

SUBMISSION TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
QUALITY INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION REVIEW

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(23 PAGES)

Jo Rogers, Primary Teacher, Special Education Teacher, LDA Consultant, 1968 to 2019

FOREWORD

My experience is classroom teaching of Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2 before 1980; before Whole Language/Balanced Literacy and Constructivism approaches were introduced to primary teaching in Australia.

I do not have the high academic qualifications of other submitters, but almost none would have the knowledge and 50 years practical experience of successfully teaching children to read, including severely dyslexic children, that my comments bring to this submission.

Before 1980, every child in F-1-2 was taught the foundation literacy and numeracy skills by the end of Year 2, so they were able to build upon those skills from Year 3 (Tier 1).

Any child struggling to progress was noted by Year 1, and given small group or 1:1 teaching by the department head, so they kept up with their peers. (Tier 2)
Each class teacher F-6 prepared 3 levels of tasks in word study (phonics & vocabulary) and mathematics direct teaching sessions to cater for individual differences.

In Special Education Units (closed in 1990) I taught Tier 2 from Years 1, 2 and 3, so the students at risk kept up with their peers and able to cope with Years 4-6.

In private practice as an LDA Consultant 1989 – 2019 I taught illiterate and innumerate children, using evidence based practice (Direct Teaching and Systematic Synthetic Phonics SSP) until they caught up with peers and then were able to cope with the curricula and get their education.

Every new student aged 6 to 14 years I saw, had not learned the foundation literacy and numeracy skills, so they could not cope with Years 3-6. So I have taught the foundation literacy skills (handwriting, alphabet, sounds in words, phonics, reading, writing, basic punctuation and grammar) and mathematics skills (numbers, counting, the four operations concepts and processes, fractions) to children for 51 years.

This knowledge I learned from my Initial Teacher Training and Curricula in 1960's, followed by PD conferences and seminars at Melbourne University via Learning Difficulties Australia and SPELD. Validity of the earlier teaching approaches has been well tested now via scientific evidence based research, as the most effective and best practice for teaching literacy and numeracy.

The alphabet, dictionary, 44 sounds in words, and children's cognitive development do not change over time, so they stay relevant.

Constructivism is an ideology that children learn by creative play, with testing to find out if they have learned, discouraged. Teachers keep moving through the curriculum, regardless of any children left behind.

We know that 20% to 25% are left behind by Year 3 and that 41% and 46% are left behind by age 15 years.

Whole Language/Balanced Literacy ideologies are based on a theory that children naturally learn to read as they do with oral language, hearing speech and language from birth. If children do not learn to read, they believe it is because they were not read to from birth, so nothing can be done by the time they go to school. Phonics and direct teaching are/were seen as unacceptable practices.

It is fact that Receptive and Expressive Oral Language is learned that way, but **written language needs to be systematically and sequentially taught to most children in order to be learned.**

Ladder of Reading

5% learn to read effortlessly.

35% learn to read with broad instruction.

40% to 50% learn to read only by including systematic, sequential, direct phonics instruction, followed by vocabulary.

10% dyslexia can still be taught to read but only with systematic, sequential diagnostic instruction.

Whole language and constructivism entered schools gradually in the 1980's. Concerns about falling literacy and education standards surfaced during the 1990's. Surveys and Inquiries from 1996 to 2019 find illiteracy levels of 20% to 30% or 40% (ABS), occurring in the exact time frame as whole language/balanced literacy and constructivism approaches entered mainstream primary education.

This issue is the crux of most of the problems in Education, which are -

- a) most primary teachers do not know how to teach children to read,**
- b) unacceptable levels of illiteracy and innumeracy,**
- c) parental frustration and angst,**
- d) school based anxiety and depression in illiterate children,**
- e) teachers' frustration,**
- f) loss of public respect for teaching.**

PART A

Education may already have quality, highly motivated school leavers choosing teaching as a career, but they are not being given adequate Initial Teaching Education to become effective teachers.

Many problems associated with attracting the best pre-teachers to enter Education as a career are linked to other problems in Education, as above. Address those problems and Teaching will attract good pre-teachers.

Children begin to fail to make progress learning literacy skills during Year 1. As their confidence and self esteem drop, their frustration and anxiety about school grows, which leads to disruptive behavior, angst towards teachers from worried parents, which adds more stress for teachers and schools. A cycle.

Secondary teachers inherit these problems from primary schools and struggle to control disruptive students when they should be able to teach their subjects to literate classes.

