



The Writing Bandscales document 9 levels of writing development, from initial exposure to print-based literacy through to written proficiency. They are designed specifically for teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who speak a language other than Standard Australian English in their home or community environment.

Junior Primary Writing Major Teaching Emphases:

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Major Teaching Emphases for Every Level:

- Acknowledge and value the HL. Learn about the features of the HL of the students.
- Provide a model of SAE. By speaking in SAE at all times, the teacher is providing a consistent example of SAE. Student confusion arises when the teacher switches between languages without acknowledging a switch. Use a bilingual aide to provide HL model whenever possible when discussing language differences.
- Develop relationships with the community, eg. Adopt a council worker, school radio, Adopt-an-Elder, provide a Coffee Corner in your Classroom for Parents, Walk around the community after school, sit with locals at the store, wear community or school t-shirts, place school notices in hospital, create a community garden, etc.
- Provide a model of writing behaviour.
- Provide a range of experiences of modelled writing at every opportunity, enabling children to make links between spoken and written words, messages, notices, lists.
- Create and refer to, a print rich environment.
- Expose children to SAE: contextualised language, songs, rhymes, stories.
- Implement Oral language development activities.
- Jointly construct texts for genuine/real-life purposes and audiences, eg. Invitations to class events, messages, excursions, lists, etc.
- Refer children to environmental print such as word banks, word walls, labels and names and model its possibilities for helping them in their writing.
- Expose children to a range of literacy materials and genres in appropriate contexts, enabling children to appreciate the enjoyment and purpose of print. Build from the known to the unknown.
- Provide opportunities for many re-readings by a variety of readers, to see that written messages stay the same.
- Maintain consistency in display locations.
- Assemble environmental print with context where possible.
- Provide multiple copies of print in alternative formats in a variety of locations around classroom.
- Include discussion as a prerequisite to writing to provide opportunities for ideas and the development of SAE vocabulary and sentence structures.
- Provide scaffolds in the form of word banks, displayed work and any modelled writing for children to access.
- Provide maximum scaffolding and support for all writing attempts eg. Word-banks, print rich environment.
- Provide daily modelled writing and negotiated writing to model strategies, concentrating on one aspect of the writing at a time.

Use roleplay to develop oral language and provide scaffolding for writing attempts.

Pre-level 1:

- Provide models of SAE.
- Accept HL as a valid form of communication.
- Acknowledge and value the HL. Use strategies to raise awareness of the differences between HL and SAE (see "Making the Jump", Ch. 4)
- Provide models of writing behaviour.
- Provide experiences enabling children to become familiar and confident in using 'school-based' mediums.
- Provide a model of writing, drawing, art, and keyboard writing implements.
- Allow free exploration of writing materials.
- Provide experiences which will enable the development of fine motor skills relevant to the 'school' tools eg. threading, tearing, collage, mouse skills, keyboarding.
- Provide a range of experiences of modelled writing at every opportunity, enabling children to make links between spoken and written words, messages, notices, lists.
- Create and refer to, a print rich environment.
- Expose children to SAE : contextualised language, songs, rhymes, stories.
- Implement sensory-motor programs to enhance coordination, thinking and concentration, (eg. "Braingym", "Perceptual Motor Program")
- Make every available opportunity to provide models of writing behaviour.
- Select new vocabulary and introduce gradually before, during and after activities.
- Make up simple "Yes and No" statements based on texts for students to respond to, eg. The prince is a boy.

Note: Teachers should be aware of medical histories and health issues such as the need to take a proactive role in assessing hearing.

Be aware that some children may remain on this level for a longer period of time dependent upon their interaction with written texts, as well as factors such as confidence and amount of auditory processing due to Otitis Media. Resultant hearing loss can delay the development of phonologic skills necessary in writing.

Be aware that writing is the culmination of many skills and may take the longest to gain confidence and proficiency in.

Level 1:

- Encourage use of HL to discuss drawings etc, but also provide SAE model.
- Emphasise connection between oral and written, eg. Scribing children's stories, ensuring that the adult writes the words that the child says, rather than translating into SAE then writing.
- Encourage the use of SAE labels as a scaffold to further SAE and connection between written and spoken language.
- Model joint construction of texts for genuine/real-life purposes and audiences where the teacher scribes the children's oral contributions, eg. Invitations to class events, messages, excursions, lists, etc.
- Jointly construct texts with children acting out appropriate actions, eg. In a recount - First we ran to the bus. Then we sat on the seats, etc.
- Model repetitive, predictable language structures.
- Sequence photographs from a class event with teacher scribing.
- Refer children to environmental print such as meaningful labels and names and model its possibilities for helping them in their writing.
- Encourage risk-taking in experimenting with writing attempts, praise all attempts to encourage confidence and risk-taking behaviour.
- Expose children to a range of literacy materials and genres in appropriate contexts, enabling children to appreciate the enjoyment and purpose of print and experiment with writing media.
- Build from the known to the unknown, eg. In a community school, a visit to the Community Health Centre could lead to the creation of a Hospital in the classroom, with children role-playing prescription writing, filling out forms, etc.
- Model the use of alphabet charts.
- Demonstrate letter/word/space concepts.

