



Literacy Program

At Victorian College for the Deaf, our F-10, Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) approach combined with Direct Instruction resources are used to teach language, reading, writing and spelling. Our approach and resources are based on evidence showing both EDI and DI resources not only close the gap at a faster rate for learners, but learning is maintained by students.

We begin by developing children's phonological awareness skills either by listening or through fingerspelling. We teach how speech sounds or lip patterns & mouth shapes (visemes) are mapped onto letters and letter patterns. We teach the language children need for learning in Auslan and spoken English. Children respond in Auslan and/or spoken English. We encourage and respect our students' choice and preferences for communication mode (Auslan or speech).

As students' skills develop, they use their knowledge to blend sounds in order to read words and segment sounds in order to spell words with increasing difficulty. While developing these fundamental skills, we also have a strong focus on building students' morphological awareness, vocabulary, literal and inferential comprehension skills, and ability to read and write proficiently across a wide range of text genres. This includes narratives, information reports, persuasive texts, recounts and poetry. The students are provided with rich, authentic writing tasks that enable them to understand the true value and purpose of the writing process.

Students are explicitly taught the conventions of grammar, punctuation and handwriting in order to become successful writers. Strong links are made between reading and writing.

Our literacy program provides a rich vocabulary oral/sign language program with daily opportunities for children to develop their skills. Using a confident 'voice', organising thoughts, listening/watching attentively and asking clarifying questions are important skills that are explicitly taught.

We teach literacy to student groupings that are stage appropriate. Instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of the learner based on whether they can acquire literacy skills using listening, seeing or both.

F-10 students have two literacy lessons daily that may include:

- Phonemic awareness – foundations for reading and writing
- Phonology – foundations for reading and writing
- Vocabulary – to support the reading and writing process
- Reading Fluency & Comprehension – also supporting the development of Theory of Mind
- Handwriting – foundation skill to support the writing process
- Morphology – spelling by way of looking at root words and affixes
- Grammar – to support the writing process
- Punctuation – to support the writing process

Speech Therapy

The College employs two qualified Speech Pathologists. Both practitioners are embedded in our literacy blocks across the college targeting the necessary skills and knowledge our students need to become literate, critical thinkers.

Speech and listening skills, in partnership with families, is also a priority of the college for identified students in our Primary F-2 program. Therapy is available for our secondary students by way of expression of interest from students.

