



IMSLE A Structured Literacy Approach

In recent years, the term Structured Literacy has become central to conversations about reading, spelling and writing instruction. Parents hear it. Schools reference it. Teachers are being trained in it.

But what does Structured Literacy actually mean—and why does IMSLE place it at the centre of teacher education?

IMSLE training is built around Structured Literacy because it aligns with decades of research into how students learn to read, spell, and write.

Structured Literacy is an evidence-based approach that explicitly and systematically teaches the relationships between spoken and written language.

It draws from cognitive science, linguistics, educational research, and neuroscience to support reading success through clear, intentional instruction.

Rather than assuming students will naturally acquire reading and writing skills through exposure alone, Structured Literacy teaches the written code directly and systematically.

This approach is beneficial for all students, particularly:

- students with dyslexia
- students experiencing reading difficulties
- multilingual learners
- students requiring stronger literacy foundations
- early readers developing essential language skills

Research continues to show that explicit literacy instruction benefits **all learners**.

The IMSLE Approach to Structured Literacy

IMSLE training supports educators to understand not only what to teach, but why and how literacy develops. IMSLE trains teachers in an integrated approach via research based models, including the 4 Part Processor (McClelland & Siedenberg). An integrated approach such as MSL teaches and incorporates the lower level skills required for successful word reading with the higher level processors of language comprehension making meaning required for comprehension. (Scarborough's Rope).

Structured Literacy instruction includes several core principles.

Direct and Explicit Instruction

Skills are taught directly and clearly.

Teachers explicitly teach students:

- how sounds can connect to letters and letter patterns
- how to decode unfamiliar words
- how to best reach word reading fluency and word recognition
- how to best retain irregular word patterns for both reading and spelling
- how to spell accurately
- how to apply these skills in reading and writing

Students are not expected to discover patterns independently—they are guided through them.

Systematic and Sequential Teaching

Learning follows a carefully planned sequence.

Students develop foundational skills before progressing to more complex concepts, creating strong pathways for reading and spelling development.

This structured progression helps reduce learning gaps and supports long-term literacy success.

Cumulative Practice

Each new concept builds on previous learning.

Students revisit and apply earlier skills regularly so knowledge becomes accurate, efficient, and increasingly automatic.

Repeated, meaningful practice supports orthographic mapping—the process that enables instant word recognition.

Diagnostic and Responsive Teaching

Effective literacy instruction is responsive to student need.

Teachers use observation and assessment to make informed instructional decisions and adjust teaching accordingly.

Rather than asking:

“What program comes next?”

Structured Literacy asks:

“What does this student need next?”

What Structured Literacy Teaches

Structured Literacy includes explicit teaching across the major components of written language:

Phonology – awareness and manipulation of speech sounds

Phonics / **Alphabetic Principle** – connections between sounds and written symbols

Spelling and Encoding – applying language knowledge to written expression

Morphology – understanding meaningful word parts including prefixes, suffixes, and bases

Syntax and Language Structure – understanding how language is organised

Vocabulary and Comprehension – developing meaning and understanding

Together, these elements support accurate reading, fluent reading, strong spelling, improved writing and deeper language comprehension.

Why This Matters

Reading is not a natural biological process.

Unlike spoken language, reading requires the brain to build new connections between speech and print.

Structured Literacy supports this process through explicit teaching, intentional sequencing, and cumulative practice.

For students who struggle, this clarity can be transformative.

For educators, it provides a practical framework grounded in evidence and aligned with how literacy develops.

At IMSLE, Structured Literacy is more than a methodology.

It is an approach that equips teachers with knowledge, instructional precision, and practical tools to support every learner to become a successful reader and writer.

Reading success should not depend on guesswork.

Structured Literacy provides the knowledge, structure, and instructional pathway to help all students access literacy with confidence.