Scaffolding Literacy and non-narrative texts

Elizabeth Hook
Our students need to become proficient writers of academic English

i.e. Standard Australian English

Those who have difficulty with this are disadvantaged.
Australian English Curriculum

The Language Strand reflects a *functional* approach to grammar.

1. Whole text level
2. Sentence level
3. Word level
...grammar is a way of describing how a language works to make meaning. (Derewianka 2011 p 1)
We need to find effective ways to:

- Teach the structure and purpose of academic texts.
- Teach and use metalanguage.
- Teach critical literacy skills.
Scaffolding Literacy strategies

Can be used to demonstrate and teach:

how language works
to make meaning ...
at these levels...

1. Whole text
2. Sentence
3. Word
...for a range of purposes

e.g.
- Instruct
- Persuade
- Inform
- Recount
- Explain
Teaching context for these texts

- Within the more broader program is ideal – science, inquiry topic, theme.

- If taught in isolation they can still be aligned with students’ interests and passions.
Choosing non-narrative texts

Finding appropriate model texts can be challenging.

Some are too complex and some on closer inspection are just not very suitable for teaching purposes.
Non-narrative texts

Categories created by Unsworth (Hertzberg, p.85 2012)

- **Subverters** - content is more like a game
- **Simplifiers** - minimise technicality
- **Distractors** - have too many unnecessary elements
- **Approximations** - may not be accessible to students
- **Initiators** (Recommended) - have age appropriate, technical vocabulary and information
Two examples in detail

How Scaffolding Literacy strategies were applied to teaching persuasive and explanation genres.
Scaffolding Literacy Overview

1. Acknowledge prior learning
2. Build Field knowledge
3. Text Orientation
4. Language Orientation
5. Transformations
6. Word study
7. Jointly constructed/Patterned writing
8. Independent writing
9. Assessment
I introduced the persuasive genre to 8 EALD boys who had little or no previous experience. Their Year 3 class teacher was about to introduce the genre to the whole class. Students were withdrawn for instruction.

I introduced the explanation genre to a Year 3 class of 23 students (four EALD.) Their inquiry topic was: ‘Reduce, re-use, recycle’.
Letter to the President of the Senate

My previous Year 2/3 students had written a letter to the President of the Senate. The reason for this was explained. Key vocabulary was introduced with pictures of Parliament House.
Dear Mr President,

We are a grade 2/3 at Mount Rogers Primary School. We are learning about Democracy and Government. We are very concerned that people who work at Parliament House and have very young children do not have child care there.

Firstly, we definitely think children should be close to their parents. They need to have parents close in case they get sick or are very unhappy.

Secondly, young children need games and activities in a safe environment. A child care place would be a safe place for children to be looked after and they could have good things to do like painting, riding bikes and playing with toys so they will be happy and not miss their parents.

Finally, parents would be extremely happy if their children were close by and their work would be of great quality.

We suggest you use a part of this lovely building to create a child care place. If we worked at Parliament House we would expect there to be a child care place for our kids. We are sure you will agree this is a great idea.

From
Dolphin 2/3 Class
How Polar Fleece is Made

The Year 3 class had been on an excursion to a recycling facility. During the excursion they had been shown a polar fleece jacket. Key vocabulary was introduced during the excursion and a film clip had provided detailed information.
How Polar Fleece is Made

Polar fleece is a warm material used for blankets, jumpers and jackets. It is soft and light, easy to clean and dries quickly. Did you know that polar fleece is made from recycled plastic bottles?

Only recycled plastic bottles made from plastic called PET can be used for making polar fleece. This is the plastic used to make soft drink and vegetable oil bottles. These bottles are light, strong and easy to clean and recycle.

The bottles are sold to recycling companies after being crushed. They are washed and ground into flakes. The flakes are cleaned again to get rid of any dirt. Then the flakes are dried out.

Next the flakes are melted and spun into strands. Think about how people who make fairy floss spin sugar into threads. These flakes are spun in a similar way.

Fibres are made into clothes or blankets. First they are woven into polar fleece. Then the fabric is dyed. It takes about 25 bottles to make one polar fleece jacket.

When you wear your polar fleece jacket, you might be wearing your own recycled bottles!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyF9Mxlcltw
Text Orientation
A difference from SL narrative texts is the *extension* of the Text Orientation phase.
1. Main structural elements
2. The key features of genre
3. Some specific vocabulary
Dear Mr. President,

We are a grade 2/3 at Mount Rogers Primary School. We are learning about Democracy and Government. We are very concerned that people who work at Parliament House and have very young children do not have child care there.

