

**LITERACY EDUCATION:  
RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**A DISCUSSION PAPER**

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September, 2006

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## DISCUSSION PAPER

### 1 INTRODUCTION: PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES

#### 1.1 What are the purposes of this paper?

The general purpose of this paper is to present a summary of information that will assist Educational Queensland in its implementation of *Literacy, the Key to Learning: Frameworks for Action, 2006*, and in subsequent literacy initiatives. More specific purposes are:

to draw together studies of literacy teaching and learning focusing on the early years of schooling, with attention to student and community groups at risk of failing to attain acceptable levels of literacy learning (e.g., socio-economically disadvantaged students and communities, Indigenous students and communities, students with specific literacy and learning disabilities);

to provide references to a summary of key research findings to supplement those available from the *National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy: Teaching Reading, 2005*; and

to provide a focused and even-handed review of the research relating to Reading Recovery, in light of Education Queensland's current commitment to that program.

This paper includes a number of appended supporting sections: i) a Digest of Research Findings; ii) a Digest of Research on Reading Recovery; iii) a collection of Studies in Early Literacy; iv) an Annotated Reference List; and v) a list of Suggested Readings in Literacy Education. While the research summarised in these supporting sections will, for the most part, not be regularly cited in this discussion paper, the discussion nonetheless draws directly on these summaries of research and theory.

#### 1.2 What are the principles guiding this paper?

The following principles are put forward as principles that should underlie the development of Education Queensland's professional development programs. They arise both from experience with extensive professional development programs and from evaluations of these, as noted from time to time in the discussion below.

1. *Evidence-informed literacy education*: The expression “evidence-based” education is ambiguous in a number of respects: It could mean, on the one hand, that policy, curriculum, and practice, including professional development, should be *determined* by and only by direct evidence that is both immediately available and that adheres to certain methodological criteria (in literacy, usually, randomised-design field experiments); on the other hand, it could mean that policy, curriculum, and practice should be *informed* by or demonstrably *aware* of the relevant evidence, and that such evidence should be rigorous but not necessarily restrictive in its methodological features. The argument here is that syllabuses and professional development relating to literacy education should be focused on evidence-informed practice rather than evidence-determined practice.

This conclusion is based on a number of considerations: First, many scholars in education have argued that reliance on evidence-determined practice will cause educators to lose sight of potentially important developments aspects and of potentially harmful unanticipated outcomes of certain educational practices and processes (Erickson and Gutierrez 2002). Some have also argued that the imposition of methodologically restricted bodies of research will limit educators’ professional engagement with diversity in students’ needs and pedagogical practice, eventually debilitating creative and disciplined research effort. The eminent educational researcher Fred Erickson described a social event in which researchers from many fields

were discussing the NRC [*US National Reading Council*] report and the current federal policy of privileging randomized field trials as the “Gold Standard” for educational research. One of the people in the room was a physician. He mentioned a report published in a medical journal that quoted a researcher who had worked for many years at the top laboratory for polio research, the Salk Institute. The medical researcher said that if knowledge development in polio research had had to depend only on conclusive findings from experiments, research on polio would today consist mainly of studies of the treatment effects of the iron lung. (Erickson 2004)

A balance of disciplined research activities from a range of reputable and informative methodological bases is called for in an area as complex and multifaceted as the teaching and learning of literacy. The domain of Social Science that uses experimental data in the testing of hypotheses is

Psychology; while much has been learned about the nature and learning of literacy from Psychological work, it is also undeniable, and developed in later sections, that Sociologists, Anthropologists and Linguists have contributed valuable insights into literacy education over the last few decades. It seems equally evident that Psychologists have employed methodologies other than experimentation to develop and assess theoretical propositions. This is particularly the case for those Psychologists aligned with Cognitive Science, a group that has made particular efforts, especially in the US, to study literacy education (see, e.g., the ongoing research series published by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (University of Michigan), the Center for the Study of Reading (University of Illinois), and see Royer, 2005).

2. *Comprehensive evaluation of initiatives.* There are currently three ways in which time, effort and money are wasted in the implementation of interventions in literacy education: i) avoid rigorous evaluation, ii) evaluate before mature practice is established in participating schools and classrooms, and iii) evaluate only some aspects of the implementation (e.g., changing student scores on assessment instruments). On the latter point, there have been significant developments in models of educational evaluation that offer some sense of scope and thus rigor in the assessment of educational initiatives. As an example, Reineke (1995) has listed evaluation models that are:

- objectives oriented (specifying objectives and determining the extent to which they are met);
- management oriented (documenting and meeting the needs of managerial decision makers for accurate and comprehensive information);
- consumer oriented (developing evaluations of outputs for dissemination and use by educators – curricula, instructional products, and so on);
- expertise-oriented (applying professional expertise to judge the quality of educational initiatives);
- adversary-oriented (strategically developing a ‘pros-and-cons’ debate by different evaluators);
- naturalistic and participant-oriented (determining values, criteria, needs and data for the evaluation from the involvement of participants and stakeholders).

Cutting across these are models of the scope of data that should inform evaluations of educational implementations. Prominent among these is the model developed by the US House Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. Following extensive stakeholder consultation, this committee, chaired by Sanders, described a publicly agreed model of standards application (recognized evaluation systems outlined in Sanders, 1994, Boulmetis & Dutwin, 1999, Gullikson, 2002), such as standards relating to:

- the *utility* of the program (stakeholder identification, evaluator credibility, information scope and selection, values identification, report clarity, report timeliness and dissemination, evaluation impact);
- its *feasibility* (practical procedures, political viability, cost effectiveness);
- the *propriety* of the program's implementation and conduct (service orientation, formal agreements, rights of human subjects, human interactions, complete and fair assessment, disclosure of findings, conflict of interest, fiscal responsibility);
- the *accuracy* of the program in achieving its aims (program documentation, context analysis, described purposes and procedures, defensible information sources, valid information, reliable information, systematic information, analysis of quantitative information, analysis of qualitative information, justified conclusions, impartial reporting).

A literacy education initiative delivered via a powerful professional development program will entail consideration of all of these models of evaluation and all of the above facets of data content: Literacy is taken to have significant implications for access (to traditional curricular, vocational and integrated, inquiry-based programs) and equity for marginalised groups, as well as material and organisational arrangements in schools and central offices.

3. *Establishing and evaluating mature reform-based practice in standard conditions*: Substantial changes in the concentration of effort in and quality of literacy education call for explicit and patient effort. Secure gains in pedagogies and student outcomes can be established only after mature practice is in place, including mature practice in “standard” not just “trial” or “optimal” teaching and learning conditions (Teese & Polesel 2005). This places pressure on evaluation activities for both patience and inclusiveness. The need for rapid turn around on the provision of experimental evidence, at a

time when many of the world's leading educational statisticians have for some years questioned the validity of school-based experimentation (see, especially Goldstein, 1987, 2000, 2001).

*4. Building and rebuilding on accomplishments and understandings:* Professional development should be “evolutionary” in two senses: Initiatives should have a clear and realistic sense of the timeframe that will produce mature practice among colleagues in schools and bureaucracies, and should provide the support for that maturity to develop; but, as well, initiatives need to take account of literacy developments in Queensland schools over the last 15 years or so and draw on the professional learnings that have developed along with those changes. Documenting and taking careful account of “where teachers and school leaders are at” in terms of their practices and understandings is not just a matter of professional ethics; it relates to the quality and potential local efficacy of initiatives.

*5. Aligning with current frameworks:* As part of the point above, initiatives in literacy education need to have some visible alignment with other frameworks actively in operation, in particular those arising from QSE–2010 (the Year 2 ‘net’, *Literate Futures*, the current English Syllabus, and so on). Perceptions of planning, continuity and cumulative policy-practice connections are critical in a time of rapid changes in community and system expectations, and the directness and transparency of the interface between new literacy initiatives and immediately previous efforts will predict levels of engagement among colleagues in schools. Lack of explicit alignment will be read as reactivity and will dissipate both energy and the guild knowledge that needs to develop along with changing policy. Such reactivity also speaks to an unclear analysis of cultural, educational and communicational conditions, present and future, among policy makers.

*6. Comprehensive alignment:* Initiatives also need to be based on the alignment of curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation. *Curriculum* here refers to the valid bodies of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that a school system embodies and aims to transmit to the next generation; *pedagogy* refers to legitimate, regulated, and accepted ways of transmitting that curriculum; *evaluation* refers to those ways of validly demonstrating the acquisition of the

curriculum (Bernstein 1975). The history of educational initiatives is not short on interventions that have over-invested in one or the other of these at the expense of the others or in the belief that the target domain will 'bring the others along' relatively free with the territory. There are times when school teachers express the belief that initiatives are at odds with one another, particularly in terms of serious mismatches between advice or policy on pedagogy and assessment. Whatever else the effects of these perceptions may be, and however accurate they may be, they have led in turn to beliefs that a given initiative will soon be superseded – 'they come and they go'. Under conditions of these perceptions, little engagement or real investment of change effort can be expected. The direction of effort to ensuring and renewing the elements of alignment is an important aspect of the implementation effort.

*7. An actionable definition of literacy.* Literacy pervades many aspects of learning and engaging with formal and informal learning settings and knowledge that any definition needs to take account of current institutional, cultural, economic and communicational environments. Part of the brief for this paper was to consider the implementation of *Literacy, the Key to Learning: Frameworks for Action, 2006*, in light of both its professional development program and the kinds of supports already available to Queensland teachers. So definitions of literacy that are actionable in this jurisdictional setting need to have some clear alignment with available programs and professional development activities, including those associated with a major current investment of Education Queensland, Reading Recovery. Research relating to that program is now considered, followed by a general discussion of the components of programs that might potentially satisfy some of the criteria outlined so far.

## **2 READING RECOVERY AND EARLY LITERACY PROGRAMS**

Like some other educational jurisdictions, Education Queensland has been investing substantially in the implementation of Reading Recovery in the early school years. Reading Recovery is the trade-registered name for an early intervention program developed by Clay (1985) for children at risk in reading progress after about a year of formal education. It is generally run as a series



of one-to-one student-teacher sessions for about 20 weeks and aims to have students re-enter mainstream classroom reading sessions without difficulty.

It is important to preface the following sections with the observation that Reading Recovery has been for some years one of the most divisive and hotly contested topics in literacy education, an area of study and research that is in general renowned neither for its high levels of consensus nor the respectfulness of its debates. Protagonists have often queried the research techniques, theoretical assumptions, commitment, politeness, and professional and commercial integrity of their opponents. Rapid cycles of claim and counter-claim characterise interactions on this topic over the last 30 years or so, and legislative moves have been variously made, for example in a number of states in the US, to either mandate or prohibit the program. So devotees and opponents alike feel strongly about the issue, particularly when attention is turned to students designated 'at risk' or with 'special needs', and many have made serious professional investments in it or in the programs with which it competes. In the discussion below and the compilation on the topic appended to this paper, an attempt has been made to be even-handed, but there is no doubt that strong contrary views could be presented in response.

