

*Sharing knowledge,
building understandings*

Koorie Learners as Language Learners

A Teacher Practice Guide

April Edwards

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Introduction

In Victoria, every one of our early learning centres, primary schools and secondary schools consist of a diverse group of learners insofar as their educational backgrounds, literacy levels in their home language and the cultural practices and traditions that form part of their personal lives (Gonzalez et.al., 2011). Therefore, given that we all “acquire the literacies of our social and cultural group first” many students may have developed very important home literacies but do not possess all of those required for school (Anstey & Bull, 2004; ACARA, 2015). For some Koorie children, daily challenges can arise as a result, as a vision of the world is presented in class using language and perspectives that often do not align with, or incorporate, their way of knowing and being at home. As such, schools and preschools can frequently be places that can limit expression and meaning making.

Rationale

Every teacher can play a role in developing and implementing teaching strategies that are inclusive of Koorie students cultural and linguistic diversity but that are also effective in supporting all students to access the curriculum and demonstrate their learning. All students social and academic ‘success’ is measured with the same set of assessment tools and curricular standards (Gonzalez et.al., 2011) despite the diverse backgrounds found in Victorian classrooms and therefore strategies are needed to reflect not only the differing needs of many Koorie learners, but that incorporate all students current English language skills and knowledge as a practical learning tool.

This guide offers a collaborative way of creating new knowledge whilst developing students literacy and numeracy skills. By blending the *8 ways* Aboriginal pedagogies with established frameworks and strategies, such as the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) the Teaching-Learning Cycle and High Impact Teaching strategies, the Guide serves to create a more ‘equal dialogue’ in the classroom (Yunkaporta, 2009) by blending new and traditional ways of learning. As such, this Guide is designed to build on and celebrate what Koorie students already bring to the classroom whilst also developing their Standard Australian English (SAE) skills as strong language skills that are ‘inescapably linked’ to social and academic success (Snow & Powell, 2012).

About the Author

As a passionate EAL, Spanish and English secondary teacher as well as an accredited translator, active VicTESOL committee member and second language learner, April Edwards is highly experienced in the areas of first and additional languages education. She is currently training undergraduate teachers at La Trobe University on how to evaluate student literacy skills and knowledge as well as how to best support all students through reflective practices and targeted interdisciplinary teaching strategies. She thrives on sharing her knowledge and skills with colleagues and students alike.

Aims

The focus of this Guide is on the development of a shared knowledge of topics and tasks through meaningful, collaborative activities that tap into and promote strong language and literacy development in Standard Australian English (SAE), through acknowledging and celebrating the home language.

The key aims of the Guide are therefore to:

- **provide practical general advice on planning, teaching and assessment** of Koorie students to support them to switch between or blend Koorie English and Standard Australian English
- **create a positive plurilingual learning environment** that engages all students to strategically use their entire linguistic and cultural repertoire in class
- **develop students' understanding of Standard Australian English** - when it changes to create meaning in a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts and contexts
- **nurture a safe and inclusive learning environment** through allowing cross cultural and linguistic knowledge to be shared and validated in the classroom
- **increase engagement** - by focusing on tasks that reflect a child's out of class world achieved through student, family and community participation in planning, teaching, learning and assessment
- **celebrate Koorie English and the cultural heritage that underpins it** - through the incorporation of Koorie English in the classroom validating and maintaining the enduring Aboriginal heritage and cultures that continue to exist in Victoria.

Suggested use of the Guide

This guide contains a range of entry points and will take time to implement fully. It is therefore recommended to read it independently and then, based on the priorities of one's educational setting, work with colleagues in Professional Learning Teams to focus on a section at a time considering the associated discussion questions. Implementation should be iterative and successes and challenges reflected upon. Engagement with Koorie teachers, learners and community members, where possible, will also further support understanding as to which activities work well with students. This will also serve to foster ongoing collaborative partnerships which will ultimately benefit the entire teaching and learning community.

Planning

Every Koorie child is different and will bring a diverse range of cultural and linguistic practices to the classroom that may or may not impact on their learning. Therefore, it is important to develop an understanding of each individual child's educational, cultural and linguistic background and needs together with an identification of the language demands of tasks to support effective and engaging teaching practices. It should be noted that, although focused on Koorie community engagement and learning styles, the planning in this section will ultimately benefit all learners as it considers various ways to learn as well as considering the language demands all students encounter daily in the classroom.

Three key ways to plan can be achieved by:

- 1. Assessing students (their background; current language skills and curricular knowledge).**
- 2. Consider local priorities (Community participation and culturally appropriate pedagogies).**
- 3. Identify the language demands of Standard Australian English tasks.**

Assessing students

Cultural and linguistic heritage and educational experiences

Prior learning is commonly assessed in terms of the skills and knowledge as identified in the curriculum. However, to avoid making assumptions about Koorie students, given that they come from a broad range of backgrounds, it is also important to include assessment that considers:

- The students' formal and informal learning experiences both within and beyond the school as they may have skills and knowledge that can be referred to or harnessed in the classroom.
- Determine whether they have had interrupted education due to family or community commitments that could leave gaps in their formal education.
- Student and teacher awareness of their current language use. In other words, whether they are aware that they, may or may not be communicating through their spoken and written word using forms of Koorie English*.

*See the [Koorie English Online modules](#) for examples.

Note: *If a student has come from, or has spent time in a traditional Aboriginal language community it is recommended to seek professional EAL/D advice on diagnostic assessment as that student may be eligible for additional language support.*

Curricular prior knowledge

In Preschool settings, assessment is generally made through observation linked to the five VEYLDF Outcomes. In contrast, Primary and Secondary schools students are commonly asked to demonstrate their curricular knowledge in writing. However, demonstration of such knowledge does not necessarily need to be only in the written form and, in fact, when explained verbally, reveals a deeper understanding of a topic (Fellowes & Oakley, 2013). Therefore, the use of visual text combined with verbal assessment can be utilised in all sectors as an indication of real knowledge and skills. In other words, the purpose of assessment is reconsidered in terms of what students already know, not how they interpret the written word or how they express their understanding in writing alone.

