



Early years curriculum materials

## **Media literacies**



**Queensland  
Government**



**Queensland  
Studies Authority**  
*Partnership and innovation*

## Case study: Media literacies

### Introduction

The following case study is not designed to describe a pre-planned unit of work; it is presented as an example of how a unit can emerge. Units can emerge by teachers drawing on children's interests and implicit knowledge, and using teachable moments and focused learning and teaching to develop explicit understandings about literacies.

### Background

Media literacies experiences became part of the classroom program over an 11-week period. At times, media attracted a strong interest, then interest faded as children's other ideas were incorporated into the program, until interest in media re-emerged and gained momentum. Some learning experiences arose from discussions initiated by children, some by teachers. Some experiences involved the whole class while others involved only a small group or an individual. Children engaged differently with materials and ideas and their choices led them down different learning pathways. The children all emerged with new ways to talk about literacies and a feeling that they were literate in various media.

Although familiar media texts were of intense interest to this group of children, "media" would not necessarily be a topic for all groups of children to explore. Many of the ideas presented in this case study could be adapted to allow children to explore other familiar texts (oral, written, visual or electronic) relevant to their local community. From these texts children could make various aspects of literacy explicit through play, real-life situations, investigations, routines and transitions, and focused learning and teaching.

### Media literacies in action

The teacher observed that the group of Preparatory Year children regularly choose to discuss their personal experiences of familiar media texts as they ate lunch or in other group settings. For this group, familiar media television and video texts, favourite characters, jingles, logos and commercial products such as hats, T-shirts and lunch boxes, were meaningful and engaging texts that held their attention. The children read these texts with confidence by implicitly identifying contextual information, visual symbols, colours, text shapes and sounds.

These texts helped the children begin to understand explicitly that many texts use words, sounds and images to communicate meaning. After children used familiar media texts they could learn to read and co-construct texts and view themselves as capable users of cultural texts. This topic also provided opportunities to question meaning in texts and children's assumptions about their world.

By drawing on children's knowledge and interests, the teacher used teachable moments — resulting from spontaneous experiences and experiences initiated by the teacher and the children — to:

- explain how media texts are created using combinations of words, images and sounds
- develop children's language for talking about and comparing texts, and for beginning to question meaning in texts
- experiment with ways to construct simple texts by combining images, words, symbols and sounds
- make children aware of similarities and differences in personal preferences regarding media texts, and how media shapes their family, classroom and community experiences
- show children how to read, view and make meaning from texts
- teach children to use communication technologies meaningfully, to access information, and to use technologies to communicate ideas to others.

## Early learning areas

### Language learning & communication

- using spoken language (including home language, or signed or augmentative communication) for a range of purposes
- using emerging understandings to predict and make meanings from a variety of written, visual and multimodal texts
- experimenting with emerging understandings of written, visual and multimodal texts to communicate meanings

### Active learning processes: Thinking; investigating technology; imagining & responding

- generating and discussing ideas and plans and solving problems
- investigating technology and considering how it affects everyday life
- experimenting with materials and processes in a variety of creative, imaginative and innovative ways
- discussing and responding to the qualities of their own and others' representations, experiences and artistic works

### Social & personal learning: Personal learning

- acting with increasing independence and responsibility towards learning and personal organisation