### *2.1 What does the research say about Reading Recovery?*

What is beyond doubt is that research results show strongly inconsistent findings from the use of Reading Recovery as an intervention program in the early years. As the appended show, several of these research projects have been the objects of criticism. Center and Wheldall (1992), for example, examining a significant proportion of the corpus of research on Reading Recovery, have commented on the "conceptual and methodological shortcomings which have characterised many evaluations to date" (p.263)<sup>1</sup>

There are reasonable grounds for concluding that research on Reading Recovery has raised complicated issues and presented an ambiguous picture. Many studies advocating the use of Reading Recovery argue for the

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<sup>1</sup> Center, Y., & Wheldall, K., (1992) "Evaluating the effectiveness of reading recovery: a critique" *Educational Psychology*, Vol 12 Issue 3/4 pp. 263-275.

adequacy, appropriateness and quality of their data; much research against focuses on how pro-Reading Recovery research is not sufficiently grounded theoretically or methodologically and is thus neither rigorous nor reliable. The stern conclusion drawn by Shanahan and Barr from their extensive review of the research literature on the topic is typical of the tone of the latter body of work:

we found no studies of Reading Recovery that did not suffer from serious methodological or reporting flaws –published or not. (Shanahan & Barr, 1995: 961)<sup>2</sup>

Concerns have been expressed that Reading Recovery is not accessible to all students with difficulties. As an example, Center and Wheldall (1992) claimed that about “25-30% of students in RR programs are withdrawn if they fail to make the expected rate of progress” (p.265). The access and equity question raised here, of course, depends entirely on the diagnostic basis of the withdrawal of such students and what is provided for them subsequently. The matter of the withdrawal of students not improving under the Reading Recovery program has always been a prominent policy of the program’s developer (Clay) and current implementations; it has also been an issue that makes traditional, systematic research on outcome effects difficult. In one respect, it is entirely proper for an educator to look for signs of inappropriate placement in an intervention and offer the learner something else. IN another respect, it makes it impossible to run a controlled experiment that looks to test for medium and longer-term benefits in contrast to one or more different interventions with comparably assessed students (preferably with random allocation to treatment condition, but at least with sufficient demonstrated comparability on variables considered to be relevant to the treatment and the outcomes assessed).

Complications in assessing the program’s effects rigorously include the methods of assessment. Students showing positive achievement in and after Reading Recovery are generally assessed only in terms of the average results

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<sup>2</sup> Shanahan, T., & Barr, R. (1995) “Reading Recovery: an independent evaluation of the effects of an early instructional intervention for at-risk learners. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30 (4), pp. 958-996.

for students in their initial classroom, and often this is by a system of performance on 'graded reading books'. Relating both of these measurement choices to outcomes from elsewhere, assessed by more traditional 'standardised' means, is difficult, and has probably added to the extended debates on this question.

## *2.2. What can we conclude about Reading Recovery?*

There is undeniably conflicting advice from the research relating to Reading Recovery. Clearly there are circumstances in which positive outcomes have been reliably demonstrated. Equally clearly, Reading Recovery is not for every child 'at risk'. Its advocates have never claimed that it should be for all students experiencing difficulties or slow progress in their reading acquisition.

A final decision on the defensibility of Reading Recovery's use in Education Queensland schools should also be prefaced by a number of other considerations.

The program seems often to have had a powerful impression on those that have been trained in its use and adopted it as an early reading intervention. There is considerable faith placed in Reading Recovery by many of its users, and substantial long-term loyalty. Inquiring into the bases for that would be important for enhancing our understanding of professional development programs in reading education. Dispensing with the program would have consequences for these people; apart from anything else, they would press for its replacement only with a program that had been demonstrated to be more successful by well-theorised and rigorous research.

This raises the question of what currently available programs have such theoretical and empirical support. Reading Recovery advocates have long noted the intensive research scrutiny under which Reading Recovery has been put for many years. The Reading Recovery Council of North America website opens with: "Reading Recovery is the world's most widely researched intervention for young children having extreme difficulty with early literacy learning." Does another program have an equally long-standing but more consistently positive track record in this area? Have the same rigorous inquiries been directed at other support programs (e.g., the "Support teacher, Learning Difficulties" program)? Have syllabuses been introduced only after

substantial rigorous, experimentally-based evidence that they have been shown to offer significant advances in learning over and above their intended predecessors?

The ambiguity of the findings should cause educational systems to exercise caution in the system-wide adoption of Reading Recovery. Two courses of action are then possible: One is to engage in systematic inquiry with a sufficiently large, representative and closely monitored students, tutors and mainstream classroom settings. The other is to accept that advocates have had enough time and resources to demonstrate the program's capacity to deliver on its larger promises, and have not convincingly done so. Educators and the community at that point would expect the program to be replaced by a well-theorised and researched offering or set of co-ordinated offerings. They would also expect considerable expertise and resources to be put into the work-up of this replacement model, its assessment only after enough time for new practice to emerge and mature, and an ongoing commitment to access and equity.

A research program recently completed in Queensland, with its results soon to be released, has addressed some of the questions raised in this paper. Those results should inform decisions about the future of Reading Recovery in Queensland. It does seem, however, that, considering the research alone, the case for the continuation of Reading Recovery across the system would be difficult to sustain.

### **3 LITERACY: TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### *3.1 What is an actionable definition of literacy?*

In an earlier section of this paper the importance of alignment between aspects of Education Queensland's literacy education provisions was stressed. In considering Reading Recovery, the question arises as to its alignment with other significant literacy provision in Queensland schools. This raises the question of the definition of literacy commonly in use in Queensland educational policy and syllabus documents, and the kinds of literacy teaching and learning activities that should be the focus of new intervention.

Needless to say, there is contestation about how to define literacy. In many Queensland educational documents, 'literacy' is taken to refer to the

orchestration of a set of mutually-informing resources relating to reading the interpretation, use and production of printed and print-based or print-associated communicational objects (including visual “support” images, graphics, format options, digital objects, and so on). It is clear that these ‘resources’ are the basis of learning in and for school and they retain their fundamental significance as both objects and media of learning across the years. The acquisition of literacy capacities generally in the early years of schooling is crucial, as is ongoing development of the curricular sub-domains of ‘literacy’ across the school years. In that regard, many discipline areas rely increasingly on new, digital production and communicational environments, and these present distinctive challenges to the relevance of contemporary literacy education efforts.

One definition that attempted to incorporate these matters explicitly was used in the Queensland Department of Education and the Arts document *Literate Futures*:

Literacy is the flexible and sustainable mastery of a repertoire of practices with the texts of traditional and new communications technologies via spoken language, print and multi-media. (*Literate Futures*, Education Queensland, Luke, Freebody & Land, 2000)

Following sections elaborate on the elements of that “mastery” in ways that are educationally actionable.

### 3.2. *What are the elements of literacy?*

In wide use in Australia and many other countries is a broad framework that aims to map the practical resources that interact in fluent, reflective and accurate reading and writing. This framework is generally referred to as “the four-roles model” (after Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke & Freebody, 1997; Freebody, 2004). The components are described in this way:

- Code-breaker (to be accurate and efficient);
- Text-participant (to make meaning within texts);
- Text-user (to manage and produce different kinds of texts for different social functions);
- Text-analyst (to operate critically with texts).

The aim of the model is to provide a set of ‘job specs’ with which an educator (teacher, syllabus writer, assessment developer, and so on) can interrogate a

program's literacy-learning content. It does not directly lend itself to a particular pedagogic format, although it does come associated with the recommendation that each role receive some explicit attention, rather than being assumed to operate in an 'integrated' setting. In that regards, what is recommended is a systematic and staged self-conscious movement back and forth between the integration and complexity of engaging and important tasks and the literacy-pedagogic work that develops the resources that inform the task and visibly help in its completion.

Much has been written about the four-roles model, and it has been adapted for use in mathematics (Lewis, & Wray, 2000), adult job training (e.g., Sinclair Bell, 2000), second-language learning (e.g., Skarin, 1996), and variously across the curriculum (Santoro, 2004). The model is not a representation of a hierarchy or developmental sequence of skills or knowledge. As new areas of knowledge and new levels of disciplinary abstraction and complexity are encountered by people in the course of their educational activities, new kinds of formatting, new spelling and punctuation challenges and new genres and grammatical formations need to be learned.

