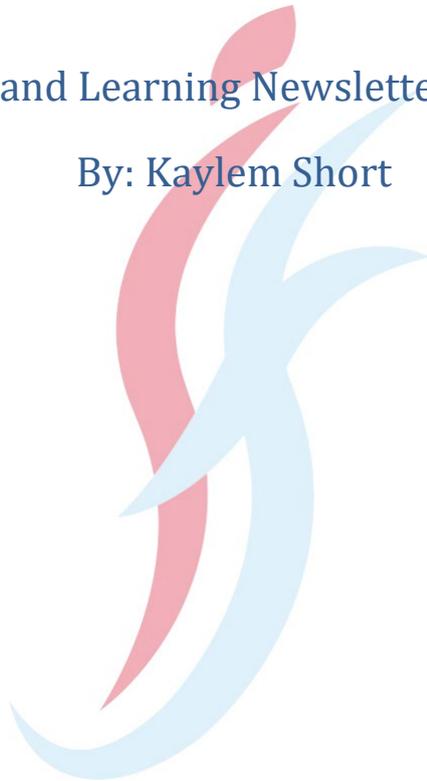


The Balanced Reader

Teaching and Learning Newsletter Collection

By: Kaylem Short



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## Teaching and Learning at IFPS – Literacy

In 2019 Ingle Farm Primary School (IFPS) committed to a 3-year plan in improving Literacy. This is referred to as the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and is accessible on the school website (<https://www.ifps.sa.edu.au/>). Our two goals in Literacy are:

*‘Students develop as balanced readers through consistent whole school practices in the teaching and learning of reading progressions.’*

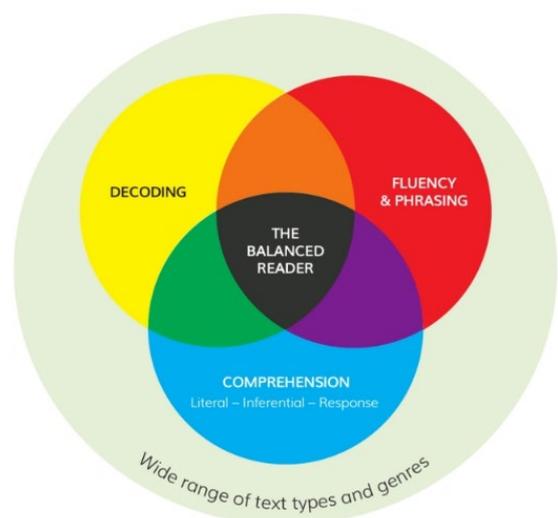
*‘Students develop oral language, phonological awareness and phonics proficiency through intentional and scaffolded teaching R - 7.’*

These goals connect into challenges of practice to ensure that actions connects to improved student learning. At IFPS we are refining how we use data to inform teacher practice.

As the Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator, I would like to include you in the improvement process taking place in classrooms for everyday teaching and learning designs. As families, your role cannot be underestimated. Together we can build powerful learners, COVID-19 has really highlighted the important connection between the teaching and learning in the classroom and at home. Teachers have noted improvement for students who participated in home learning. WE NEED THIS TO CONTINUE!!!

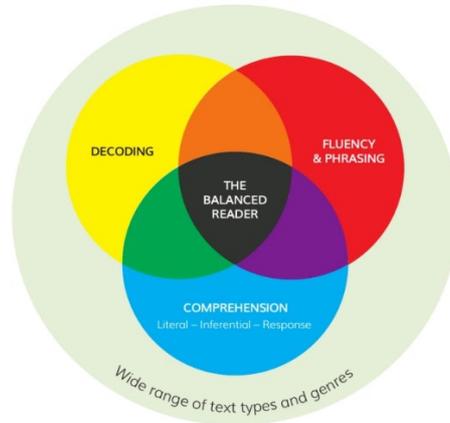
In my role as Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator I will provide school newsletters updates sharing how you can successfully support your children at home, supporting work at school and therefore continuing the quality practices we established during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You may recall the ‘Balanced Reader’ (see below). We want EVERY student to become a successful balanced reader. The Balanced Reader is made up of three elements: **Decoding, Fluency and Phrasing and Comprehension** (*literal, inferential and response*). **Oral Language** also underpins acquisition of ALL of the above skills. **Decoding** refers to your child’s ability to apply their letter sound knowledge (Phonics) to correctly pronounce words. **Fluency** refers to your child’s ability to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression. **Phrasing** refers to your child’s ability to group words together as in normal speech, pausing appropriately between phrases, clauses, and sentences. **Comprehension** refers to your child’s ability to understand the text (spoken, written or visual). Finally, **Oral Language** refers to your child’s ability to use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings. When reading with your children it is important to consider each element as your child requires all of them to progress their reading ability.