Level 2:

- Provide opportunities for children to write, accepting all attempts.
- Scaffold writing experiences: stamps to show where to start (L-R), alphabet charts for reference.
- Explicitly teach letter-sound correspondences.
- Provide opportunities for children to share their writing experiences with classmates in HL and teacher in SAE.
- Provide opportunities for many re-readings by a variety of readers, to see that written messages stay the same.
- Use wordless picture books as a resource for joint construction of texts, with questions to guide development.
- Maintain consistency in display locations.
- Assemble environmental print with context.
- Refer children to environmental print such as word banks, word walls, labels and names and model its possibilities for helping them in their writing.
- Provide multiple copies of print in alternative formats in a variety of locations around classroom.
- Build word banks collated from students' writing (eg. Pronouns, past tense verbs, action verbs).
- Use language separation activities, eg. Develop Two-Way charts with children, eg. bin go - went; bin run – ran. (See 'Making the Jump", p.33)
- Jointly construct texts with students orally assisting while teacher scribes. Explicitly outline the generic structure of the text, eg. With a recount - "First we need to write when we went to the hospital."
- Use sound recording of children 'reading' their writing to help them to grasp that a written message stays the same, eg., listening posts.
- Where children have given a story to their picture it is vital that their telling in HL is valued, and encouraged. Teachers should not interrupt or translate until the child has finished or is ready, thus enabling development in HL as a means of developing SAE and self-esteem.
- Where children have attempted to write a message for their picture, teachers should accept the HL explanation of the child but provide the SAE translation, only after explaining the process of translating. Eg. "In Kriol we say 'One dog, five dog'. In SAE we say 'One dog, five dogs'. (See "Making the Jump", p. 73).
- Create texts for a group of students to proof-read with the teacher on an overhead transparency. Focus on one element at a time, eg. punctuation, grammar, spelling.

Pre-level 3:

- Include discussion as a prerequisite to writing to provide opportunities for ideas and building SAE vocabulary and sentence structures.
- Provide scaffolds in the form of word banks, displayed work and any modelled writing for children to access.
- Model explicit differences between HL and SAE using language separation activities, eg. Develop Two-Way charts with children, eg. *bin go* - went; *bin run* – ran. (See "Making the Jump", p.33)
- Focus on the development of one aspect of writing (eg. Rereading to check or grammar) at a time.
- Use visual texts, ie. Illustrations, story maps, etc, to support preplanning before writing.
- Praise and encourage all attempts at spelling and writing.
- Explain the language differences between HL and SAE that may make the spelling or grammar inappropriate when writing in SAE. Provide models of complete simple high-usage SAE sentences that children can refer to and use in their writing (e.g. We went fishing. I went hunting. We are going to the football.).
- Model editing skills and proof-reading strategies. Construct editing and proof-reading guides to assist.
- Continue to explicitly teach letter-sound relationships and common letter clusters, eg. ight, scr.
- Use joint construction to demonstrate how to plan writing and to verbalise the writing process, eg. "I've just written a question, so I'll need to put a question mark here."
- Demonstrate how to construct sentences using correct punctuation.
- Rehearse and perform stories to make explicit aspects of speech.
- Utilise the services of the Hearing Impairment advisors to devise programs to address language delays and hearing impairment issues.