Local priorities, local knowledge

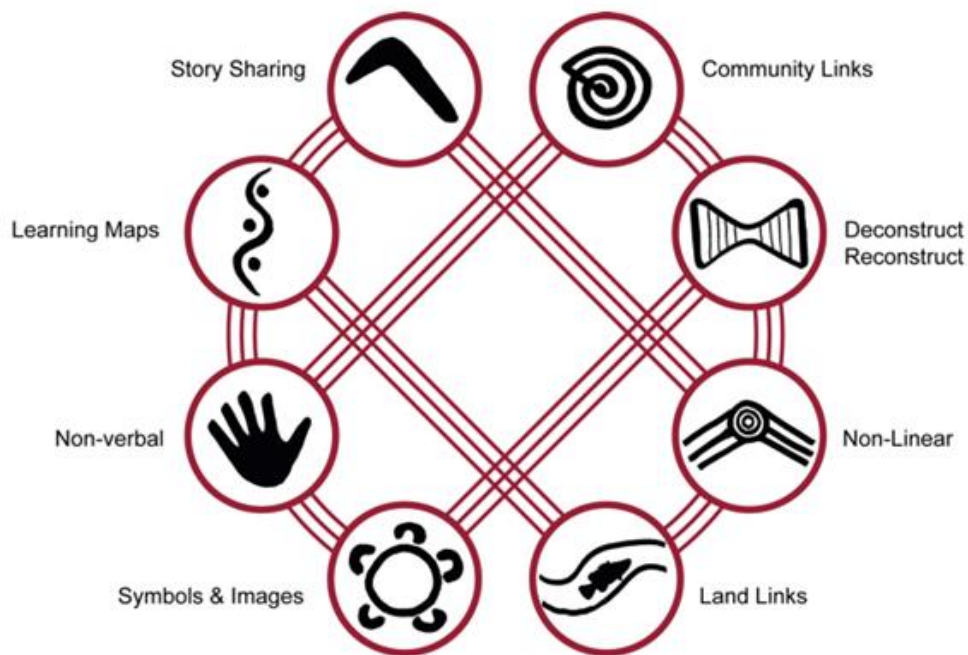
When structuring units and subunits, and the lessons that form them, it is fundamental to consider student and community needs and perspectives as well as learning styles to form an 'equal dialogue' (Yunkaporta, 2009). This can include:

1. How to engage with the local community and the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG), to plan units, consider their priorities for the community as well as to consult on cultural protocols and possibly different meanings for SAE key terms or concepts.
2. Seeking Koorie student opinions and visions for their learning - what is important and relevant for them to learn and why.
3. Embedding activities that can also promote Aboriginal perspectives such as:
 - the Early Years Learning hub [Valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures resources](#)
 - the [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.](#) (VAEAI)
 - the [VCAA cross curricular mapping tool](#) that links the F-10 curriculum to Aboriginal histories and cultures
 - the ACARA [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cross curriculum priority](#) resources
 - the DET [Koorie teacher resources](#)
 - the [Koorie English Online modules](#)
4. Including the *8 ways* pedagogies (see below).

The 8 ways pedagogies

In traditional Aboriginal cultures, 'teaching and learning is not linear and does not involve the teacher being the bearer of all knowledge' (Yunkaporta, 2009). Learning is collaborative, cyclical and is done by learning "through culture" not just "about culture" (p.8). As such, if learning processes are experiential and interconnected visually between topics and community in a way "that makes outcomes explicit for students right from the start", teaching and learning will become more relevant, transparent and accessible for not only Koorie students but the entire class.

Below is a visual representation of the 8 ways pedagogies:



(Yunkaporta, 2009)

Practical classroom strategies that can link to the 8 ways pedagogies include:

1. **Story Telling:** Incorporating opportunities to tell stories (with or without images) about the topic being studied. Personal narratives or those linked to Aboriginal role models or community members will foster connections to culture and community.
2. **Learning Maps:** Using visual representations of the learning journey and its processes in the form of flow charts to map steps, graphic organisers to develop skills, cyclical and linear timelines to map units, lessons, changes in topic, connections between Learning areas or points in a unit where a recycling of vocabulary or skills is required.
3. **Non-verbal:** Providing a range of kinesthetic, hands-on activities to learn about concepts such as allowing teachers and students to model a task without words or using mime, gestures and facial expressions to express meaning. Followed by discussion scaffolds and builds knowledge of key ideas and the language associated with it in memorable ways.

4. **Symbols and Images:** Using images and metaphors/symbols to understand or represent concepts and content. Labelling of images using Koorie English and SAE related to concepts to build knowledge around a topic visually.
5. **Land links:** Exploring a child's links to their own country and language community through stories and lesson content linked to the land or local area and making explicit connections to promote a valuing of students cultural identity.
6. **Non-linear:** Placing a focus on different ways to go about things - considering students' educational experiences and cultural ways of doing things. Also, integrating knowledge and skills from other Learning Areas.
7. **Deconstruct/Reconstruct:** The use of worked samples - collaborative meaning making of whole text structures and internal structures within any text to develop an understanding of the language demands according to Audience, Purpose and Context.
8. **Community Links:** Connections to real-life purposeful tasks, contexts & communities that can support and feedback to the local Koorie community and their needs; activities where local members are involved in storytelling, competitions and establishing their own success criteria.

(Yunkaporta, 2009, pp.4-7)

*****Discussion questions*****

- Which Koorie perspectives or pedagogies do you already incorporate into your lessons?
- Which graphic organisers or hands on activities have you used before that have supported student achievement?
- Why do you think they have been effective for many learners?

Identifying the language demands of tasks

All tasks require key speaking, reading and writing skills using texts that frequently reflect non-Koorie ways of communicating or thinking. As such, identifying the language and linguistic demands of Standard Australian English texts allows for teachers and schools to visibly see what language, literacy and numeracy skills to model for students.

Of course, each subject has its own key terms and concepts. On the other hand, the same terminology can have different meanings between subjects and contexts even though key skills such as description, identification, definition, comparison or analysis are common across much of the curriculum. Furthermore, key skills often overlap - students will require interpersonal skills in every lesson, mathematical skills in interpreting or generating results in the Sciences or interpreting and/or selecting data for persuading in English, for example.

As such, in any Unit of Work and across and within lessons or activities, Koorie English speaking students will need to:

- make connections between their language and culture and that of the language of the subject
- make connections between contexts as to the use and meaning of key terms
- have time to regularly reuse and recycle such knowledge to build and consolidate learning
- experience and use Standard Australian English in multiple ways - spoken, visual, audio and written forms
- reflect on when, where and why they use Koorie English and/or Standard Australian English.

To plan for this, simple steps can be taken:

1. Select an assessable text to interpret or create.
2. Locate or generate* a model 'text' to be formatively or summatively assessed.
3. Identify key vocabulary or grammatical expressions that are required for that text.
4. Consider whether such language is used in other topics in the same Learning Area or that could have other meanings in other subjects or cultures.

*Making one's own model helps to understand the mental processes and actual vocabulary and skills a child requires to understand and complete a task.

Note: Consultation with subject specialist teachers and/or Koorie staff, may be required to determine differences in meaning. Further assistance can also be seen on the VCAA website under [academic vocabulary](#).