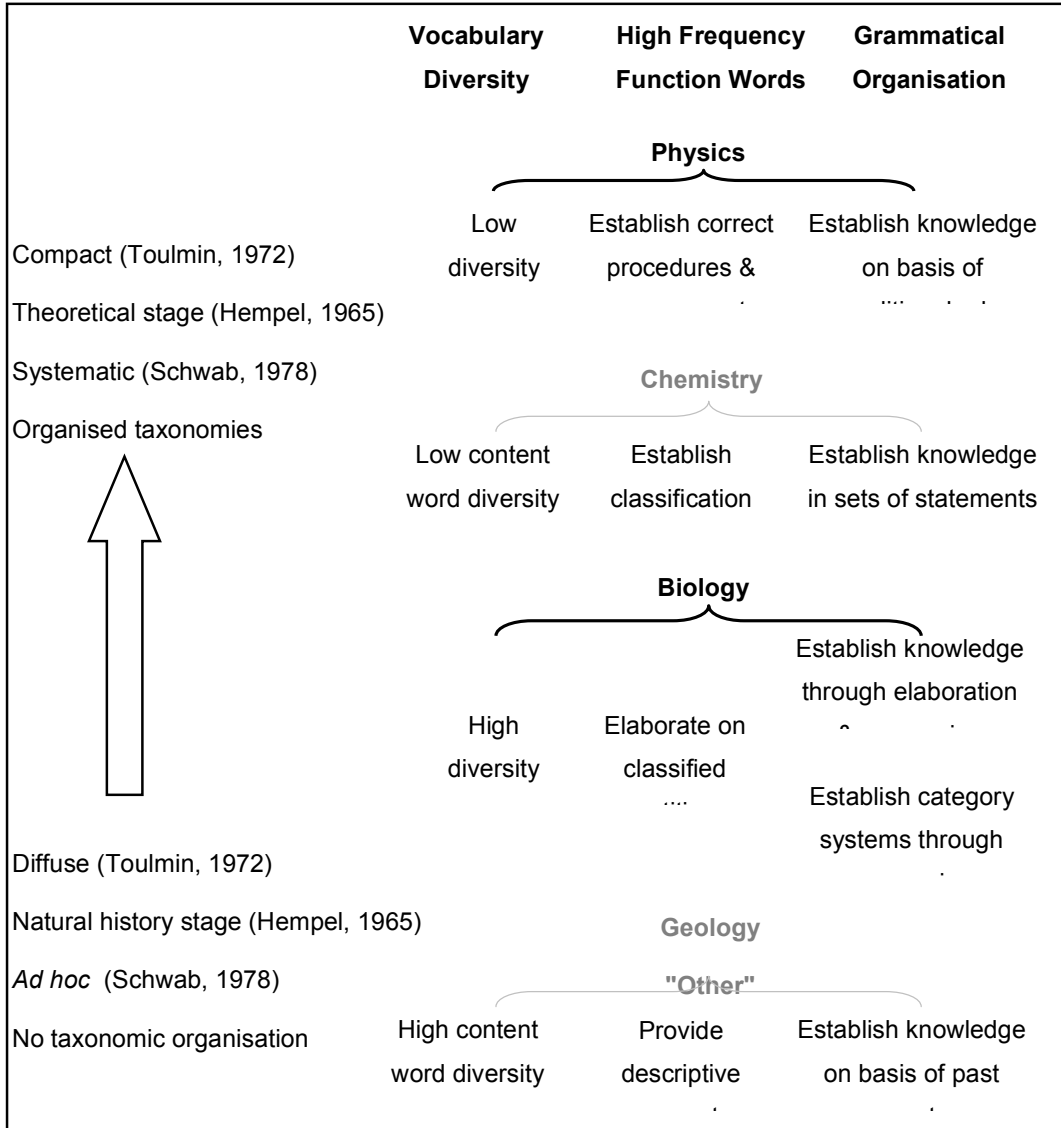
The model has several advantages over most standard frameworks in literacy education. For example, an encyclopedic review of reading instruction research conducted by Adams (1990) operates almost exclusively within the dichotomy of "phonics/skills" instruction and "holistic/meaning" based instruction. This dichotomy also pervades reports such as Chall's (1967) review of the research literature (*Learning to read: The great debate*) and *No Child Left Behind* in the US. Similarly, the recently released National Inquiry report on literacy (Rowe and others, 2005) focuses largely on the acquisition of alphabetic and phonemic knowledge in early learning, and later mentions but does not expand upon the need for teachers to foster the development of oral language, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, comprehension, and the "literacies of new technologies".

Issues not addressed in such conceptualisations of the problem of teaching and learning literacy, apart from their general neglect of theory and research on writing and text production more broadly, relate to the breadth of field of the brief for a literacy education program. Schooling can be thought of as a

10-12-year induction into how literate and digital-technology societies use communication systems and the communicational conventions those societies use to develop, store and disseminate their valued bodies of knowledge. The structures of texts generically purpose-built for various functions, the lexical and grammatical configurations that embody those genres, the interplay among semiotic systems (words, graphics, pictures, mathematical algorithms, and so on) in the building of valued knowledge through text, and the forms of critique, through analysis and synthesis with neighbouring textual materials, all constitute the core of success in such an induction, and all are omitted from the US and Australian reviews of literacy education.

Most critical is the attempt to extract literacy from the epistemological and ideological setting in which human communication operates, and which schooling calls for no matter how deeply implicit that calling. First, there is an urgent need to conceptualise literacy within the knowledge categories that currently organise valued knowledge in and for school – curriculum-literacy awareness – into an account of how programs embody literacy-“content” relationships in particular ways. School organisation of school subjects imperfectly mirrors disciplines, those growing and ever-changing knowledge formations that include conventions for what counts as data, evidence and argumentation. Muspratt has collected evidence for Science textbooks that demonstrates the considerable variations in the logical and epistemological work that various texts perform within the school science curriculum. He characterised these in terms of the dimensions that philosophers of knowledge have developed to distinguish the disciplines, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Alignment of descriptors with disciplines and linguistic configurations  
 (from Freebody and Muspratt, in press/2006; Muspratt, 2005)



On the matter of the broader mandate such an analysis presents to educators interested in literacy, Freebody and Muspratt (in press) concluded

[The disciplines] have been resources for cutting beneath the surfaces of experience, gearing young people into an 'explicable' world beyond the touchstones of the tribe – commonsense and dogma. The literacy inquiry, therefore, concerns how teachers and students have been acculturated, and continue to acculturate one another, in particular linguistic, textual and interactional formats that, on some evident and interpretable counts, vary across disciplinary formations.

Literacy is often researched, theorised and taught as if early literacy educational program do not need to explicitly stimulate the evolution of



students' literacy resources toward these specialised ways of gearing into the observable world. Such a view represents a magical belief in the independence and total portability of a cognitive-linguistic module 'Literacy' that, once established in the early years of schooling, can transport the otherwise struggling learner effortlessly through these increasingly abstract and complex pathways.

Similarly, as in Freebody (in press) the case has been put for appreciating the ideological resources at work:

The potentially multiple ways in which any given language can be used to understand, act in and on, and appraise the world call, therefore, for explicit educational effort, and constitute a core component of any mature form of acculturation into literate society. The issue is, however, always generationally contentious, and doubly so for generations in most contemporary societies. This is because the organizational, regulatory functions of schooling militate against the "ability to think 'critically' in the sense of understanding how systems and institutions inter-relate to help and harm people" (Gee, 2001: 2).

The *Literate Futures* project showed that teachers need to share a professional vocabulary, co-ordinate their activities from year to year, and debate issues of literacy across the curriculum areas and the school years. The four-roles model is one such model, with a growing track-record of use, but whether or not it is used, some accessible framework for capturing these 'basics' of literacy learning needs to be the basis of any 'train-the-trainer' or 'trickle-down' model of professional development program in literacy education.

Successful professional development programs in education are built on the bases of knowledge, attitude and skill held currently by teachers. In that regard, theoretical ideas, techniques and daily routines are relevant. As Bosker and Scheerens (1997) emphasise, straightforward mundane matters such as time on task reading and writing, the closeness of content covered to the assessment formats, and the sharing of specific objectives and frequent corrective feedback all bear directly on teaching efficacy. These issues, along with a number of theoretical ideas and practices about literacy are evident in much current practice (as reflected in the performance of Australian students in the recent international PISA assessments). Lacking perhaps most critically, and reflected in the 'long tail' on the PISA is the broad availability of

those ideas and practices, in particular an appreciation of how they need to be systematically adapted to diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged groups of students. This is a matter of collective responsibility in the profession, calling for new levels of intellectual and material collegiality.

#### **4 SUMMARY**

The professional development program planned needs to consolidate achievements by teachers in Queensland. Literacy needs to be construed as having a range of resources brought seamlessly to bear in successful reading and writing. For collectives and individuals, literacy is an 'emergent technology', not just sitting on top of the cultures in which it develops, but more so changing the ways those cultures define themselves and do business, and thereby changing the consciousness of individuals. Part of learning to be literate is coming to know that, and how, illiteracy practices are always embedded in and give shape to human relationships, everyday events, the tools and technologies in which literacy 'lives'.

Finally, it is important for professional development programs in literacy to reflect a deep appreciation of two matters. First, as Barton concluded his study of literacy in the community:

Ultimately literacy reflects inequalities in society: inequalities of power, inequalities in the distribution of wealth, and inequalities in access to education ... Literacy can only be fully understood in the context of these social relations. (1994: 218)

Some students in Queensland depend crucially on their literacy learning in school, that it is uncompromising, comprehensive and comprehensively relevant, curriculum-aware, portability from learning site to learning site, and continuous and cumulative across the school years.

Second, the fact of disadvantage as described by Barton, and the fact of its very correlation with performance on literacy assessments in Australian data do not add up to the necessity for such a relationship in nature. Other countries and jurisdictions have different levels of correlation, and there are factors that can be changed that will affect the levels of the relationship. The relationship between literacy learning and socio-economic disadvantage is a product of the relationships between cultural, economic, and institutional conditions, and the ideologically interested deployment of human and material

resources. These correlations are not instances of nature revealing timeless secrets; they are the constructions of social and institutional practice. As Teese and Polesel have argued, most professional development, syllabus development and teacher education is conducted as if teachers operate in optimal material conditions within optimal cultural correspondence between the communities served and the teaching and learning arrangements provided:

Without a focus on how the teaching of a subject is conducted in the most characteristic settings of the school system, the cognitive architecture of the subject – the structure of its demands and the pace at which key concepts are introduced – will continue to be treated as essentially the same for all students. Inequality begins with this assumption, and with the great pressures placed on teachers to reverse its effects. (Teese & Polesel, 2003: 223)

Teese and Polesel made the case for school subjects generally, but it applies even more forcefully to literacy teaching and learning: High school curricula, assessments and teaching practices assume specific curriculum-literacy capabilities among the learners, and often thus focus on content; literacy lessons in the early school years assume high levels of topic knowledge and knowledge about interactional conventions, purposes for reading and writing, and the social and ideological innocence of young people's experience, and thus often focus on the mechanics of reading for accuracy and denotative meaning. The argument is that narrowing the focus in these ways intensifies the marginalisation of disadvantaged groups and individuals, and leaves their teachers with few sophisticated accounts of that marginalisation.

The professional development of teachers in the area of literacy education needs to take these two concerns as both starting points and the ongoing key problematics for the program – the durability of socio-economic disadvantage and its consequences for literacy learning and thus educational achievement in general should reinvigorate the sense of challenge in aiming for medium-term change, not set the boundaries of our expectations.

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## **DIGEST OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

## 1. **BEATING THE ODDS**

**Taylor, B., Pearson, D., Clark, K., Walpole, S. (1999) *Beating the Odds. America: Center for Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.***

[www.ciera.org](http://www.ciera.org)

### Overview:

- research was conducted as part of CIERA – Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement
- investigated teacher and school factors that affect children’s reading success
- principals completed questionnaire
- teachers were observed for an hour of reading instruction 5 times – December-April
- children tested in November and May including:
  - words correct per minute;
  - retelling a passage; and
  - words in isolation.

