Prediction Game* is also a good strategy for teaching the power of reading-on in the text to predict unknown words.

THE PREDICTION GAME

The learners close their eyes and the teacher turns some words from the cut-up Transformation sentence over. When working with a very fragile learner, the teacher may only have one word turned over, while more confident learners may have three or four.

The learners then predict, by reading the surrounding text, what words are turned over. The learners should be in control of checking by turning the card face up.

It is important to remember that this is not a memory test. The learner should be able to check against the full transcript of the sentence if he or she cannot easily identify the missing word.

> The teacher and learner can also change roles, with the learner turning words over for the teacher. This is an opportunity for the teacher to model problem-solving strategies such as reading the words that follow the unknown word in order to aid prediction.

Stage 2: Checking that words can be identified in isolation

Before moving on to spelling the teacher also needs to know which words from the Transformations sentences the learners can read automatically in isolation. This is because only those words will be used to teach spelling.

Photos B.4 and B.5 *The teacher and learner play the Prediction game. The teacher has turned the word 'shepherd' face down. In the second photo, the learner has correctly identified the missing word, indicating that he can read the word within the context of the sentence.*

Photo B.6   *The teacher and learner play* Your Pile/ My Pile. *The learner has all the cards, indicating that he is successfully identifying all the words out of context.*

Teaching spelling on words the student cannot read reduces the learning task to a memory test. It cuts down on the ability of the learners to take on board the information about letter patterns they need if they are to become fluent readers/writers. Remember, these strategies are designed to 'fill-the-gaps' in weak readers'/writers' knowledge and experience with text.

The *Your Pile/ My Pile* game is a way to check which words can be confidently and automatically read in isolation. It provides maximum support to the learner while allowing the teacher to undertake some important diagnostic observations. Because the text is at hand, the learner will be able to get all the cards in their pile. However, the teacher can check which words still cannot be read out of context by observing whether the learner needs to consult the text. Because this is a diagnostic activity it needs to be done with individual learners rather than as a group exercise.

THE YOUR PILE/ MY PILE GAME

This activity also uses the Transformation sentence words that have been cut into individual words. The learner is in control of the cards on which the individual words from the cut up Transformations sentences are written. The cards are placed in a shuffled pile on the table. The learner picks up the cards one at a time and reads the word. The learner should be given as long as necessary to work out any word and can

check the full sentence in the text if necessary. The teacher observes the strategies used by the learner and mentally notes which words do not have automatic recognition.

If the learner can read the word correctly, no matter how slowly, it goes into their pile. If they cannot read it, it goes in the teacher's pile. Because the text is available for the learner to check, there will be very few words, if any, in the teacher's pile. However, a weak or fragile learner may not have read all the words correctly. In this case the teacher will support them by having them check in the text. These words may then be placed in the learner's pile.

Words that the learner can read automatically out of context are the words the teacher can use to move on to spelling. Those the learner cannot read with ease need more work in context—that is, more Transformations work.

Using the Transformations strategy with more advanced text

The Transformations strategy can be equally effective when working with learners on a more advanced text. Examples B.4 and B.5 illustrate a Transformation drawn from an unpublished novel:

One morning the people of Canberra woke to find that the lake that was at the heart of their city and divided the north from the south had turned blood red.

As illustrated in Example B.4, the teacher can negotiate the cutting up of the sentence into units of meaning in the same way as in the earlier example. It should be noted that the teacher still frames the questions in a way that encourages the learners to respond using the exact words from the text. Hence the teacher in this example asks *'What are the words that the author used to tell us what had happened to the lake that was at the centre of their city?'* rather than *'What was the problem with the lake?'* The answer to the first question can only be *'had turned blood red'* while the answer to the second question is more open-ended. A correct answer could be, for example, that the lake had changed colour. Such a response, which does not employ the author's word choices, takes the learners' attention away from the actual words used in this text and it is these words the learners will later be required to spell/write.

Example B.4 *Transformations using a more advanced text*

TEACHER TALK	UNITS OF MEANING
The first part of the sentence lets us know when it was that the people of Canberra woke to find that the lake had turned blood red. What words did the author use?	One morning
Who was it that woke to find that the lake had turned blood red?	the people of Canberra woke to find that
What had turned blood red?	the lake that was
What is the first group of words that tell us where the lake was?	at the heart of their city
What is the second group of words that tell us where the lake was?	and divided the north from the south
What are the author's words that tell us what had happened to the lake?	had turned blood red.

With more advanced texts, the teacher and learners can use the Transformations strategy to explore aspects of language by playing with the sentence structures and meaning in the same way as in the earlier example, although the teacher can introduce more sophisticated text analysis language. To illustrate, in Example B.5 the teacher is able to

Photo B.7 *A teacher works with an older learner. Note the text has no illustrations and the learner is using a clear plastic strip as a line guide. The teacher is writing the Transformations sentence in consultation with the learner (who has control of the text).*

Example B.5   *Using Transformations to teach about the role of 'circumstances of place' (adverbial phrases)*

One morning the people of Canberra woke to find that the lake

and divided the north from the south

that was at the heart of their city ^ had turned blood red.

One morning the people of Canberra woke to find that the lake

was at the heart of their city and

that ^ divided the north from the south had turned blood red.

One morning the people of Canberra woke to find that the lake

that was at the heart of their city and divided the north from the south

^ had turned blood red.

demonstrate the function of adverbial phrases by removing the units of meaning relating to circumstances of place (or where something happened). By removing these from the Transformation sentence, first one at a time and then together, the teacher is able to draw the learners' attention to the importance of each phrase to the reader's understanding of the scene and the kind of detail these phrases provide. The teacher could use this opportunity to talk to learners about the relevance of this information to later events in the story. Through the Transformations discussion the teacher can, for example, make explicit to learners the way authors introduce, early on in stories, information that not only sets the scene but also proves critical as the story unfolds.

Concepts such as tense might be considered by drawing attention to the was/were and is/are word groups. Similarly, the teacher could make the text selection based on particular features of text construction the teacher wishes to draw attention to so learners are able to incorporate this knowledge into their own writing. Other examples of word features that learners often have difficulty with, and that can be made more concrete through the Transformations strategy, include: use of pronouns, building atmosphere, suspense, character and motivation, and using different narrative 'voices'.

For more advanced readers/writers, the Transformations strategy can also be adapted to teach more transitive forms of language use. For example, along with using the strategy to discuss such matters as how the

Example B.6 *Using Transformation with 'passive voice' text*

Active voice/past tense
I watched, in the early dawn light, as the still-sleepy workers moved through the rubber plantation tapping each tree.
Passive voice/passive tense
The rubber trees are tapped early each morning.

author chooses words that help build character, or suspense, or mystery in a narrative text, Transformations can be used to teach concepts such as the shift from active to passive voice (or passive tense) by authors of non-narrative text. This kind of shift from active to passive tense is illustrated in Example B.6.

Using the Transformations strategy to teach these more advanced linguistic constructions is as yet an underdeveloped aspect of the research in this field.

Another underdeveloped area of research is the use of this method with English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. This highly concrete and physical manipulation of text can be linked to the teaching of those linguistic features of written English that ESL learners have difficulty reproducing in their own academic writing in secondary and tertiary settings. Initial trials in bringing *Scaffolding Literacy* strategies and English as a Second Language teaching together have indicated that this is a promising new direction for this approach (see Adoniou & Macken-Horarik, 2007; Harders & Macken-Horarik, forthcoming; Macken-Horarik, 2005).

2 SCAFFOLDED SPELLING: ANALYSING WORD CONSTRUCTIONS

Strengths of the Scaffolded Spelling strategy

We have included the spelling strategy as part of language analysis because the point of teaching spelling is to bring the focus of attention 'inwards' to the letter patterns within individual words but without losing sight of the overall aim of explicitly teaching learners how 'literate' language works to convey complex meanings. This approach has a number of advantages:

- Spelling is taught using words from a text that learners can read fluently. In this way, while individual words are drawn into

the foreground they are still embedded within the meaning of the overall text.

- Spelling is taught in a way that emphasises the common letter patterns that make up English words. This allows the teaching of spelling to be both grounded in specific text uses and meanings of the words *and* used to orient learners towards the common letter patterns that make up English words. By using this approach knowledge about words is both specific and generalisable.

- Learners with literacy difficulties usually possess low-level knowledge of graphophonic relationships. They may know, for example, basic letter/sound correspondences and can 'sound out' individual letters in words but they have difficulty moving beyond this basic phonics knowledge to higher-level pattern recognition. Using this strategy, teachers can check that learners can read the words out of the context of the surrounding text and that they can 'hear' the 'sound chunks' within the word in a way that will support their spelling of that word.

- It is inappropriate to expect learners to spell words they cannot read and/or pronounce. It creates memory overload and confusion and it discourages the development of sustainable and transferable spelling strategies. This approach addresses these issues.

- In Scaffolded Spelling, it is not the number of words taught that is important. The aim is to teach strategies for looking at words in terms of their component parts and for hearing the sounds these component parts contribute to the pronunciation of that word. When the aim is to build transferable spelling and reading skills, a small number of words that teach learners how to 'tune into' and look at words can be more useful than many words glossed over.