Assessable 'texts'

Below are ideas for possible 'texts' to select to identify key vocabulary and grammatical structures. Naturally, some of these suggested texts overlap between educational settings. Therefore, the list below is provided as a general guideline only.

Pre-school to Primary school

- a list of spelling words with the 'ch' phoneme
- expressing several emotions
- asking for permission or how to share
- naming local places on a map
- drawing and describing a picture
- identifying family names and roles

Primary school

- describing a character in a book or in a TV show
- writing a basic recount of an excursion or story
- a book report
- an explanation of how to calculate fractions of 2 digits
- a persuasive essay or letter to the principal
- a method or a hypothesis for an experiment
- Instructions on how to jump through a hoop

Secondary school

- a short answer to a worded question in biology, chemistry or psychology
- an explanation of the steps to calculate an algebraic equation
- a flyer on how the digestive system works
- a film review
- a job interview or seeking a work experience placement
- an analysis of an art work or novel (paragraph or essay)\
- instructions on how to kick a goal or bake a chocolate cake.

Note: Annotated models appear below.

Annotated model texts

Early Years

Explicitly identifying the Standard Australian English (SAE) vocabulary and grammar to be promoted to develop all childrens' oral competencies in the early years is fundamental for students' current and future social and academic success (Fellowes & Oakley, 2014; Snow & Powell, 2012). As such, it is highly beneficial for child-care workers, kindergarten teachers and early primary school teachers, as those members of the teaching and learning community explicitly modelling Standard Australian English forms of communication to be clearly aware of the language demands of each Outcome. See below for an example:

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

Annotated model text: Expressing feelings about activities

Verbal

I am happy (Verb + adjective to describe a feeling) when we sing Koorie songs.

You make me (Expression to describe impact/consequences) sad when you take my toys.

I am ***unhappy*** (negative adjective using the prefix 'un') ***when*** (Conjunction - Action that provokes a response) you take food off my plate.

Non-verbal

I ***cry*** or ***pout*** (Facial expressions & body language) when I am sad or angry.

I ***frown*** (Facial expressions & body language) when I am angry.

I ***cross my arms*** (Facial expressions & body language) when I am angry.

Key vocabulary

- Nouns - Happiness, sadness, anger
- Verbs - To be, To feel, To make,
- Adjectives - happy, sad, angry
- Non-verbal verbs - To smile, to cry, to frown, to cross one's arms, to pout

Key grammar

- *when* - to explain a reaction *I am happy when...*
- *to make* (someone feel something) - impact/consequences of an action
- *To be + emotion* - to express a feeling
- *To feel + emotion* - to express an emotion

Words that can have different meanings or that appear in different cultural contexts

- Pouting and looking away or looking down may not be considered rude in some cultures.
- Crossing one's arms can show strength and confidence.

Annotated model texts

Primary and Secondary

Frequently, key skills and knowledge, including key metalanguage, can be easily identified for a Unit of Work. However, by writing down the steps required to complete a task, such as how to complete a worded question in Maths and annotating it, highlights both the explicit and implicit language as well as technical skills and cultural knowledge required for a task and that need to be modelled. See below for examples from the core curriculum:

Level 3 - English

Writing, Literature: Creating literature

Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students' own and other cultures, including through the use of visual features ([VCELT264](#))

Annotated model text: Model imaginative text based on the Dreamtime story 'How the kangaroo got its pouch'

A long, long time ago, (time marker) the small, brown kangaroo **was** (past tense – irregular verb) in the **hot, dry**, (adjectives) desert and it was hopping very fast **because** (conjunction) it was lost. It went to the waterhole and drank lots of water because it was thirsty. It **drank like a fish** (colloquial expression) and so then it felt sick and fell asleep. When it woke up the old wombat was there and he told the kangaroo to go home where there was more lush, green grass. This is because the wombat wanted to have all the water for himself. So **two days later** (time marker) the kangaroo went home. **After that** (sequence words) journey he felt happy because he had filled his belly with the food he loved most. He **fell asleep** (grammatical expression) in his mother kangaroo's pouch.

Key vocabulary

- Nouns - wombat, kangaroo, pouch, waterhole, desert, plains
- Verbs - To go, to hop, to drink, to wake up, to feel thirsty, to feel happy
- Adjectives - Lush, green; hot, dry
- Non-verbal verbs - To drink like a fish

Key grammar

- *because* - to explain a reason or give a reason
- *A long time ago; two days later* - time marker to tell the reader when the event took place
- *Then; after that* - sequence words to make the story move forward

Words that can have different meanings or that appear in different cultural contexts

- Hot/dry; waterhole - Geography
- Waterhole - place of spiritual importance
- 'A long time ago' is normally for creation myths. 'Once upon a time' is for fairy tales.
- To feel thirsty - Health & PE

Level 7 - Maths

Data representation and interpretation

Construct, interpret and compare a range of data displays, including side-by-side column graphs for two categorical variables ([VCMSP235](#))

Worded problem

You are convinced that your local footy team should be part of the footy league in the neighbouring region. To sell your team to a coach in another region, you tracked the scores of your team for each quarter of one and a half games to see how you were all performing. You also counted how many times your team got those same scores for any one quarter over the whole season. How many times did your team score more than four points in a quarter?

Points scored Frequency

4	17
6	4
2	6
8	2
1	16
3	6

Annotated steps to take to solve the problem:

1. Remember that a **quarter** (*noun*) is another word for 'four' and that in AFL there are four quarters to a match.
2. Conclude, therefore, that half a game would only have 2 quarters as 4 **divided** (*verb*) $2 = 2$.
3. As the quarters are measured over 1.5 games, **therefore** (*conjunction word to draw a conclusion*), **add** (*verb*) $4+2=6$ to conclude that there are six quarters represented in the six rows of numbers.
4. Read the word **frequency** (*noun*) and remember that it is **how many times** (*synonym for frequency*) the points in each row were scored over the season.
5. **Identify** (*verb*) which numbers are more than four in the left hand column (6 & 8).
6. **Link** (*verb*) the times when the team scored more than 4 to how many times (4 + 2).
7. **Add** (*verb*) $4 + 2 = 6$. Therefore, the answer is 6.

Key vocabulary

- Nouns - Quarter, rows, columns, score, points, frequency, season, game, league
- Verbs - To divide, add, locate, connect

Key grammar

- How many - used to refer to something that can be counted (the times when more than 4 points were scored in a quarter)
- Therefore - to make a conclusion

Words that can have different meanings or that appear in different cultural contexts

- Score - in Health and PE; Frequency - Science; Season - Humanities
- Prior knowledge: that there are four quarters in a football match.