## Teaching and Learning at IFPS – Decoding

At Ingle Farm Primary School (IFPS), our aim is to ensure that all our students become 'Balanced Readers' based on the model below.



As previously explained, to become a 'Balanced Reader' each student requires the skills to: decode correctly; read with fluency and phrasing; comprehend literally, inferentially and be able to respond to a text effectively. These skills should also be demonstrated across a wide range of text types and genres. Once a student has these abilities they read to learn successfully. It is important to understand that children 'learn to read' and 'read to learn' simultaneously and the skill acquisition is not as simple as moving from one to another.

To enable you to support your children at home, I refer below to each aspect of the Balanced Reader, beginning with Decoding. Decoding refers to a child's ability to understand concepts of print, read high frequency words, be phonologically aware and to link phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters) using phonics.

### Concepts of Print

Concepts of Print refers to the awareness of 'how print works'. This includes the knowledge of the concept of what books, print, and written language are, and how they function. Understandings that allow the reading process to take place including:

- understanding that print conveys a message
- knowledge about book orientation and directionality of print
- distinction between sentences, words and letters
- knowledge of the alphabetic system and the difference between letters and words.

### High Frequency Words

High-frequency words are words that a student needs to know and cannot decode. They follow rules that may not support decoding practices.

### Phonological Awareness

Phonological Awareness is a focus of literacy teaching incorporating:

- recognising phonological patterns such as rhyme and alliteration
- awareness of syllables and phonemes within words
- hearing multiple phonemes within words.

## Phonics

Phonics is the ability to map sounds onto letters (sound-letter knowledge). Phonics knowledge allows children to understand the link between sounds (phonemes) and letter patterns (graphemes).

### Supporting your child at home

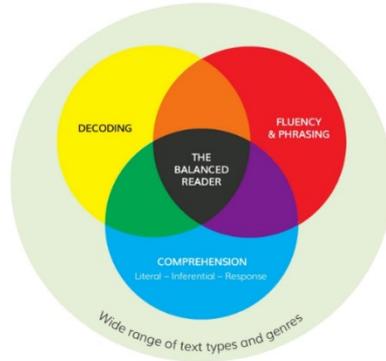
Each child at IFPS will have access to a levelled reader that has either been given to them by their teacher or borrowed from the library. To support your child's education and achievement it is suggested that they should read independently for at least 20 minutes each day.

As parents, there are some simple strategies that can be adopted when listening to your child read to practise their decoding ability.

- For a younger reader, help your child learn the names and sounds of the alphabet. Occasionally point to letters and ask your child to sound them.
- Play with magnetic letters. See how quickly you can put them in alphabetical order while singing the alphabet song.
- Look at written materials around your house and at road signs to see if you can spot familiar words and letter patterns.
- When you're trying to sound out a word, pay close attention to the print. Try to look at all the letters in the word, not just the first one or two.
- Help your child make connections between what he or she might see on a sign or in the newspaper and the letter and sound work he or she is doing in school.
- If your child stumbles on a word, encourage them to sound it out. If they still can't get it, provide the word so they don't get discouraged.
- Encourage your child to write and spell notes, e-mails, and letters using what he knows about sounds and letters.
- Talk with your child about the "irregular" words that she'll often see in what she's reading. These are the words that don't follow the usual letter-sound rules. These words include *said*, *are*, and *was*. Students must learn to recognise them "at sight."

## Teaching and Learning at IFPS – Fluency and Phrasing

Following previous Teaching and Learning newsletters, Fluency and Phrasing and its part in the 'Balanced Reader' (below) will be discussed.