This is a Primary School issue. 95% of students can be taught to be literate by Year 6 so Secondary teachers can teach literate classes. **If these issues are addressed, the quality of teacher effectiveness will automatically follow.**

I am adding a personal comment because I was just an average matriculation (Year 12) student, who liked children and wanted to teach primary school. My Initial Teacher Education and Curricula (Courses of Study) were succinct, relevant and effective, allowing me and others to be effective young teachers. Then, knowledge was based on historical wisdom of 'what worked'.

I have enjoyed a wonderfully rewarding teaching career because I knew how to teach every child the literacy and numeracy skills, so they could progress. That is the only difference between me and tired teachers who want to leave teaching in frustration. **My profession gave me the knowledge I needed.**

As much as I feel sorry for illiterate children and their families, I feel sorry for the young teachers like I used to be, who have not been given access to the now proven evidenced based information that my profession gave me.

They have been let down by their Education Leaders.

WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR SELECTION OF I.T.E STUDENTS?

- a) Panel Interview (3 interviewers) to ascertain personal suitability. No online applications.
- b) Minimum ATAR 60+ with (c)
- c) demonstrated ability to read and write and compute BEFORE SELECTION, and NOT online.

Public loss of respect for teachers who cannot read, spell or calculate well themselves is valid. Allowing ITE students whose literacy and numeracy skills are low to begin Teacher Education courses is unacceptable. No other profession would allow this anomaly. Another Pass on the same test at the end of the course is sound practice.

“My child’s teacher cannot read well herself and her spelling is poor.”

“My child’s math’s homework keeps being marked wrong when it is correct.”

Students lose respect if they notice their teacher’s poor spelling or mathematics.

Calls to pay teachers more and raise ATAR scores are red herrings to this issue. An ATAR 60+ is a suitable based line for primary teacher selection, **IF they are better prepared by their I.T.E.**

With illiteracy and innumeracy rates consistently high for the last 20 years, the call to raise salaries is invalid.

1996 – National Survey 27% Year 3 and 29% Year 5 children ‘did not meet minimum performance standards of literacy required for effective participation in schooling’. (ABS)

2018 PISA 41% of 15 year olds did not meet National Proficiency Standards in Reading and 46% of students did not meet National Proficiency Standards in Mathematics.

ALL intervention programs have been Whole Language/Balanced Literacy based, which is why they have not been effective.

The only reason NAPLAN results have not improved, is because the curricula are still Whole Language/ Balanced Literacy and Constructivism based.

3. COMPLETION RATES

It is fair that some under-graduates may decide that teaching is not for them, so allowing them to leave is wise. Before leaving, they should be asked why they want to leave. If it is because their education course was not providing relevant knowledge, then professional practice is for the course content to improve.

There are accounts of Education university lecturers who built their reputations on one ideology, telling students they must only submit assignments that support that theory or ideology 'if they want to pass' the subject. This is unprofessional.

All graduating students should be given an opportunity to comment on their education course **anonymously**; common practice for other commercial services.

PART B

Education is NOT preparing the teachers they already have well enough, so they can be more effective teachers.

This is NOT the primary teachers fault. It is the dereliction of duty of Education Leaders in National and State Curricula, State Education Departments, Initial Teacher Education, Key Educational Research organizations, Primary Principals Associations and Leading Teachers, who continue to allow Teacher Unions to dictate policy that exceeds their brief.

It is their fault to allow 20% to 41% illiteracy to continue, to 'pretend it is not there', to ignore it, as if it doesn't matter; the education elephant in the room.

Teacher Education ignores illiteracy.

English organizations ignore illiteracy.

Teacher Unions ignore illiteracy.

State and National Primary Principals Associations ignore Illiteracy.

Key Educational Research organizations ignore illiteracy.

State and National English Curricula ignore illiteracy. Their websites and conference programs prove it. They do not show any interest. Other professions would not allow this; worse when the solution is well known.

Illiteracy does matter.

It does matter to those children who attend school in Australia, not to be taught to read, to fail every day, with damaged self esteem, and then be blamed for it.

It does matter to their parents who are also blamed for a school based problem.

It does matter to doctors and psychologists who see illiterate children for anxiety and/or frustration behavior or medical issues like insomnia because they are worried about going to school the next day, to face yet another day of failure.

It does matter to the speech pathologists and special education teachers who see the preventable damage to these children and

It does matter to employers who want to employ employees who can read.

ILLITERACY DOES MATTER ILLITERACY SHOULD MATTER TO EDUCATION LEADERS

Federal Government and State Governments in South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania, are trying to improve this situation, acting responsibly for their Education portfolios and duty to taxpayers, but Education Leaders ignore their official recommendations.

There have been more than 12 reviews or inquiries into I.T.E from 2005 to 2019, which the I.T.E Review Panel would have read to prepare for this review.

