

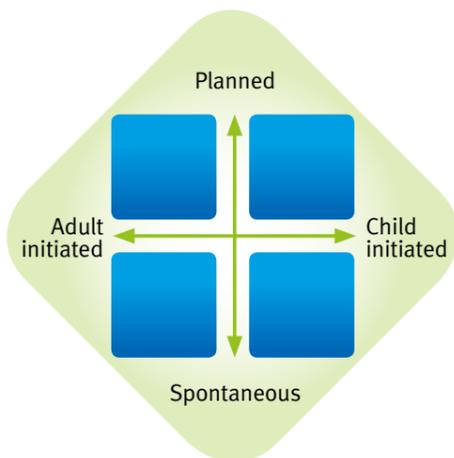
Aligning curriculum, pedagogies and assessment, an example of practice in Prep/Year 1 Play-based learning - 'Developing oral language through play'

Australian Curriculum - English

Sequencing teaching and learning

How do I teach it?

Achieving range and balance*



Approach

- Play-based learning

Practices

- Socio-dramatic play

Strategies

- Use of props
- Use of costumes
- Pre and post play discussions
- Documentation of play

Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies*

- Active
- Agentic
- Collaborative
- Creative
- Explicit
- Language rich and dialogic
- Learner focused
- Narrative
- Playful
- Responsive
- Scaffolded

*See over for an explanation of approaches, practices and strategies, and the characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies evident in this Example of practice.

Our students

Working together to ensure that every day, in every classroom, every student is learning and achieving

This is an example of how one teacher incorporated **play-based learning** to support young learners' oral language development in a Prep/Year 1 classroom.

In response to Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data related to the *Communication skills and General knowledge* domain, and anecdotal evidence of the young learners' oral language development across Prep and Year 1, the teacher provided a space within the classroom to allow engagement in oral language through play. This oral language through play was based on the seven functions of oral language opportunities as outlined in *Learning How to Mean: explorations in the development of language* (Halliday 1975). Halliday explains that young learners are motivated to acquire language because it serves certain purposes or functions for them. The *instrumental, regulatory, interactional* and *personal* functions help to satisfy physical, emotional and social needs. The *heuristic, imaginative* and *representational* functions help the young learner to come to terms with his or her environment.

The space for this oral language play took up one area of the room and

was changed in response to a current event, project or inquiry. Props and costumes were carefully chosen to prompt and scaffold specific oral language outcomes (for example, safety goggles, lab coats, digital microscope, magnifying glasses, tweezers, live silkworms, clipboards, camera, desktop computer showing video clips of silk worm development, small cardboard boxes - to support play in the Silkworm laboratory).

Throughout the year the play space included the Silkworm laboratory, Obstacle course engineer's workshop, Commemorative museum and Fairy tale castle. The Silkworm laboratory involved the use of heuristic language - 'I can use language to gain knowledge about the environment'. The Obstacle course engineer's workshop focused on regulatory language - 'I can use language to tell others what to do'. The Commemorative museum engaged the learners in representational language - 'I can use language to convey facts and information'. The Fairy tale castle encouraged imaginative language - 'I can use language to create an imaginary environment'.

The teacher scaffolded this oral language learning through the use of pre and post play discussions, modelling and joining the play when appropriate.

Assessment

What do my students already know? How well do they know it?

Assessment **for learning** - anecdotal notes, audio recordings and observational checklists

Assessment **as learning** - pre and post play discussions, peer feedback, teacher feedback

Assessment **of learning** - there was no summative assessment task attached to this play-based learning.

Making judgments

How will I know how well my students have demonstrated the Achievement Standard?

Although there was no summative assessment task attached to this play-based learning, by monitoring learning through the use of assessment **for** and **as** learning related to the Australian Curriculum English learning area, and providing feedback to the young learners, decisions could be made by

the teacher relating to what:

- the learners knew and understood
- strengths, misconceptions and misunderstandings were evident
- were the next steps for learning.

Feedback

What do my students already know?

What do my students need to learn next?

The teacher used anecdotal notes, audio recordings and observations to inform feedback.

The feedback provided the young learners with progress on their learning to date (*Keaton, I noticed that you spoke to Abi using a clear voice when you were explaining why some of the silkworm eggs haven't hatched*), and gave specific information about what to do next (*Remember to make eye contact when you are speaking to someone*).

Ongoing, informal verbal feedback was given throughout the oral language play, as appropriate to this play-based learning.



Curriculum intent

What do my students need to learn?

Australian Curriculum - English

The English curriculum is built around the three interrelated strands of language, literature and literacy. Teaching and learning programs should balance and integrate all three strands. Together, the three strands focus on developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills in listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating. **Students apply knowledge they have developed to create with clarity, authority and novelty a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts that entertain, inform and persuade audiences.**

Foundation (Prep) Year Content Descriptions (as applicable to this play-based learning)

Literacy

- Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations (ACELY1646)
- Use interaction skills including listening while others speak, using appropriate voice levels, articulation and body language, gestures and eye contact (ACELY 1784)
- Deliver short oral presentations to peers (ACELY 1647)

Aspects of the Foundation (Prep) Year Achievement Standard (as applicable to this play-based learning)

Productive modes (speaking, writing and creating)

By the end of the Foundation year, students use appropriate interaction skills to listen and respond to others in a familiar environment. In informal group and whole class settings, students communicate clearly.