As the diagram above shows, the 'Balanced Reader' consists of three key skills: decoding, fluency and phrasing, and comprehension (literal, inferential and response). Once a reader competently demonstrates these three skills, they are considered to have the ability to 'read to learn'. This is when a child can use reading to learn new information independently.

These newsletters share the strategies we use at Ingle Farm Primary School (IFPS) and provide techniques to support your child at home. This collaborative approach to reading can support accelerated learning for your child.

### Fluency

- Reading fluency has a qualitative definition, referring to the quality of students' reading. This includes the use of rhythm, phrasing, intonation, naturalness, and use of voice (for different characters/moods).
- Reading fluency also has a quantitative definition, referring to the accuracy (number of errors, compared to number of correct words read) and the rate (number of words read per minute). *The amount of words a child should be able to read a minute = 10 x child's age. E.g. An 8 year old should be able to read 10 x 8 words per minute, so 80 words per minute.*

### Supporting your child at home

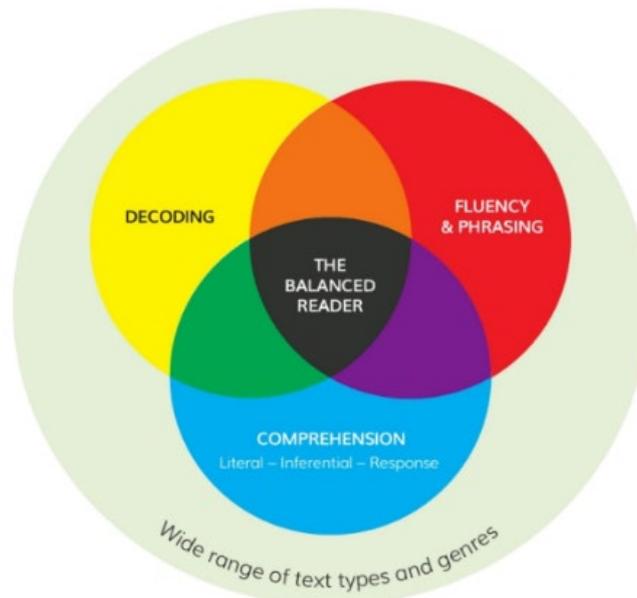
Each child at IFPS accesses a levelled reader via their teacher or borrowed from the library. To support your child's education and achievement it is suggested that they should read independently for at least 20 minutes each day.

As parents, there are some simple strategies that can be adopted when listening to your child read to practise their **fluency and phrasing**.

- Reread familiar books. This allows the child to practise fluency and phrasing rather than the decoding skills required to read unfamiliar ones.
- Reading aloud and having your child match his voice to yours.
- Having your child practice reading the same list of words, phrase, or short passages several times.
- Reminding your child to pause between sentences and phrases.
- Read aloud to your child to provide an example of how fluent reading sounds.
- Give your child books with predictable vocabulary and clear rhythmic patterns so the child can "hear" the sound of fluent reading as he or she reads the book aloud.
- Use books on tapes; have the child follow along in the print copy.

## Teaching and Learning at IFPS – Comprehension

Comprehension is another integral part that contributes to our students becoming Balanced Readers. As the diagram below shows, the 'Balanced Reader' consists of three key skills: decoding, fluency and phrasing, and comprehension (literal, inferential and response).



Becoming a balanced reader involves 'learning to read' and 'reading to learn'. 'Learning to read' is not a pre-requisite of 'reading to learn', despite being the goal of the Balanced Reader. Skills are interchangeable throughout the process. When we are 'learning to read' we still 'read to learn'; at a level that coincides with our reading ability.

These newsletters share the strategies we use at Ingle Farm Primary School (IFPS) and provide techniques to support your child at home. This collaborative approach to reading can support learning for your child.

### **Comprehension (literal, inferential, response)**

Comprehension means understanding text: spoken, written and/or visual. Comprehension is an active and complex process which:

- includes the act of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning from text
- enables readers to derive meaning from text when they engage in intentional, problem solving and thinking processes
- is a lived and institutionally situated social, cultural and intellectual practice that is much more than a semantic element of making meaning.