I read the last AITSL Report on I.T.E and it read very well, as if there are no problems.

BUT every Review into I.T.E finds glaringly unacceptable problems which continue to be ignored.

Young teachers keep saying they have not been prepared for teaching and they have not been taught to teach reading, which under pins ALL LEARNING.

Reading is the cornerstone for education; without it, there is no education.

ALL REVIEWS find Initial Preparation of teachers to teach reading inadequate and courses that did include reading instruction, included non evidence based approaches.

With 41% of 15 year olds NOT reaching National Proficiency Reading levels and 46% of students not reaching National proficiency levels in Mathematics, no one can say “All is well” in Education, although that is what is often stated; a spin.

Teacher Education and Curricula are the problems, the cause and **the solutions.**

Their Education Leaders have to take that responsibility and duty of care for the good of their profession.

Instead, they say poor results are due to lack of funding, low teacher salaries, ATAR scores, ‘large’ classes of 20, bad parenting, children’s poor diet, poor sleep, not enough books in the home, school based anxiety, excessive screen time, sms language, society’s ills; ANYTHING but the truth that **their ineffective ideologies PROMOTE ILLITERACY AND INNUMERACY.**

All Australian children deserve to be taught to read at school by their teachers and their teachers deserve access to the knowledge of best practice of teaching reading, so all children leave Year 6 able to read, to cope with Year 7 curricula.

The 2019-2029 ALICE SPRINGS (Mparntwe) Education Declaration mandates it.

Any educator who agrees to support this declaration, also agrees to meet its goals, that involve ALL children to be taught to learn to read at school.

In December 2019 all Government Education Ministers agreed, with the Deans of Education, that **all initial Teacher Education providers** would include incorporation of the FIVE Essential Elements of Literacy,

- 1) phonemic awareness,
- 2) systematic, sequential, synthetic phonics,
- 3) vocabulary,
- 4) fluency,
- 5) comprehension,

into **every** Initial Teacher Training Course, linked to their funding.

This has not occurred and is still arrogantly ignored by some teacher educators, who joke about phonics and intimidate ‘those dyslexia mums’ on social media; parents whose children were not taught to read at school and who are trying to prevent that happening to other children. They are well organized, well informed and determined in their noble aims to address this unacceptable problem.

They have faced the unprofessional reactions by teachers and principals, defending what amounts to their child’s exclusion from being taught to read.

“When I told the principal and my son’s teacher I wanted him to learn to read, they looked at each other then laughed at me”.

“The teacher has given our son a soft toy cat that he has to carry around with him and his job is to teach the cat to read” (an idea presented at ALEA National conference).

Some teachers, some academics, parents and taxpayers, business, and employers and professionals, who treat illiteracy’s child casualties, are all concerned about Education’s failure to teach every child to read at school.

But when they try to remedy the problem, they are accused of being “outsiders who should mind their business because all teachers know best what to do”, when clearly many teachers do not know best.

If they did know which children are not progressing and do ‘know what to do’ but then ignore those children through their school failure, that is a matter of professional ‘duty of care’, which goes against The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration; **action that enters the legal domain.**

Responsibility for teaching 95% of primary students to reach National Proficiency Standards in Reading and Mathematics should be and can be attained, if Education Leaders in I.T.E and Curricula accept responsibility for **best practice** in education to be shown as **THE top priority**, so teachers clearly know how best to teach children in their class to read.

Too many hundreds and thousands of illiterate and innumerate Australian children have been let down by their school system between 2005 and 2021.

Education Leaders have allowed this cycle of educational farce to go on for far too long and it has to stop.

In 2022 the new 5-year-old Foundation children, 6-year-old Year 1 children and 7-year-old Year 2 children deserve to be taught the foundational reading skills they will need to master, BEFORE they go to Year 3, using the BEST EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE, which is -

The Simple View of Reading with Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension, in that cognitive processing order.

And their class teachers deserve to have access to that BEST PRACTICE from 2022 from their I.T.E and Curricula, so they can experience the professional pride in effectively teaching ALL of the children in their classes; a wonderful experience I can attest to.

QUALITY EFFECTIVE INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

My teacher training course included PE, art, music, drama, literature BUT also covered the development of children from aged 5 to 12 years – their physical, psychological, language and cognitive development, which included teaching reading, spelling and mathematics concepts and operations; all relevant to teaching the primary school age group.

These key aspects of teacher education involved at least one lecture every day.

Today, Initial Primary Education courses cover subjects like sociology, arts, drama and critical thinking; not that relevant to teaching primary students.

