




# Powerful stories and big ideas

ALEA/AATE Conference 2022

*Let's write an English unit that engages hearts and minds through powerful stories and big ideas*

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## Acknowledgement of country

*We acknowledge the Larrakia People who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today.*

*We pay respect to Elders past and present of the Larrakia People and extend that respect to other Aboriginal people visiting this site.*



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## Welcome

- Brief introduction to Lorraine and Michael
- <https://primaryenglish.education>



Presenters' own photo

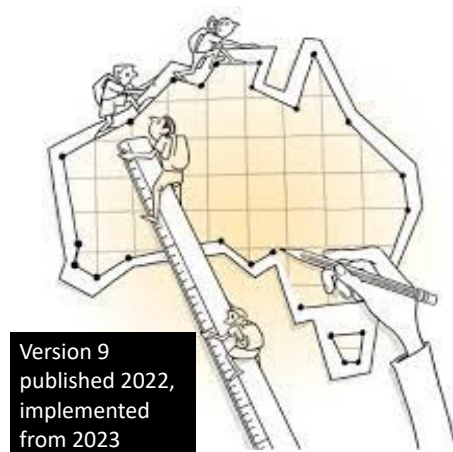
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## Why are we here?

- To appreciate the important place of literature in subject English
- To understand the value of the concept-based approach to the teaching of English
- To investigate ways of integrating the teaching of literature, literacy and language
- To understand a process for developing quality English units

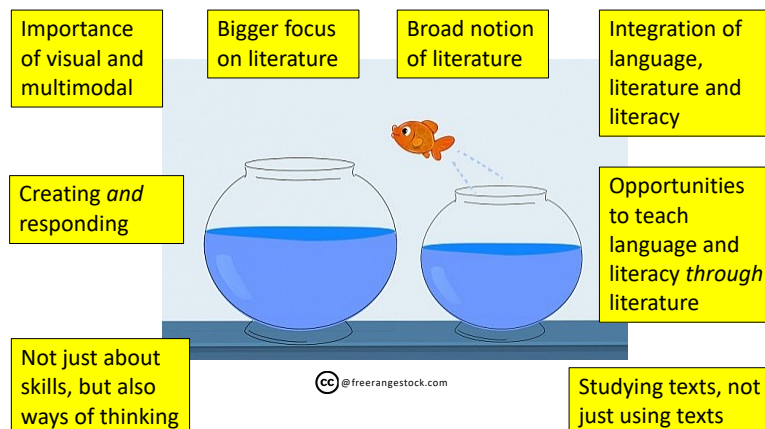
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## Revisiting *Australian Curriculum: English*



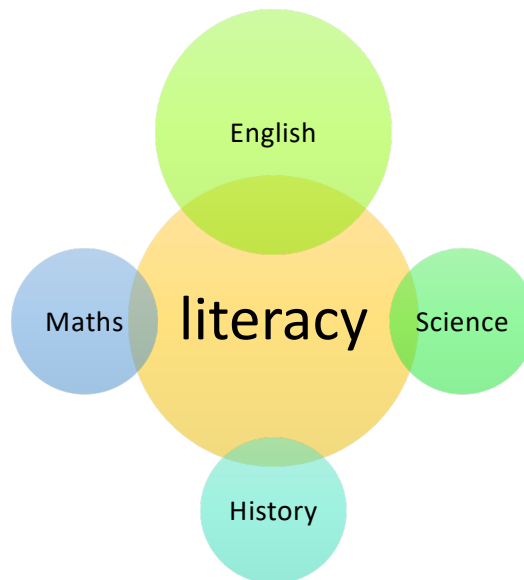
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## Australian Curriculum: English ... a big jump for primary teachers



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English  $\neq$  literacy



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A different notion of English as a subject demands a different way of teaching.



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The concept-based approach to programming offers a possible solution.




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## How to pick an English concept...