### Methodology:

Various levels of analysis –

- (i) results, largely descriptive at the school level
  - (ii) variations among instructional practices of teachers within the levels of school effectiveness
  - (iii) variations found in instructional practice as function of teacher accomplishment
  - (iv) on regression analysis combining school and teacher variables
- Years 1-3 – focus on student level of engagement, time spent in small or whole-group instruction, preferred interaction style
  - time spent in small-group instruction, time spent in whole-group instruction, time spent in independent reading, student engagement rating, home communication rating, preferred style of telling, preferred style of recitation, and preferred style of coaching
1. Communication to parents
    - was not statistically significant
    - “the differences between the school level and the accomplishment analyses suggest either that the most accomplished teachers are not necessarily the best communicator or that teacher effects are moderated by a school-level ethic for this type of activity” – [www.ciera.org](http://www.ciera.org)
  2. Student engagement
    - was statistically significant
    - “The findings suggest that, unlike parent communication, wherein individual teacher practices appear to be moderated by school-level efforts, promoting high student engagement is a teaching practice not easily influenced by school-level practice”.
  3. Grouping practices
    - students averaged from 23-27 minutes a day in independent reading across all conditions of teacher effectiveness
  4. Interaction patterns



- “significant differences among teachers across schools suggest that a teacher’s preferred style of interacting with students is a teaching dimension which is less well influenced by the practice of others at the school level than other dimensions of teaching being investigated in our study”
- 5. Approaches to word recognition instruction
  - “most accomplished teachers demonstrate a more balanced portfolio of approaches to assist in word identification”
- 6. Comprehension instruction
  - “across all schools, comprehension instruction was minimal in grades 1-3 – included asking questions about the story as children were reading, having children write in response to stories they had read”
  - most accomplished teachers were frequently observed asking higher level questions

Overall, school-level change is as important as change within classrooms.

### Key Findings:

#### Management and engagement:

- most accomplished teachers in this study were experts at classroom management
- had well-established classroom routines and procedures for handling behaviour problems
- quick transitions between activities and rapid pace of instruction
- managed to engage 96% of students in work of the classroom

#### Small-group instruction:

- students in most effective schools averaged 60 minutes a day of small, ability-grouped instruction
- greater time allotted for small-group instruction was made possible by collaborative model – teachers, aides, ESL teacher etc.
- every child had two blocks of small-group instruction
- ability grouping used in effective schools – the use of these was however, not rigid or inflexible

#### Independent reading:

- students in most effective schools spent more time in independent reading – 27-28 minutes a day

#### Coaching:

- effective schools had teachers able to teach “on the fly”
- practice of coaching during reading to provide word recognition instruction was found to be a characteristic of teachers in the most effective schools and the most accomplished teachers in general

#### Phonics:

- Wharton-MacDonald et al. (1998) found most effective first-grade teachers in their study taught decoding skills explicitly and provided their students with many opportunities to engage in authentic reading.
- *Beating the Odds* data suggests that “what teachers do to promote application of phonics knowledge during the reading of connected text that matters most” – [www.ciera.org](http://www.ciera.org)
- “what distinguished the most accomplished teachers was their use of coaching to help students learn how to apply word recognition strategies to real reading

Higher level questions:

- found most of the accomplished teachers frequently encouraged higher level responses to text
- strategies include: asking higher level aesthetic response questions, requiring students to write response to what they had read
- only 16% of teacher in entire sample could be considered to truly emphasise comprehension

Improving instruction:

- in two schools – teachers and principals mentioned importance of improving instruction
- “focus on staff development efforts on becoming better teachers of reading”

High expectations for student learning:

- two of the schools – teachers mentioned high expectations for students’ achievement as a factor contributing to their success

Retrieved from: [www.ciera.org](http://www.ciera.org)

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## **2. PISA STUDY**

**Programme for International Student Assessment (2000)** – PIRLS, Paris, OECD.

[www.pisa.oecd.org](http://www.pisa.oecd.org)

Overview:

Reports on three different aspects of reading. These are how well students can

- retrieve specified information,
- interpret what they read and
- reflect on and evaluate the texts, drawing from existing knowledge

Scales were developed for each of these aspects as well as for reading literacy overall (the 'combined reading literacy' scale).

Student background variables which were related to achievement,

A range of other home and school factors appear to have influenced the reading literacy achievement of Australian students. These factors included:

- home educational resources (access to dictionaries, text books and a quiet place to study),
  - the amount of time spent on homework,
  - time spent reading for enjoyment,
  - students' perception of classroom discipline,
  - teacher enthusiasm,
  - the average student SES at the student's school
-

**3. 100 CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL: CONNECTIONS AND DISCONNECTIONS IN LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN THE YEAR PRIOR TO SCHOOL AND THE FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL.**

**AND**

**100 CHILDREN TURN 10: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF LITERACY DEVELOPMENT FROM THE YEAR PRIOR TO SCHOOL TO FIRST FOUR YEARS OF SCHOOL.**

**Susan Hill, Barbara Comber, William Louden, Judith Rivalland, Jo-Anne Reid**

*100 children go to school* – 1996-1997 –1998 report

*100 children turn 10* -1999-2000 –2002 report

Overview:

Gathered data on:

- Formal and informal early literacy activities
- The views of parents, teachers and children
- The classroom literacy experiences

Grouped under four headings:

1. The nature of the children's literacy achievement over time
2. The differences between children's patterns of growth and pathways towards the achievement of school literacy
3. The relationship between the literacy practices of home and school
4. The classroom and teaching practices that were observed to make a difference to the literacy development of the children that were studied.

Findings:

Researchers believed that each major finding has implications for:

- curriculum
  - policy and
  - practice in Australian schools
1. Most children made substantial growth in literacy
    - a. there was a broad range of performance on various literacy domains
      - i. 15% did not demonstrate ability to operate codes of reading and writing at a least acceptable by national benchmarks
    - b. those children not achieving were overwhelmingly from schools serving families living in poverty
  2. Children take different pathways and have different patterns of growth in literacy development
    - a. not always predictable, linear and sequential
    - b. not all children follow predictable trajectories based on early literacy assessments
    - c. early starters and 'catching up'
    - d. early starters and later success – what is measured as 'literacy' begins to shift in ways that may impact on relative performance
  3. Home and community experiences influence children's literacy development
    - a. five schools from different communities and within them diverse families

#### 4. Teaching that made a difference

##### Conclusions:

- importance of good teachers

“Teachers who are most successful in setting up and managing classrooms where children have consistent success and make consistent progress are informed about current and conventional theories of literacy development and instruction” (p. 106, para 2)

- development of literacy in some neighbourhoods more difficult than others
- good teaching needs to be complimented by good parenting at home
- in some schools students are failed from first day of school - 10 years of age and beyond
- was substantial growth of students' literacies
  - almost all could read accurately book level 27-28 (age 9-9.5)
  - almost all could produce extended written texts above national benchmark
  - 2/3 recorded spelling age equal to or above approx mean
  - broad range on all other literacy dimensions
  - lowest performing schools were schools serving children in poverty

“The study of *100 children turn 10* found that there was a very broad range of performance on literacy tasks. This finding requires attention and action. Action does not mean more of the same but rather the need for all teachers to work together to create and share knowledge about good early years literacy teaching and appropriate early intervention for students who require support. In addition there is a need for a second safety net after the transition to primary school for 8-9-year-old children who have not acquired the automatic literacy skills and strategies needed to reach their full learning potential in primary school. Good first teaching, effective early intervention and a second safety net requires that all teachers are energetic, knowledgeable and can practice culturally responsive literacy teaching (p. 107)”.

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#### **4. NOTHING LEFT TO CHANCE**

**Pat Grant, Lynne Badger, Anna Rogers - University of South Australia and  
Lyn Wilkinson, Flinders University.**

<http://www.thenetwork.sa.edu.au/nltc/literature/index.htm>

##### Overview:

Investigates how schools approach challenges they face. Report on Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes Evaluation in High Achieving Disadvantaged Schools

##### Findings:

Findings were that successful schools had the following:

- 1) Instruction was best in heterogeneous classes, with the reduction of the number of students assigned to special education classes.
- 2) Support was increased in the regular classroom for children with special needs.
- 3) Improvements in bilingual education were important to implement despite associated difficulties.
- 4) State-mandated instruction requirements that restricted teachers' scope to implement improvements, were the subject of experiments with state waivers of rules and regulations.
- 5) Emphasis on minimum competencies may prompt increased efforts to raise student performance at the lowest levels, without an accompanying effort to improve student achievement at the highest levels.
- 6) Staff in-service training was matched to the specific areas of school need and was provided throughout the year
- 7) Attempts to involve families in their children's education met with limited success. No exemplary model of a parent education Program was found.
- 8) Successful implementation of change required the participation of many people within and outside the school. The key to success was the possibility for school administrators and teachers to use additional resources from outside the school, to initiate and support fundamental changes within the school.
- 9) Evaluation of improvement was complex - techniques used involved meetings, questionnaires, interviews and reviews of student achievement data.

##### Conclusions:

It was noted that six interrelated features of instruction were characteristics of all the higher performing schools.

- 1) Students learn skills and knowledge in multiple lesson types.
- 2) Teachers integrate test preparation into instruction.
- 3) Teachers make connections across instruction, curriculum and life.
- 4) Students learn strategies for doing the work.
- 5) Students are expected to be generative thinkers.
- 6) Classrooms foster cognitive collaboration

**5. SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACIES IN SCHOOL: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY.**

**Barbara Comber. et al. University of South Australia, Centre for Studies in Literacy, Policy and Learning Cultures, (2001).**

Overview:

Investigates children's school trajectories from ages 8-12 in low socio-economic areas

Designed to investigate literacy development in the often ignored middle-primary years of schooling (talk of 4<sup>th</sup> grad slump)

Findings:

Six key factors contributing to successful literacy development:

- 1) The recognition factor (the extent to which what children can do *counts* and they can see that it counts)
- 2) The resources factor (the extent to which schools have the human and material resources they need)
- 3) The curriculum factor (the quality, scope and depth of what is made available)
- 4) The pedagogical factor (the quality of teacher instructional talk, teacher-student relationships and assessment practices)
- 5) The take-up factor (the extent to which students appropriate literate practices and school-authorized discourse)
- 6) The translation factor (the extent to which students can make use of and assemble repertoires of practice that they can use in new situations)

Conclusions:

There are many positive aspects of school in disadvantaged areas.

Need more emphasis on critical analysis for students.

- Socio-economically disadvantaged children have vast array of literate practices from family; had differentiated linguistic, cultural capital.
- Literacy curriculum on offer in middle years – organized differently to those of early years counterparts; expectations to be independent and responsible for own learning without being told how; expected that could already read and write fluently; expectations of self-reflection more
- Literacy teaching and learning – in low socio-economic schools teachers need high skills and commitment; need for ongoing supplemental assistance so teachers can make a difference; teachers valued one-to-one and small group pedagogical approaches; assessments need to align with whole school structures

## **6. TWO-WAY ENGLISH: TOWARDS MORE USER-FRIENDLY EDUCATION FOR SPEAKERS OF ABORIGINAL ENGLISH.**

**Education Department Of Western Australia, Edith Cowan University, February 1999.**

### Overview:

Explores social and cultural knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – in oral narratives/literacy.