Teaching the CORE Subjects like reading, spelling, writing, mathematics, as distinct from literature, arts, drama etc need to be taught by lecturers able to teach reading, spelling, writing, and mathematics skills.

INCLUDE THE ALLIED EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELD TO EDUCATE PRE-TEACHERS

Children's Psychological Development and SLD – Educational Psychologists

Children's Language Development – Speech Pathologists

Children's Physical Development – Pediatric Occupational Therapists.

Add medical specialists to teach teachers about ADD, ADHD, AUTISM, etc; special needs of children who are in most classrooms, so that they know how best to teach them and speak to their parents in a professional manner.

“Your child is probably autistic because he won’t join in reading activities” (but he joins in on all other activities),

“Your child can’t pay attention so take him to a doctor to get medication for ADHD”, (even though he had no symptoms of ADHD or any of the 3 types of ADD)

“Take your child to a psychologist for his behavior problems because he is uncooperative and won’t do the class work.” (he didn’t know what to do)

“Your child will never learn to read. He should go to Special school”(Dyslexia)

CURRENT I.T.E PROBLEMS

“At Uni when we talked about not feeling ready to start teaching next year, all they told us to do was to follow the teacher in the next room.

The teacher in the next room didn’t know what to do either. She told me to fake it til you make it.” This is unacceptable but often reported.

“We are in our 4th year of education and still have not had any lectures about how to teach reading.”

“Why are we paying so much money for a 4 year course that isn’t preparing us to teach children to read?”

Some papers justify an ‘Art’s Approach to Teaching Literacy’ in I.T.E, to “make learning more fun for children via drama and music to take away their anxiety about reading and writing.” This is unacceptable.

Teaching children skills to read, spell, write and understand mathematics takes away children’s anxiety about reading, writing and math’s.

School based anxiety and school refusal is well known by medical doctors, psychologists, speech pathologists and special education teachers.

Every parent I asked over 30 years said their child had been happy and confident, until they started school.

Every new student I saw suffered low self esteem, anxiety, sometimes clinical depression, but when I taught them in school holidays they were relaxed, ‘normal’ children. By the end of my teaching program, they had regained their self esteem and self confidence and their anxiety symptoms had gone.

Art, music and drama maybe important for children to learn but **an Arts Approach to teaching literacy and numeracy is CAUSING and PERPETRATING illiteracy and innumeracy.**

Critics say “But Direct Teaching of Reading Skills will dull children’s creativity”.

Incorrect assumption.

Creativity comes AFTER skills have been mastered, in everything.

There is nothing creative about not knowing how to read or write.

WHAT IS AND IS NOT EVIDENCE BASED TEACHING PRACTICE?

Today ‘everything’ written about education ‘is evidence based’ or ‘research based’.

The National Inquiry in Teaching of Literacy NITL 2005, a report ratified in Australian Federal Parliament in 2006, after 12 months of scientific research by a Committee led by Dr Ken Rowe, stated –

“to teach the systematic direct and explicit *phonics* instruction so that children can master the essential alphabet code-breaking skills required for foundational reading proficiency. “

Since then, English organizations and whole language-balanced literacy advocates have added the word ‘explicit’ to all their documents.

Then they included, “teach systematic and explicit instruction” in all their documents, **deliberately omitting the key word in NITL, ‘phonics’.**

More recently, the words ‘phonics’ and ‘spelling’ are included with ‘evidence based research’, BUT **no valid evidence is ever actually produced.**

Supporting texts of opinions of like minded colleagues or small surveys of carefully selected samples, do not provide ‘evidence’ and do not follow the ethical rigours of valid scientific evidenced research.

Their material now includes the words ‘phonics’ and spelling, with “reading is about meaning’, “intelligent teachers teach spelling through meaning”, **omitting the mention of letters representing sounds in words, i.e. phonics.**

Please watch “ACE/CIS Phonics Debate 2018 for clarification.

Please read the paper “Ending the Reading Wars” Professors Castle, Nation and Rastle, which is a valid research paper.

In 2019 Buckingham and Meeks I.T.E. Review found **only 4% of the 116 literacy units reviewed in ITE had a specific focus on early reading instruction.**

In 70% of the 116 literacy units reviewed, none of the five evidence-based reading instruction elements were mentioned in the unit outlines.

All FIVE essential elements – 1) Phonemic Awareness, 2) Systematic Synthetic Phonics 3) Vocabulary, 4) Fluency 5) Comprehension, were referred to in only 6% of the literacy unit outlines.

Only 15% of lecturers and unit co-coordinators' could be identified having specific expertise in early reading instruction; most of them having interest in literacy of children from Indigenous and non-English speaking homes.

30% of literacy lecturers and unit co-coordinators' had research interests and expertise in areas other than literacy such as math's and music.