**Literal comprehension** occurs at the surface level when a reader acknowledges what they can see and hear. The details are stated and clear for anyone to identify. Literal comprehension is often referred to as 'on the page' or 'right there' comprehension. This is the simplest form of comprehension.

**Inferential comprehension** requires the reader to draw on their prior knowledge of a topic and identify relevant text clues (words, images, sounds) to make an inference. Inferential comprehension is often referred to as 'between the lines' or 'think and search' comprehension.

**Response comprehension** requires the reader to move beyond the text to consider what they think and believe in relation to the message in the text. It is at this point that readers are required to justify their opinions, argue for a

particular viewpoint, critically analyse the content and determine the position of the author. Response comprehension is often referred to as 'beyond the text' and includes 'big picture' comprehension. Often there is no right or wrong answer but rather justification for thinking in a particular way.

### **Supporting your child at home**

Each child at IFPS accesses a levelled reader via their teacher or borrowed from the library. To support your child's education and achievement it is suggested that they should read independently for at least 20 minutes each day.

As parents, there are some simple strategies that can be adopted when listening to your child read to practise their **comprehension**.

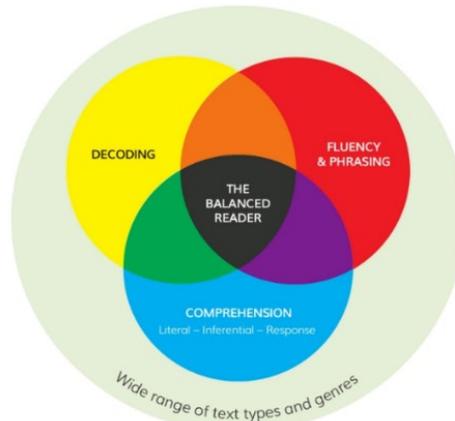
- Read books your child likes
- Read out loud
- Skim the heading of the text
- Re-read sections that are confusing
- Write down unknown words and discuss them
- Discuss with your child what they just read
- Recap and summarise main points
- Write down questions about what they don't understand
- Help your child make connections between what he or she reads and similar experiences he has felt, saw in a movie, or read in another book.
- Help your child go back to the text to support his or her answers.
- Read material in short sections, making sure your child understands each step of the way.

The Department for Education have also provided some information in regards to supporting your child at home via the link below:

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa/advice-families/reading-home>

## Teaching and Learning at IFPS – Text Types and Genres

When supporting students to become balanced readers, it is important that they learn the three skills while reading a wide range of text types and genres. As the diagram below shows, the 'Balanced Reader' consists of three key skills: decoding, fluency and phrasing, and comprehension (literal, inferential and response), but these skills need to be encapsulated within all text types and genres (Signified by the large circle)



As explained before, becoming a balanced reader involves 'learning to read' and 'reading to learn'. 'Learning to read' is not a prerequisite of 'reading to learn', despite being the goal of the Balanced Reader. Skills are interchangeable throughout the process. When we are 'learning to read' we still 'read to learn' at a level that coincides with our reading ability.

This is the final Teaching and Learning newsletter of 2020 and will conclude the theory around 'the Balanced Reader'. To support you with your understanding of the Balanced Reader, a complete booklet of all this year's Teaching and Learning newsletters will be available so all the information is in one place.

### Text Types and Genres

Reading is done for a number of different purposes and for different audiences. These different forms of writing are often known as **text types** at school. These are broken in to two types **factual texts** (non-fiction) and **literary texts** (fiction). Examples of these types are also known as **Genres**.

**Factual texts** inform, instruct or persuade by giving facts and information. Examples of these include: factual descriptions, factual recounts, information reports, procedures, procedural recounts, explanations, expositions and discussions.

**Literary texts** entertain or elicit an emotional response by using language to create mental images. Examples of these include: literary descriptions, literary recounts, personal responses, reviews and narratives.

When supporting your child to learn the 3 skills involved within the balanced read (Decoding, comprehension, fluency and phrasing), it is important that they learn and practice these while reading a range of the text types/genres outlined above. This ensures that the skills learnt are autonomous and can be transferred to different contexts.