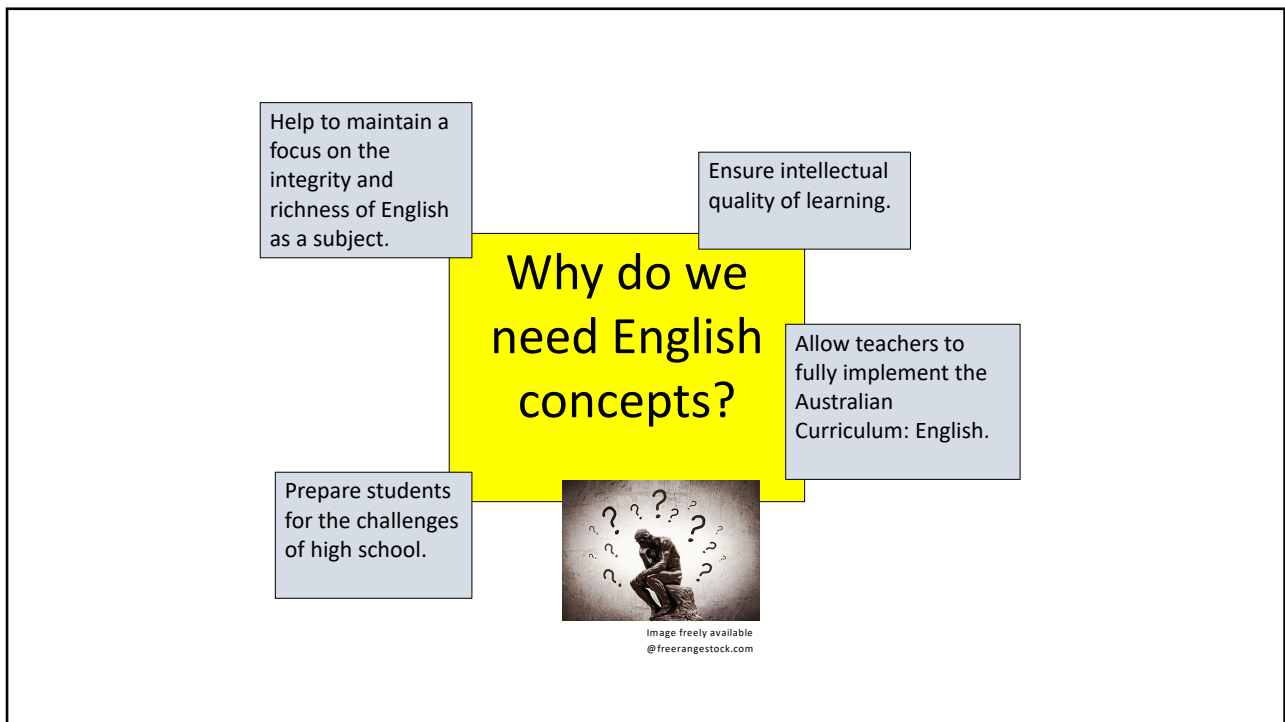
- BIG IDEAS
- Themes v. concepts
- Learning about key concepts is cumulative F-12
- Key concepts work across a range of texts.

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## Examples of concepts

Year	Text	Cover	Topic	Theme	Concept(s)
F	<i>Tricky's Bad Day</i> , Alison Lester		Moods and feelings	The power of nature to bring calm and joy into our lives	<b>Character Narrative (Code and convention)</b>
1-2	<i>Fabulous Frogs</i> , Martin Jenkins (illustrated by Tim Hopgood)		Frogs	The amazing features and variety of this ancient order of animals, so important to environmental health	<b>Representation (Genre)</b>
5-6	<i>Mechanica</i> , Lance Balchin		Mechanical animals	The importance of caring for the natural world - and the dire consequences (for us all) of failing to do so	<b>Genre (Narrative, Code and Convention, Intertextuality, Point of View)</b>

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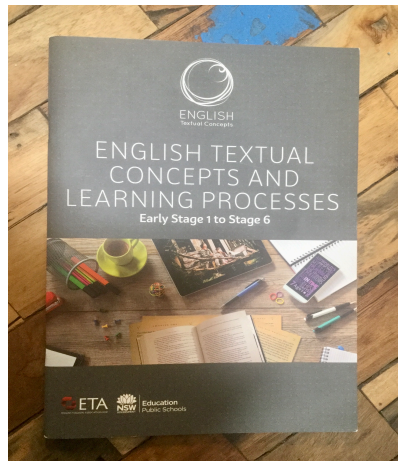
## What does the research tell us?



- Bloom (1956), Anderson & Krathwohl (2001): Concepts both enhance and are a product of higher order thinking.
- Newmann et al (1996), Newmann & Wehlage: Concept-based approach aligns with 'authentic pedagogy', encouraging students to actively construct meaning rather than rote learning.
- Bransford et al (2000): Concepts enhance transfer of learning to new situations.
- NSW Quality Teaching model, Ladwig & Gore (2003): Concept-based approach supported by best practice and solid research.
- Dylan Wiliam (2011): Subject-specific concepts promote powerful ways of thinking.
- Moon, B. (2017). Literary terms (eg representation, point of view) provide tools for talking about texts.