55% of literacy lecturers had research interests and expertise in other aspects of literacy, most often digital and multi-modal illiteracies.

The Simple View of Reading (1986) in which the learner decodes the word, then links it with known vocabulary to gain meaning, was not mentioned in any unit.

Critics say "But There Are Several Ways To Teach Reading".

Education Departments in West Australia, Victoria, ACT, Queensland and some Deans of Education state this semantically correct defense, **but need to admit just how ineffective the 'other ways to teach reading' are – see PISA 2018 results.**

FACT: there is only one way that has much scientific evidence of best practice to teach EVERY CHILD TO READ. There is ONLY ONE WAY to address 41% illiteracy.

The other non-evidence based 'ways' produce unacceptable levels of illiteracy and otherwise good primary teachers' ignorance, which no education body should support.

The Four Resources Model (1990) used to be the Three Resources Model before 2005, making meaning from context (Does it make sense?), syntax (Does it sound right?) and a visual part of words (Does it look right?), the same as the Three Cueing System, developed without phonics.

Mention of letters and sounds were only added after NITL 2005.

The Four Resources Model of Reading states that ‘reading and writing always be in authentic contexts’ which makes no sense to non-reading early learners, who have not yet learned words and cannot ‘lift the words off the page’ (decode) yet.

IN 2019 Review the Four Resources Model (1990) was mentioned 8 times and the Socio-Cultural View was mentioned 9 times. **No valid evidence supports this.**

Embedded or Analytic Phonics uses authentic texts read to children as whole language-balanced literacy. The children read along trying to memorize the story, told to predict meaning and look at pictures to guess unknown words.

Then at the end, e.g. in the book ‘Pig the Pug’, the teacher ‘explicitly’ mentions that ‘pig’ starts with ‘p’ and ‘pug’ starts with ‘p’.

“Yes, we teach phonics at this school.”

This ad hoc way of ‘appearing to teach phonics’ is ineffective.

EXPERT ADVISORS TO EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Several highly qualified teacher educators and advisors to Government Education Departments promote only whole language/balanced literacy, arts/drama approaches to teach literacy. They warn against phonics.

One teacher educator advises children’s reading must always use ‘authentic texts’ so they ‘will be curious and excited by real books’ **(that, of course should be read to them until they learn to read themselves)** and not to teach phonics because ‘English is not a phonetic language’.

If a person says that, it shows they do not know anything at all about SSP Phonics. **All words in English can be sounded out.**

Oral language dictates we sound out each word as we speak.

Those who know how to teach SSP Phonics know that every sound in any word has one or more letters to represent that sound in a word or words, as per the English Dictionary.) e-n-c-y-c-l-o-p-e-d-i-a = 12 sounds. s-ch-oo-l = 4 sounds.

Critics say “We disagree with teaching words in isolation or nonsense words.”

Yet they allow F-2 children in every school to be forced to memorize 13 groups of ‘Magic Words’ in isolation every day. Five year olds, who have not yet orthographically mapped any words in memory, are expected to ‘learn’ these

words by rote, in isolation, an almost impossible task for most five and six year olds.

Golden Words – a, and, he, the, that, I, in, is, it, of, to, was. (Without phonics, is and in, he and the, will look the same to a new learner)

Red Words – all, as, are, at, but, for, had, have, he, her, his, not, on, one, said, so, they, we, with, you. (Without phonics, ‘as’, ‘are’ & ‘at’, ‘he, her & his’, ‘had’ & ‘have’, and ‘on & one’ will look the same to a new learner.)

Asking such young children to ‘learn’ these words by shape/visual memory is too difficult and stressful and done under considerable pressure of parents by schools, to get their child to ‘pass’ each colour by a certain date.

Teaching the phonic strategy to sound out, then read (‘lift the word off the page’), then link with meaning (i.e Simple View of Reading)

with CVC words like m+a+t = mat, b+e+d = bed, d+o+g = dog gives five year old children success and later, when they see f+a+n = fan, t+a+s = tas and t+i+c = tic, as in fan+tas+tic = fantastic, the strategy allows them to decode and encode (spell) larger words. The 2nd syllable ‘tas’ is nonsense but a syllable of a word. It works and young children experience great satisfaction at success.

Critics say “We disagree with a phonics only approach”.

Answer: So does everyone.

Meaning and vocabulary are always taught with phonics, after the word has been decoded or ‘lifted off the page’.

Another education educator and advisor says, “Reading is about meaning (only)” and advocates using ‘drama and arts to teach reading’, and that reading problems occurred “long before children entered school, so nothing could be done now,” (inferring to pre-teachers, “it’s ok, not our fault, when they fail”)

Why not teach children to read and spell, to teach them reading and spelling?