Level 8 - Science

Analysing and evaluating

Use scientific knowledge and findings from investigations to identify relationships, evaluate claims and draw conclusions ([VCSIS111](#))

Model text: Investigation Report

Annotated model internal text (The Data Analysis section)

Data Analysis

Why did you get these results? You will need to use your understanding of the different forms (noun) of energy transfers (noun) and energy transformations (noun).

I got these results because (cause) as the ball is higher it has more potential gravitational energy (adjective), (effect) therefore (conjunction word to give a reason) letting it bounce higher (effect). It only bounces around half of its drop height because (conjunction) it loses energy when (words indicating the conditions/circumstances) it hits the ground and transfers (verb/action word) into sound energy (noun).

(ACARA, 2014)

Key vocabulary

Nouns - Forms, energy transfers, energy transformations, potential gravitational energy, ball, sound energy

Verbs - To bounce, lose, transfer

Key grammar

because - to explain the reason for the results

when - to indicate the conditions for something to occur are going to be explained

higher - comparison that will impact on results

Words that can have different meanings or that appear in different cultural contexts

Transfer - business maths, Health and PE

Energy - Maths, Health and PE, synonym for 'power' (spiritual connection)

Sound - Music, Geography

Transform; potential - Maths, English, Careers

*****Discussion questions*****

- What have you learnt about the skills requirements of a task through identifying the vocabulary and grammar?
- What gaps in a student's learning could be identified through a student verbally explaining how to complete one of these models?
- What level of difficulty is the vocabulary? (see [Tiers 1-3 vocabulary](#))

Teaching and Learning

This part of the Guide focuses on moving from speaking and listening to reading and writing in Standard Australian English integrating the model texts and the *8 ways* pedagogies identified in the *Planning* section. It is divided into Early Years and F-10 however, it is highly beneficial for all preschool, primary and secondary teachers to read each section to appreciate the continuum of learning for students.

Early Years

In the Early Years, the use of the [Early Years Learning Framework](#), the [VEYLDF Learning Outcome Planning Cycle](#) and the [Communication Practice Guide](#) will support teachers to think of ways to incorporate, model and develop the key communicative and social skills Koorie English speaking students require in the early years. Covering a range of communicative activities within and across the five key Outcomes whilst engaging family and community in activities, will provide opportunities to build a shared understanding of *Being, Belonging and Becoming*.

Classroom activities

In class activities could include the following:

- Inviting family or community members to share their views or experiences on a topic.
- Reading stories or singing songs in class both with and without community/family members that describe or explore the topic from multiple plurilingual perspectives.
- Creating and displaying Koorie and non-Koorie images and words to represent the key terms or ideas of a topic.
- Using, creating and displaying Koorie and non-Koorie symbols to represent key terms/values in terms of ways of *Being, Belonging and Becoming*.
- Encouraging children to use the language associated with the topic as identified in the *Planning* section through creative play in the class or outdoors.

Modelling language use

Across the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework educators are encouraged to model the key communicative language skills (DET, 2012). As such, early years educators should find opportunities, both structured and unstructured, to model such skills both explicitly and implicitly. For example by:

- Using flow charts with images to refer to when talking in Standard Australian English with children to visually represent relationships e.g. cause and effect of behaviours (see *Planning* section of the Guide).
- Using mix 'n' match of symbols to images and/or phonemes/simple words to highlight non-verbal or verbal language in Koorie English and SAE.

- Explicitly indicating what Standard Australian English language is being used by teachers followed by an explanation of why.
- When a Koorie child expresses themselves using Koorie English, restating what they have said using Standard Australian English without correcting them.
- Thinking aloud and reflecting in real time using the identified Standard Australian English language skills when experiencing events or texts
- Using puppets, toys and games to recreate situations that model Standard Australian English language skills.

For example:

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

- Indicating your feelings both verbally and non-verbally when watching a short video about a traditional story, for example, or when reading a Koorie story. In other words, thinking aloud what you are feeling and why. This can be done either after you read/view it or stopping at intervals to reflect aloud what you feel about the events.
- After singing a song or listening to a song, reflecting on how it made you feel, when and why then eliciting student responses.
- In a given situation that arises spontaneously, referring to the word walls or flow charts of emotions and associated images/symbols and asking students to guess which expression to use and why or modelling how to express this emotion to the student.
- Using puppets and toys to retell situations that model the vocabulary and sentence structures identified to express emotions and their causes. Following on, questioning the characters' feelings in the 3rd person. *Why did koala feel this way? Was she feeling this because...?*

*****Discussion questions*****

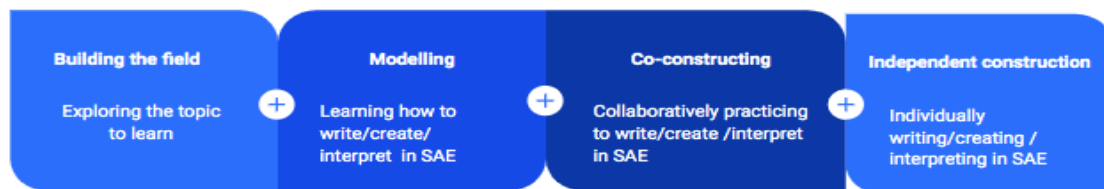
- Why might repetitive modelling be effective in developing children's oral language skills?
- What opportunities exist in your current curriculum to embed play based language activities?
- Do you remember how visuals prompts helped you to learn language in class or at home?

Foundation - 10

In primary and secondary schooling, use of the [Teaching-Learning Cycle](#) (TLC), in combination with the 8 ways pedagogies, will be highly beneficial for all students to create or interpret texts. It is a combination of Koorie and non-Koorie frameworks and pedagogies that allows for teachers, in conjunction with students and the community, to plan multiple opportunities to access the curriculum and complete assessable Standard Australian English tasks. The TLC can be applied to a small unit of work of 4-5 lessons or throughout a whole term depending on the age and stage of development of each student.

The TLC has four stages:

1. **Sharing stories, sharing understandings** (*Building the field*) - collaboratively developing an understanding between cultures of key terms and texts to build a knowledge of a topic. It is designed to allow significant time to access prior linguistic and cultural knowledge, build new ideas whilst developing oral language skills through collaborative hands on activities and visual representations as well as through engagement with the broader community.
2. **Deconstruction/Reconstruction** (*Modelling*) - the use of worked sample texts such as the ones generated in the *Planning* stage of this Guide to focus explicitly on model SAE text structure, vocabulary and grammatical features according to the audience, purpose and context of the text to be assessed.
3. **Recycling & Rehearsing** (*Guided Practice/Co-constructing*) - teachers and students jointly construct the same Standard Australian English text based on the model continuously giving each other formative one-on-one and group feedback. Reflection on language choices is also embedded to support text construction or interpretation.
4. **Making New Meaning** (*Independent construction*) – students' independently create a Standard Australian English text (or a mixed/bilingual text, if that is the model) to demonstrate Standard Australian English language and skills acquisition. Further use of feedback from peers and the teacher before assessment especially around language choices and their effectiveness.