### Findings:

- showed a continuum of familiarity of participants on schemas
- strategies of recall – “bottom-up” approach – had partial ideas that were then reassembled towards original narrative
- some non-Aboriginal participants relied on own schemas in comprehension
- recalls by Aboriginal participants were generally holistic – elaborated on cultural schema
- “the research suggests that the contribution of Indigenous students in our classroom have the potential to be misinterpreted and even misunderstood”
- Often contributions not valued
- Therefore Indigenous students in marginal positions in classrooms
- Indigenous students are bringing rich cultural knowledge to classrooms that non-Indigenous students do not have
- Oral narratives recalled by Indigenous students because of familiarity with cultural knowledge
- teachers in current education system who possess little understanding of Aboriginal perspectives

### Conclusion:

“Urgent need for Professional development and development of curriculum materials to demonstrate importance of cultural understandings and schemas in comprehension of narrative texts” (p.28)

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## **7. READING RECOVERY – INDIGENOUS TEXT RESEARCH PROJECT.**

**State of Queensland, Education Queensland, November 2003.**

### Overview:

Investigates use of Indigenous texts trialed with Indigenous children in Reading Recovery in 2002. Culturally-responsive pedagogy was developed by Grant and trialed also.

### Findings:

#### A. Texts

- students exposed to project texts left RR program faster than others
- teachers did less prompting

- children's reading errors indicated they were attending to meaning as a source of information more often on project texts than others
- teachers thought books were suitable
- teachers' perception of what was important matched Grant's elements – land, language, culture, time, place and relationships.
- Teachers wanted more culturally appropriate texts
- Teachers saw texts as particularly effective
- Teachers in remote and community schools valued them more
- Texts prompted student-initiated conversation
- Improvement in motivation and enjoyment of reading occurred
- Students liked valuing of own culture (p. 2)

B. Culturally responsive instruction

- teachers using strategies had their students discontinue RR quicker
- teachers said framework was powerful in these ways:
  - understanding of and sensitivity to students' needs increased
  - could build on students' strengths
  - non-acceptance of limited progress
  - broadened understanding of literacy development
  - improved knowledge on how to cater to needs of students
  - applicability of framework to general classroom teaching
  - facilitation of more effective communication between teacher and student (p.3)

Recommendations:

- report be published
- community be informed
- AccessEd publish texts
- List of texts be made available
- Refine some texts
- Continue design of texts
- Further investigate needs of urban and TSI students
- Consider linguistic patterns of Indigenous students

Professional Development

- PD on Grant's cross-cultural framework be provided to RR teachers of Indigenous students
  - TSI perspective in PD needed
  - Link with Indigenous Education and training alliance be maintained
  - students should not be given culturally relevant texts exclusively
  - topics made sense to students
  - information provided to teachers provided satisfactory educational experiences for teachers and students
  - the framework equipped teachers with better skills and knowledge
  - awareness of socio-cultural factors on learning assisted teachers to hold high expectations of students
  - positive results would seem inevitable to continue program
-



*Digest Of Research On Reading Recovery*

### **1. Reading Recovery Descubriendo la Lectura – National Data Evaluation Center (NDEC)**

[www.ndec.us/Mission.asp](http://www.ndec.us/Mission.asp)

- Provides evidence that their data collection on use of RR is quality evidence, rigorous, systematic and uses empirical methods
  - Children completed six tests
    - Text reading
    - Letter identification
    - Word test
    - Concepts about print
    - Writing vocab
    - Hearing and recording sounds in words
  - Ohio State University
  - Presents a number of RR studies that uses quality research methods
- 

### **2. Reading recovery: Indigenous text research project. State of Queensland, Education Queensland - November 25<sup>th</sup> 2003**

- Used indigenous based texts with indigenous children in RR in 2002
  - This was coupled with culturally-responsive pedagogy developed by Grant (1998)
  - Results showed that Indigenous based texts beneficial in RR program already established for Indigenous kids
- 

### **3. Six Reading Recovery Studies: meeting the criteria for scientifically based research. By the North American trainers Group Research committee**

Retrieved from: Reading Recovery Council of North America - [www.readingrecovery.org](http://www.readingrecovery.org)

- “An evaluation of reading recovery” – Center, Wheldall, Freeman, Outhred and McNaught
  - “Phonological processing skills and the reading recovery program” – Iversen and Tunmer
  - “Reading recovery: helping at-risk children learn to read”- Pinnell
  - “Comparing instructional models for the literacy education of high risk first graders” – Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk and Seltzer
  - “Children’s achievement and personal and social development in a first-yea reading recovery program with teachers-in-training” – Quay, Steel, Johnson and Hortman
  - “Literacy learning of at-risk first-grade students in the reading recovery early intervention” - Schwartz
  - Discusses theoretical base, evidence of effects and evidence of replicability for each study
  - Generally found that each study found significantly positive effects from use of Reading Recovery
-

**4. Blaiklock, Ken. E. (2004) "A critique of running records of children's oral reading" *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 241-253.**

- Blaiklock has four concerns about running records:
    - The appropriateness of using running records for beginning and fluent readers
    - The use of running records to assess accuracy rate
    - The value of self-corrections
    - The analysis of oral reading errors
  - Claims that there is a "lack of clarity in guidelines about suitability of using running records to assess reading at any level" (p. 242)
  - Reliability of procedure has not been established (p. 243)
  - No research supports self-correction as an indicator of skilled reading (p. 246)
  - Analysis of errors is problematic – may provide misleading portrayal of child's reading (p. 247)
- 

**5. Blaiklock, Ken. (2004) "Commentary guided reading: Years 1-4" *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 333-339.**

- This paper discusses the Ministry of New Zealand's publication – *Guided reading: years 1-4*.
  - Argues that it says nothing new from previous policy and that there are a number of discrepancies in the document and video materials
    - Believes it has overall message that teachers spend most time talking about meaning of story
    - Document fails to understand references used
    - Contradiction between materials – 'read out aloud' to 'read in your heads'
- 

**6. Grossen, Bonnie. Coulter, Gail & Ruggles, Barbara. (1997) *Reading recovery: an evaluation of benefits and costs*. University of Oregon.**

- Comments on more and more independent evaluators raising questions about RR's effectiveness and cost
  - States there is considerable bias in research on RR
  - Persons responsible for success collect data on success
  - Cost of one child for 30 hours in RR costs more than one full year of schooling for one child
- 

**7. Center, Yola. & Wheldall, Kevin (1992) "Evaluating the effectiveness of reading recovery: a critique" *Educational Psychology*, Vol 12 Issue 3/4, pp. 263-275.**

- Comments on that "some studies have conceptual and methodological shortcomings which have characterised many evaluations to date" (p.263)
- Comments that RR requires "a carefully designed set of interlocking principles and actions requiring the support of a school system to ensure and sustain quality results" (p.263)
- RR teachers help at-risk students to learn "kinds of strategies good readers use" (p. 264) [problem is good readers may use many/varied approaches]

- States that about 25-30% of kids in RR programs are withdrawn if they fail to make the expected rate of progress (p. 265)

*A Collection Of Studies In Early Literacy*

<b>STUDY 1 BEATING THE ODDS</b>	
<b>WHAT</b>	Investigating what is effective teaching in reading instruction K-3
<b>AIMS</b>	To identify and discuss both school level (ie. Programs) and classroom level (ie. Teachers instructional practices) factors that distinguished the most effective schools participating in the study
<b>WHO</b>	CIERA
<b>Researchers</b>	Barbara Taylor, P. David Pearson, Kathleen Clark, Sharon Walpole
<b>Where</b>	America
<b>People involved</b>	14 schools in 4 American states
<b>WHEN</b>	
<b>Date</b>	November and May - 1999
<b>HOW</b>	
<b>Data collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completion of questionnaire by principals – demographic information about the school, no. of students, overall performance indicators and standardised test results.</li> <li>• interview with principal related to classroom practices concerning reading</li> <li>• pre and post test data for four children per classroom – two average and two low achievers</li> <li>• children tested in November and May on various literacy skills</li> <li>• observations of teachers on 5 occasions (list of teacher interaction styles)</li> <li>• interviews with some teachers</li> <li>• daily log kept by teachers</li> </ul>
	<p>Case study developed for each school – looked at gains in reading of students in Year 3 – measure for effectiveness of school.</p> <p>Choice of schools (two factors) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• had recently implemented reform programs to improve reading achievement,</li> <li>• had reputation of producing unexpectedly positive results with low-income populations.</li> </ul> <p>Choice of teachers –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two teachers identified by principals in each K-3 class that were good/effective teachers and willing to participate</li> <li>• some were not included as wanted to focus on exemplary practice</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quantitative and descriptive analyses were conducted using multiple sources of information.</li> <li>• analyses done at school and classroom level</li> <li>• categories and rating systems built from data emerging from observations, surveys and interviews.</li> <li>• school variables include: school effectiveness rating, school efforts to link to parents,</li> </ul>

	<p>systematic, internal assessment of pupil progress, building communication, use of externally developed early reading intervention,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>classroom variables include: home communication, student engagement, preferred interaction style, approaches to word recognition and comprehension instruction, teacher accomplishment rating.</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT</b>	
<b>Results</b>	<p><b>Key findings:</b></p> <p><i>School factors</i> – building communication and collaboration, systematic evaluation of student progress, research-based early reading intervention, ongoing PD, school organisation for reading instruction, reaching out to parents.</p> <p><i>Teacher factors</i> – home communication, student engagement, time spent in small group instruction, time spent independent reading, approaches to word recognition instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 schools measured most effective, 6 moderately effective and 4 least effective.</li> <li>Teacher observations rated – 41% used many elements of culturally responsive teaching and effective teaching in classrooms, 32% used some, 27% used few.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions/Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective schools have reading as a priority.</li> <li>Teachers, principals, parents worked positively together.</li> <li>Had a consensus on school wide monitoring systems, curriculum and professional development.</li> <li>Constant goal of improving already effective reading programs. In school level analyses:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>linking to parents highly recommended</li> <li>need for systematic assessment</li> <li>need to build communication</li> <li>need for early reading interventions</li> <li>need for ongoing professional development</li> <li>need to build collaboration – effective schools have collaborative model for reading instruction</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Publications</b>	<p>Visit: <a href="http://www.ciera.org">www.ciera.org</a>          A number of reports are available.</p>

