

Teaching and Learning Primary English

Edited by
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Angela Thomas



Chapter openers

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CHAPTER
1

WELCOME TO *TEACHING AND
LEARNING PRIMARY ENGLISH*

DAMON THOMAS

Summary

- Teaching English is important but can also seem overwhelming. The amount of English content taught in primary school is considerable.
- The central metaphor of the text is a travel guide to help navigate the often complicated, crowded, and interconnected landscape of English education.
- The *Australian Curriculum: English* guides English teaching in Australian schools. It divides English into three strands: language, literacy, and literature. Each strand is divided into substrands, and each substrand is used to organise a list of content descriptions that teachers should teach and assess in each year level.
- Explicit instruction is the main pedagogical approach underpinning the teaching and learning experiences in the text's chapters.
- The many destinations of this book are tied together by the notion of mentor texts, used by primary school teachers to model how proficient readers and writers make meaning in culturally relevant ways.



Points of interest

- Introduction 03
- English education as a travel guide 03
- The three strands of the Australian Curriculum 04
- English as a coherent and cumulative body of knowledge 05
- What is explicit instruction? 06
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- Mentor texts 11

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CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF READING INSTRUCTION

DAMON THOMAS



Summary

- Reading promotes important personal and social benefits. Every primary school teacher needs to be an expert reading teacher.
- Reading has been taught using several methods. Major government reviews in the 2000s suggested that effective reading instruction has five key elements: phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency.
- Different kinds of texts can support students' early reading development. Levelled readers are associated with the whole language method of teaching reading, while decodable texts are associated with a phonics-based method.
- The gradual release of responsibility model is an explicit approach for teaching reading. It includes four stages: focused instruction; guided instruction; collaborative learning and independent learning.

Points of interest

- Teaching reading with the ABC method 18
- Looking and saying through the whole word method 19
- The return of phonics 20
- A new reading philosophy: The whole language approach 20
- Introducing the simple view of reading 21
- Government reviews into the teaching of reading 22
- Aspects of whole language still being taught 23
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- When to use levelled readers and decodable texts 26
- How the GRR model works 27

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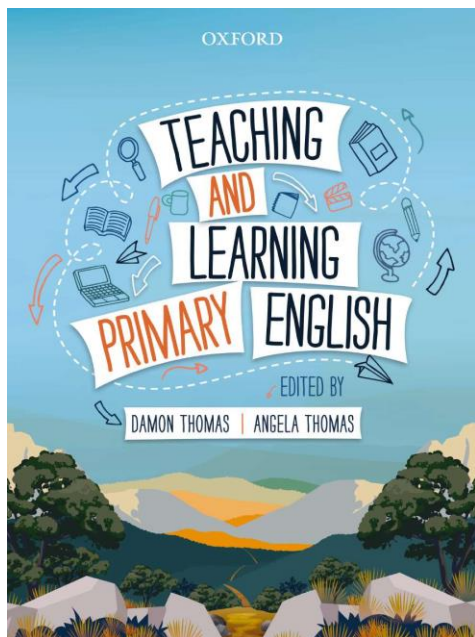


Image Bank

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Chapter 2

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Figure 2.1 A *Dick and Jane* reader

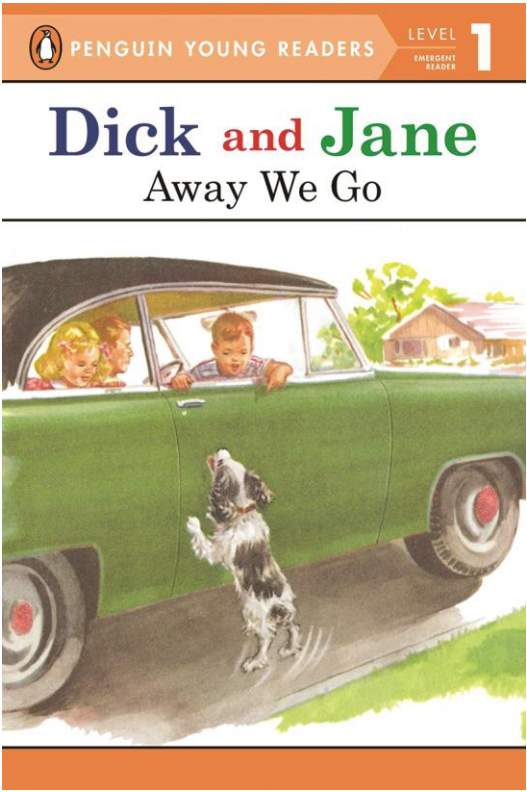


Figure 2.2 Original design of the GRR model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983, p. 337)