(Adapted from Derewianka & Jones, 2016; Humphrey, 2017; Humphrey & Feez, 2016 in DET, 2017)

Note: Although the visual representation of the TLC above is linear, as Derewianka (2018) points out, students and teachers can move backwards and forwards between each stage using their evolving English language skills, as required. Watch [this video](#) for further information.

Sharing Stories, Sharing Understandings

(Building the field)

For all students, providing significant time and a range of experiences that relate to prior cultural and linguistic knowledge are fundamental to developing student knowledge of the key concepts, skills and language through open, hands on experiences, storytelling and discussion using their current oral language skills. It will introduce new concepts whilst deepening previous understandings as well as reveal misconceptions without a focus on assessable tasks. Many strategies can be employed by teachers and students, including:

- Mind mapping the topic using student's preferred language or dialect terms
- Brainstorming and organising tasks linked to the local area and/or the land and the topic
- Generating questions around the topic using SAE sentence stems
- Collaboratively creating learning maps of how the unit will or should unfold or asking students to consider how it should unfold and how it connects to other units or subjects.
- Telling stories about the topic to validate personal experience
- Interviewing or inviting elders, community members or role models to speak about the topic
- Using Koorie texts and non-Koorie texts to explore different perspectives on the topic
- Participating in hands on activities followed by discussions, noting all important vocabulary learnt in word banks or on word walls in class or online
- Going on excursions to local areas that provide diverse insights into the topic and reflecting on what was learnt
- Researching Koorie interpretations or representations of the topic, both locally and nationally, collecting and organising the information on the topic using retrieval charts*
- Using graphic organizers with Standard Australian English sentence stems to develop skills required for model texts (see *Further Resources*)
- Representing key concepts through story, song or dance symbols and images and allowing them to be visible in class and/or online**

(Derewianka, 2011 & 2019; Gibbons, 2015; Price, 2015)

*Supported reading also occurs either during or following this stage. For guided reading and viewing strategies it is recommended to use the [4 resources learning model](#) .

**** Examples of kinesthetic activities to represent concepts:**

Maths: Foundation Level

Represent practical situations to model sharing (VCMNA074)

Performing the links between language and equations (as symbols of that language) two students walk across the playground in front of the class to represent '2' but then another joins them visually making 3 i.e. $2+1=3$

Maths: Level 7

Describe translations, reflections in an axis, and rotations of multiples of 90° on the Cartesian plane using coordinates. Identify line and rotational symmetries (VCMMG261)

Allowing students to represent, through dance or song, the creation and re-creation of patterns using spoken word and the body. For example, writing a song or poem in their most comfortable language or dialect then providing a dance representation to accompany the poem or song to reflect combinations of reflections and rotations.

(Price, 2015; Matthews et.al.2007)

Vocabulary building

As the vocabulary builds from task to task and class to class, allow for ways to continually visually represent and verbally recycle any topic specific key SAE vocabulary and expressions by:

- Creating or locating further symbols or images that offer newly developed understandings or ways to represent key or supplementary ideas and visually map back to prior learning
- Where students identify a Koorie English term, also include the equivalent Standard Australian English term
- Increasing development of vocabulary around the topic using further word walls/graphic organisers, exploring morphological patterns and word origins*
- Classifying key terms and expressions in charts or tables working from tiers [1-3 vocabulary](#) (from informal and conversational to more formal and technical)
- Regularly comparing and contrasting the meaning of vocabulary across Learning Areas and between Koorie English and SAE.

*Example of vocabulary building:

English - Level 5

Phonics and word knowledge

Understand how to use banks of known words, syllabification, spelling patterns, word origins, base words, prefixes and suffixes, to spell new words, including some uncommon plurals ([VCELA312](#))

Word origins - change over time (AE = Aboriginal English)

- *Celtic > car > motor car > modigar (KE) > car (SAE)*
- *Celtic > car > automobile (American English) > auto (Spanish)*
- *Arabic > algebra > SAE > algebra*
- *AE > woiwurrung yaba > SAE > yabber > SAE > to speak*
- *AE > Yagara yaga > SAE > yakka > SAE > hard work*
- *AE > Cooee > originally 'come here' > SAE > 'Where are you?' Or 'nearby'*

(DETWA, 2012; Eades, 1993)

Discussion questions

- How are you already using graphic organisers, visuals and audio visual materials to benefit teaching and learning?
- Have you ever used performance or role play to teach vocabulary, concepts or relationships such as cause and effect in your Learning Area?
- Why do you think the use of informal, conversational vocabulary scaffolds students to move towards more subject specific or technical vocabulary?

Deconstructing/Reconstructing

(Modelling)

As outlined in the *8 ways* pedagogies, the Teaching-Learning Cycle and the DET High Impact Teaching Strategies, worked examples (or models) of what is required to complete any task is fundamental for a student's academic success. This is so that the requirements of the text they are expected to create or interpret is made clear to them. This stage recognises that 'putting thoughts into words is the highest form of language skills development' (DETWA, 2012) and so it is key to provide explicit instruction about switching to SAE classroom texts. Strategies that teachers and/or students can use to model and promote the use of the desired outcomes to be demonstrated can be achieved by collaboratively as a class and small groups:

- Predicting the key elements of the text* (see the *Planning* stage)
- Reading the model/worked example as a class and identifying and talking about its Audience, Purpose and Context. For example, to write like a scientist who wants to report on their findings on water conservation to a State conference in Shepparton.
- Considering other types of the same text and identify similarities and differences based on Audience, Purpose, Context
- Breaking down the elements of the assessable text into sections by identifying and annotating key sections, key vocabulary and grammatical structures. For example, a recount begins with the setting and within the setting there are specific elements.
- Making and/or completing mix 'n' match tasks online or on paper of the key elements and/or language requirements separated into their individual parts.
- Creating flow charts with/without images to visually represent the steps/elements/sections of the text
- Retelling and recording the steps for task completion as a story/narrative using the key Standard Australian English vocabulary and expressions and visuals
- Collaboratively creating instructional blogs, vlogs or podcasts explaining how to complete the task and displaying annotated model texts in class or online for other classes
- Playing jigsaw or running dictation games using the model text.