<b>STUDY 2 PISA STUDY – PIRLS</b>	
<b>WHAT</b>	OECD PISA study – large scale international assessment of skills and knowledge of 15 year olds; PIRLS – <i>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study</i> . International comparative assessment of reading literacy in fourth-graders.
<b>AIMS</b>	To examine the progress of reading literacy over time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate core competence in students at end of primary schooling</li> <li>• Consider conditions at school and home</li> </ul>
<b>WHO</b>	
<b>Researchers</b>	Management and Coordination: IEA Headquarters in Amsterdam (NL) International Study Center at Boston College (USA)
<b>Where</b>	World wide – nominated participating countries
<b>Funded by</b>	The participating countries fund the international management of PIRLS with support from the World bank and the United States Department for the National Center of Education and Statistics
<b>People involved</b>	Approx. 41 countries so far - 150 schools in each country ie. 3000-4500 students in each participating country
<b>WHEN</b>	
<b>Date</b>	Commenced 2000 – proceed in 3 yearly intervals PIRLS began Sept 2003-expected completion 2007
<b>HOW</b>	
<b>Data Collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy for this study was to reflect breadth of knowledge, skills and competencies to be assessed.</li> <li>• Reading literacy defined as more than just the ability to read and understand regular text, but the ability to understand, use and reflect on written texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential and to participate effectively in society.</li> <li>• Assessment included visual images – maps etc.</li> <li>• The Reading Development Group, was formed to construct the PIRLS Framework and compile the final reading assessment.</li> <li>• Each country adhered to valid procedures to make data reliable and representative samples of students.</li> <li>• Quality Control Monitors were used in each country to monitor the testing in schools, ensuring high level standards were met.</li> <li>• Four literary passages were used to measure reading literacy achievement.</li> <li>• The literary passages included realistic stories and traditional tales – these were reviewed and accepted by PIRLS committee.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The informational texts included chronological and non-chronological articles, a biographical article, and an informational leaflet.</li> </ul>
<b>Data collection</b>	<p>Assesses performance of students in three domains:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. reading literacy,</li> <li>2. mathematical literacy and</li> <li>3. scientific literacy</li> </ol> <p>2000 – reading literacy focus,    2003 – maths,    2006 – science.</p> <p>Each participating country supplied a sample target group. Schools were randomly selected and then one or two classrooms were randomly selected within each school.</p>
<b>WHAT</b>	
<b>Results</b>	<p>Can report on three different aspects of reading including how well students can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>retrieve specified information</li> <li>interpret what they read and</li> <li>reflect on and evaluate the texts, drawing from existing knowledge.</li> </ul> <p>Scales were developed for each of these aspects as well as for reading literacy overall (the 'combined reading literacy' scale). In addition to the above student background variables which were related to achievement, a range of other home and school factors appear to have influenced the reading literacy achievement of Australian students. These factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>home educational resources (access to dictionaries, text books and a quiet place to study),</li> <li>the amount of time spent on homework,</li> <li>time spent reading for enjoyment,</li> <li>students' perception of classroom discipline,</li> <li>teacher enthusiasm, and,</li> <li>the average student SES at the student's school</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>"Professional development for teachers is an integral part of the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan, as it is recognised that the classroom teacher is the major determinant of the literacy learning of students. During 2000, there was considerable professional development related to the assessment and intervention programs described above. In particular, teachers were assisted to interpret data from assessment programs and devise programs based on their findings. Many teachers were involved in professional development programs associated with the introduction of particular intervention programs. As many schools had instituted literacy teams, a number of the professional development initiatives were directed towards the team leaders. A train-the-trainer approach was common in such programs. Another professional development strategy was the establishment of literacy networks among teachers. The increasing use of modern communication technology contributed significantly to the extent and effectiveness of such strategies. Many</p>

	authorities also provided opportunities for teachers to engage in postgraduate, accredited study in literacy teaching and learning" ( <a href="http://www.pisa.oecd.org">www.pisa.oecd.org</a> )
<b>Publications</b>	Mullis, I.V.S., Martin, M.O., Gonzalez, E.J., & Kennedy, A.M. (2003), <i>PIRLS 2001 International report: IEA's study of reading literacy achievement in primary schools</i> . Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College. Mullis, I.V.S., Kennedy, A.M., Martin, M.O., & Sainsbury, M (2006) <i>PIRLS 2006 Assessment framework and specifications, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition</i> Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College. ( <a href="http://www.pisa.oecd.org">www.pisa.oecd.org</a> )

<b>STUDY 3 100 CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL AND 100 CHILDREN TURN 10</b>	
<b>WHAT</b>	<p>Three phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1996-1997 – <i>100 Children go to school: connections and disconnections in literacy development in the year prior to school and the first year of school.</i></li> <li>2. 1998 – university funded round of assessment tasks</li> <li>3. Extension of Phase 1 – a five year longitudinal study from 1996-2000 – <i>100 children turn 10: a longitudinal study of literacy development from the year prior to school to the first four years of school.</i></li> </ol>
<b>AIMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a brief literature review of research into literacy development in preschool and early years of school with a focus on diverse communities and home and school connections.</li> <li>• The production of longitudinal, measurable literacy outcomes of a sample group of children's prior-to-school experiences, kindergarten, year 1 and 2 school experiences</li> <li>• The production of longitudinal, qualitative case studies of the literacy development of 20 focus children with five different cultural and socio-economic research sties.</li> </ul>
<b>WHO</b>	
<b>Researchers</b>	Susan Hill, Barbara Comber, William Louden, Judith Rivalland, Jo-Anne Reid
<b>Where</b>	<p>Phase 3 – five sites</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Northern suburbs of Adelaide – low socio-economic</li> <li>2. Inner urban SA site – new arrivals Vietnamese, South American and Southern Europe</li> <li>3. Remote Aboriginal community edge of western desert</li> <li>4. Western suburbs of Perth – economically advantaged</li> <li>5. Regional centre of Ballarat – characteristics of rural centres – increasing social and economic hardship and struggle</li> </ol>
<b>Funded by</b>	Department of Education, Science and Training, Commonwealth of Australia
<b>People involved</b>	<p>Phase 1 – 20 focus children, literacy assessment on 120 children in five research sites in SA, WA and Vic</p> <p>Phase 2 – 1998 – development of university assessments</p> <p>Phase 3 – <i>100 children turn 10</i> – continued focus children and assessment data again collected on wider cohort of children up to year 4.</p>
<b>WHEN</b>	
<b>Date</b>	4 year study

	1996-1997 – <i>100 children go to school</i> – 1998 report 1999-2000 – <i>100 children turn 10</i> - 2002 report
<b>HOW</b>	
<b>Data collection</b>	<p>Phase 3 – two levels of data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fine-grained case-studies of focus children in the five sites</li> <li>• interviews with care-givers, teachers</li> <li>• observations of children in their homes, preschools, day-care centres and in classrooms during initial four years of schooling</li> </ul> <p>Gathered data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal early literacy activities</li> <li>• The views of parents, teachers and children</li> <li>• The classroom literacy experiences</li> </ul>
	•
<b>WHAT</b>	
<b>Results</b>	<p>Overall findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there was a broad range of performance on various dimensions of literacy</li> <li>• there was a relationship between early literacy predictors and later school success</li> <li>• not all children follow predictable trajectories based on early literacy assessments</li> <li>• catching up was possible when teachers, parents and students made it a priority</li> <li>• new forms of literacy practice require different understanding, strategies and techniques as children progress through school</li> <li>• teaching that made a difference was data-driven, diagnostic and responsive</li> <li>• the students who did well were those whose home experiences count as currency in school</li> <li>• students engaged differently with in-school and out-of-school literacy (p.4-5 of Comber, B &amp; Barnett, J. 2003)</li> </ul> <p>“The good news was that <u>all</u> of the students had improved. school was making a positive difference in the literacy development of all the students, but not at the same rate or in the same way” (Comber And Barnett, 2003, p.3)”</p> <p>“While all of the children in the study had significant access to rich language practices and household knowledges, not all of these knowledges and practices counted equally in school and not all can be easily transferred to school literate practices” (Comber and Barnett, 2003, p. 4)”</p>
<b>Conclusions/ Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study found a broad range of performance on literacy tasks.</li> <li>• Need “effective early intervention, teachers that are energetic, knowledgeable and can practice culturally responsive literacy teaching”(p. 107)</li> </ul>

	<p>Literacy attainment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• some late starters appear to be able to make up ground in some aspects of literacy, but 'catching up' is a rare privilege</li><li>• what counts as success in literacy varies in different school communities</li><li>• what counts as 'at risk' in literacy varies in different school communities</li><li>• a high progress start does not guarantee continued high progress</li><li>• matching of community and school expectations for literacy and schooling is hard to achieve</li><li>• some parents provide a great deal of supplementary resources and tuition</li><li>• children are assembling different literacies</li><li>• children are at different points of development on multiple axes of literacy</li><li>• teaching which makes a difference is based on a careful analysis of what children can do already and what they need to learn</li><li>• literacy lessons which engage children make use of familiar language, processes, genres, concepts, information and media, whilst introducing new practices</li><li>• the effects of poverty interrupt the literacy education of some children (pp. 95-105)</li></ul>
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<b>STUDY 4 NOTHING LEFT TO CHANCE</b>	
<b>WHAT</b>	Investigates how schools approach challenges they face. Report on Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes Evaluation in High Achieving Disadvantaged Schools
<b>AIMS</b>	Aims to address challenges that schools face in contemporary times including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the need for teachers and schools to understand issues of disadvantage in productive ways</li> <li>• engaging with contemporary constructions of literacy and numeracy</li> <li>• seeing difference and diversity as productive resources in schools</li> <li>• finding ways of developing a whole school response including utilising productive programs and pedagogies; and exploring ways to sustain improvement.</li> </ul> Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.thenetwork.sa.edu.au/nltc/literature/index.htm">http://www.thenetwork.sa.edu.au/nltc/literature/index.htm</a>
<b>WHO</b>	Government of South Australia and Department of Education and Children's Services
<b>Researchers</b>	Pat Grant, Lynne Badger, Anna Rogers – University of South Australia and Lyn Wilkinson, Flinders University
<b>HOW</b>	
<b>Data collected</b>	Two phases for data collection: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. gathering data from the whole cohort of participants in the eight schools and</li> <li>2. gaining more specific information about ideas and practices that were evident in the survey data but which the researchers needed to know more about. The informants from each of the eight schools:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• principals/deputies,</li> <li>• key teachers and some classroom teachers.</li> <li>• The data collection methods used in these phases were the surveys (one for literacy and one for numeracy), semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>WHAT</b>	
<b>Results</b>	Their findings were that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruction was best in heterogeneous classes, with the reduction of the number of students assigned to special education classes.</li> <li>• Support was increased in the regular classroom for children with special needs.</li> <li>• Improvements in bilingual education were important to implement despite associated difficulties.</li> <li>• State-mandated instruction requirements that restricted teachers' scope to implement improvements, were the subject of experiments with state waivers of rules and regulations.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on minimum competencies may prompt increased efforts to raise student performance at the lowest levels, without an accompanying effort to improve student achievement at the highest levels.</li> <li>• Staff in-service training was matched to the specific areas of school need and was provided throughout the year.</li> <li>• Attempts to involve families in their children's education met with limited success. No exemplary model of a parent education programme was found.</li> <li>• Successful implementation of change required the participation of many people within and outside the school. The key to success was the possibility for school administrators and teachers to use additional resources from outside the school, to initiate and support fundamental changes within the school.</li> <li>• Evaluation of improvement was complex - techniques used involved meetings, questionnaires, interviews and reviews of student achievement data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusions/ Recommendations</b></p>	<p>It was noted that six interrelated features of instruction were characteristic of all the higher performing schools. These need to be acknowledged in practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Students learn skills and knowledge in multiple lesson types.</li> <li>2) Teachers integrate test preparation into instruction.</li> <li>3) Teachers make connections across instruction, curriculum and life.</li> <li>4) Students learn strategies for doing the work.</li> <li>5) Students are expected to be generative thinkers.</li> <li>6) Classrooms foster cognitive collaboration.</li> </ol> <p>“[Successful schools] make productive whole school responses to the challenges they face and they are concerned about sustaining the improvements they make. At all times they are clearly focused on their students as capable learners. Successful schools build a tremendous knowledge about their students, their staff and productive ways of working in their context” (from website)</p>
<p><b>Publications</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.thenetwork.sa.edu.au/nltc/literature/index.htm">http://www.thenetwork.sa.edu.au/nltc/literature/index.htm</a></p>