Year 1 Content Descriptions (as applicable to this play-based learning)

Literacy

- Engage in conversations and discussions, using active listening behaviours, showing interest, and contributing ideas, information and questions (ACELY 1656)
- Use interaction skills including turn-taking, recognising the contributions of others, speaking clearly and using appropriate volume and pace (ACELY 1788)
- Make short presentations using some introduced text structures and language, for example opening statements (ACELY 1657)

Aspects of the Year 1 Achievement Standard (as applicable to this play-based learning)

Productive modes (speaking, writing and creating)

By the end of Year 1, students listen to others when taking part in conversations, using appropriate language features and interaction skills. They interact in pair, group and class discussions, taking turns when responding.

Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies evident in this example of practice

The young learners' focus, concentration and motivation were enhanced through their active, physical engagement with the play space. Their oral language learning was social and co-constructed as they engaged with their peers in the oral language play. The young learners were invited to investigate, inquire and create through their engagement with props and costumes. Oral language was modelled and employed by both young learners and adults in the play space, allowing for meaningful dialogue, imaginative curriculum learning and purposeful play. The production and comprehension of oral narratives were supported through the play, in a space where the young learners felt free to take risks. The young learners were able to make connections through imagination and creativity, exploring alternate worlds, ways of thinking and curriculum knowledge. They were able to innovate and enact new possibilities in a playful way.

Although only six of the characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies have been highlighted here, there were opportunities to embed each of the eleven characteristics.

Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies

Active

Requiring physical and embodied engagement across all areas of learning. Whether this is indoors or outdoors, activity is essential in order to activate children's full potential. Their focus, concentration, motivation and self-regulation are enhanced through moving, doing and interacting within a range of learning environments.

Agentic

Ensuring that children have voice in their learning. Their ideas and interests initiate, support and extend learning possibilities in order to build on their real-world understandings and experiences.

Collaborative

Being social and co-constructed. Children and educators work together to identify ways of learning and understanding through sustained shared thinking and action.

Creative

Inviting children to consider "What if?" They encourage investigation, inquiry and artistry to explore new possibilities and ways of thinking.

Explicit

Making conscious for both learner and educator the relationships between the learning purpose and processes employed and the skills and understanding these processes support.

Language rich and dialogic

Ensuring that learning occurs in environments where rich language is modelled and employed by both children and educators. Meaningful dialogues between children, as well as between children and educators, are created to support thinking, learning, engagement and imagination.

Learner focused

Recognising that all children learn in different ways and that learning is a highly individualised process. They also acknowledge differences in children's physical, intellectual, cultural, social and personal experiences and perspectives.

Narrative

Acknowledging the important role that personal, written, oral and digital stories play in all our lives. They support both the production and comprehension of narratives through active processes, especially play.

Playful

Encouraging children to make connections through imagination and creativity to explore alternate worlds and ways of thinking. These worlds, not bounded by reality, offer the freedom children need to innovate and enact new possibilities.

Responsive

Incorporating a willingness to be flexible, to ensure that learning is always child, context, content and discipline appropriate. To achieve this, educators will balance opportunities for structure and spontaneity, open-ended and specific tasks, and child-led and educator-led learning.

Scaffolded

Including such actions as modelling, encouraging, questioning, adding challenges, and giving feedback, provide the support needed to extend children's existing capabilities. Effective scaffolding by both educators and other children provides active structures to support new learning; it is then progressively withdrawn as learners gain increasing mastery.

Approach - Play-based learning

Practices*

Socio-dramatic play

In response to Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data related to the *Communication skills* and *General knowledge* domain, and anecdotal evidence of the young learners' oral language development across Prep and Year 1, the teacher made the decision to support oral language development through the use of socio-dramatic play. Socio-dramatic play became a regular part of indoor learning time and was also used in the outdoors.

*These are examples of the Practices implemented, and not intended as a finite list.

Strategies*

Use of props

Props were carefully selected to be both open-ended (including realistic, symbolic and unstructured props), and supportive of the specific oral language intention that underpinned the play. In the *Fairy tale castle*, for example, where imaginative language was the focus, props included commercially produced crowns, bolts of fabric, blocks, collage and box construction materials. Realistic props were useful as tools to introduce children to the play, but symbolic and unstructured props added to the richness of the play.

Use of costumes

As with the use of props, the costumes were chosen carefully as an invitation to play. These costumes supported the young learners in taking on roles within the play. Many members of the class chose to bring props and costumes from home.

Pre and post play discussions

Pre play discussions encouraged the young learners to practise using learning area specific language to discuss the play scenario, and to make the roles, props, and actions clear to all players. During this time, the teacher prompted the use of new vocabulary and encouraged the young learners to use the curriculum specific elements that were available in the play area. Post play discussions allowed time for feedback and future play planning.

Documentation of play

The play was documented through the use of anecdotal notes, voice recordings and observational checklists related to specific oral language goals and curriculum specific content descriptions.

* These are examples of the Strategies implemented, and not intended as a finite list.

Questions for teacher-based reflection

- How is an array of effective pedagogies ensured?
- How are holistic development and academic goals balanced?
- How is a balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated learning experiences fostered?
- How are positive personal relationships with children nurtured?
- How is playfulness in learning and teaching interactions embedded?
- How are high-quality, verbal interactions encouraged?
- How are interactions to scaffold cognitive challenge and develop higher order thinking incorporated?
- How are real-life, imaginary, spontaneous and planned experiences integrated?

Questions for school-based reflection

- How is the provision of training, resources and support considered?
- How are the professional demands on teachers, and the lead-in time required to establish new approaches, recognised and supported?