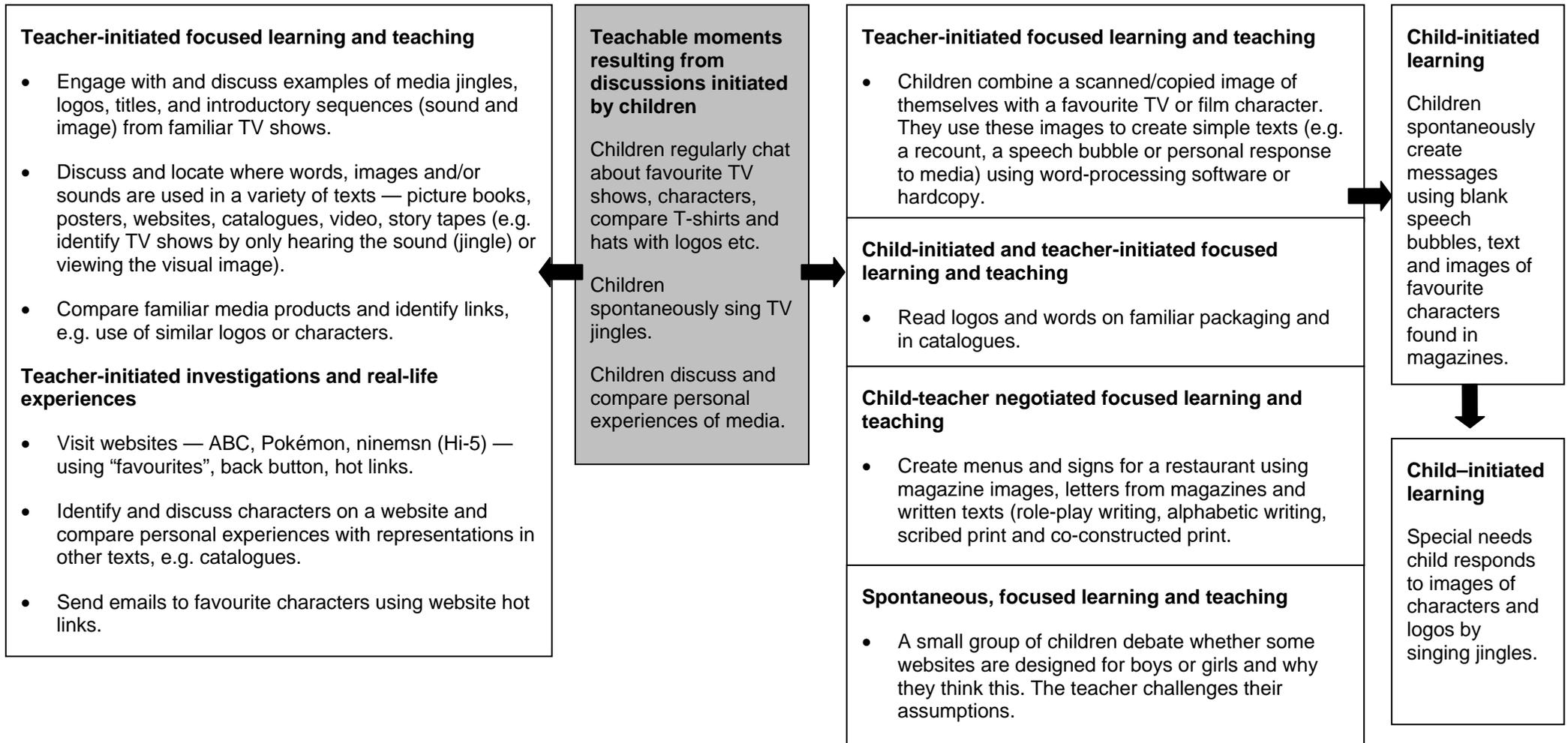
### Health & physical learning

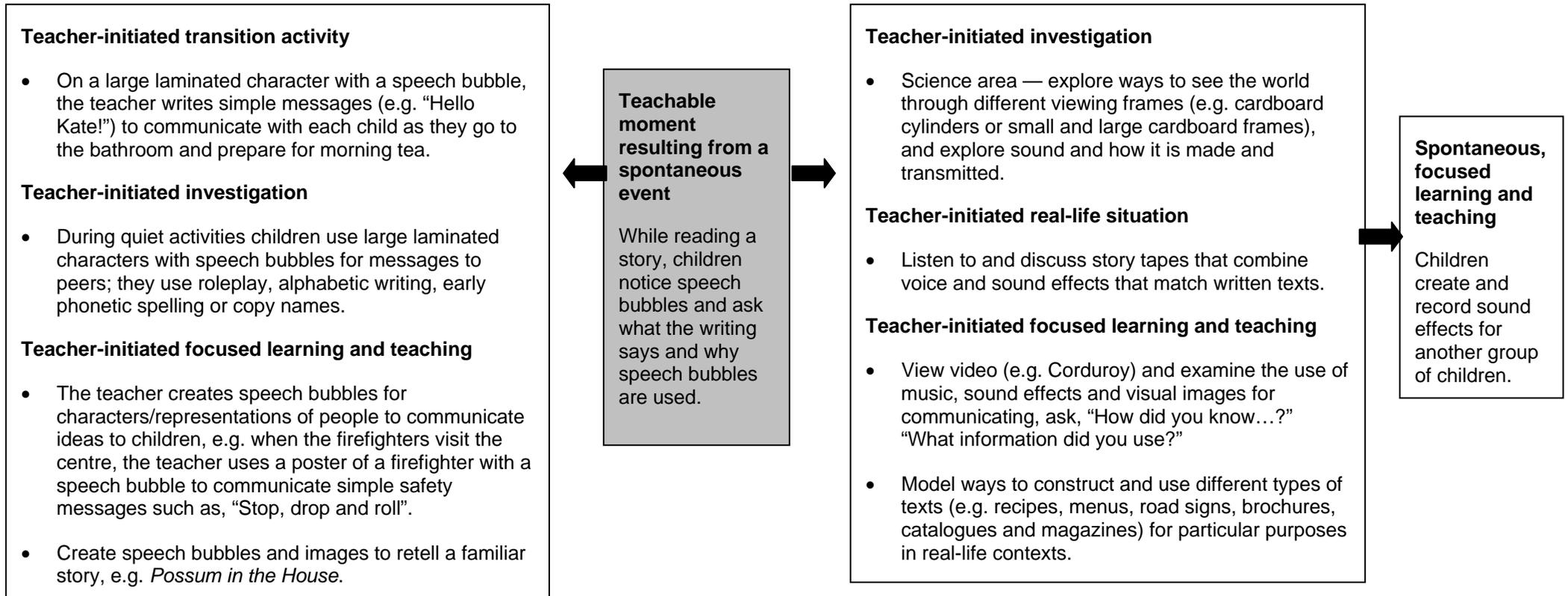
- using and extending fine-motor skills when integrating movements and manipulating equipment, tools and objects