- This is a practical way to foster independent learning. It does this by teaching learners how to visually check the words they write. Through the visual checking strategy, a way is provided to give explicit feedback to learners on their spelling by emphasising the sounds of the letter patterns within the word rather than naming the individual letters in the word.

- This strategy avoids busy-work tasks. The purpose of learning to spell must always be to use correct spelling in writing and to help develop fluent reading. Learning lists of words out of context is, at best, busy work. At worst, this kind of rote learning of lists is a way of reinforcing the mistaken belief that each word has to be memorised letter by letter. This latter approach not only reinforces poor spellers' negative self-

belief but also inhibits fluent spelling. And it inhibits the automatic decoding necessary for fluent, independent, reading and writing.

Teaching spelling through common letter patterns

The Scaffolded Spelling strategy is carried out on words already worked on for Transformations. That is, the learners are already familiar with working with these particular words written out on strips of card. Whereas in the Transformations activity these strips of card were being used to focus attention on the way the author has constructed the sentence to convey a particular meaning, now the same words are being used to draw attention to the common letter patterns in English words.

Why learners need this level of support with spelling

Learners who are memorising words alphabet letter name by letter name: for example, *'cat'* sounded out as *c (si) –a (ei) –t(ti)* will need support to develop a more effective visual memory. So too will those who persist in sounding out and writing what they hear (phonetic spellers). For example, 'cat' sounded out as *k-æ-t.*

Those who attempt to learn spelling words by memorising each letter individually in each word encountered are handicapped by the enormity of the task. The number of words they can hold in memory using this method is extremely limited.

For those who persist in 'sounding out' and writing what they hear, the situation is little better. This is because too many English words are not read, or written, phonetically. The children's author Paul Jennings illustrates this point by noting, as just one example, that in English words there are twenty-three different ways of writing the sound *oo* and that in some words the *oo* letter combination makes other sounds (Jennings, 2003, pp. 116–17). Because English words are so 'phonetically varied' many phonetic spellers find it difficult to develop the fluent reading and writing that is required to cope with the demands of academic learning, particularly once they reach upper primary and secondary school.

Learners, particularly confused spellers, benefit from being explicitly shown how to look at words effectively so they can see the common letter patterns in words. They need to be able to do this to decode effectively in the flow of reading as well as to develop effective spelling strategies.

Staying within the text

When using the Scaffolded Spelling method, the teacher only teaches the words from the chosen piece of text. Through the Transformations

activities (see earlier discussion), the teacher has ensured that the learners can read, both in and out of context, the words chosen for further work on spelling. This high level of knowledge about the text provides the support learners need to move from letter-by-letter spelling to 'chunked' spelling.

It is also important to emphasise that, when learning to spell a word from the selected sentences, learners should not be asked to think of other words that use a particular letter pattern but do not appear in the sentences they have been working on. For example, when teaching the word t/ea/ch/er it is tempting to ask: *Can you think of other words with 'ea' letter patterns?* While this is a very common practice in classrooms, it takes the focus away from the text (context) in which the words are used. When teachers do this, they inadvertently remove the 'scaffolding' created during the earlier work on the chosen text and move to a decontextualised activity that will undermine weak readers/spellers and will serve no purpose for the more competent readers/spellers in the group. As will be seen in the example discussed below, sometimes words with the same letter pattern appear in the selected sentences. In this case, the teacher could choose to teach all the words in the selected passage of the text with that letter pattern. For example, in the sample text below both t/ea/ch/er's and spr/ea/d appear.

Identifying common letter patterns

As most adults were not themselves taught to spell using the method described here, they often find it difficult to identify the common letter patterns when they start. To help teachers and parents identify appropriate letter patterns we provide the following example of the steps the adult can work through before the lesson. We have used words drawn from the following sample text taken from the Arnold Lobel story *The Bad Kangaroo*:

> There was a small Kangaroo who was bad in school. He put thumbtacks on the teacher's chair. He threw spitballs across the classroom. He set off firecrackers in the lavatory and spread glue on the doorknobs.
>
> 'Your behaviour is impossible!' said the school principal. 'I am going to see your parents. I will tell them what a problem you are!' (p. 28)

The teacher will need to decide, from his or her knowledge of the learners' development, just how many letter pattern 'chunks' to use. In the beginning, the teacher will generally create more chunks. This will facilitate the shift to visually checking letter patterns. Some ways of 'chunking' the words that appear in the above extract include identifying:

Compound words

thumbtacks	thumb / tacks
classroom	class / room
spitballs	spit / balls
firecrackers	fire / crackers
doorknobs	door / knobs

Prefixes and suffixes

Work towards revealing the root word.

parents	parent / s
impossible	im / possible
going	go / ing

Onset/rhyme patterns

The onset/rhyme pattern is identified by cutting the core word element before the first vowel.

spread	spr / ead
glue	gl / ue
small	sm / all
threw	thr / ew
chair	ch / air
kangaroo	k / angaroo
parents	p / arents
principal	pr / incipal
there	th / ere

Common English letter patterns

Common patterns in the words from *The Bad Kangaroo* example include:

f / ire / cr / ack / er / s
k / ang / ar / oo
p / ar / ent / s
im / poss / ible   or   im / poss / ib / le
d / oor / kn / ob / s
spr / ea / d
pr / in / ci / pal

Specific letter patterns

In the above sample text, the teacher might specifically focus on the following letter patterns:

ea – teacher's, spread

oo – kangaroo, classroom, school, doorknobs

ack – thumbtacks, firecrackers

all – small, spitballs

our – your, behaviour

pr – principal, problem

ar – kangaroo, parent

A list of common letter patterns is set out in Table B.1.

GETTING STARTED WITH SCAFFOLDED SPELLING

This spelling strategy can be used in one-on-one situations (such as a parent or teacher working with an individual learner), in small groups, or whole-class settings.

In one-on-one situations, the sentence strips and the author text can be laid out on a table and the resources are similar to those needed for Transformations but now include a whiteboard or similar. Resources include:

- strips of cardboard, a felt-tipped pen, scissors.
- a whiteboard and whiteboard pen (or blackboard and chalk)
- a table to work at
- a copy of the text.

For classroom or group situations you will need:

- strips of cardboard, a felt-tipped pen, scissors
- a Transformations board
- small individual whiteboards
- copies of the text, or photocopies of the page the Transformations sentences are drawn from.

Step 1: Word selection

From a Transformation the teacher and learners have already worked on, the teacher selects words that the learners can read automatically and out of context. As with the Transformations activity, a copy of the text, or photocopy of the extract the words come from, needs to be available for the learners to refer to. This helps prevent the activity becoming a memory test. In addition, as teaching 'visual checking' of words is an important part of moving learners from dependent to independent spelling, they need the text to refer to.

Table B.1   Common letter patterns

Double vowels					
ai	au	ea	ee	ei	ie
oa	oi	oo	ou	ue	ui
Vowel + consonant sounds					
aw	ay	ew	ow	oy	
Double consonants					
ch	gh	ph	sh	th	wh
bb	cc	dd	ff	gg	ll
mm	nn	mm	pp	rr	ss
zz	ck				
Vowel plus 'r'					
ar	er	ir	or	ur	
Silent letters					
gn	kn	mb	ten	wr	
Word endings					
al	ed	en	er	es	est
ied	ion	ing	le	ly	s
y					
Blends: onset rhymes					
bl	br	cl	cr	dr	fl
fr	gl	gr	pl	pr	sc
scr	sk	sl	sm	sn	sp
spl	spr	squ	st	str	sw
thr	tr	tw			ex
Blends: final					
ct	ft	ld	lk	lp	lt
mp	nd	nk	ng	nt	pt
sk	st	sp			
'e' Marker					
a-e	e-e	i-e	o-e	u-e	-ce
-ge					
Longer letter patterns					
alk	augh	ear	eigh	ess	ful
igh	ough	ould	our	tion	ound
Source: *Scaffolding Literacy Teaching Notes* (2006) Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra.					

Step 2: Jointly identifying the letter patterns

The teacher models writing the word on the cardboard, demonstrating how to relate the letter pattern 'chunks' in the word to the sounds they carry. The teacher should model 'chunking' the letter patterns in the word, for example, *'t-ea-ch-er's '*.

The teacher then guides the learners to cut up the word into its letter patterns. If it is a compound word, split the two words first. If there are prefixes or suffixes, remove them to reveal the root word. For example, using the word *'teacher's'*:

1   Cut the *'s* away and talk about what this *'s* means.
2   Next, cut *er* away to reveal the root word *teach.* Teacher and learners talk in terms of cutting away the *er* sound rather than naming the individual letters *e* and *r.* The teacher can than go on to identify the letters that go together to make up the *'er'* sound. For example:

Teacher: What two letters go together here to make up 'er' ?
Learner: 'e' and 'r' (letter names).
Teacher: And which comes first? (This is a form of rehearsing the 'chunk' to maximise the chances of success when writing it.) … This kind of 'rehearsing' can take place with each 'chunk' as it is cut away.