Drama and the Arts are important and best taught by Drama and Arts teachers. Teacher Educators who know how to teach children to read and spell are best placed to teach pre-teachers how to teach children to read and spell.

Another Teacher Educator on the ACE/CIS Phonics debate said that “she had seen struggling readers, but nothing could be done, because they had not been read to from birth. It was too late. ”

One teacher educator who has been a teacher for 51 years, the same time as me, has been “advising governments and universities for decades”. He told his pre-teacher audience that he “learned to read at school by being given the joy of reading authentic texts such as ‘The Hobyahs’, the ‘Drovers Wife’ in the Fifth Book and ‘The Loaded Dog’ in the Sixth Book.”

I enjoyed those stories too. But I also remember in my first years at school being systematically taught each alphabet letter by name, its common sound and how to write it, then to join up letters to make sounds in CVC words in the 1st Year (F), then CCVC/CCVC words and 1 syllable words with consonant digraphs in the 2nd Year (Year 1), then 1 syllable words with vowel digraphs in the 3rd Year (Year 2).

We were given reading practice books (think trainer wheels) that matched our class learning, with text such as Page 3, ‘I can hop.’ to Page 73, ‘Let us sing as we swing.’, in the First Book, then in the Second Book Page 31, ‘Quickly he snatched it up and ran out of the room’, decodable books that matched our classroom learning for that stage of beginning to learn to read,

SOMETHING HE FORGETS TO MENTION TO “ALL THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS AND PRE-TEACHERS HE HAS ‘EDUCATED’ OVER SO MANY DECADES”.

HOW BEST TO TEACH EVERY CHILD IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TO READ

Tier 1. Effective classroom teaching using BEST PRACTICE

Tier 2. Note children failing to progress by Mid Year 1 and give them 12 months of small group, evidence based, reading intervention; then retest in Year 2.

Tier 3 A small group (5%) will need long term, evidence based reading intervention during primary school, so they have learned to read by Year 7.

(In my 30 years of private teaching, there were only 5 severely dyslexic children out of hundreds of students, who took 4-5 years to learn to read.)

THE SIMPLE VIEW OF READING with 5 Essential Elements –phonemic awareness, SSP phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension.

1) Decode word – ‘lift it off the page’.

2) THEN link it with known vocabulary to gain meaning. If the meaning is not known, the teacher discusses meaning or uses a dictionary to learn meaning.

Think about it.

Competent adult readers have orthographically mapped many words cognitively so they have automatic recall to decode or 'lift' most words from the page, then link with meaning, in a split second.

But if we come to an unknown word, e.g. 'zygomaturus' that is not known in memory, we resort to using our phonic knowledge to decode the word. Then we either remember its meaning or we use a dictionary to gain its meaning.

Semantics, prediction or syntax WILL NEVER HELP US READ that unknown word 'zygomaturus' or learn to spell it.

Remember: Teachers and schools and curricula are focused on teaching YOUNG NEW LEARNERS to read and spell, who are not competent readers.

This is THE critical point to this 'several ways to teach reading' argument.

Using the Simple View of Reading, we have to teach **young new learners sequentially and systematically, from simplest to complex (synthetic)**, slowly but surely, because they are 'laying down' NEW information.

And it is best 'laid down' or learned correctly, to avoid learning confusion.

It is great to learn about colours and paint by guesswork and 'having a go', **but NOT when learning CORE reading, spelling and mathematic foundation skills.**

The FIVE essential Elements –

1. Phonemic awareness, so they can learn to distinguish the 44 sounds in words, beginning sounds to start. If children do not have phonemic awareness skills, they cannot access or use phonics.
2. Phonics. Instead of expecting children to learn to read and spell words by visual memory of letter, (similar to asking them to learn each number in a telephone book), it is MUCH EASIER and more effective, to FIRST teach the letter-sound code, the alphabet code, i.e. phonics. ph/o/n/i/c/s = 6 sounds
3. Then comes vocabulary, 4) fluency and, the result – 5) comprehension.

Every word in the English language can be sounded out by definition of oral language. When we speak, we are sounding out every word.

Literate adults can be shown a complete phonics sounds chart of 44 squares that has all the letter or letters that represent each sounds in words. It is a large chart that phonemically aware Year 6 plus students would enjoy.

Using a complete sound chart, **every word in the dictionary can be 'sounded out'** from the chart. It is a fascinating study for competent readers.

