



Slacks Creek State School
Literacy Strategy
2008-2010

Context

Slacks Creek State School is a co-educational, state school catering for students in prep to year 7. We currently have approximately 290 students grouped in traditional, single year classes where numbers permit. However, because of numbers, some of our students are placed in composite classes.

We aim to provide a balanced education for our children in a supportive environment. We aim to develop self-esteem, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values on an equitable basis, thus establishing a foundation for lifelong learning.

The school is part of the Logan-Albert-Beaudesert District of Education Queensland.

Strategy

The Literacy Strategy outlined in this document is organised under the following organisers and aligns with Education Queensland's Literacy Strategy.

Literacy Teaching
Literacy Learning
Literacy in the Curriculum
Literacy Leadership

Literacy Teaching

Increasing professional knowledge and skills in teaching literacy

It is the quality of teaching that makes the biggest difference to students' literacy outcomes across the phases of learning. Teachers draw on a range of teaching practices to meet the literacy needs to individual students and diverse student communities.

Slacks Creek State School provides professional development opportunities to staff focusing on effective practices in the teaching of literacy.

- Ann Baker (Reading Comprehension Strategies)
- Literacy Strategy Training for all Teachers and Teacher Aides 2007/2008

Teaching Reading

Reading is our core business at Slacks Creek State School. Each week four mandated literacy blocks, which run for 1 hour, are delivered. These literacy blocks incorporate the explicit teaching of reading via guided reading groups which are based on the Fountas and Pannell Model. Effective management of resources (teacher aides, books) supports the teaching of reading in our classrooms.

LITERACY TEACHING

Teaching writing

Explicit teaching of text types occurs during mandated literacy blocks. Subject matter, roles and relationships and mode and medium underpin all teaching of writing. Textual features are explicitly taught and include:

- Generic Structure – how the text is organized
- Cohesion – how the ideas are related
- Vocabulary – which words are used and why
- Grammar – how the words are organized
- Intonation, Paragraphing, Punctuation – how important ideas are indicated
- Pronunciation, Spelling, Handwriting – how sound/letter patterns are used
- Extra features which support the text – Graphics, diagrams, photos...

Scope and sequence documents are used to support and inform the teaching of writing at our school. These documents, developed by QSA identify content, processes and knowledge to be addressed at year level benchmarks

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE DOCUMENTS (Appendix 1)

- ▣ literary and non-literary text types
- ▣ grammar

Through exposure, exploration of generic structure, textual features, modeling, and construction students learn to produce purposeful, literate texts which communicate an understanding of the world around them.

LITERACY TEACHING

Teaching Spelling

Slacks Creek State School is adopts a whole school phonemic approach to spelling. Soundwaves is used to support the teaching of spelling in years prep – 7. Essential spelling lists are available for each year level.

The delivery of the Soundwaves spelling program will see students:

- explore the phonemes (the basic sounds in our language) of our language,
- discover and identify graphemes (the letter or letters used to represent these sounds)
- develop an awareness of spelling patterns
- develop strategies for spelling
- explore and extend vocabulary

A scope and sequence document (Appendix 2), developed by QSA, is used to support the teaching and learning of spelling at our school. This document provides guidance spelling knowledges and year level benchmarks. These knowledges include:

- ▣ Phonological knowledge
- ▣ Word function knowledge
- ▣ Meaning knowledge
- ▣ Word history knowledge

Teachers are also encouraged to access the CD-ROM, *Spelling: Improving learning outcomes*, for examples of diagnostic tools useful in determining individual instructional levels. (Available at library of HoC)

Literacy Learning

Assessing, tracking and improving literacy learning outcomes for all students in the context of diverse backgrounds and abilities.

There is increasing diversity in the student population and students bring with them to the classroom rich and diverse languages, dialects and literacy skills. The combination of poverty with diversity (for example, gender, ethnicity, location and disability) creates one of the most significant challenges for literacy teaching in the 21st century.

Recognition of diversity in literacy curriculum

Our school is fortunate to draw its student population from a diverse group of cultures. We acknowledge and embrace the benefits this diversity brings to our curriculum. We recognise in particular, the direct benefits of cultural diversity on the literacy curriculum. We recognise the richness that a different cultural background and heritage can bring to the classroom.

Tracking and Assessing Reading

PM Benchmarks are used to measure reading age and comprehension.

PROBE will be used from the beginning of 2008 for measuring reading age and comprehension in the middle years.

Literacy Learning

Tracking and Assessing Writing

Text type criteria sheets are used to assess student writing performance.

3/5/7 data is used as a tool for raising student outcomes in writing. Gender, ATSI and individual performance on these tests is analysed and strategies to raise literacy learning are developed.

Tracking and Assessing Spelling

South Australia Spelling test is currently used across the school to measure spelling proficiency.

All data in literacy is collected by teachers and used to inform overall grade in literacy. This data is then collated and presented on a data summary sheet which is stored electronically on the curriculum server and passed on to following teachers.

Literacy in the Curriculum

Improving literacy capabilities for learning in all areas of the curriculum.

If all students are to learn effectively, they must become literate to learn in different areas of the curriculum across the phases of learning. Literacy demands in the curriculum interface with a body of knowledge such as a Key Learning Area or subject for example. For example, in Science, students may need to write science reports after undertaking investigations or experiments. This requires using language systems including specialised text and language structures, vocabulary and graphics that are specific to constructing knowledge in Science and that may not be learnt in other areas of learning. If these literacy demands are left implicit and not taught explicitly they provide barriers to learning.

Text types are also taught within the context of an integrated unit. This allows the students to develop specific subject matter knowledge in tandem with the text type. Teachers identify text type focus in their integrated planning.

	Mathematics	Science	S.O.S.E	HPE	The Arts	Technology	L.O.T.E
Suggested Text Types	Graphs	Report	Factual Recount	Recount	Review	Procedure	Description
	Report		Personal Letter		Description		Lists
					Narrative		Personal Letter
					Poetry		

Literacy Leadership

Enhancing curriculum leadership

Curriculum leadership is pivotal in supporting school communities and teachers to engage in professional development relating to literacy in the curriculum. Whilst it is acknowledged that schools have teachers with literacy expertise, it is imperative that literacy leadership in schools should be provided by Heads of Departments and Principals. It is also acknowledged that Principals require support from other curriculum leaders to take up this leadership, Executive Directors (Schools), Regional Executive Directors, and Assistant Directors-General have a role in providing this support.

Slacks Creek State School recognises the importance of strong leadership in literacy. The principal is the pedagogical leader and is supported by the Head of Curriculum and teaching staff to ensure that literacy teaching is meeting the needs of the student cohort. The principal and head of curriculum work with staff to ensure the strategic provision of professional development and resources is facilitated. Expertise among teaching staff is identified and represented on the literacy committee.

Identified Roles and Responsibilities

The principal is the leader of literacy pedagogy and learning and is supported by the Head of Curriculum. The teacher-librarian is a valuable resource and supports with explicit teaching strategies, resources and knowledge around the effective development of literate students. The class teachers explicitly plan for, implement and monitor the literacy needs of the students in their care. They are supported effectively by the teacher aides on staff.