<b>STUDY 5 SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACIES IN SCHOOL: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY</b>	
<b>WHAT</b>	Series of studies of children's school literacy learning flowing on from the early years of schooling
<b>AIMS</b>	Designed to investigate literacy development in the often ignored middle-primary years of schooling (talk of 4 <sup>th</sup> grad slump)
<b>WHO</b>	
<b>Researchers</b>	Lynne Badger, Jenny Barnett, Barbara Comber, Helen Nixon, DECS - Department of education and children's services in South Australia
<b>Where</b>	3 high poverty areas of South Australia – two metro schools and 1 regional
<b>Funded by</b>	ARC – Collaborative Grant Scheme
<b>People involved</b>	21 children from Years 3-5
<b>WHEN</b>	
<b>Date</b>	2001
<b>HOW</b>	
<b>Data collected</b>	<p>Involved three high-poverty areas in South Australia – two metropolitan and one regional school (after early years)</p> <p>Selection based on good results in literacy</p> <p>Key research questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which literate practices are these students given access to and practice in?</li> <li>• What do these students take up from what is on offer?</li> <li>• What changes in literacy development are evident over time?</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT</b>	
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many positive aspects of schooling in disadvantaged areas.</li> <li>• Need more emphasis on critical analysis for students.</li> </ul> <p>It was found that six key factors contribute to successful literacy development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the recognition factor (the extent to which what children can do counts and they can see that it counts)</li> <li>• the resources factor (the extent to which schools have the human and material resources they need)</li> <li>• the curriculum factor (the quality, scope and depth of what is made available)</li> <li>• the pedagogical factor (the quality of teacher instructional talk, teacher-student relationships and assessment practices)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the take-up factor (the extent to which students appropriate literate practices and school-authorised discourse)</li><li>• the translation factor (the extent to which students can make use of and assemble repertoires of practice that they can use in new situations)</li></ul>
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<b>STUDY 6 TWO-WAY ENGLISH</b>	
<b>WHAT</b>	Indigenous Literacy education
<b>AIMS</b>	
<b>WHO</b>	Australian Government
<b>Funded by</b>	DEST
<b>WHEN</b>	
<b>Date</b>	October 2004
<b>HOW</b>	
<b>Data collected</b>	Participant listened to series of eight passages and recalled immediately
<b>Methodology</b>	Analysed in three stages: 1) analysis of recall protocols 2) comparison of order in which information recalled 3) examination for general patterns or strategies
<b>WHAT</b>	
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• showed a continuum of familiarity of participants on schemas</li> <li>• strategies of recall – “bottom-up” approach – had partial ideas that were then reassembled towards original narrative</li> <li>• some non-Aboriginal participants relied on own schemas in comprehension</li> <li>• recalls by Aboriginal participants were generally holistic – elaborated on cultural schema</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the research commented that Indigenous students and their contributions in classrooms are often misinterpreted</li> <li>• Often contributions not valued</li> <li>• Therefore Indigenous students in marginal positions in classrooms</li> <li>• Indigenous students are bringing rich cultural knowledge to classrooms that non-Indigenous students do not have</li> <li>• Oral narratives recalled by Indigenous students because of familiarity with cultural knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	“Urgent need for Professional development and development of curriculum materials to demonstrate importance of cultural understandings and schemas in comprehension of narrative texts” (p.28)

## **ANNOTATED REFERENCE LIST**

- **EARLY LITERACY RESEARCH**
- **MIDDLE SCHOOLING AND LITERACY PRACTICES**
- **READING RECOVERY**
- **LITERACY AND DISADVANTAGE**
- **LITERACY AND CURRICULUM PRACTICES**
- **POLICY**
- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

## *Early Literacy Research*

### **BEATING THE ODDS**

**SOURCE:** Taylor, B., Pearson, D., Clark, K., Walpole, S. *Beating the odds in primary grade reading: lessons from effective schools and accomplished teachers.*

[www.ciera.org](http://www.ciera.org)

**SOURCE:** Taylor, B., Pearson, D., Clark, K., and Walpole, S. *Beating the odds in teaching all students to read: lessons from effective schools and accomplished teachers*

[www.ciera.org](http://www.ciera.org)

- research was conducted as part of CIERA – center for the improvement of early reading achievement
- “has looked at school and teacher factors contributing to children’s reading success within the same study” (p.1 – source A)
- principals completed questionnaire
- teachers were observed for an hour of reading instruction 5 times – Dec-April
- children tested in Nov and May – words correct per minute; retelling a passage; and words in isolation

#### Results:

Various levels of analysis –

- (v) results, largely descriptive at the school level
  - (vi) variations among instructional practices of teachers within the levels of school effectiveness
  - (vii) variations we found in instructional practice as function of teacher accomplishment
  - (viii) on regression analysis combining school and teacher variables
- Years 1-3 – focus on student level of engagement, time spent in small or whole-group instruction, preferred interaction style.
  - time spent in small-group instruction, time spent in whole-group instruction, time spent in independent reading, student engagement rating, home communication rating, preferred style of telling, preferred style of recitation, and preferred style of coaching.

communication to parents

- not statistically significant
- “the differences between the school level and the accomplishment analyses suggest either that the most accomplished teachers are not necessarily the best communicator or that teacher effects are moderated by a school-level ethic for this type of activity”

student engagement

- was statistically significant
- “The findings suggest that, unlike parent communication, wherein individual teacher practices appear to be moderated by school-level efforts, promoting high student engagement is a teaching practice not easily influenced by school-level practice”.

grouping practices

- students averaged from 23-27 minutes a day in independent reading across all conditions of teacher effectiveness

interaction patterns

- “significant differences among teachers across schools suggest that a teacher’s preferred style of interacting with students is a teaching dimension which is less well influenced by the practice of others at the school level than other dimensions of teaching being investigated in our study”

approaches to word recognition instruction

- “most accomplished teachers demonstrate a more balanced portfolio of approaches to assist in word identification”

comprehension instruction

- “across all schools, comprehension instruction was minimal in grades 1-3 – included asking questions about the story as children were reading, having children write in response to stories they had read”
- most accomplished teachers were frequently observed asking higher level questions
- Overall, school-level change is as important as change within classrooms.

KEY FINDINGS:

Four sections of analyses –

- 1) school-level analyses of reading program characteristics;
- 2) the practices of teachers within levels of school effectiveness;
- 3) the practices of accomplished teachers independent of schools and
- 4) relationships among variables across schools and classrooms.

Management and engagement:

- most accomplished teachers in this study were experts at classroom management
- had well-established classroom routines and procedures for handling behaviour problems
- quick transitions between activities and rapid pace of instruction
- managed to engage 96% of students in work of the classroom

Small-group instruction:

- students in most effective schools averaged 60 minutes a day of small, ability-grouped instruction
- greater time allotted for small-group instruction was made possible by collaborative model – teachers, aides, ESL teacher etc.
- every child had two blocks of small-group instruction
- ability grouping used in effective schools – the use of these was however, not rigid or inflexible

Independent reading:

- students in most effective schools spent more time in independent reading – 27-28 minutes a day

Coaching:

- effective schools had teachers able to teach “on the fly”

- practice of coaching during reading to provide word recognition instruction was found to be a characteristic of teachers in the most effective schools and the most accomplished teachers in general

#### Phonics

- Wharton-MacDonald et al. (1998) found most effective first-grade teachers in their study taught decoding skills explicitly and provided their students with many opportunities to engage in authentic reading.
- BTO data suggests that “what teachers do to promote application of phonics knowledge during the reading of connected text that matters most”
- “what distinguished the most accomplished teachers was their use of coaching to help students learn how to apply word recognition strategies to real reading

#### Higher level questions:

- found most of the accomplished teachers frequently encouraged higher level responses to text
- strategies include: asking higher level aesthetic response questions, requiring students to write response to what they had read
- only 16% of teacher in entire sample could be considered to truly emphasise comprehension

#### Improving instruction:

- in two schools – teachers and principals mentioned importance of improving instruction
- “focus on staff development efforts on becoming better teachers of reading”

#### High expectations for student learning:

- two of the schools – teachers mentioned high expectations for students’ achievement as a factor contributing to their success

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**SOURCE: CIERA Report (2002) – Orellana, M, Monkman, K, MacGillivray, L. *Parents and teachers talk about literacy and success.***

Retrieved from: <http://www.ciera.org/library/reports/>

examination of emic views of ‘success’ in central LA – immigrant community

1. participant observations in homes, classrooms, community programs
  2. transcriptions of four focus groups with parents
  3. notes from informal and semi-formal interviews with parents and teachers
- importance of looking at relationship between home and school literacy practices
  - two dimensions usually overlooked
    - spatial – context – community and school
    - temporal – not frozen in time

**Findings:**

3 key areas

- daily lives and literacy practices
- views of success
- views of obstacles to children's success

Parents come from range of backgrounds and experiences (even though Latino parents)

- some had lived in city, countryside
- middle-class/working poor
- most worked in low paying jobs

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**100 CHILDREN PROJECTS**

**SOURCE:** Hill, S, Comber, B, Loudon, W, Reid, J & Rivalland, J (1998) *100 children go to school: connections and disconnections in literacy development in the year prior to school and the first year of school*. Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.