One example –

Two Sound Squares out of 44 Sound Squares

æ - as in at, as, am, ant, and,

ei - ay as in day, ai as in rain, a-e as in cake, a as in baby, ey as in they, eigh as in eight, aigh as in straight, ea as in break, e-e as in fete.

BUT with new learners – their sound chart will be simple, building up slowly as they learn each element.

In Foundation Year the teacher and children may discuss other examples of words with the 'ay' sound, but children will not be required to learn them until Year 2.

They would learn to sound out, then say, then discuss the meaning of words like at, as, am, an, then, (a+t=at)

sound out, say, & discuss meaning of bat (b+a+t=bat), cat, fat, hat, mat, pat, sat, vat, then,

in the next session to avoid learning confusion

dam, ham, jam, Sam then, (d+a+m = dam)

in the next session, to avoid learning confusion

cap (c+a+p=cap), gap, lap, map, rap, tap, sap, rap then,

in the next session to avoid confusion

ban(b+a+n=ban), dan, fan, man, nan, tan, pan then,

revision,

not mixing words up until the child has 'orthographically mapped' (learned) the word correctly, to avoid learning confusion.

Gentle testing (quiz, fun and supportive with rewards) to find if children have learned to read and write these words yet, before moving on.

WITH NEW LEARNERS WHO HAVE NOT YET ORTHOGRAPHICALLY MAPPED THE WORD YET , IT IS VITAL THAT THEY FIRST LEARN THAT WORD CORRECTLY, SO THEY CAN ALWAYS ‘MATCH’ THAT WORD CORRECTLY WHEN THEY SEE IT AGAIN AND THEN SPELL THAT WORD CORRECTLY WHEN THEY WANT TO WRITE IT.

Those children who have learned these words move on; children who have not learned these words practice and revise.

Children only become BORED if they are expected to practice what they have already mastered.

If teachers do not provide for children who need more practice and revision to learn a unit of work, they will effectively EXCLUDE that child from learning, which goes against The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration.

That is how the 20%+ of Illiterate or Innumerate Year 3 children grow to be the 41% 15-year-olds; children who keep being left behind by each teacher, when they ‘move on’ with the children who learn more quickly.

Again, the 2019 – 2029 Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration mandates not 60% but ALL children be taught to read and can learn to achieve its goals.

Critics say, “But We Can’t Hold Bright Kids Back”

That is correct. From Foundation/Year 1, it will be apparent which children are learning faster than others, so each class will have 2 or 3 or 4 groups providing tasks at each ability level, so EVERY CHILD CAN LEARN and progress. And more able children can be extended by reading higher level library books or writing stories.

7. PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE FOR PRE-TEACHERS

This is problematic as many primary classroom teachers follow whole language/balanced literacy and constructivism approaches, so modeling of these less effective teaching approaches only perpetrates the problems.

9. LEADING TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOLS.

Some primary schools, led by their school principals have revised their teachers’ PD and classes to incorporate structured learning in explicit teaching of core subjects and synthetic phonics. These schools should be visited.

Some schools are not concerned about their high levels of illiteracy. They espouse creative discovery learning, where children are happy engaged in creative interactive non literacy activities all day. See ACE/CIS Phonics Debate.

These schools should not be model schools.

School Principals obviously have the most influence on primary classroom teachers.

I look back to Primary Principals in schools I taught as a young teacher, with great respect for their leadership, and gratitude for their support and wisdom.

The Australian Primary Principals Association would have the highest influence with primary principals and what happens in primary schools.

In 2019 I saw on the main APPA Website page, the PALL Principals as Literacy leaders project, with the 'Big 6 Elements in Reading' in clear view – **oral language as a pre-requisite skill, then 5 cognitive processes of Reading - Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency and Comprehension, in that order of cognitive processing.**

Today, I searched the APPA website for the PALL project. It took 5 web page clicks before I found the content that I was looking for. If I hadn't known of it, I doubt I would have 'stumble across it.' It looked as if it has been 'buried'.

I couldn't see evidence of any current interest in Principals as Literacy Leaders, addressing illiteracy or providing information of best practice to teachers in primary education on the APPA website.

The APPA Position Paper against the Yr 1 Phonics Check was puzzling.

I thought all Primary School Principals would want every child in their school to read well by end of Year 6, so they could engage with Year 7 curricula.

I thought that would be something principals and teachers would feel proud of.

The 41% of 15 year olds who did not reach National Proficiency in Reading in 2018 were some of the same children as the 24% illiterate children in 2011 PIRLS Year 4. They would have been struggling to progress with literacy skills in 2010 in Year 3, and in 2008, when they were in Year 1.

The Year 1 Phonics Check would have noticed them and they could have received additional teaching support (Tier 2) BEFORE THEY FAILED, so they would have avoided the illiteracy statistics and education failure.