3   Now cut away the onset/rhyme *t* from *each.* Sound out the *t* and *each.*
4   Next, separate *ea* from *ch*
5   These steps separate the word into *t-ea-ch-er-'s.*

The learners rehearse saying the letter pattern 'chunks' aloud as they move them on the table or Transformation Board.

The teacher turns the cards with the letter patterns face down on the table or Transformations Board. Starting with the first letter pattern 'chunk', the learners turn the cards face up one at a time. As they do so, they say what they see on the card. This is particularly useful for learners who have difficulty separating the sounds of the 'chunks' within individual words.

The teacher again models writing the word, this time on the whiteboard, once more sounding out the 'chunks' and thus demonstrating again how to relate the letters of the word to the sounds they carry. The teacher models visual checking by underlining the letter patterns while saying what each chunk says in the word. The teacher then erases the word. This step does not need to be done for every word—just the first time so the learners know what to do.

The learners then write the word on their whiteboards, saying each 'chunk' as they write. It is important to remember that many learners will
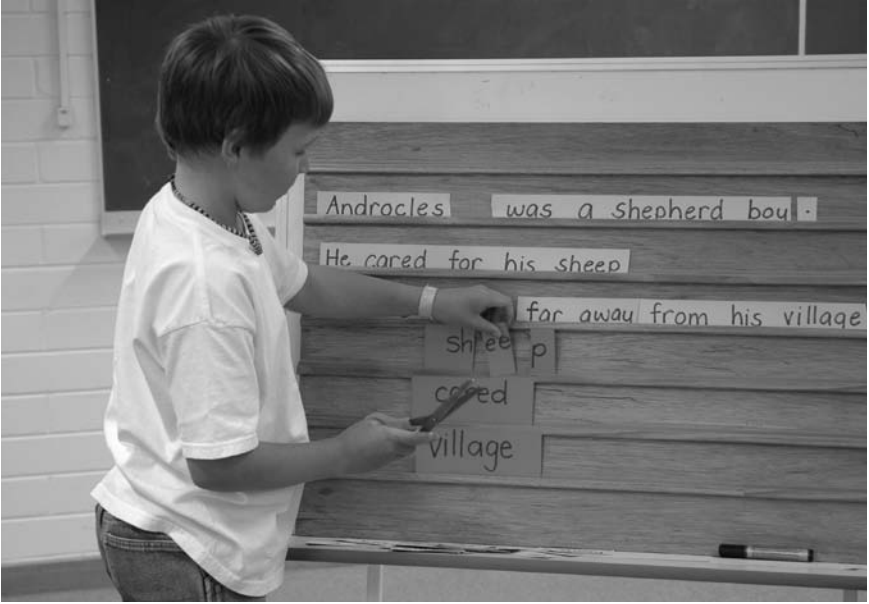
***Photos B.8 and B.9*** *Learners cut words into letter pattern 'chunks'. The text the words are drawn from is displayed on the Transformations Board.*

still be memorising words letter by letter. Reinforcing the need to say the sounds of each letter pattern (rather than each individual letter name) at each stage in the spelling strategy is essential: for example, sounding out *ea-ch* and not *e-a-c-h*.

Step 3: Visual checking

The learners then carry out visual checking. This is a very important aspect of the strategy. For independent learning to take place, each learner needs to be in control of their own checking. The procedure is a two-stage process:
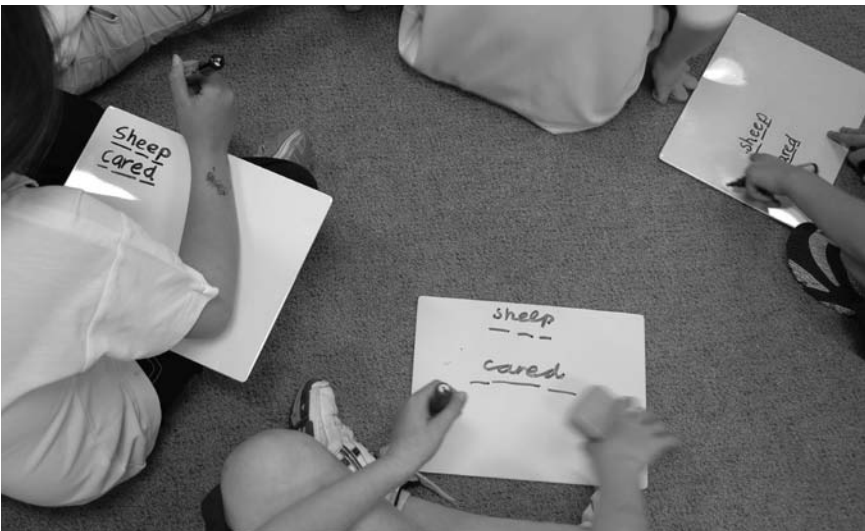
Photos B.10 and B.11 *Learners use small whiteboards to write the words and then carry out visual checking. Note they have underlined each letter pattern as they say out the word and that each learner can erase and correct their own mistakes.*

Stage 1: Checking the letter pattern 'chunks'

The learners underline each letter pattern in the word while saying the sound of each chunk. If the learners identify a mistake they correct it. This is the beauty of the whiteboards or blackboards—mistakes can be removed quickly and easily. Psychologically, this is the opposite of the experience of having their work returned to them with red-ink crosses all through it.

Stage 2: Does it look right?

The teacher asks: *Does it look right?* It is important that the teacher does not tell the learners that it is right or not right (or communicate this through body language cues). The learners must assume responsibility for checking their own writing of the words. Remember: the cut-up word is available to the learners on the table or Transformation Board, and copies of the text the word is drawn from are also available. If the learners are unable to identify mistakes, the teacher can direct them to check their word against each of the cut-out chunks in turn. It should be noted that the teacher may need to explain beforehand that they are going to ask whether it looks right. This is because, when asked such a question by an adult, most learners will automatically assume that what they have written must be wrong.

Photo B.12 *A learner enters words into her personal spelling folder.*

Step 4: Developing a spelling folder

A system to record the words worked on should be developed. This could be individual spelling folders or lists the whole class creates. The spelling folder can become a resource for future work and revision. The folder should include the learner's copy of the extract the words were taken from. This allows individual learners to quickly tune themselves in to the context from which a word was taken if they forget that word when revising their spelling words.

MOVING ON: SHARED RECONSTRUCTED WRITING

This activity shifts the focus back from letter patterns within individual words to word patterns within the sentences from which the spelling words have been drawn. It needs to be done in a one-on-one situation (teacher or parent and learner). It is not a suitable group or whole-class activity. It provides the highest level of writing support to the learner. For group or whole-class work we suggest 'tandem reconstructed writing' (see Part C).

In shared reconstructed writing the learner writes the parts of the sentence he or she feels confident to spell and the teacher provides support by writing the other words in the sentence. In this way, they share the reconstruction of the sentence from which the spelling words have been drawn and hence share the task of reconstructing the author's language. Very fragile spellers may at first write only one or two words. Some points to remember when proceeding to this activity:

- At this stage, the teacher and individual learner are writing out the sentence they have been working from. They are not developing new text. This part of the strategy may seem unnecessary but it enables the learner to practise putting the spelling words back into a context they are now very familiar with. This will reinforce the 'looking at letter patterns within words' approach even as the focus of attention begins to open up into sentence patterns again.
- Work in units of meaning (as for Transformations) rather than one word at a time. The teacher should say the unit of meaning then, as they write each individual word, should say the word in its letter patterns. Working in this way reinforces looking at both the sentence unit of meaning (phrases or clauses) and the letter pattern 'chunks'.

- When the teacher and individual learner have shared the writing of the sentence, the learner should be given responsibility for editing. There are two stages to the editing process. First, the learner reads aloud what has been written to establish whether the teacher and learner have successfully recorded all the words that are required for this text extract. The second part of the editing process requires the learner to visually check each of the words he or she wrote. The teacher should give the learner plenty of time for this and should praise their ability to self-correct when they identify errors.
- The teacher should remember that the task at this point is to keep the focus on the words in the text and to encourage the learner to both decode words in letter pattern 'chunks' rather than as individual letters and to read sentences in units of meaning (clauses and phrases) rather than individual words.

Shared reconstructed writing provides a highly supportive link between focused language work and writing. As such, it is taken up again in the next section in which we look at the final stage in the teaching sequence, that of Scaffolded Writing.

SCAFFOLDED WRITING: THINKING (AND ACTING) LIKE WRITERS

WHERE ARE WE IN THE TEACHING SEQUENCE?

The final part of the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence takes us into writing. If we look again at the overall teaching sequence (see Figure C.1) we can see that this is the final part of the sequence. The *Scaffolding Literacy* strategies up to this point have allowed a considerable amount of language work to take place without the added stress, for the learners, of having to write more than individual words. In addition, through the earlier strategies, the teacher and learners have built a shared vocabulary (or metalanguage) for talking about the author's text. This metalanguage can now be drawn on to help learners see how they might approach the task of building their own new text.