At all times the teacher allows students to discuss their understandings in pairs, small groups and as a class. However, the teacher and/or stronger students themselves can also use further modelling strategies in Standard Australian English and/or their community dialect by:

- The teacher restating what has been said in their community dialect by a student into Standard Australian English to clarify, not correct, when discussing the model
- Explicitly modelling the key language and associated skills by purposely referring back to the word banks developed in the first stage of the TLC.
- Thinking one's thoughts aloud about how to read/complete the task using the key expressions and terms identified in the *Planning* section and first stage.
- Reflecting to the class on when to employ the community dialect and/or Standard Australian English and why (see *Assessment* for further details).
- Completing verbally cloze exercises of the model that omits the key [tier 2-3](#) Standard Australian English terms or grammatical expressions identified in the *Planning* section then allowing students to do the same in pairs with another example
- Describing the steps or elements as a story using the key terms and students repeat verbally as a group.

(Gibbons, 2015)

Note: More time may also be needed to:

- further pre-teach any new vocabulary not explored in the first stage using new charts, images and symbols especially when any new technical language is added.
- for some learners, sorting sections of the model again or completing more Close exercises and verbally explaining understandings may be required.

*****Discussion questions*****

- How has learning parts of the curriculum helped you to understand it as a whole?
- Can you think of a time when being given clear, specific outlines or models have helped you complete a task?
- How has this stage changed the way you think about teaching and learning?
- Can you think of any students in your classes that could act as teacher-mentors at this stage?

Recycling and Rehearsing

(Guided tasks/Co-construction)

Once students have experienced multiple opportunities to learn key vocabulary, expressions and the associated structure for the model/target text to interpret or create they are now ready to begin to complete tasks in the form of rehearsal reflecting on when and why to use their community dialect and/or Standard Australian English depending on the purpose of the task or activity.

Possible activities that teachers and students could undertake include:

- As a class, students identify what language, grammar or skills should be incorporated or utilised depending on the Audience, Purpose and Context of the task.
- Review all of the rich language, expressions, visual and symbolic representations observed in the *Building the Field* and *Modelling* stages to complete tasks at this stage.
- Construct a text together as a class to model the process of creating/interpreting the task. The teacher can explicitly refer back to the steps from the previous stage and may use a template that visibly divides up the task
- In pairs or small groups, students complete a similar task using discussion to support task completion. Again some students may require templates/flowcharts and SAE sentence stems to visually complete each section/step.
- Offer opportunities for real-time feedback from teachers and peers on whether to use Koorie English in the text or not and why
- Encouraging small group presentation of completed collaborative task during which time students share the decisions they have made in terms of choice and efficacy of skills, strategies and language choices (see the *Assessment* section for metacognitive strategies).
- Mentor students sharing their approach to the class followed by whole class discussions focusing specifically on SAE vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation choices.
- Creating new “How to’ video clips or podcasts to provide models of successful task completion and language choices.
- Reflection on the effectiveness of choices of whether to use SAE or Koorie written/visual/spoken text depending on Audience, Purpose and Context. These can be reflected upon as a class, in pairs and individually in a journal or blog (see *Assessment*).

*****Discussion questions*****

- How has planning with colleagues at school or in Professional Development sessions consolidated your knowledge of a topic or curriculum?
- How has the act of repeatedly teaching helped you learn more about a topic or effective teaching and learning?

Creating New Meaning

(Independent language use)

Finally, students will have had multiple exposures and discussions preparing them for the task. Again, if required, they should be allowed to refer to class tiers 2-3 vocabulary resources, previous models and co-constructed models from the first three stages. The aim now is to have offered many opportunities to experience text structures and expected language and linguistic features before creating their own individual text.

During this last phase, attention is dedicated to writing or reading for assessment purposes. Depending on the written, creative or interpretative skills of each individual child, a Koorie English speaking student should have the choice to write one version to be created completely in Standard Australian English and/or Koorie English and Standard Australian English according to their level and stage of language development. This can be determined by the teacher and students in accordance with the child's personal learning goals and serves to explicitly highlight and celebrate similarities and differences in the two versions of English.

During this stage it is important to:

- Provide opportunities for peer and teacher feedback on the first, second and final drafts as a form of collaborative editing to consolidate understandings about the requirements of the task.
- Use questioning linked to metacognition to support students to develop a deeper understanding of the Standard Australian English language and literacy demands (see the *Reflecting* section of *Assessment*).
- Offer opportunities to reflect on the positive role of learning tools such as visual representations, models, sentence stems, cloze exercises, storytelling, audio visual materials and use of both Koorie English and Standard Australian English to build their knowledge of the curriculum and completion of the task.

Note: At this final stage a text might still provide evidence of Koorie English language in a Standard Australian English text or there may still be gaps in understanding. Prompts to observe the areas for improvement both from a content and language perspective provides rich discussion when completed collaboratively either peer-to-peer or between the teacher and student. Such dialogue also serves as assessment for future teaching and learning and to set further language goals

*****Discussion questions*****

- Why is it so important to provide multiple opportunities to read, view, manipulate and discuss the texts?
- How do frameworks provide multiple opportunities for teachers to model skills throughout and provide ongoing feedback?
- How might explicit modelling and rehearsal serve to improve learning outcomes?

Assessment for learning

To be able to demonstrate competencies in any educational setting all students will be benchmarked against the Early Years Learning Framework Outcomes or the F-10 Achievement Standards. Yet by allowing students to draw comparisons and celebrate key similarities and differences between their own language, literacies and the cultural knowledge that underpins these with those of the curriculum will ensure that they are able to switch between or across languages effectively to communicate and interact in and out of class. To facilitate this, regular and timely reflections at the end of lessons and Units of Work are recommended.

Reflecting

For Koorie English speaking students to consider when, how and why their spoken and written Koorie English can be used effectively to make meaning and demonstrate learning or when to code-switch to Standard Australian English for specific purposes Koorie English speaking students will be required to reflect on their metacognition by reflecting on:

- their awareness about Koorie English and how it represents the expression of a valid way of being, knowing and communicating
- the benefits of using Koorie English or Standard Australian English according to Audience, Purpose and Context
- the effectiveness of using Koorie English

Awareness of language use

Awareness about Koorie English as a student's main means to communicate and interpret the world is reflected in what Koorie learners know about their own spoken and written language. Opportunities to express this is fundamental to not only validate their current language skills and those of their community but to understand how and why it is beneficial to their learning. Therefore, students should be given regular opportunities to consider:

- the relationships between Koorie English and Standard Australian English
- changes in spoken language over time that may be reflected in their own language
- the underlying worldview that may change the meaning of words and expressions for them when interpreting and creating texts in the classroom.