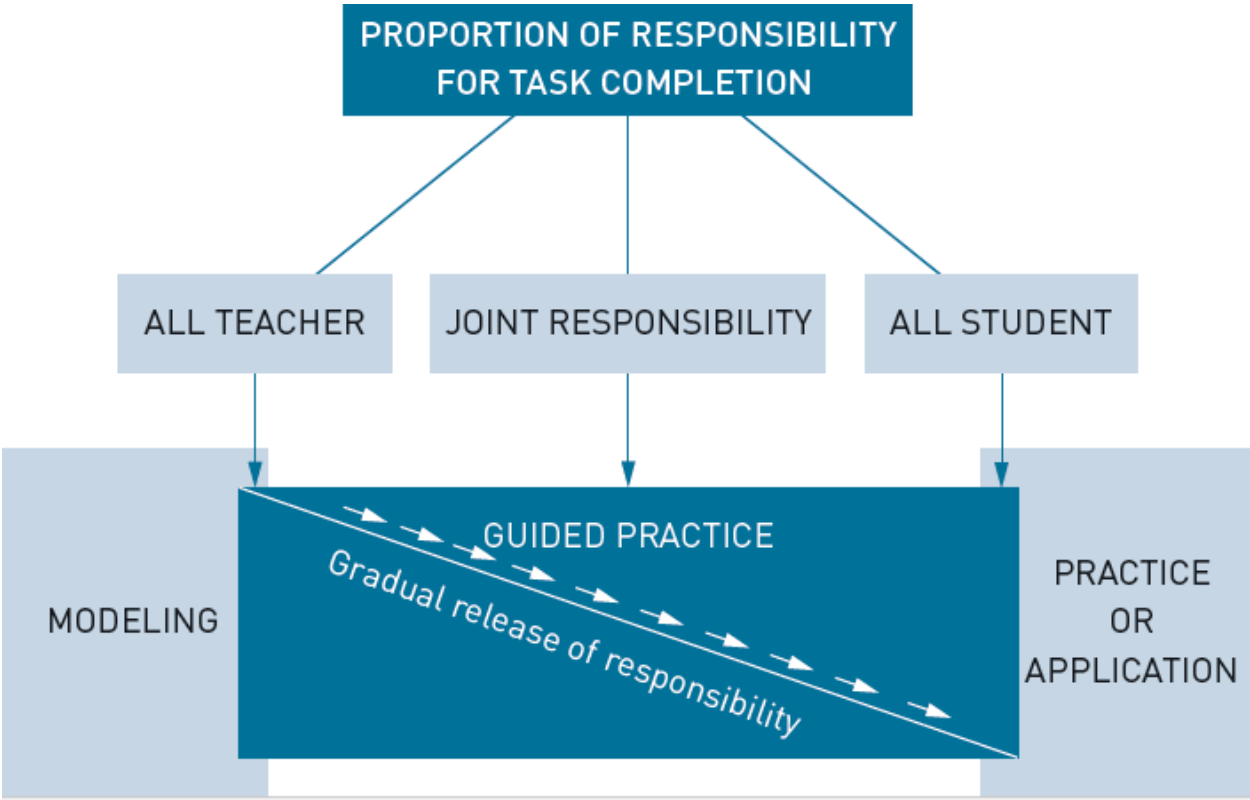


Figure 2.3 Stages of the GRR model (Fisher & Frey, 2013)