The high level of integration of literacy tasks within the teaching sequence, achieved in part through continuing to work with one text throughout the sequence, means that all the earlier literacy learning tasks jointly worked on by the teacher and learners are contributing to developing learners who can 'think like writers' (Gray, 2003, p. 4). As pointed out earlier (see Introduction), learning to think like writers means reading with more critical awareness and writing with an audience in mind. Reading for meaning moves to the foreground, but with this goes the need for sound sentence structures (grammar) and conventional spelling. Thinking like a writer means using language as a rich resource for expressing your intended meaning. Spelling, appropriate vocabulary, and
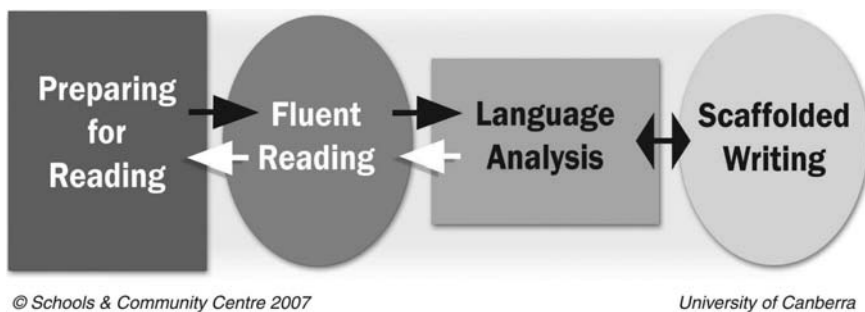
© Schools & Community Centre 2007   University of Canberra

Figure C.1 *The* Scaffolding Literacy *teaching sequence*

grammar become important, not as rules to be followed, but as aids to communicating in writing. Does it 'look right' and 'does it make sense' become more important than remembering specific rules. And learners are not only thinking like writers but also like editors.

From fluent reading to scaffolded writing

The Scaffolded Writing strategy is made up of a series of activities that build on the earlier *Scaffolding Literacy* activities. Through extended study of one author's text using the Text Orientation, Aural Orientation and Language Orientation strategies, the teacher and learners have been able to build a shared understanding about how the particular text being worked on is structured and how the author has used language to tell a story, build 'mental pictures' of characters, build suspense or atmosphere, position the reader to sympathise with particular characters, and so on. In the study of a non-narrative text, the teacher and learners have been able to jointly examine such things as how the author of the selected text has built an argument, marshalled facts, and structured the text as a whole using, for example, paragraphs and topic sentences.

The Transformations strategy extended the study of how the author conveyed his or her meaning by providing a set of activities that allowed the teacher and learners to physically manipulate the author's words and to study sentence form and structure. The Scaffolded Spelling activities took this study down to the level of individual words and their common letter patterns. It also, for the first time in the teaching sequence, introduced writing. In the spelling activities learners were supported to write individual words. They were also introduced to the technique of visual checking—their first step towards taking responsibility for editing their own writing.

Because these activities were carefully structured around the analysis of one text, the shared understanding of that text has been conveyed in a highly contextualised and explicit way. This final part of the teaching sequence extends the study of the selected text one step further. Now the teacher and learners work together to reconstruct the author text (with the assistance of a Scaffolded Writing Plan). This reconstructed text, with its structural bones laid bare, then becomes the platform from which learners can construct their own independent text. As with all *Scaffolding Literacy* activities, the aim is to provide learners with high levels of support to enable them to undertake high level and challenging tasks—tasks that would be beyond them without the scaffolded support provided by the teaching sequence.

From deconstructing to reconstructing text

At this point it is worth re-emphasising the way in which the teaching sequence has moved from the broadest overview of the selected text, down through the various layers to individual words, and then out again as the selected text is put back together again. This movement through what Rose (2006, p. 11) calls the 'layers of language' is discussed more fully in the Introduction. This approach is clearly at odds with more traditional approaches to teaching reading and writing that see these as separate sets of skills and see literate language learning as a more linear development in which learners start with individual letter names and sounds, then move to simple words and phrases, then longer sentences, then text with less controlled vocabulary. The *Scaffolding Literacy* approach assumes that learners will need to be able to 'move around' the various 'layers' of language and meaning simultaneously if they are to become effective meaning makers.

The Scaffolded Writing strategies

The series of activities that make up Scaffolded Writing can be depicted diagrammatically (see Figure C.2).

It can be seen from Figure C.2 that there are several inter-related components to the writing strategy. These are briefly outlined here and then discussed more fully later.

Reconstructed writing

The purpose of reconstructed writing is to allow learners to 'reconstruct' text they know they can read with understanding. This reconstruction work is an important strategy for building comprehension skills by
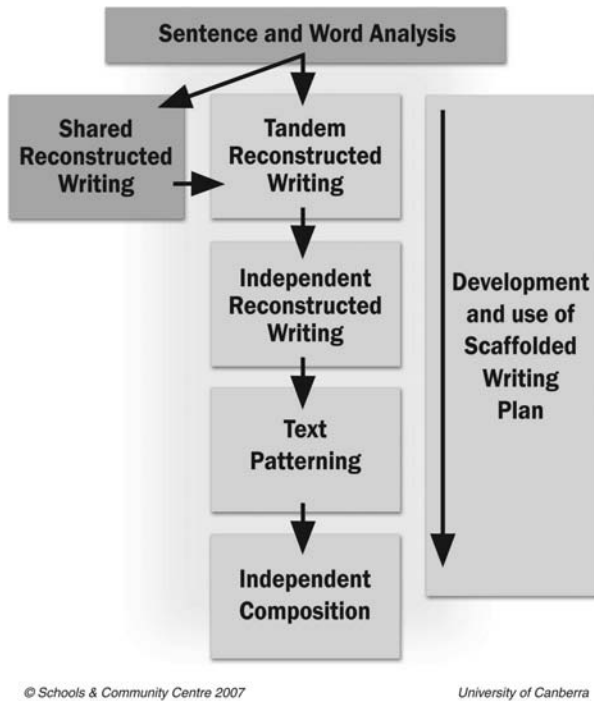
Figure C.2 *Components of Scaffolded Writing*

reinforcing the need to employ meaning-making strategies. There are three types of reconstructed writing:

- shared reconstructed writing
- tandem reconstructed writing
- independent reconstructed writing.

Each type of reconstruction varies in its level of support, with 'shared' providing the highest level and, as the name suggests, 'independent' providing the least. It should be noted that the shared reconstructed writing is designed for use with highly fragile learners working in one-on-one learning situations. This strategy is not suitable for use with groups or whole classes.

Text Patterning

In Text Patterning learners use the structure and form of the author's text to generate their own narrative writing. This activity uses the structure of the author's text as a template for creating a new piece of writing. This template enables even inexperienced writers to create their own unique and extended piece of narrative writing and scaffolds them into using

literate forms of language—including such forms as metaphor, simile or other poetic devices.

The Scaffolded Writing Plan

In *Scaffolding Literacy*, the Writing Plan is constructed **by the teacher** and shared with the learners as a way of making explicit how the author of the selected text has constructed his or her text.

Unlike more traditional approaches in which a writing plan is something learners are asked to construct before they begin on their own independent piece of writing, in *Scaffolding Literacy* the Writing Plan is introduced into the teaching sequence at the point of 'reconstructed writing'. It can then be used as a tool to assist with Text Patterning and independent composition. In 'reconstructed writing' the point of the Writing Plan is to reinforce the work done previously on making the structure of the author's sentences explicit and to provide an aid to learners as they reconstruct the text by writing it. In the Text Patterning activities, the Writing Plan supports learners by providing a model they can use to 'imitate' the author. Through this 'imitation' learners come to understand how sentences can be reformed in ways that express new meanings. They can also 'act' like writers and hence experience what appropriate performance is (see earlier discussion about 'imaginative' enactments of literate practice in the Introduction).

In the following, we explain how to prepare a Scaffolding Writing Plan first. This is because the teacher needs to do this **in preparation** for the reconstructed writing activities. That is, the teacher needs to have the goal of Text Patterning in mind before these activities begin. Preparing a Writing Plan is not hard to do but takes a little practice at the beginning. A simple exercise teachers can use to help them prepare their first Writing Plan is provided as part of the strategy.

Step 1: Preparing the Writing Plan

The aim of the Writing Plan is to reinforce for the learners what the author's language is doing. Analysing the author's language in this way gives the teacher the opportunity to teach learners about writing techniques they can employ in their own writing. The high level of text analysis required to do this is made possible because the teacher and learners have already built considerable shared knowledge about the author text. They have done this through the series of activities they have undertaken together on this one text. This is what makes this highly

Example C.1 *Writing Plan for* Androcles and the Lion

AUTHOR TEXT	WRITING PLAN
Patricia Scott's language:	What Patricia Scott's language does:
Androcles was a shepherd boy.	Introduces the main character and his job.
He cared for his sheep on the hills far away from his village.	Describes what the character's job involved.
Often he was away from home for many days.	Expands on the description of his job with further information about what he does.
At night, he kept his flock in a yard that he built near a cave.	Provides a second piece of information about his job.
He made a small fire in the mouth of the cave and lay down beside it.	Elaborates on the description of what that job involved.
He was near the fire for warmth and near the sheep in case wild animals came in search of food.	Explains why he did these things.

integrated and sequential approach effective at building sustainable literacy practices, even with learners who start from very low literacy levels.