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## Finding a conceptual framework for subject English...



- Developed collaboratively by NSW Department of Education and NSW English Teachers Association in 2017
- Mapped to NSW English syllabus **which includes all content from Australian Curriculum: English**
- Available to all online at <http://englishtextualconcepts.nsw.edu.au>

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## English textual concepts



Argument	Authority	Character
Code and convention	Connotation, imagery and symbol	Context
Genre	Intertextuality	Literary value
Narrative	Perspective	Point of view
Representation	Style	Theme

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## But where are concepts in the AC:E?

- These concepts *are* represented in the AC:E, explicitly or implicitly.
- Check the mapping to the NSW English syllabus in *English textual concepts*. Many of these content points derive from AC:E.
- A good starting point for finding concepts for a particular year in the AC:E is the **Literature strand**.

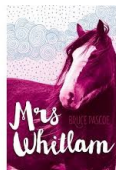
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## Linking concepts and literature

Two examples: current K-10 syllabus

### Text for Stage 3:

*Mrs Whitlam* (novella by Bruce Pascoe)

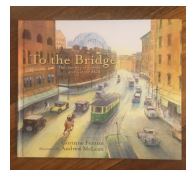


Possible concepts:

- Perspective
- Context
- Authority

### Text for Stage 2:

*To the Bridge* (picture book by Corinne Fenton, illustrated by Andrew McLean)



Possible concepts:

- Genre
- Theme & Representation

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# Concepts in K-2 English syllabus

- Kindergarten:
  - Context
  - Narrative
  - Character
  - Imagery, symbol & connotation
  - Perspective
- Stage 1:
  - Context
  - Narrative
  - Character
  - Imagery, symbol & connotation
  - Perspective & argument
  - Representation

Outcomes and content for Early Stage 1

## Understanding and responding to literature

This content is best addressed in parallel with:

- Early Stage 1: Oral language and communication
- Early Stage 1: Vocabulary
- Early Stage 1: Print conventions
- Early Stage 1: Reading comprehension
- Early Stage 1: Creating written texts
- Early Stage 1: Spelling
- Early Stage 1: Handwriting

### Outcomes

A student:

- understands and responds to literature read to them. **ENE-UARL-01**

### Content

Access content points are also available to support students with significant intellectual disability who are working towards this outcome.

#### Context

Students:

- identify aspects of their own world represented in texts
- identify texts that are composed for specific audiences and purposes
- identify and contrast features of texts that inform, persuade and/or entertain
- create imaginative and/or informative texts relating to their own experience, the world and/or other texts.

#### Narrative

Students:

- understand that narrative can be real or imagined
- identify narratives told through a range of modes<sup>14</sup> and media<sup>15</sup>
- identify, discuss and compare the beginning, middle and end in a range of narratives
- experiment with using parts and/or features of a narrative, innovating from a model text.

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# Concepts in draft 3-6 English syllabus

- Stages 2 and 3:
  - Context and perspective
  - Narrative
  - Character
  - Imagery, symbol & connotation
  - Argument & authority
  - Genre
  - Theme

Stage 3

## Understanding and responding to literature

This content is best addressed in parallel with:

- Stage 3: Oral language and communication
- Stage 3: Vocabulary
- Stage 3: Reading comprehension
- Stage 3: Creating written texts
- Stage 3: Handwriting and digital technologies

### Outcomes

A student:

- analyses representations of ideas in texts through narrative, character, imagery, symbol and connotation, and adapts these representations in own texts
- analyses representation of ideas in texts through genre and theme, that reflect context, perspective, argument and authority, and adapts these representations in own texts

### Content

#### Narrative

Students:

- describe how narrative structures and/or narrative conventions have been used to engage the reader
- analyse how narrative structures are manipulated to represent events in predictable and unpredictable ways, and experiment with these in own texts
- recognise that narratives reflect both personal experiences and those that are commonly experienced across groups<sup>16</sup>
- describe the difference in purpose between Aboriginal Dreaming stories and Aboriginal Songlines<sup>17</sup>

#### Character

Students:

- analyse attributes of characterisation, including how real and/or imagined characters resemble the way people act, think, feel and communicate
- identify the ways in which different elements of the text contribute to developing characterisation and adapt these elements when creating own texts<sup>18</sup>
- recognise character types, archetypes and stereotypes and how they are represented in texts<sup>19</sup>
- explore how characterisation invites engagement with a text