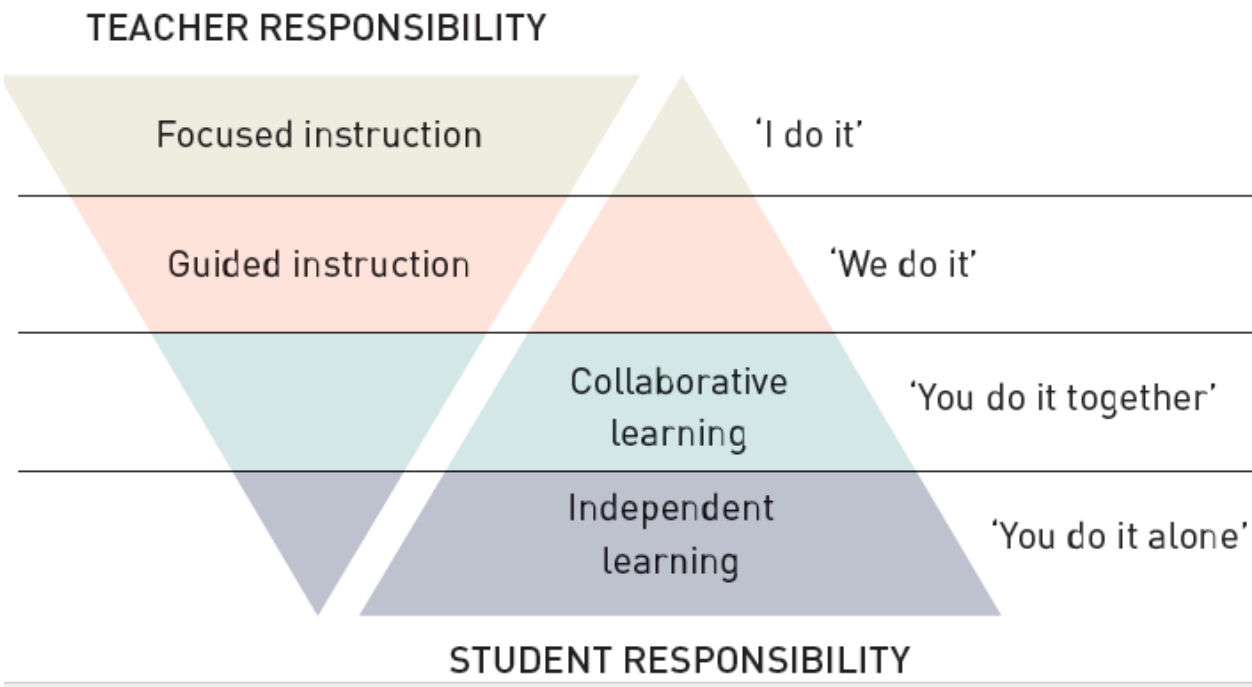
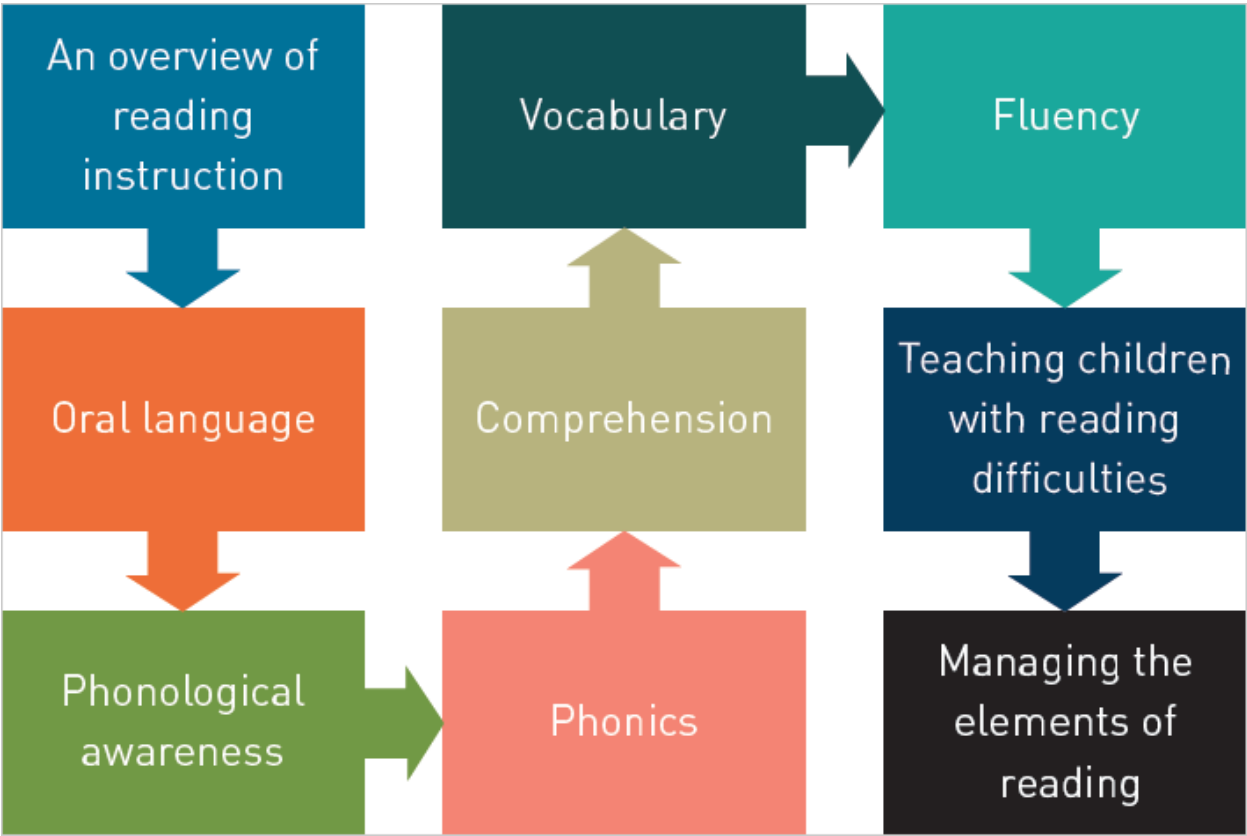
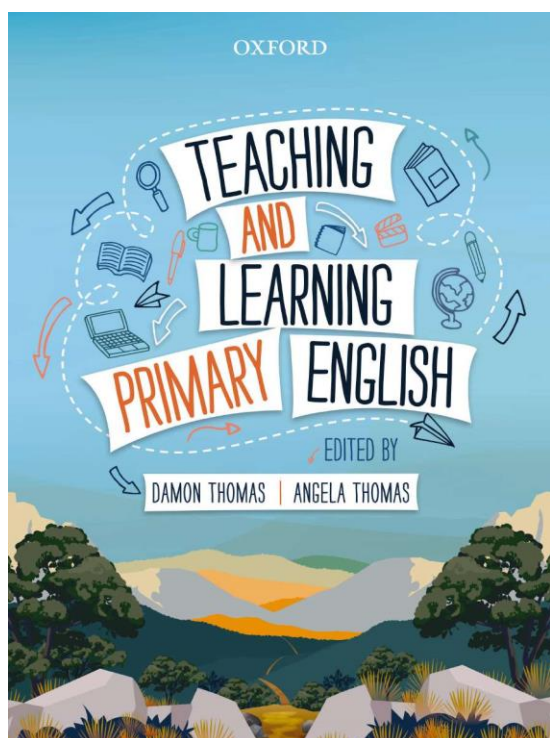