The teacher develops a Writing Plan only for the extract that will be used for Text Patterning (see Example C.1). As can be seen in this example Writing Plans start out with two columns: the first sets out the language used by the author and the second states what the author's language does in this context. To illustrate the Writing Plan we have used the same author text as that used to illustrate the Transformations strategy discussed in Part B: that is, *Androcles and the Lion*, retold by Patricia Scott. This time we have used the opening sentences and the sentences that follow. The extract reads:

Androcles was a shepherd boy. He cared for his sheep on the hills far away from his village. Often he was away from home for many days. At night, he kept his flock in a yard that he built near a cave. He made a small fire in the mouth of the cave and lay down beside it. He was near the fire for warmth and near the sheep in case wild animals came in search of food.

Example C.2   *Author text by grammatical function*

AUTHOR TEXT	GRAMMATICAL FUNCTION
He	Who (subject)
cared for	What he did
his sheep	What he cared for (object)
on the hills far away from his village.	Where
Often	When
He	Who
was away from home	What he did
For many days.	When

The Writing Plan is generated by the teacher. It is prepared before the teaching–learning session. As this way of integrating reading, language study and writing is not the way most teachers or parents were taught, it will take some practice to master. However, once used, teachers and parents will be surprised at the richness of the writing their learners can produce when supported by a Writing Plan.

When generating the Writing Plan the teacher is addressing the question: *What is this language doing?* The teacher should focus on the author's writing techniques rather than the grammatical function of the language. To illustrate what is meant by 'grammatical function' we have set out the second part of the same text used in Example C.1 by grammatical function (see Example C.2). It can be seen that the 'grammatical function' approach gives us a different picture of the author's text than that set out in the earlier example.

Example C.2 illustrates how particular words and phrases function in the sentence. However, when using the Writing Plan as a preparation for Text Patterning, the aim is to provide learners with an understanding of how the author built up a word picture (or an explanation or argument in a non-narrative piece) rather than how each word or phrase functions in the sentence. In the examples set out here, the teacher is providing a framework for understanding how the author (Patricia Scott) built a word picture of the character (Androcles), and his circumstances.

In this approach to writing, we want the learners to be able to use their understanding of how the author constructed the story to help them build a story of their own. In this sense, the aim is to put knowledge of

the *form* they might use to write their own story before knowledge of the *function* of the component parts.

The Writing Plan demonstrates the power of working on one text throughout all the stages of the *Scaffolding Literacy* sequence. Learners are by this stage very familiar with the author text and can confidently discuss the parts of the story in the way suggested by the example set out in Example C.1. This makes it possible for the teacher and learners to discuss the author's language and what this language is doing in the particular text they are working on without the teacher having to teach the more abstract language of grammatical functions. The aim is to get learners reading and writing fluently and allowing the more abstracted knowledge of grammatical function to follow, rather than lead, literacy development.

To practise preparing your first writing plan, select a sentence from the author text that the learners have used for Transformations work (see Part B). Using the example set out in Example C.1 as a guide, write the sentence in 'meaning chunks' in the left-hand column of a two column table. Check that the sentence is complete by reading over what you have written. Then, in the right-hand column write what you think the author's language is doing in each of the 'chunks'. Focus on 'chunks of meaning', not on the grammatical function of each part of the sentence.

Step 2: Reconstructing the author text

So far in the teaching sequence the teacher and learners have been 'deconstructing' the selected text to understand its component parts. The aims of reconstructed writing are to:

- Practise using the words worked on for spelling by putting them back into the context of the sentence they were drawn from.
- Practise writing without overloading learners. By jointly reconstructing a familiar text that learners can read with accuracy, fluency, and understanding, learners do not have to think of new subject matter and are in a strong position to learn to use the same writing strategies as the chosen author.
- Build stronger reading skills. The understanding of author intent provided through these activities feeds back into learners' reading: they get the idea of inferred meaning and become skilled at 'reading between the lines'. They move from literal (word by word) translations to more fluent reading and better overall text comprehension.
- Position learners to undertake independent text construction.

As already noted, there are three levels of reconstructed writing: shared, tandem and independent. Each is discussed below.

Shared reconstructed writing

This activity has already been described as part of the spelling activities (see Part B). It appears in both sections because this is a transitional activity and can be either considered as the end part of the spelling activities or as the start of the writing strategies. If being used as an introduction to writing, a Writing Plan will be used (see above) and it will not be necessary for the learners to have a copy of the text in view because the learners can see both columns of the Writing Plan. This activity is best done on a whiteboard so that any mistakes can be quickly and easily erased and corrected. It can also be done on a sheet of paper.

As previously explained, in this activity the teacher and learner work together to put the spelling words that they have been working on back into context. Together, teacher and learner share responsibility for reconstructing the language from the story as though they are the authors of it. The learner writes those words that he or she can now confidently spell and the teacher writes the other words in the sentence. The teacher may also negotiate with the learner to write some of the other words from the sentence/s although when doing this the teacher needs to be sure that this does not set up the learner to fail. The teacher should also continue to model 'chunking' the words. This will provide additional support to the learner in matching the visual appearance of the letter patterns to the sound that those letter patterns generate for that particular word. See 'Scaffolded Spelling' (Part B) if unsure how to 'chunk' words—that is, identify the common letter patterns.

The shared reconstruction activity provides yet another opportunity to talk about the meaning and the language of the part of the story being worked on. It allows the teacher to reinforce earlier explicit teaching about the punctuation in the sentence/s and to introduce the idea of the Writing Plan and explain its purpose.

When the learner is introduced to a Writing Plan for the first time the teacher needs to take considerable time to explain its purpose. The learner must be made aware that Writing Plans are the bridge between the author text that the teacher and learner have analysed in detail throughout the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence and the new piece of text they are going to write.

The Writing Plan that the teacher has previously prepared is available for the teacher and learner to work from. Using the Writing Plan as a

guide, the teacher and learner jointly reconstruct the author text, writing each 'chunk' on the whiteboard or paper and checking as they go. The learner marks off each element of the Writing Plan as they do so. Hence the talk might be something like:

Teacher: How did Patricia Scott introduce Androcles?

Learner: She wrote, 'Androcles was a shepherd boy'.

Teacher (writing): OK, so An/dr/ocles was a … Can you write 'shepherd boy'? 'Shepherd is one of the words you have learnt to spell and I am sure you'll be able to manage the word 'boy'.

Learner writes.

Teacher: That's the end of the first sentence. What do we need to put in to show it is the end of the sentence?

Learner: A full stop. (writes it in)

Teacher: Well, we have the first sentence. You can tick off that bit on the Writing Plan.

Teacher: In the next sentence, the author tells us what this job involved. What was it that Androcles did?

Learner: He cared for his sheep …

Teacher: Where?

Learner: On the hills far away from his village.

Teacher (writing): You can spell 'cared', so can you write 'he cared' and I'll write 'f/or h/is sh/eep.'

Learner: I can write 'on the hills'.

Learner writes.

Teacher: OK … now, I'll write 'f/ar a/way fr/om h/is'.

Teacher: We worked on village yesterday, so can you write 'village'?

Learner writes.

Teacher: OK. So now we have written the bit where the author describes what the character's job involved. Can you tick off that bit on the Writing Plan?

Teacher and individual learners work through the passage in this negotiated way, with the teacher writing the words the learner hasn't worked on for spelling and the learner ticking off each section of the Writing Plan as it is completed. When the whole passage is written, the learner should be asked to read aloud what has been written to establish that, together, teacher and learner have been successful in generating all the words that the author wrote. In this way, even though we are moving into writing, reading skills are still being reinforced. In addition, teaching learners to read what they have written is an important editing skill.

The individual learner is then instructed to carry out visual checking, and self-correcting if necessary, of all the words that he or she (rather than the teacher) has written (see Part B for a description of how to carry out visual checking with weak or fragile spellers/writers).

The teacher should ensure that each learner is given responsibility for the checking and self-correcting, and allowed plenty of time to do this. Only if individual learners fail to identify a problem will the teacher intervene to assist in the identification of errors.

At first glance many adults, especially parents, will think that this level of detailed attention to what is essentially a copying task is unnecessarily laborious. However, a shared reconstruction is a challenging spelling task for many learners. Just because they can spell words correctly when practising them individually does not guarantee that they will also spell these words correctly in the shared reconstruction. This is because each learner has a lot more to think about in this more complex task. The teacher should be sensitive to this and should not show disappointment if spelling errors are made.

Tandem reconstructed writing

The Tandem Reconstruction activity can be done with an individual learner, a small group or class group. When working with an individual learner, the teacher and learner sit next to each other and the teacher orientates his or her work so that the learner can see it and can refer to it for support if necessary.