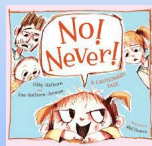
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## Linking concepts and literature

Two examples: new K-2 and draft 3-6 syllabus

### Texts for ES1:

*We Love You, Magoo* (picture book by Briony Stewart) & *No! Never!* (picture book by Libby Hathorn & Lisa Hathorn-Jarman)

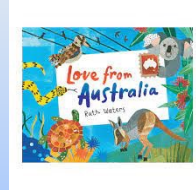


Possible concepts:

- Narrative
- Character

### Text for Stage 1:

*Love from Australia* (picture book by Ruth Waters)



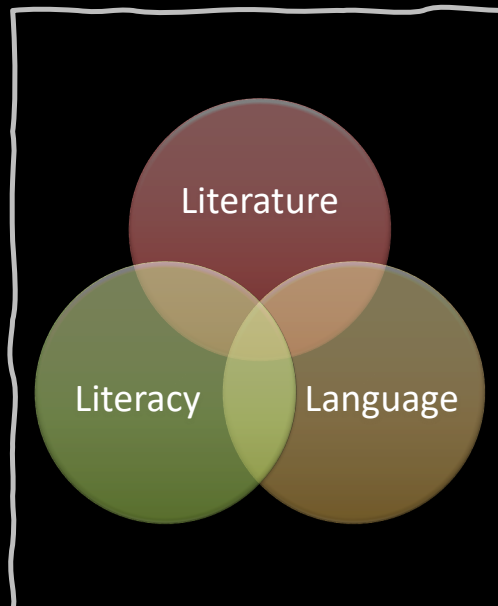
Possible concepts:

- Representation
- Imagery, Symbol and Connotation
- Code and convention


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## Integrating the three Ls

*Australian Curriculum: English* requires the integration of the three strands of English: 'each strand interacts with and enriches the other strands in creative and flexible ways.'



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Literature is the key to effective language and literacy teaching

Using quality literature as the focus:

- provides models of excellence
- develops grammatical competence
- broadens vocabulary
- improves writing and spelling

<http://primaryenglish.education/teaching>

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## Developing a quality unit of work




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# Process for designing a quality English unit of work



- Step 1:** Identify the needs of students, mindful of evidence of previous learning
- Step 2:** Develop a scope and sequence for English learning that identifies the key English concept and text for the unit
- Step 3:** Identify the syllabus outcomes and content that relate to the key concept
- Step 4:** Identify opportunities for assessment (both formative and summative), including an assessment task with syllabus-based criteria
- Step 5:** Backward map from the assessment task to develop a teaching/learning sequence
- Step 6:** Integrate other important learning activities into the unit
- Step 7:** Evaluate the unit at critical stages in its development to ensure quality (Murray & Beveridge, 2019)

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**PETAA**  
PRIMARY ENGLISH TEACHING  
ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA  
CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL GROWTH


PETAA  
PAPER 215

## LET'S WRITE A UNIT

Based on a quality text and tailored to your students' needs.

*Michael Murray & Dr Lorraine Beveridge*

This PETAA Paper includes digital resources. To access these resources you need to log on to access the member-only digital version for all the associated resources, embedded video and downloads, including the sample unit of work, at [bit.ly/pet215](http://bit.ly/pet215) or using the QR code.



### Introduction

Teachers are great at sharing, evidenced by the plethora of literature-based units authored by teachers and freely available for download on the internet. Sharing and collaboration are core strengths of the teaching profession, yet these units should be viewed as a double-edged sword. When teachers use someone else's unit, written to target the needs of a particular group of students, we argue they are not addressing the specific learning needs and interests of their own students.

Reasons provided by teachers as to why they don't create their own units, tailored to their students, usually revolve around a lack of time and/or knowledge regarding the appropriate steps to follow – that is, how to write a quality English unit.

### 1. CREATING A UNIT FOR YOUR OWN STUDENTS' NEEDS

Our aim is to outline a trustworthy, collaborative process on how to craft a unit that is not onerous or time-consuming and draws on educational theory, formative assessment and student learning needs. By centring a unit of work in English on high interest quality texts, and students' identified learning needs, teachers are potentially creating literature-based units that target learning locally, engage students in rich learning tasks and can, when appropriate, authentically link to other key learning areas across the curriculum.

Through this process of writing your own literature-based English units that address the learning needs of your students, you establish the best chance of learning success.