To begin, identifying when and why it is beneficial to use Koorie English and/or Standard Australian English in all Learning Areas allows for Koorie English speaking students to control and manage their learning by allowing them to:

- select when and why to use spoken and written Koorie English and/or Standard Australian English within and beyond the class
- consider the value of using spoken and written Koorie English to improve their reading and writing in Standard Australian English

For example, asking Koorie English speaking students to consider when is it more efficient to speak or write in Koorie English could include:

- talking to family
- Texting or chatting in the school courtyard
- singing/rapping
- role playing or writing a character dialogue
- seeking assistance
- brainstorming or note taking
- explaining or evaluating concepts, processes or steps
- creating or reading texts in Koorie English
- reflecting on learning

However, explicit attention can then be drawn to when they are required to speak and create texts, both formally and informally in Standard Australian English, for example to:

- accept an award in front of the school
- complete a standardised test or exam
- write an essay or report
- write a letter or email to the Principal or a local community group
- speak in a job interview

As an inclusive practice, there are also times where students could identify the use of both Koorie English and Standard Australian English to highlight and celebrate cultural and linguistic similarities and differences. For example by:

- creating bilingual texts in both spoken/written Koorie English and Standard Australian English to highlight and celebrate the similarities and differences
- when interviewing or presenting to members of the local community who speak Koorie English and then presenting the information to the class or school
- in the actual process of learning to move from spoken and written Koorie English to Standard Australian English for specific academic purposes.

Benefits of using a home language

It is extremely affirming for a student and their family to know the inherent value of their cultural and linguistic repertoire to support and achieve social and academic success.

Asking a student to consider how valuable it is builds self-esteem and in turn a sense of wellbeing by being able to validate the use of their spoken and written word and all the cultural and linguistic knowledge that underpins it. For example, students could reflect on the benefits of using their home language to:

- celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom and build mutual understandings
- understand that the regular use of their home language is important for the preservation and development of their cultural identity and family relationships
- recognise that not all knowledge expressed in Standard Australian English is the only way to express and understand the world

- build connections in their brains about the different meanings of words and ideas between cultures and subjects
- show teachers what they understand about a topic
- efficiently explore and discuss key ideas or prior knowledge
- extend and deepen learning by speaking and writing in their home language before creating assessable tasks
- master the grammatical rules of Standard Australian English to peer and self-assess learning

Effectiveness of using language strategies

Considering whether it was more or less effective to use spoken or written Koorie English for different purposes and in a range of contexts is imperative. Students can be encouraged to identify or reflect upon how their current spoken or written language is effective in:

- understanding words and expressions and the cultural meanings behind them
- communicating ideas in a range of settings to a variety of audiences
- promoting alternative viewpoints and in turn celebrating diversity
- clarifying tasks and concepts
- building esteem and promoting wellbeing

Integrating the Capabilities for reflection

Many opportunities can be offered right across the curriculum as part of reflective class routines. Further ideas for reflective assessment can also be drawn from:

- The Critical and Creative Thinking Capability
- The Intercultural Capability
- The VCAA Content descriptions as outlined in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the Learning Areas [mapping tool](#).

Example Critical and Creative Thinking Capability assessment can be viewed below.

Levels 3 - 4

Explore reactions to a given situation or problem and consider the effect of pre-established preferences ([VCCCTQ011](#))

In reflections students:

- describe how the meaning of a word was related to a students preferred Koorie English use but in actual fact it meant something else. Then thinking about the possible issues that can arise from this in terms of communicating if such words are misinterpreted
- Explain how it makes people react in unexpected ways when they use preferred body language or gestures

*****Discussion questions*****

- How has your idea of integrating a capability changed?
- Have your perceptions of when and why to use spoken or written English in the classroom changed?

Further resources

Graphic organisers and language use

Employing the key expressions and vocabulary linked to curricular skills, such as was identified in the *Planning* stage, together with graphic organisers and sentence stems promotes improved use of oral and written Standard Australian English for all students. For example:

Geography Levels 3-4

Content description: Similarities and differences between places in terms of their type of settlement, demographic characteristics and the lives of the people who live there ([VCGGK084](#))

Elaboration: Discussing the similarities and differences in the types of work and other activities people do in their own place with a different type of place in Australia and a place in another country.

The key skill to be explored is 'comparison' - to compare the similarities and differences in the types of work people do in the city as opposed to in the students' country town or country of origin.

A table with sentence stems can be used to brainstorm vocabulary incorporating Koorie English and Standard Australian English depending on the student's English language levels.

<u>Types of work in Melbourne</u>	<u>Types of work in both</u>	<u>Types of work in country towns</u>
	Shop assistants	
	Petrol station attendants	
	Cleaners	
	Truck drivers	
	Elders/community leaders	
	Cafe owners	
	Farmers	
	Koorie football players	

When discussing the differences, the key vocabulary and grammatical structures for comparison should be explicitly referred to. For example,