When working with a group or whole class a whiteboard, blackboard, interactive whiteboard or blank overhead transparency will be necessary for the teacher to write on so the learners can refer to it for support if they need it. The learners write in their workbooks.

This writing task is more demanding than the shared reconstruction because learners are required to write all of the words in the passage, not just those words that they have worked on for Scaffolded Spelling. For this activity, the teacher and learners use only the Writing Plan (see sample set out in Example C.1, above). They should not be able to see the author text (column 1 in Example C.1). This can be covered over if using an overhead projector or the paper copy can be folded back.

This is the first time in the teaching sequence that the author text is not available for students to refer to. The reason for this is that this activity relies on the learners working at the same pace as the teacher. If the text is available, some learners may rush ahead, reducing this activity to simple

copying without paying attention to the author's writing techniques and/or copying without taking care to produce correct spelling.

Using the Writing Plan, the teacher and learner/s recall the units of meaning written by the author. They then methodically record all the words paying careful attention to 'chunking' in order to generate correct spelling. The talk might be like this:

Teacher: Who can recall the words Patricia Scott used to introduce the character and his job to her readers?
Learner: 'Androcles was a shepherd boy.'
Teacher: That's right. Let's now write those words.

When the teacher reaches a word in the author text that the learners have been learning to spell, the teacher should hold back while the learners attempt writing the word independently. Once this is done, the teacher then writes the word and the learners check their spelling using the teacher's writing as a reference. As with the Shared Reconstruction, the teacher should model 'chunking' for words that students have not learnt as well as for those they have.

As they share the reconstruction of the author text, the teacher and learners mark off each component of the Writing Plan. Once the writing of the passage is completed, the teacher asks the learners to go through the same checking procedure used for the Shared Reconstruction. That is, when the learners have completed writing the passage, they should then read what they have written to establish that they have been successful in generating all the words that the author wrote. The teacher then instructs the learners to check the letter patterns in each of the words that they have been taught to spell.

The teacher can use learners' Tandem Reconstructed writing as a diagnostic tool to inform his or her teaching. The teacher collects the workbooks and has a close look at how individuals in the group managed the task: how well did each individual learner manage the words that had been worked on for spelling? How well did each learner manage words that had not been taught for spelling? Are there any misspelt words that the learner failed to identify? Did the learner manage to use correct punctuation? Record this information and provide ongoing support to individual learners as required. Make an effort to provide each learner with explicit positive feedback, either with a written comment in workbooks or by speaking to students individually.

Independent reconstructed writing

This is the most difficult stage of Reconstructed Writing. Not only are learners required to write all of the words from the sentence/s they have been working on, but they must also tackle this task without the support of the teacher's work to refer to. Learners write in their workbooks. This activity can be undertaken in a one-on-one situation or in a group or whole classroom. Before tackling the more demanding task of writing the author's language, learners first use the Writing Plan to generate the words orally. The purpose of this activity is to give learners a less demanding 'practice-run' for the writing task that is to follow. If learners are not able to orally generate the author text, the teacher needs to revisit the Writing Plan with the learners in order to provide a higher level of support.

The procedure is similar to that of the Tandem Reconstruction except that this time the learners set their own pace as they work through the Writing Plan. Once again, only the Writing Plan column is visible. The author text is not visible. Learners have their own copy of the Writing Plan and mark off each component once that part of the author text has been written. This helps learners keep track of where they are as they proceed through this activity.

As with Tandem Reconstruction the teacher models how to tackle this task. However, unlike in the Tandem Reconstructed writing activity, teachers will not show their work to the learners during this writing activity. Teachers should make sure they do not work too fast as this may make learners feel stressed and pressured to work quickly. Teachers can suggest to learners that if they get stuck they should refer to the Writing Plan and re-read what they have already written. For this activity everyone works quietly and, as the name suggests, independently.

When everyone has completed the task the teacher can ask for volunteers to read aloud their writing to the group to establish if they managed to recall the author's language. Instruct learners to check, and self-correct if necessary, all the words they worked on for spelling. Once again, the teacher can reflect on learners' uptake of the author's language and the spelling of this language by collecting their workbooks and looking closely at their efforts. *Do not* have the learners exchange workbooks to correct each other's work. Remember, the aim is to develop independent readers/writers who know how to self-correct and how to take responsibility for their own spelling/writing. Also, learners who have not achieved work of a high standard can feel uncomfortable about showing their writing to peers. Doing this has the potential to undermine the positive approach to literacy the earlier strategies have set up.

Step 3: Generating new text using Text Patterning

The aim of Text Patterning is to make the author text, which learners can now read and write with accuracy and fluency, a resource the learners can use to construct their own text. Using their own subject matter and their own language, learners can use the pattern provided by the author to generate new text. At this stage, the Writing Plan is being used to support the learners so they can tap into their own creativity.

Before attempting to introduce Text Patterning to learners, teachers should try this exercise themselves. Here is what you do:

* Add another column to the Writing Plan. In the example set out in Example C.3 we have extended the Writing Plan used in Example C.1.
* In the new column, write a new version of each of the units of meaning listed.
* Share this new piece of writing with the learners as part of your introduction to Text Patterning.

The example set out in Example C.3 was written by a group of parents during a parent *Scaffolding Literacy* seminar. It can be seen that the author text is still *Androcles and the Lion* and that the right-hand column from Example C.1 has now become the bridge between the author text and the new text.

It can be seen from Example C.3 that the Writing Plan has provided the framework for the new piece of text. This new writing incorporates the language features of the author text but the new writing tells a different story.

When introducing Text Patterning, teacher and learners can brainstorm ideas for a new piece of writing together. Doing a joint story first will allow the teacher to model the strategy and will enable weaker learners to clearly understand the task. In one-on-one teaching–learning situations, the teacher and learner can negotiate a new storyline and the teacher can write it up on a whiteboard or on a sheet of paper, referring back to the Writing Plan as they work. In group or whole-class situations, the teacher can choose one particular writing idea to develop, and scribe the learners' language onto a whiteboard or blackboard, interactive whiteboard or blank overhead transparency.

In the final stage of Text Patterning learners generate their own piece of patterned writing, either independently or with a partner. The teacher may need to remind learners to use the Writing Plan to inform their language choices and be aware that weaker students may not be able to tackle this task on their own. These students may need the teacher's support to scribe their ideas for them. Teachers can also encourage the

Example C.3 *Using the Writing Plan for Text Patterning*

PATRICIA SCOTT'S LANGUAGE	WHAT THIS LANGUAGE DOES	TEXT PATTERNING (NEW TEXT)
Androcles was a shepherd boy.	Introduces the main character and his job.	Sally was a florist.
He cared for his sheep on the hills far away from his village.	Describes what character's job involved	Every morning she woke early, leaving breakfast set up on the table for her family.
Often he was away from home for many days.	Expands on the description of his job with further information about what he did.	In the dark she drove to the markets.
At night, he kept his flock in a yard that he built near a cave.	Provides a second piece of information about his job.	She collected flowers for arranging and selling at her shop.
He made a small fire in the mouth of the cave and lay down beside it.	Elaborates on the description of what job involved.	She looked for flowers that were fresh with buds unopened and colourful.
He was near the fire for warmth and near the sheep in case wild animals came in search of food.	Explains why he did these things.	Back in the shop, long before opening time, Sally started to prepare for customers: cutting stems, arranging flowers into decorative bunches and then tidying up.

Example C.4 *Examples of learner's writing using the Writing Plan and Text Patterning*

In the following two writing samples, extracts from the author texts used for Text Patterning is shown in the left hand column. The learners' writing, using the support of the Text Patterning strategy, is shown in the right column. Both samples were produced by learners while they were participating in the *Parents as Tutors Program* at the University of Canberra. The samples illustrate that Text Patterning is equally effective for younger and older writers. Spelling errors in student work have been corrected in transcription.

AUTHOR TEXT USED FOR TEXT PATTERNING	LEARNER COMPOSITION
Every morning, when it was still dark and ordinary hippopotamuses were still asleep, with the sky like velvet and the stars just starting to go out, Edward leapt from his bed, out of his pyjamas and into his bathing trunks. Wasting not a second, looking to neither left nor right, he ran for the river at the end of the garden, and dived in. Reproduced from: *The Twenty Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race* by Morris Lurie, Puffin Books, Australia, 1977, p. 14.	Learner 1 (Year 3 student): About half a millennium ago, when knights were brave and kings were royal, with horses as black as ebony and the war just starting to break out, the scared little king quickly hid under his bed sheets, trembling like an earthquake, and gave the order to attack.
Tailor's … hermit part at least. From: *Tomorrow, When the War Began* by John Marsden. Pan Macmillan, Australia, 1993, pp. 38–9.	Learner 2 (Year 10 student): Narrawallee, Narrawallee Beach is a coastal line that runs from Mollymook to Narrawallee National Park. It's sandy with small hillocks in places that are covered in sparse vegetation. The sea views are spectacular. The Narrawallee Inlet is what's on the other side of Narrawallee Beach, an estuary full of mangrove trees and submerged rocks and underwater plants and fish and poisonous looking creatures. It's a wild place and I didn't know anyone who'd been there though I'd stood on the cliff

Example C.4 (cont.)