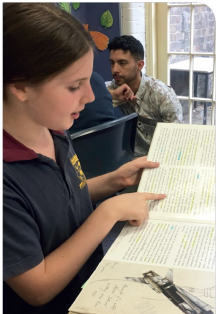


Figure 1: *Mechanica* The core text of unit.

Before we share the process for designing a quality unit of

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**Step 1: Identify the learning needs of students,  
mindful of evidence of previous learning**

- Consider the diversity of students in your classroom
- For subject English, how do you know what their learning needs are?
- NAPLAN is one source of data, but what others are available to you?
- Focus on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): taking students to the next level

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**Step 2: Develop a scope and sequence for English learning  
that identifies the key English concept and text for the unit**

- Why bother with a scope and sequence?
- Essential components of each unit, reflected in the scope and sequence, should include:
  - ★ title of unit
  - ★ duration
  - ★ implementation sequence
  - ★ curriculum is addressed
  - ★ **key concept(s)**
  - ★ **quality text (s)**

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**Step 3: Identify key concept(s) – and ensure that the curriculum supports the key concept(s)**

- Select appropriate literature for the year that you teach.
- Use English Textual Concepts to help you identify the concepts to be studied.
- Note that for NSW teachers the concepts are prescribed in the new K-2 and draft 3-6 syllabus.
- The Literature strand in the AC:E is a good starting point to find content relevant to a key English concept.
- Choose an appropriate template for writing the unit.

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**Step 4: Identify opportunities for assessment (both formative and summative), including an assessment task with syllabus-based criteria**

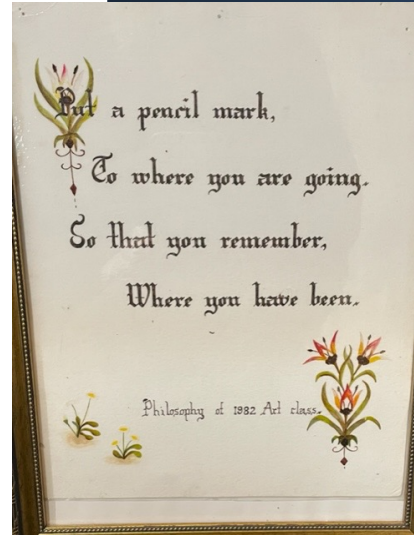
- Identify opportunities for assessment in unit
- Develop an assessment task with outcomes-based criteria to judge performance
- Some considerations:
  - ✓ Assessment is important for the *student* to monitor and improve learning
  - ✓ Assessment is important for the *teacher* to monitor and improve teaching
  - ✓ Formal and informal assessment
  - ✓ Opportunities for self and peer assessment
  - ✓ Ongoing, but manageable

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**Step 5: Backward map from the assessment task to develop a teaching/learning sequence**

In their book *Understanding by design*, Wiggins and McTighe suggest three stages for curriculum planning:

1. Identify desired outcomes
2. Determine what constitutes acceptable evidence of competency in the outcomes (assessment)
3. Plan instructional strategies and learning experiences that bring students to these outcomes.



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**Step 6: Integrate other important learning activities into the unit**

- What **literacy** activities will be involved in the unit? Refer to the AC:E or your syllabus.
- What learning about **language** is essential to the unit? Refer to the AC:E or your syllabus
- What opportunities for students to **reflect** on their learning can be included in the unit?

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### Step 7: Evaluate the unit at critical stages in its development to ensure quality

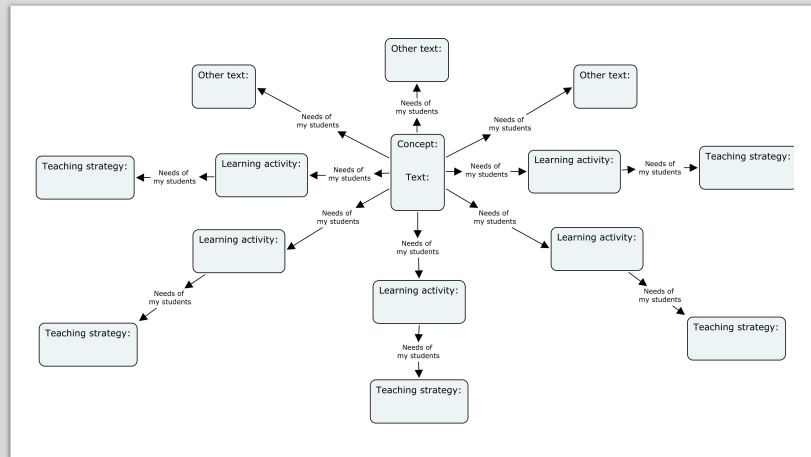
- Use the *Tool for evaluating a quality unit of work* to help you evaluate existing or newly developed units.
- Use the *Tuning protocol* to receive feedback that will assist you to further refine units in the development stages.
- Teaching the unit provides the ultimate opportunity for evaluation.
- Ideally, evaluation of units should be collaborative and ongoing.