Level 3:

- Provide maximum scaffolding and support for all writing attempts eg. Word-banks, print rich environment, sentence starters.
- Use language separation activities, eg. Develop Two-Way charts with children, eg. bin go - went; bin run – ran. (See Making the Jump, p.33)
- Provide daily modelled writing and negotiated writing to model strategies, editing, transformations, concentrating on one aspect of the writing at a time, eg. editing to clarify meaning.
- Use visual texts, ie. Illustrations, story maps, etc, to support preplanning before writing.
- Accept that use of connectors may be a legitimate form of oral language story-telling which has been transferred into written form.
- Provide affirmation to the writer with minimum interruption to the writing process respecting that affirmation is a cultural feature of HL story-telling.
- Jointly construct a variety of meaningful genres within the classroom context, eg. Monitors' lists, tuckshop orders, messages to other children: all purposeful uses of literacy.
- Encourage roleplay to develop oral language and provide scaffolding for writing attempts.
- Encourage use of spelling strategies, eg. Have-a-go Cards and emphasise and encourage risk-taking procedures.
- Explicitly teach spelling as part of word study at a level appropriate to each child, eg. short vowel level, 2 vowel level, meaning and base word level, etc.
- Encourage correct spelling of high frequency words as appropriate.
- Continue to model and explicitly teacher use of punctuation.
- Model how to construct written texts for particular audiences.
- Accept and encourage students' experimentations with new language features appropriate to the genre.
- Provide oral language activities prior to writing sessions.
- Use visual texts, ie. Illustrations, story maps, etc, to support preplanning before writing.
- Jointly rewrite known texts focusing on structure.
- Create texts for a group of students to proof-read with the teacher on an overhead transparency. Focus on one element at a time, eg. punctuation, grammar, spelling.
- Have students discuss and list possible topics for writing.
- Publish students' writing so that it can be revisited.
- Teachers must investigate and value local oral storytelling styles, ie. The use of repetition, use of conjunctions to convey suspense, as writing may reflect these features of oral language. (See "Towards a More User-Friendly Education for speakers of Aboriginal English" (1999), p. 54).
- Plan conference times with individual students to discuss children's own writing.

Level 4:

- Engage in pre-task and post-task talk about children's writing.
- Continue to model writing with children.
- Continue joint construction of texts with children.
- Continue teacher conferencing with individual students.
- Provide vocabulary and encourage students to use dictionaries.
- Provide children with more time to complete writing activities than that expected of mainstream speakers.
- Continue to provide a variety of contexts for writing.
- Encourage students to share their writing with others.
- Continue to build up word banks to explicitly teach the use of SAE, eg. Past, present tense verbs, plurals, pronouns, etc.
- Edit texts as a class activity.

Level 5:

- Engage in discussions with students before, during and after writing sessions.
- Model writing.
- Engage in joint construction of texts.
- Continue conferencing with students individually.
- Develop and extend vocabulary of students, including awareness of different semantic meanings attributed to the same words in HL and SAE.
- Continue to explicitly teach and model the use of SAE vocabulary and linguistic structures appropriate to various genres.
- Accept and encourage students' experimentations with new language features appropriate to the genre.
- Publish students' writing so that it can be revisited.
- Continue to use visual texts to assist with preplanning for writing.

Level 6:

- Develop background knowledge and cultural understandings of SAE.
- Model proof-reading work as a double-check for incomplete sentences, spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.
- Design and use a checklist or guide for proofreading and editing a piece of writing. Display for student reference. Provide examples of each type of edit.
- Provide models of generic structures for students to refer to.
- Continue to precede writing with oral discussion and use of visual texts (as appropriate) to preplan writing.
- Engage in discussions with students before, during and after writing sessions.
- Model writing.
- Engage in joint construction of texts.
- Continue conferencing with students individually.
- Develop and extend vocabulary of students.
- Continue to explicitly teach and model the use of SAE vocabulary and linguistic structures appropriate to various genres.
- Accept and encourage students' written approximations with new language features appropriate to the genre.
- Publish students' writing so that it can be revisited.
- Continue to use visual texts to assist with preplanning for writing.
- Practise writing new text types with suitable proformas to encourage effective planning.
- Provide opportunities to write individually and collaboratively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Use other texts as models for aspects of writing.
- Continue writing development activities as those expected with mainstream students.

Level 7:

- Provide background knowledge and cultural understanding
- Model proof-reading work as a double-check for incomplete sentences, spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.
- Design and use a checklist or guide for proofreading and editing a piece of writing. Display for student reference. Provide examples of each type of edit.
- Provide models of generic structures for students to refer to.
- Continue to precede writing with oral discussion and use of visual texts (as appropriate) to preplan writing.
- Continue writing development activities as those expected with mainstream students.

Glossary

SAE - Standard Australian SAE

HL - Home Language This represents the languages or dialects that the child speaks at home. This may be a traditional indigenous language, a Creole or a dialect of SAE, eg. Kala Kawaw Ya, Wik-mungkan,, Torres Strait Creole, Aboriginal English. Note that many children are exposed to multi-lingual settings in their home environment.

Mainstream students - Those students who come to school with SAE as a home language.

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