Firstly, we definitely think children should be close to their parents. They need to have parents close in case they get sick or are very unhappy.

Secondly, young children need games and activities in a safe environment. A child care place would be a safe place for children to be looked after and they could have good things to do like painting, riding bikes and playing with toys so they will be happy and not miss their parents.

Finally, parents would be extremely happy if their children were close by and their work would be of great quality.

We suggest you use a part of this lovely building to create a child care place. If we worked at Parliament House we would expect there to be a child care place for our kids. We are sure you will agree this is a great idea.

From
Dolphin 2/3 Class

How Polar Fleece is Made

Polar fleece is a warm material used for blankets, jumpers and jackets. It is soft and light, easy to clean and dries quickly. Did you know that polar fleece is made from recycled plastic bottles?

Only recycled plastic bottles made from Plastic called PET can be used for making polar fleece. This is the plastic used to make soft drink and vegetable oil bottles. These bottles are light, strong and easy to clean and recycle.

The bottles are sold to recycling companies after being crushed. They are washed and ground into flakes. The flakes are cleaned again to get rid of any dirt. Then the flakes are dried out.

Next the flakes are melted and spun into strands. Think about how people who make fairy floss spin sugar into threads. These flakes are spun in a similar way.

Fibres are made into clothes or blankets. First they are woven into polar fleece. Then the fabric is dyed. It takes about 25 bottles to make one polar fleece jacket.

When you wear your polar fleece jacket, you might be wearing your own recycled bottles!
Dear Mr President,

We are a grade 2/3 at Mount Rogers Primary School. We are learning about Democracy and Government. We are very concerned that people who work at Parliament House and have very young children do not have child care there.

Firstly, we definitely think children should be close to their parents. They need to have parents close in case they get sick or are very unhappy.

Secondly, young children need games and activities in a safe environment. A child care place would be a safe place for children to be looked after and they could have good things to do like painting, riding bikes and playing with toys so they will be happy and not miss their parents.

Finally, parents would be extremely happy if their children were close by and their work would be of great quality.

We suggest you use a part of this lovely building to create a child care place. If we worked at Parliament House we would expect there to be a child care place for our kids. We are sure you will agree this is a great idea.

From
Dolphin 2/3 Class

Author
Thinking verbs, some modality, emotive words, connectives.

Technical/subject specific vocabulary and action verbs.
Language Orientation
Work through the text together, underlining a word/groups of words.

Discuss author’s word choices. Highlight particular language features and punctuation.
One paragraph was chosen.
The last two paragraphs were chosen.

Persuasive – letter
Explanation – Polar fleece
Firstly, we definitely think children should be close to their parents. They need to have parents close in case they get sick or are very unhappy.
Fibres are made into clothes or blankets. First they are woven into polar fleece. Then the fabric is dyed. It takes about 25 bottles to make one polar fleece jacket.

When you wear your polar fleece jacket, you might be wearing your own recycled bottles!
Language Orientation

- Notice connective, emotive language, modality, repetition, thinking verb, present tense, reference.
- Punctuation dealt with in context.
- Attention was given to topic sentence, time connectives, action verbs, precise descriptive and technical vocabulary.
- Punctuation was dealt with in context.

Persuasive letter

Explanation – Polar fleece
Consistent use of symbols

Persuasive letter
Firstly, we definitely think children should be close to their parents. They need to have parents close in case they get sick or are very unhappy.

Explanation – Polar fleece
fibres are made into clothes or blankets. First they are woven into polar fleece. Then the fabric is dyed. It takes about 25 bottles to make one polar fleece jacket.

When you wear your polar fleece jacket, you might be wearing your own recycled bottles.
Transformations
Transformations

Chosen to explore:
- Emotive vocabulary
- Repetition
- Reference
- Cause and effect
- Punctuation

Chosen to explore:
- Topic sentence
- Connectives
- Action verbs
- Passive voice
- Simple sentence structure.

Persuasive letter

Explanation –Polar fleece
Word Study
Word study

- Modality – word cline
- Prefix ‘un’
- ‘ee’ in need, agree
- ‘ea’ in create, learning, great.
- High frequency words

- Prefix ‘re’
- Synonyms: fabric/material strands/threads
- Word building: recycle, recycling, recycled
- Word origins: fibre
Jointly constructed/Patterned writing
We brainstormed ideas why student home language programs should be on TV.
Why do we want programs on TV in our languages?