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Seven-step  
process –  
cyclical!

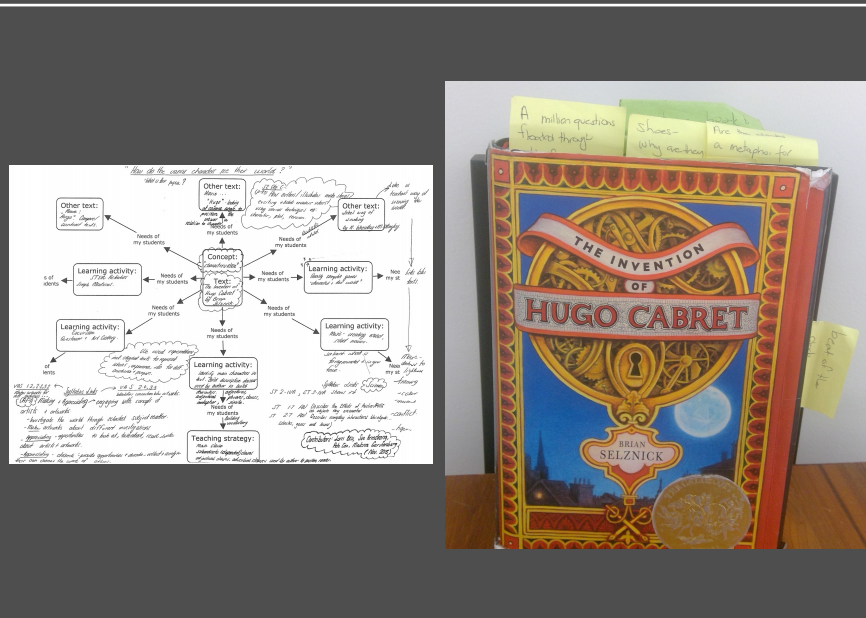


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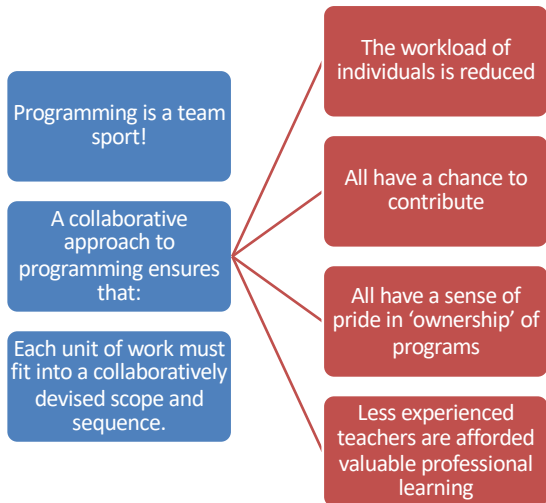
Model for mind-mapping a new unit of work

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## Strength in collaboration



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What comes first: the concept or the quality literature?

Suggested activity:

- Identify an example of quality literature for the year you currently teach.
- Remember that non-fiction, novels, poetry, drama, non-fiction, film, television, websites and podcasts, as well as picture books, can all be considered examples of quality literature.
- Identify one or two concepts you think are strongly evident in the text.
- What aspects of literacy and language can be taught through this text?
- Share with a partner!



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## What's the big idea?

### Writing quality units of work:

- putting the student at the centre of learning
- using a tried and tested process
- drawing on quality literature
- incorporating English concepts
- integrating literacy and language

to teach *real English* in the primary classroom



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## Evaluation- Jamboard

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/17VaRSvUZH4aHa278YCpay-JL02S4-JdNCRUT2uUyrlQ/edit?usp=sharing>

1.

Do you have a better understanding about English concepts? How?

2.

Please comment on your understanding of the process of composing quality units of work

3.

How has your understanding of quality literature changed as a result of today's workshop?

4.

How can you use these ideas in your teaching practice?



Thank you. Any feedback would be valued and appreciated.  
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