Figure 2.4 Conceptualisation of reading in *Teaching and Learning Primary English*





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Lesson Overviews

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Table of Lesson Overviews

	Page referenc e	Subject	Early primar y	Middle primar y	Late primar y
3.3	50	Grammar: Identifying a simple sentence (or clause) and its parts	x		
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4.3	69	Phonological awareness: Onset identification and phoneme manipulation	x		
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5.2	87	Phonics lesson: Teaching the GPC /p/ = <p>	x		
6.1	107	Comprehension: Teaching students to make predictions about narrative events	x		
6.2	107	Comprehension: Teaching students to infer			x
7.2	119	Vocabulary	x		
8.2	141	Fluency development			x
8.3	142	Read like me	x		x
9.2	156	Phoneme blending and segmenting: Teaching students how to blend and segment sounds in words	x		
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12.1	222	Punctuation: Using capital letters	x		
12.2	222	Sentence structure			x
14.1	265	To respond to a known text and write for a real audience across a range of text types	x		
14.2	266	To examine how dialogue can be used to tell a story and to show relationships between characters			x
15.2	284	The letter 'b'			
15.3	284	Word origins			x
16.7	303	Letter formation (using NSW Font). All three letters start in the same place and fit within the same fluency pattern	x		
16.8	304	Joining letters (using Victorian Cursive)		x	

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	Page referenc e	Subject	Early primar y	Middle primar y	Late primar y
18.6	336	The narratological representation of character in text			x
18.7	336	To explore the authenticity of character, setting, plot in an example of historical fiction representing the early 1900s	x		
19.2	353	Semiotic meanings of: vectors (and the lines and shapes they make) and the effects different choices have on the audience	x		
19.3	354	Features of postmodernism			x
20.1	372	Choral reading: Teaching students to express a poem's rhythm, language patterns, and meaning, through the decisions they make about how they read the poem	x		
20.2	373	Comprehension: Teaching students to explore ideology through language patterns and word associations			x
21.4	390	Understanding how sounds are used in film	x		
21.5	391	Exploring a narrative world and identifying the ways setting, character, and plot are impacted by interactivity			x
22.4	407	Examining perspectives, exploring poetic language	x	x	
22.5	408	Creative thinking, dramatic play, teacher/student in role, poetic language			x
22.6	410	Imaginative writing, building rich vocabulary, care of each other and our world	x		
23.1	420	Comprehension: Text-to-self connecting and disconnecting	x		
23.2	420	Identifying alternate perspectives		x	x
24.1	435	Critically analysing constructions of family: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the word 'perfect' and how it makes socially constructed meaning in the context of families Interrogate representation of 'family': pushing normative boundaries Analyse how the author views 'family' 	x		
24.2	436	Critically analysing two fairy tales with different viewpoints with a focus on raising environmental awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare the ways authors view 'the villain' in both tales 			x