AUTHOR TEXT USED FOR TEXT PATTERNING	LEARNER COMPOSITION
	at the end of Narrawallee Beach and looked down at it quite often.
	There is a pathway leading from Narrawallee Beach to the inlet. It is overgrown with fallen logs and overhanging trees and blackberry bushes. Any access to the inlet had to be along this path and I had always wanted to give it a try.
	The Narrawallee residents told stories about little Henry Johnson, a local boy who was supposed to have drowned in the inlet. At night you could hear his screams for help.

more able students to generate a few different pieces, suggesting, for example, that they try different fiction genres such as reality fiction, fantasy fiction, or science fiction. Two examples of learners' Text Patterning work, one from a younger learner, the other from an older learner, are set out in Example C.4.

By using the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence to study a variety of texts over time teachers can show learners a myriad of writing techniques that learners can then incorporate into their independent writing. The *Scaffolding Literacy* strategies explicitly show learners how to structure their own writing. Learners are able to take on the effective writing techniques used by good authors as their own inner resources and use these to craft their own narrative texts. The learning they have done along the *Scaffolding Literacy* journey has equipped them with skills that are sustainable and transferable.

Step 4: Providing constructive feedback

A great strength of this approach to writing is that the common knowledge about text that has been developed throughout the *Scaffolding Literacy* work (from Text Orientation to Text Patterning) can be drawn on to provide explicit suggestions and constructive feedback to learners on how

to develop their writing further. Too often, the feedback given to learners is too vague to be helpful. What is a struggling writer to do when faced with comments on their work such as:

> *Very good, but can you write more/give better descriptions/expand on the main point.*

Obviously, if they could, they would! With *Scaffolding Literacy*, teacher and learner have shared a great deal of information about how a specific author used language to build a specific word picture. This information can be drawn upon to provide more specific guidance to a young writer about how to build a better piece of text:

> *You remember how Patricia Scott let us know how difficult and isolated Androcles' life as a shepherd was? Could you use that technique to build more tension in your story about the fireman?*

This shared language about text provides a great resource for further teacher–learner talk, for more attentive and meaningful reading of new texts, and more imaginative and adventurous writing.

A CONCLUSION—AND A NEW BEGINNING

There is no real conclusion to the *Scaffolding Literacy* teaching sequence. As the figure below shows, the sequence can be drawn again to indicate that the end of the sequence signals a return to the beginning:
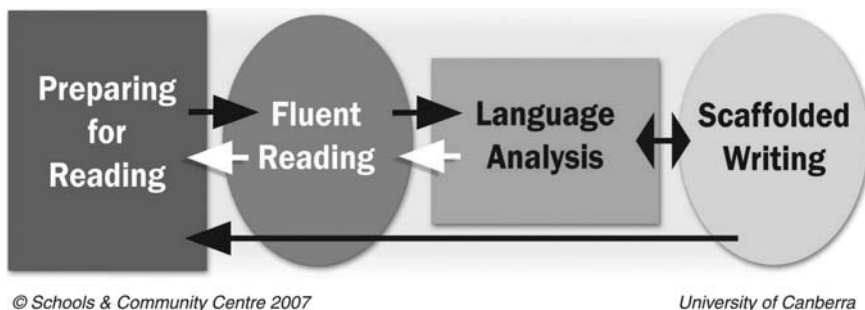

© Schools & Community Centre 2007   University of Canberra

Figure D.1   Scaffolding Literacy—*an ongoing dialogue*

By the time the learners have reached Text Patterning and Independent Writing stages, the teacher has already selected the next study text and is preparing the reading activities to be worked on with the new text. In this sense, *Scaffolding Literacy* is not only sequential but also spiral.

With older students the teacher may have already introduced the next text (Text Orientation) and begun to read it (Aural Orientation), perhaps a chapter at a time, while the learners are working on the writing activities arising from the earlier text.

The aim is to create teaching and learning environments in which literacy is both a practice and an ongoing dialogue about possible meanings and possible language uses to express those meanings. Reading and writing, and talking about reading and writing, go hand in hand.

Dynamic teaching and learning environments can be built between one learner and one 'significant other' (such as a parent) or between a teacher and a class group of learners. The principles are the same. What matters is that the learners come to see that the purpose of reading is meaning-making; and the purpose of writing is meaning-making. Meaning-making is the uniquely human act that feeds the imagination and opens doors to other possibilities.

REFERENCES

Acevedo, C & Rose, D 2007, 'Reading (and writing) to learn in the middle years of schooling', *Pen 157*, Occasional Papers, Primary English Teaching Association (PETA), Australia.

Adoniou, M & Macken-Horarik, M 2007, 'Scaffolding Literacy meets ESL: Some insights from ACT classrooms', *TESOL in Context*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 5–14.

Axford, B 2007, 'Parents and their children working together: A Scaffolding Literacy case study', *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 21–39.

Bennett, T 2007, 'Pedagogic Antecedents of Classroom Writing', unpublished Masters (Education) Thesis, Canberra University.

Bernstein, B 1990, *Class, Codes and Control 4: The structuring of pedagogic discourse*, Routledge, London.

Christie, F 2006, 'Literacy teaching and current debates over reading', in R Whittaker, M O'Donnell and A McCabe (eds), *Language and Literacy: Functional approaches*. Continuum, London, pp. 45–65.

Clay, M 2000, *Running Records For Classroom Teachers*, Heinemann, Auckland, NZ.

Cowey, W 2005, 'A brief description of the National Accelerated Literacy Program', *TESOL in Context*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 3–14.

Culican, S, Milburn, S & Oakley, C 2006, *Scaffolding in the Middle Years*, Final Project Report: Literacy and Numeracy Innovative Projects Initiative, Australian Government: Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), Canberra.

Davenport, MR 2002, *Miscues, Not Mistakes: Reading assessment in the classroom*, Heinemann, Portsmouth.

Gentile, LM & McMillan, MM 1987, *Stress and Reading Difficulties: Research, assessment, intervention*, International Reading Association, Newark, DE.

Goodman, K 2005, 'Making sense of written language: A lifelong journey', *Journal of Literacy Research* (Spring), pp. 1–14.

Gray, B 2007, *Accelerating the Literacy Development of Indigenous Students*, CDU Press, Darwin.

Gray, B 2003, *Key Elements of Scaffolding Literacy: Pedagogy and teacher support*, Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra, published electronically: www.canberra.edu.au/centres/schools-community/literacy-research

Gray, B 1980, 'Developing language and literacy with urban Aboriginal children: A first report on the Traeger Park Project', conference paper presented at Traeger Park School, 4–5 March, Alice Springs, Northern Territory Department of Education. Available: AIATSIS Collections, Accession no. 5265b.

Gray, B, Cowey, W & Axford, B 2003, *Scaffolding Literacy with Indigenous Children in School*, Final report to the Indigenous Education Branch, Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), University of Canberra, Canberra.

Gray, B, Cowey, W & Graetz, M 1998a, *Scaffolded Writing: Using familiar text to teach children to write narrative*, unpublished teaching notes, Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra.

Gray, B, Cowey, W & Graetz, M 1998b, *Transformations*, unpublished teaching notes, Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra.

Gray, B, Cowey, W & Graetz, M 1997a, *Book Orientation: How to prepare for successful reading*, unpublished teaching notes, Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra.

Gray, B, Cowey, W & Graetz, M 1997b, *Scaffolding Transitional Spellers: Teaching spelling in context*, unpublished teaching notes, Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra.

Gray, B, Cowey, W & Graetz, M 1996, *How to do a Transformation on Helping Children Attend to Single Words and their Spelling*, unpublished teaching notes, Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra.

Hammond, J & Gibbons, P 2001, 'What is scaffolding?', in J Hammond (ed.), *Scaffolding: Teaching and learning in language and literacy education*. Primary English Teaching Association (PETA), Newtown, Australia, pp. 1–14.

Harders, P & Macken-Horarik, M (in press), 'Scaffolding Literacy and the Year 9 boys: Developing a language-centred literacy pedagogy', *TESOL in Context*, vol. 18, no. 2.

Harris, P, Turbill, J, Fitzsimmons, P & McKenzie, B 2001, *Reading in the Primary School Years*, Social Science Press, Tuggerah, NSW.

Jennings, P 2003, *The Reading Bug… and how you can help your child to catch it*, Penguin Group (Australia), Camberwell, Victoria.

Kemp, M 1987, *Watching Children Read and Write*, Thomas Nelson, Melbourne.

Kemp, M 1985a, *Re-Building Literacy*, Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra.

Kemp, M 1985b, *Transformations: A book for parents and teachers to use when beginning assistance programmes with children and adults who lack confidence in reading and writing*, Schools & Community Centre, University of Canberra.

Kemp, M 1980, *Reading-Language Processes: Assessment and teaching*, The Australian Reading Association, Adelaide.

Lobel, A 1980, *Fables*, Jonathan Cape, London, pp. 28–30.