Teacher unions, some educators and some Education Ministers say, “Our teachers do not need an external check because teachers know their students best and which children are struggling.”

Clearly they do not. **Or if they know which students are struggling, why are they then ignoring those children’s illiteracy, thus excluding them from their education.**

It comes back to a DUTY OF CARE ISSUE and goes against the ALICE SPRINGS DECLARATION which ALL EDUCATION MINISTERS HAVE SIGNED and Education Leaders claim to support. If this anomaly is not addressed, something is very wrong and every Education leader and Education Minister is responsible.

This issue has a human side. A new student, Andrew was aged 8 years, and could only write his name in his 3rd year at school. Every day for writing, he would be given his writing book and he would write his name on the first line. And he would keep writing his name on every line for the whole writing session, whilst children each side of him wrote their stories. I saw his Year 2 writing book.

His parents were told by one teacher that “he might be autistic”, which he was not. Another teacher said “he might have ADD”, which he did not. Another said “he was doing OK. He just needed to try harder”.

The Reading Recovery teacher made him read “Three Billy Goats Gruff” PM book with her every day for 20 weeks, until he had memorized the book. He could ‘read it without looking’. He was ticked off the Reading Recovery Program as successful, because he could read the Level 15 “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”. But he could not read any other books on Level 15 or anything else.

I said to this little child, who was becoming naughty at home and at school, “I can teach you to be a good reader”. After three years of school failure, he looked at me with such a sad face, his shoulders shrugged and his head low and said,

“It’s Ok. I can cope with being no good.” It would break your heart.

All this child had done was to go to primary school. There were no other problems.

I taught him using evidence based Direct Teaching and Systematic Synthetic Phonics.

By Year 5 his literacy and numeracy skills were age appropriate.

His parents tell me he is coping well in all subjects in Year 10 now.

There have been and still are too many Australian children like this child.

He avoided the psychological damage to his self esteem and his mental health, which would have become permanent by aged 15, like those 41% of students in the 2018 PISA results.

Nine years of daily academic failure in front of their peers, too late to remediate, damage done, products of our current education system.

No-one can say there is nothing wrong in Australian Primary Education.

They would be making their secondary teachers stressed by their class behavior, if they haven’t already succeeded in being expelled to escape their daily dose of shame in front of their peers.

All this is preventable.

In England - Year 1 Phonics Check – 2012 58% pass

2016 80% pass Some schools = 100%

Using phonics to decode words then link with meaning is a valid skill, well checked by this Year 1 Phonics Check strategy.

I found the APPA position on the Year 1 Phonics Check difficult to understand.

I read about the APPA ‘Parent Led Resilience’ project to help children with anxiety.

It looked like APPA sees anxious children at school or about school as suffering anxiety from parents at home.

School based anxiety is about what is or isn't happening at school.

There is much evidence that children who are failing to learn to read develop anxiety and in some cases depression, resultant of their school failure.

One of my student's mothers told me, when her child was sleeping, she would hear him at 3am 'head banging' against the wall, **BUT ONLY ON SCHOOL DAYS.**

On the Queensland Association of State School Principals website, I saw PD about Phonemic Awareness, without its twin skill phonics, and wondered why Phonics wasn't where it belongs.

I looked at the websites of the Victorian Primary Principals Association, the South Australian Primary Principals Association, The West Australian Primary Principals Association, the Tasmanian Primary Principals Association and the NSW Primary Principals Association and found **no mention of the teaching of literacy or the problem of illiteracy that is every primary classroom in every primary school.**

On this issue, the Australian Council for Educational Research, supposedly the premier educational research organization is derelict in its responsibility too. If teachers type in "Teaching Reading" the first article is a 'whole language/balanced literacy paper; **the non-evidence based opinion of only 1 person.**

Until recently, the National Inquiry in Teaching of Literacy (NITL 2005), internationally acclaimed for its 12 month scientific research by an expert panel, chaired by ACER academic researcher Dr Rowe, was the 5th paper (now is the 2nd paper) to appear on their website.

Can leading teachers, school principals and schools play a greater role in supporting the development of I.T.E Students?

Yes, a lot more.

10. Can I.T.E providers play a stronger role in ongoing professional development and support of teachers?

No, not if they offer non-evidence based ideologies, as is current.

This submission is lengthy but I hope my sincerity in hoping that Education Leaders will act to make vital changes that will improve the literacy and numeracy rates in Australian children and improve the knowledge base of our good young teachers, shows through my comments.

All I want is to see improvement in the vitally important and wonderful Profession of Primary Education.

Yours Sincerely
Jo Rogers