There is _____

There are _____

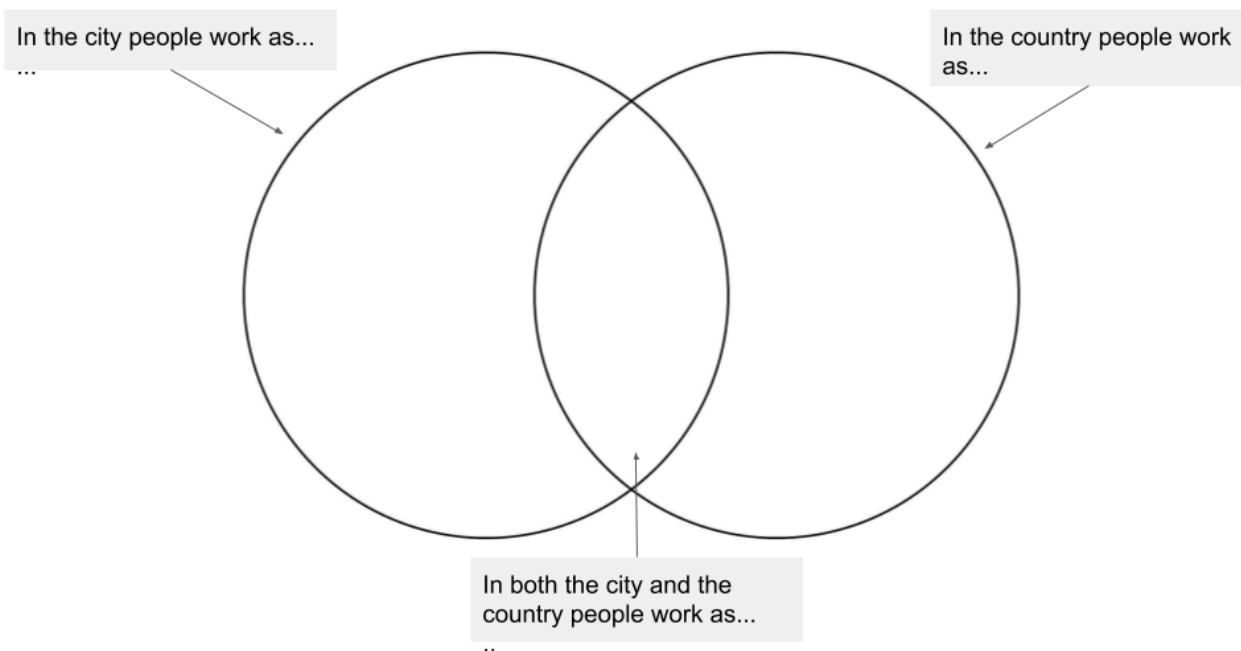
People work as _____

More _____ *than* _____

Less _____ *than* _____

As many _____ *as* _____

To draw comparisons visually, a Venn diagram, as another graphic organiser, can also employ sentence stems to promote completion verbally and in written form by employing the original vocabulary and grammatical lists above and again allowing students current English language skills.



Further to this, explicit focus on the written form of the key skill of 'comparison' in sentence, or paragraph form, integrating key vocabulary and grammar can then be facilitated using cloze exercises* such as the one below:

In the city there are more people working as _____ than in the country.

There are as many people working as _____ in the city as there are in the country.

In the city there are _____ people working _____ cafe owners than in the country.

There are _____ people working _____ truck drivers in the city as there are in the country.

*These Standard Australian English language skills can again be recycled when discussing the data that may be later represented, for example, in a bar chart. Of course, a bar chart also has its own language to be taught (title, data/data groups, legend, Y-axis, x-axis, source, vertical, horizontal, frequency etc.) which could be identified and labelled on a model previous to using and discussing such visual data representations.

Language goals

Koorie English speaking students, not unlike any other student, are negotiating the language of each Learning Area every day. As such, they need to have explicit language foci and opportunities to discuss and reflect upon them in every lesson.

Classroom goals

By facilitating whole class and small group discussions about the Standard Australian English language demands of each lesson before beginning will not only provide feedback to the teacher about whether students are comprehending the requirements of the lesson in terms of the assumed knowledge

behind the language they employ but it also allows for students to explicitly focus on the SAE forms to employ for certain tasks. Alternatively, to begin lessons or Units of Work teachers can simply embed the Standard Australian English skills and/or knowledge related language identified in the *Planning* section of this Guide in the Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. For example:

Personal and Social Capability - Foundation Level

Identify their likes and dislikes, needs and wants, abilities and strengths ([VCPCSE002](#))

Learning Intention: *To talk about our experiences at school.*

Success Criteria:

- **List our likes and dislikes in a table using ‘I like’ or ‘I don’t like’**
- **Justify our opinion using ‘because’ or ‘when’**
- **Compare our experiences using ‘the same’ and ‘different’**

English - Level 9

Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts ([VCELY441](#))

Learning Intention: *To analyse perspectives about an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issue reported in commercial media.*

Success Criteria:

- **Identify the issue using the expression ‘it can be observed that the issue is ___ ’**
- **Highlight the causal relationship using ‘this is due to the fact that’ or ‘the creator of the text employs ___ to cause the viewer to’**
- **Explain similarities and differences using ‘this is not dissimilar to’ and ‘contrastingly’**
- **Building on ideas using ‘in addition’ or ‘furthermore’**

Note: To promote further use of SAE, students can be guided to utilise the same language foci as they complete class tasks as well as when reflecting on their learning.

Personal language goals

Setting personal language goals linked to awareness and strategies for using spoken and written Koorie English or SAE for learning and/or assessment further supports Koorie English speakers to actively choose how and when to use language according to Audience, Purpose and Context. For example, they could consider:

- when to use spoken and written Koorie English and for what purposes
- when to employ the Standard Australian English language visibly established in class to learn about the subject
- why Koorie English and Standard Australian English are important for class and beyond the class
- what strategies are used and what Standard Australian English and Koorie English resources were used to help them learn and create texts

Note: The personal goal setting can directly relate to the key skills outlined in the *Reflecting* sections of this Guide and can be set and reset at any stage of the teaching and learning process.

*****Discussion questions*****

- How does it help you as a teacher to think about the type of language you used at home as a child and how it has contributed to your current abilities?
- How do you focus on specific language when you read or write texts for different purposes?
- How could a regular reflective journal or online blog support classroom routines, formative assessment or differentiation?

Conclusion

Overall, the range of activities presented in this Guide need to be integrated if they are to be effective in improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students. This Guide exists as a recognition that all members of the teaching and learning community, both within and beyond the classroom, can work together to support every student to become a successful learner and member of society. Bridging gaps in understandings through inclusive intercultural and language focused practices will lead everyone in the teaching and learning community to understand that every child brings unique skills and knowledge to the table. These can contribute to positive social and academic outcomes, for it is through the development of every child's home language and culture together with Standard Australian English that will serve to support them to move confidently within and between social, academic and future workplace contexts.

Glossary

Audience, Purpose, Context - is an understanding that every single spoken, visual and written text is created taking into consideration who it is being created for, why it is being created and in what context it is created. Such knowledge is very helpful for creating and interpreting meaning in the classroom.

Aboriginal English - refers to a legitimate dialect of English spoken by a range of Aboriginal people in varying regions of Australia.

Code-switching - the conscious act of changing one's own language use from one language to another depending on the audience, purpose and context. This term is commonly used when referring to bilingual children's ability to 'switch' between languages.

Code-mixing - is the recognition that for bilingual and multilingual speakers who share common languages that their communication and interpretation of meaning can be formulated through a mix of those common languages, especially in earlier stages of development and now increasingly more due to globalized digital communications.

Koorie English - refers to the dialect of English spoken by Aboriginal people in Victoria and parts of New South Wales.

Plurilingualism - is the set of skills and knowledge that anyone who speaks two or more languages can use together with Standard Australian English to learn and communicate.

Standard Australian English - is the variety of spoken and written English language commonly used in Australia, particularly in formal settings including in the use of many classroom texts.

Tiers 1-3 vocabulary - are the levels of vocabulary used within and beyond an educational settings*

- **1**- Everyday language
- **2** - Words used across subject areas
- **3** - Words used specifically for a subject or Learning Area.

*Students are constantly expected to move across all three levels in the school environment.

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