Luke, A & Freebody, P 1999, 'A map of possible practices—further notes on the four resources model', *Practical Primary*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 5–8.

Lurie, M 1977, *The Twenty Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race*, Puffin Books, Australia.

Macken-Horarik, M 2005, 'Tools for promoting literacy development in TESOL classrooms: Insights from systemic functional linguistics', *TESOL in Context*, vol. 15, no. 2 (Dec.), pp. 15–23.

Mariani, L 1997, 'Teacher support and teacher challenge in promoting learning autonomy', *Perspectives*, vol. 23, no. 2.

Marsden, J 1993, *Tomorrow, When the War Began*, Pan Macmillan, Sydney.

Martin, JR 2007, 'Metadiscourse: Designing interaction in genre-based literacy programs', in R Whittaker, M O'Donnell and A McCabe (eds), *Language and Literacy: Functional approaches*, Continuum, London, pp. 95–122.

Martin, R 2007, 'Why literacy and numeracy vouchers are not the answer', *The ACT Teacher: Journal of the Australian Education Union*, (April), p. 11.

Mossenson, L, Stephanou, A, Forster, M, Masters, G, McGregor, M, Anderson, P & Hill, P 2003, *Tests in Reading Comprehension (TORCH)*, 2nd ed., Australian Council *for* Educational Research, Camberwell, Victoria.

NALP (National Accelerated Literacy Project) 2007, A project jointly funded by the Australian Department of Education Science and Training and the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training, and supported by Charles Darwin University. Website: http://www.nalp.cdu.edu.au/

Rose, D 2008, 'Teaching reading and writing to Aboriginal children', in N Harrison (ed.), *Teaching and Learning in Indigenous Education*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Victoria, pp. 55–83.

Rose, D 2006, 'Towards a reading-based theory of teaching'. Keynote address delivered at the 33rd International Systemic Functional Linguistics Conference, Sao Paulo.

Rose, D & Acevedo, C 2006, 'Closing the gap and accelerating learning in the middle years of schooling', *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*, vol. 14, no. 2 (June), pp. 32–45.

Rose, D, Gray, B & Cowey, W 1999, 'Scaffolding reading and writing for Indigenous children in school', in P Wignell (ed.), *Double Power: English literacy and Indigenous education*. Language Australia, Melbourne, pp. 23–58.

Saxby, M 1993, *Why the Bear has a Stumpy Tail*. A traditional tale retold by Maurice Saxby. Illustrated by Kevin Burgemeestre, Macmillan Education Australia, South Yarra.

Scott, P 2001, *Of Mice, Lions and Elephants*. Illustrator Hannah Cutts, Macmillan Education Australia, South Yarra, pp. 11–22.

Vygotsky, LS 1978, *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Wilde, S 2000, *Miscue Analysis Made Easy: Building on student strengths*, Heinemann, Portsmouth.

Grammar for Everyone
Practical tools for learning and teaching grammar

Barbara Dykes
ACER Press, 2007

In contemporary society, a thorough understanding of the principles of English grammar is more important than ever. English is now spoken by more than 500 million people around the world. It deserves to be taught with both knowledge and respect. Furthermore, students of English deserve the opportunity to speak and write it confidently, and correctly.

Grammar provides a language to talk about language. As a mechanic needs naming words for the parts of an engine, so a student needs naming words for the components of speech and writing. This practical book provides all who learn or teach grammar with these skills in a clear step-by-step process. It provides teachers with an armoury of learning strategies to use at all levels. Grammar should be fun to teach and fun to learn.

About the author

Barbara Dykes has taught grammar and literacy skills in primary and high schools, pre-employment courses, TAFE, adult and migrant education, and as a private tutor. She is the author of the bestselling books **Spelling Made Easy** and **Grammar Made Easy** and co-author of the Nutshell Products range of literacy materials. Barbara manages the Quantum Literacy, University of Newcastle Course in Spelling and Reading for Tutors and conducts workshops for interested groups all over the country.

To order **Grammar for Everyone** visit <http://shop.acer.edu.au>.
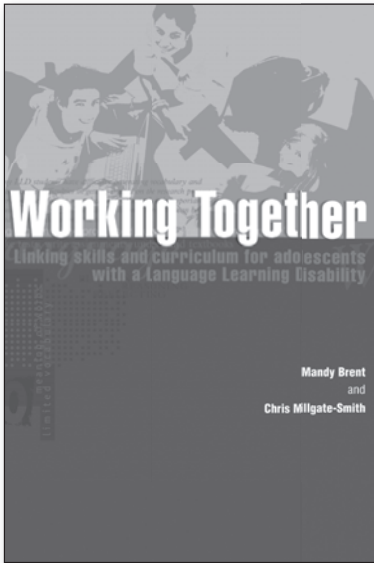
Working Together

Linking skills and curriculum for adolescents with a Language Learning Disability

Mandy Brent and Chris Millgate-Smith
ACER Press, 2008

Working Together: Linking skills and curriculum for adolescents with a Language Learning Disability is a must-read book for busy classroom teachers who sometimes see the needs of students with language and learning difficulties as just too hard to cater for. A working collaboration between secondary teacher, Chris Millgate-Smith, and speech pathologist, Mandy Brent, this book clearly illustrates how mainstream curriculum can be differentiated for the benefit of all students with a language learning disability (LLD).

Working Together incorporates:

- Explanation of the key factors that impact on LLD students in the classroom — difficulties with memory, restricted oral language and vocabulary, poor reading and writing skills, anxiety and self-esteem
- Teaching and learning strategies embedded into six units designed for mixed ability classrooms, covering the major disciplines of English, Maths, Science and History
- Detailed advice for teachers and support staff on sequencing learning
- Skill development strategies to assist LLD students to access the mainstream curriculum successfully.

This practical and easy-to-use book significantly expands on the work of One in Eleven: Practical strategies for teaching adolescents with a Language Learning Disability (ACER Press, 2001), also co-authored by Mandy Brent.

About the authors

Mandy Brent is a speech pathologist with many years' experience working with children. She works with both primary and secondary students with language disabilities and associated literacy problems. She co-authored the book One in Eleven with Florence Gough and Susan Robinson.

Chris Millgate-Smith has taught English in Australian and British schools, including public and private, co-educational and single sex. Chris takes a particular interest in differentiating the curriculum for all abilities. She has run workshops for teachers and authored a guide to the teaching of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.

To order Working Together visit <http://shop.acer.edu.au>.
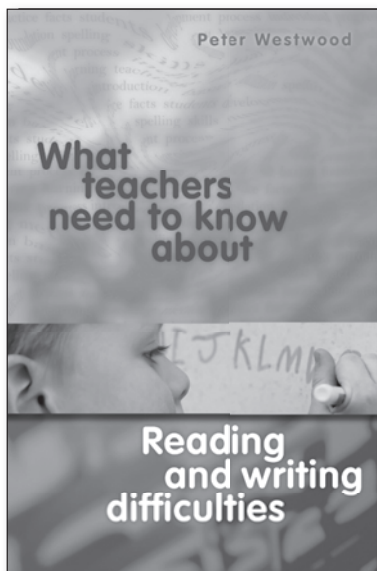
What Teachers Need to Know About

Reading and Writing Difficulites

Peter Westwood
ACER Press, 2008

Literacy skills are fundamental to all areas of learning in the school curriculum but also have a profound impact on an individual's chances of finding satisfying work in the years beyond school. **Reading and Writing Difficulties** draws on the latest research from around the world to explain some of the causes of literacy problems and gives practical advice on methods to support students with their own difficulties. Details of additional resources and online links are provided to assist teachers who wish to pursue some of the issues in greater depth.

About the author

Peter Westwood has been an Associate Professor of Education and has taught all age groups. He holds awards for excellence in teaching from Flinders University in South Australia and from the University of Hong Kong. Peter has published many books and articles on educational subjects and is currently an educational consultant based in Macau, China.

To order **Reading and Writing Difficulties** visit <http://shop.acer.edu.au>.

To view other titles available in this series visit <http://www.acer.edu.au/need2know>.

ACER
BOOKSHOP

The ACER Bookshop specialises in:

• Teacher Resources • Special Needs • Unicom Education
• Literacy • Numeracy • Speech and Language • Early Years
• Student Wellbeing • Leadership and Management • Parenting
• Study and Scholarship Materials • Research Publications

Ask our Bookseller to:

• source publications for you from other publishers and distributors
• quote and fulfill your entire school booklist
• post your order to you, if necessary.

www.acerbookshop.com.au

Scaffolding Literacy

Scaffolding Literacy describes an alternative approach to literacy teaching in primary schools based on the principles of explicitly teaching how authors use words to convey meaning. The book provides a detailed description of the scaffolding literacy teaching sequence and related strategies developed at the University of Canberra over two decades. It explains why the scaffolding literacy approach enables learners to better understand the reading, language studies and writing tasks asked of them in school.

Dr Beverley Axford was Director of the Schools and Community Centre at the University of Canberra from 2004 to 2008. Pam Harders and Fay Wise are language and literacy teachers in ACT primary schools and have both taught in the Faculty of Education at the University of Canberra.

ACER