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	Page referenc e	Subject	Early primar y	Middle primar y	Late primar y
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse how the rewritten fairy tale raises the issue of climate change 			



Table 3.3 Lesson overview: Early primary focus

Pauline Jones and Damon Thomas

Teaching focus	Grammar: Identifying a simple sentence (or clause) and its parts
Mentor text	<i>Magic Beach</i> by Alison Lester (1990/2020)
Stage focus	Early primary

Description of teaching strategies	
Before reading mentor text	<p>WALT and WILF: Explain that the lesson will focus on writing simple sentences using the images from <i>Magic Beach</i> to inspire them. They will learn about parts of the simple sentences and construct their own to accompany images from <i>Magic Beach</i>.</p> <p>Tuning-in activity: Remind children of the author, what they know about her and the texts that they have already encountered, pointing to these displayed prominently in the classroom. Ask children to turn to the person next to them and tell them their favourite Alison Lester book, giving a reason for their choice ('I like because').</p>
During reading of mentor text	<p>Teacher-focused reading: Reread the text to the children, stopping from time to time and asking what actions the characters in the text are doing.</p>
After reading mentor text	<p>Responding to action verbs: Select a page or two from the book with a lot of action verbs. Children stand and as you read these pages, exaggerate the verb groups while children 'perform' the actions.</p> <p>Joint construction of simple sentences: Display an image from one of the pages used in the previous activity and jointly construct a simple sentence by asking (i) 'What's happening?', encouraging children to nominate action verb groups such as 'are running' and 'are splashing,' etc.; (ii) 'Who or what is involved?' to elicit the participants such as 'The children' or 'The dog'; and (iii) 'Is there any other information such as when or where or how?' to elicit circumstances. Record this sentence and read with the children, drawing their attention to the words that represent 'What's happening?' by highlighting these in green, and then repeating with 'Who or what is involved?' (red) and 'extra information' in blue. Repeat with 2 or 3 more simple sentences depicting events from the book, perhaps asking individual children to act out the action verbs.</p> <p>Group work: Children work in small groups to complete the following activities: guided reading with teacher, writing on a class blog about the beach, a worksheet requiring children to identify parts of simple sentences using colours previously introduced, and a dice game to identify parts of simple sentence (see https://educationalsemiotics.wordpress.com/2013/01/08/imogenes-grammar-games).</p> <p>Conclusion: Reconvene whole class and share blog entries—draw children's attention to how sentences are constructed, which parts are always there, which can be moved around in a sentence, using metalanguage as appropriate to the class's experience. Explain that knowing about language in this way is an important part of being a writer and a reader.</p>



Table 3.4 Lesson overview: Upper primary focus

Pauline Jones and Damon Thomas

Teaching focus	Responding to literary texts
Mentor text	<i>The Island</i> by John Heffernan
Stage focus	Late primary

	Description of teaching strategies
Before reading mentor text	<p>WALT and WILF: Explain that the class will read a picturebook together and then discuss the author's ideas, the language used, and the illustrator's choices. Remind the class to listen and watch carefully while you read.</p> <p>Tuning-in activity: Introduce the book and discuss briefly the cover, eliciting ideas about what the book might be about, its setting, and its characters. Explain that this book focuses on the idea of happiness. Ask the class what makes them happy, drawing attention to responses that involve others—friendships, doing things together, etc.</p>
During reading of mentor text	<p>Teacher-focused reading: Read the text through once, ensuring that everyone has sufficient time to absorb the language and illustrations.</p>
After reading mentortext	<p>Responding to the text: Lead a class discussion of the text using the following general questions as prompts: 'Was there anything you liked about this book?', 'Was there anything that you disliked?', 'Did anything puzzle you?'</p> <p>To ensure that all students participate, ask them to turn to the person beside them to answer each of these questions: 'Were there any patterns—any connections—that you noticed?', 'Have you read other books like this?' Share just a few with the whole class.</p> <p>Revisiting the text: In small groups and with a copy of the book, students listen to a recording of you reading the story. Then each group takes one group of the <i>special</i> questions below to respond to. Remember to model the task requirements first with just one of the questions so that everyone knows what is required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you think the author wants the reader to think about and to value as a result of reading this text? In other words, what do you think is the message? What wordings tell you that?• Why has the author made the central character a blind urchin? How is he different from the rest of the tribe? Where does the book tell us this?• What do you notice about the illustrations? How do they contribute to the message of the text? Provide evidence for your ideas.• Would you recommend this book to children in other classes? Why or why not? Use examples from the book to support your answer. <p>Conclusion: Share each group's responses with the whole class, recording ideas for use during later work on written responses.</p>