- I will enjoy funny cartoons.
- I can learn more of my language.
- I will be happy to hear my language.
- It is good for other kids to learn languages.
- I can learn another language
- I can learn scientific words in my language.
- Stories are funnier in my language.
Students used transformation sentence as a **guide** for writing a request.
Students’ sentences

• I would like short movies like “The Fortune Teller” in Russian. It’s funny in English too.

• I want Japanese movies and Japanese pictures on TV.

• I would like to watch Spanish cartoons on TV because I would learn more Spanish.

• I would like children’s programs and movies in Vietnamese on TV.

• I need Mon programmes and cartoons on SBS TV so I can be happy.’

• I want programs in my language and movies like “Dragon Ball Z” in Arabic. Movies that are funny like “Smurfs”.

• I have to have Dr Who movies on TV in Japanese.
A challenge was given to students to use the passive voice.
A sequence of pictures was shown ‘How aluminium cans are recycled.’

A list of topic vocabulary was given for each picture.

Students were asked to write using passive voice to explain sequence
HOW ALUMINIUM

Large amounts of energy are needed to produce aluminium from bauxite—but once aluminium is in metal form it can be remelted over and over again.

IS RECYCLED

saving considerable amounts of energy and bauxite. The following diagram represents the process of recycling aluminium:

1. Cans
2. Delivery
3. Smashing
4. Heating
5. Melted
6. Rolled
7. Cut
8.形成的
Writing an Explanation

How Aluminium is Recycled

Key words to go with each picture:

1. cans. collected
2. factory
3. ground, tiny metal chips
4. melted, ingots
5. rolled, sheets
6. sold, can manufacturers
7. new aluminium cans
8. buy, recycled

REMEMBER

Use ‘are’, ‘can be’, ‘is’
Independent writing
Students wrote a letter to the manager of SBS TV requesting children’s programs in their home languages.
Dear Mr. Eberly,
I would love to have cartoons on Russian. Firstly, it would be funny and interesting. Secondly, I would like moves in my English because it is funny. Finally, I want to learn Russian language because if I keep on learning only English I will forget Russian.

Please put movies on Russian language on TV.

From Misha.
Dear Mr Ebeid,

I would love to have cartoons in Russian.
Firstly it would be funny and interesting.
Secondly I would like movies in my language because it is funny.
Finally I want to learn Russian language because if I keep on learning only English I will forget Russian.
Please put movies on Russian language on TV.
From Misha
Dear Mr. Ebeid,

I would love to have movies in Vietnamese.

Firstly, it will be funny because I like it.

Secondly, it will be easier to understand because it is in my language.

Finally, it will be awesome because they have fighting movies.

Therefore, you should put movies in other languages on TV.

I hope you agree.

From Steven
Dear Mr. Ebeid,

I want to have cool movies like Doctor Who, Star Wars, Phineas and Ferb. I need Phineas and Ferb in Japnese it's very cool.

Firstly, some people can learn how to use Halp.

Secondly, I can remember how to speak Japanese, if I keep on just with English I will forget Japanese language.

Finally, I feel all the school can learn Japanese.

Plas put Japanese movies and cartoon on tv.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

from Ali D
Dear Mr Ebeid,

I want to have cool movies like Doctor Who, Star Wars, Phinies and Ferb. I need funny movies in Japanese, it’s very cool.

Firstly some people can learn how to say hello.

Secondly I can remember how to speak Japanese. If I keep on just with English I will forget Japanese language.

Finally people at all the school can learn Japanese.

Please put Japanese movies and cartoons on TV.

From

Ali
Dear Mr Ebeid,

I would really like Arabic language programs on TV like Dragon Ball GT and NINJAGO and Power Rangers samurai and Avatar the Last Air Bender.

Can you please do it?

Firstly I would like Arabic programs because it teaches me more Arabic.

Secondly I would love Arabic funny shows because it makes me wet my pants.

Finally I would like scary shows in Arabic because it scares my mum.

Please do it because it makes me happy and surprised.

From Omar
Assessment
Rubrics
Checklist
Achievement of specific goals
Self assessment
Teacher evaluation
Where to next?
Reflections

- When working with non-narrative texts, allow students to ask questions and make comments. They can be quite critical of texts! They can also see things you miss!

- I find my own appreciation and understanding of writing continues to grow too.

- Have a go! I find I am continually refining my approach as I work with new groups of students and different texts.
THANK YOU
Bibliography:

- Hertzberg, M. (2012) *Teaching English Language Learners in Mainstream Classes* PETAA N.S.W.