## Learning experiences

The following overview illustrates the main learning experiences that emerged from the explorations of media texts. The shaded boxes indicate the starting points, that is, how children initiated learning by sharing their interest in the topic and how they began to explore their implicit knowledge.

These experiences ebbed and flowed as children's interests shifted and changed. At times, only particular children were actively engaged and shared their experiences with peers. At other times the whole class was engaged. Some children followed their interests intermittently over a term, and others were involved for shorter, more concentrated periods of time.





## What did the children do to learn about literacies?

<b>Identify and use codes</b>	<b>Make links between texts and contexts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify what codes are used — font/style of print, colour, shape of text, particular symbol/logo/image.</li> <li>• Talk about letters and initial sounds for real purposes.</li> <li>• Identify names/labels, e.g. character's name on website.</li> <li>• Identify and discuss what information to use to work out a message, e.g. initial letter/sound, image, sound, colour and context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use implicit knowledge of media texts — TV and video shows — and develop a language for expressing this knowledge.</li> <li>• Compare personal experiences of media with peers' experiences.</li> <li>• Identify similarities/links between texts (e.g. between a hat with a logo, and favourite show)</li> <li>• Identify how, when and where the children engage with media texts.</li> </ul>
<b>Use texts for real purposes</b>	<b>Analyse texts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use speech bubbles to record speech that can be read to others.</li> <li>• Create texts for a purpose, e.g. signs used to sell items in a shop.</li> <li>• Construct and co-construct different types of texts with suitable formats, e.g. a menu, speech bubble, list, sign or price tags.</li> <li>• Identify where and how different text types are used in real life, e.g. a recipe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify where and when images, sounds and words are used.</li> <li>• Discuss why a producer uses jingles, logos and so on to, for example, get your attention or get you to buy something.</li> <li>• Discuss and compare media, e.g. TV shows or websites (that I like/don't like, that are violent, scary or make me happy, etc., that target boys/girls? Why? How do you know?).</li> <li>• Question meanings in texts and examine stereotypes and biases, with support.</li> </ul>

## What did the teacher do to support children to learn about literacies?

Identify and use codes	Make links between texts and contexts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain particular codes that are used — font/style of print, colour, shape of text, particular symbol/logo/image.</li> <li>• Explain how letters and sounds are used in texts (and make links to children’s knowledge and experience).</li> <li>• Draw attention to where names/labels/words/logos are used in real life, e.g. a character’s name on a website.</li> <li>• Guide learning to help children to draw on what they know to work out a message, e.g. using initial letter/sound, image, sound and/or context information.</li> <li>• Point out relationships between text and talk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen and observe to find out what implicit knowledge children have about media, and verbalise and make this knowledge explicit to them.</li> <li>• Encourage children to share personal experiences with media, and question to help them compare experiences.</li> <li>• Help children to create a speech bubble stating what they like about a TV show/character.</li> <li>• Make explicit the similarities/links between texts and encourage children to do this by questioning.</li> <li>• Provide many opportunities to engage with familiar media texts and identify other times/places they experience these texts.</li> </ul>
Use texts for real purposes	Analyse texts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model and provide materials and scribe so children can create speech bubbles, and help them to read/share these.</li> <li>• Model and scribe to help children create texts for particular purposes, e.g. signs for a shop or menus for a restaurant.</li> <li>• Provide real-life opportunities to construct different types of texts with suitable formats, e.g. a menu, speech bubble, list or sign.</li> <li>• Explain why and where we use different text types.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a language for talking about how texts are constructed using images, sounds and words.</li> <li>• Discuss and question why producers use music, jingles, logos to get attention, get you to buy something etc.</li> <li>• Listen to children’s comments and ask questions to help them to elaborate their responses to media, and explore assumptions and biases, e.g. why a child feels that Dragon Ball Z is “yukky”, or why a child says, “I don’t want the girl one (Barbie website), I want the boy one (Pokémon website).”</li> <li>• Highlight and question some examples of stereotypes and pose questions about representations.</li> </ul>