**SOURCE:** Hill, S, Comber, B, Loudon, W, Reid, J & Rivalland, J (2002) *100 children turn 10: a longitudinal study of literacy development from the year prior to school to the first four years of school*. Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra.

Major findings:

Four key findings:

1. nature of the children's literacy achievement over time
2. the differences between children's patterns of growth and pathways towards the achievement of school literacy
3. the relationship between the literacy practices of home and school
4. the classroom and teaching practices that were observed to make a difference to the literacy development of the children involved

Each has implications for curriculum, policy and practice in Australian schools.

1. most children made substantial growth in literacy
  - a. there was a broad range of performance on various literacy domains
  - b. those children not achieving are overwhelmingly from schools serving families living in poverty
2. children take different pathways and have different patterns of growth in literacy development
  - a. not all children follow predictable trajectories based on early literacy assessments
  - b. late starters and 'catching up'
  - c. early starters and later success
3. home and community experiences influence children's literacy development
4. teaching that made a difference
  - a. based on knowledge of what children can do already and what they need to learn (p.104)

Conclusions – p.106-107

- importance of good teachers

“Teachers who are most successful in setting up and managing classrooms where children have consistent success and make consistent progress are informed about current and conventional theories of literacy development and instruction” (p. 106, para 2)

- development of literacy in some neighbourhoods more difficult than other neighbourhoods
- good teaching needs to be complimented by good parenting at home
- in some schools students are failed from first day of school - 10 years of age and beyond
- was substantial growth of students' literacies
  - almost all could read accurately book level 27-28 (age 9-9.5)
  - almost all could produce extended written texts above national benchmark
  - 2/3 recorded spelling age equal to or above approx mean
  - broad range on all other literacy dimensions
  - lowest performing schools were schools serving children in poverty

“The study of *100 children turn 10* found that there was a very broad range of performance on literacy tasks. This finding requires attention and action. Action does not mean more of the same but rather the need for all teachers to work together to create and share knowledge about good early years literacy teaching and appropriate early intervention for students who require support. In addition there is a need for a second safety net after the transition to primary school for 8-9-year-old children who have not acquired the automatic literacy skills and strategies needed to reach their full learning potential in primary school. Good first teaching, effective early intervention and a second safety net requires that all teachers are energetic, knowledgeable and can practice culturally responsive literacy teaching (p. 107)”.

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**SOURCE: Grant, P, Badger, L, Wilkinson, L, Rogers, A & Munt, V. *Nothing left to chance: report on literacy and numeracy outcomes evaluation in high achieving disadvantaged schools*. Department of Education and Children's Services, Government of South Australia.**

“Students and teachers are living and working in what have been called “New Times” (Hall, 1996) which include a globalized economy and an emphasis on testing particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. This presents a number of challenges for teachers and schools. These challenges have been met in various ways, some of which have been shown to make a difference for students in disadvantaged schools”

Retrieved from: <http://www.thenetwork.sa.edu.au/nltc/literature/index.htm>



Challenges include:

- [the need for teachers and schools to understand issues of disadvantage in productive ways](#);
- engaging with contemporary constructions of literacy and numeracy;
- seeing difference and diversity as productive resources in schools;
- finding ways of developing a whole school response including;
- utilising productive programs and pedagogies; and
- exploring ways to sustain improvement.

Retrieved from: <http://www.thenetwork.sa.edu.au/nltc/literature/index.htm>

In another study The Council of Chief State School Officers (1990) initiated a project in the USA to examine successful school practices for students 'at risk of school failure'. Their findings were that:

- 1) Instruction was best in heterogeneous classes, with the reduction of the number of students assigned to special education classes
- 2) Support was increased in the regular classroom for children with special needs
- 3) Improvements in bilingual education were important to implement despite associated difficulties
- 4) State-mandated instruction requirements that restricted teachers' scope to implement improvements, were the subject of experiments with state waivers of rules and regulations
- 5) Emphasis on minimum competencies may prompt increased efforts to raise student performance at the lowest levels, without an accompanying effort to improve student achievement at the highest levels
- 6) Staff in-service training was matched to the specific areas of school need and was provided throughout the year
- 7) Attempts to involve families in their children's education met with limited success. No exemplary model of a parent education programme was found
- 8) Successful implementation of change required the participation of many people within and outside the school. The key to success was the possibility for school administrators and teachers to use additional resources from outside the school, to initiate and support fundamental changes within the school
- 9) Evaluation of improvement was complex - techniques used involved meetings, questionnaires, interviews and reviews of student achievement data.

It was noted that six interrelated features of instruction were characteristics of all the higher performing schools.

- 1) Students learn skills and knowledge in multiple lesson types.
  - 2) Teachers integrate test preparation into instruction.
  - 3) Teachers make connections across instruction, curriculum and life.
  - 4) Students learn strategies for doing the work.
  - 5) Students are expected to be generative thinkers.
  - 6) Classrooms foster cognitive collaboration
-

**SOURCE: Comber, Barbara. et al. (2001) *Socio-economically disadvantaged students and the development of literacies in school: a longitudinal study*. University of South Australia, Centre for Studies in Literacy, Policy and Learning Cultures.**

Six key factors contributing to successful literacy development:

- the recognition factor (the extent to which what children can do *counts* and they can see that it counts)
- the resources factor (the extent to which schools have the human and material resources they need)
- the curriculum factor (the quality, scope and depth of what is made available)
- the pedagogical factor (the quality of teacher instructional talk, teacher-student relationships and assessment practices)
- the take-up factor (the extent to which students appropriate literate practices and school-authorised discourse)
- the translation factor (the extent to which students can make use of and assemble repertoires of practice that they can use in new situations)
- Socio-economically disadvantaged children have vast array of literate practices from family; had differentiated linguistic, cultural capital.
- Literacy curriculum on offer in middle years – organized differently to those of early years counterparts; expectations to be independent and responsible for own learning without being told how; expected that could already read and write fluently; expectations of self-reflection more
- Literacy teaching and learning – in low socio-economic schools teachers need high skills and commitment; need for ongoing supplemental assistance so teachers can make a difference; teachers valued one-to-one and small group pedagogical approaches; assessments need to align with whole school structures

There are many positive aspects of school in disadvantaged areas.  
Need more emphasis on critical analysis for students

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**SOURCE: Comber, Barbara & Barnett, Jenny. Eds. (2003) *Look again: longitudinal studies of children's literacy learning*. Newtown, N.S.W. Primary English Teaching Association (PETA).**

Introduction

- Teachers rarely get a chance to follow students' literacy learning progress over time
- A number of longitudinal studies are presented in this book of children's literacy learning
  - 100 children go to school: connections and disconnections in literacy development in the year prior to school and the first year of school.
  - 100 children turn 10: a longitudinal study of literacy development from the year prior to school to the first four years of school
  - Socio-economically disadvantaged students and the development of literacy in school: a longitudinal study
  - Questioning development in literacy: preschool to Year 2.

*100 children go to school (1998)*

- five different sites around Australia – three high poverty and two affluent communities (one remote, one regional and 3 metropolitan)

- 20 students – four in each of the five sites plus assessing others over time (100 children)
- Parents/guardians interviewed

Findings:

- wide gap between children starting school
- this gap increases after one year at school
- all students had improved however not at the same rate or in the same way (p.3)

*100 children turn 10 (2002)*

- A second follow-up study of the same children involved in 100 children go to school
- Goal – to investigate the various pedagogies and literacies made available to children in school
- Which one made a difference to students' learning
- Family played an important part in other differences

Findings: (p. 4-5)

- broad range of performance on various dimensions of literacy
- relationship between early literacy predictors and later school success existed
- not all children follow predictable trajectories based on early literacy assessments
- 'catching up' was possible when teachers, parents and students made it a priority
- New forms of literacy practice require different understandings, strategies and techniques as children progress through school
- Teaching that made a difference was data-driven, diagnostic and responsive
- The students who did well were those whose home experiences count as currency in school
- Students engaged differently with in-school and out-of-school literacy.

*Socio-economically disadvantaged students and the development of literacy in school: a longitudinal study*

- Involved three high-poverty areas in South Australia – two metropolitan and one regional school (after early years)
- Selection based on good results in literacy
- Three research questions – (i) which literate practices are these students given access to and practice in? (ii) what do these students take up from what is on offer? (iii) what changes in literacy development are evident over time?

Findings:

- identified six key at-school factors that made a difference to students literacy learning (p. 6)
  - the recognition factor (the extent to which what children can do *counts* and they can see that it counts)
  - the resources factor (the extent to which schools have the human and material resources they need)
  - the curriculum factor (the quality, scope and depth of what is made available)
  - the pedagogical factor (the quality of teacher instructional talk, teacher-student relationships and assessment practices)
  - the take-up factor (the extent to which students appropriate literate practices and school-authorized discourse)
  - the translation factor (the extent to which students can make use of and assemble repertoires of practice that they can use in new situations)

Questioning development in literacy: preschool to Year 2

- Looks at transition from preschool to school
- Funded by ARC

Outcomes:

- children connect prior knowledges to what they learn in pre-school literacy practices
  - this home-school connection varies in complex ways – cultural, social, gender, linguistic etc.
  - children who ‘fit’ the pre-school environment may become invisible in school context (p. 5)
- 

**SOURCE: Malcolm, I, Haig, Y, Konigsberg, P, Rochecouste, J, Collard, G, Hill, A & Cahill, R. (1999) *Two-way English: towards more user-friendly education for speakers of aboriginal English*. Education Department of Western Australia.**

Results:

- showed a continuum of familiarity of participants on schemas
  - strategies of recall – “bottom-up” approach – had partial ideas that were then reassembled towards original narrative
  - some non-Aboriginal participants relied on own schemas in comprehension
  - recalls by Aboriginal participants were generally holistic – elaborated on cultural schema
  - “the research suggests that the contribution of Indigenous students in our classroom have the potential to be misinterpreted and even misunderstood”
  - Often contributions not valued
  - Therefore Indigenous students in marginal positions in classrooms
  - Indigenous students are bringing rich cultural knowledge to classrooms that non-Indigenous students do not have
  - Oral narratives recalled by Indigenous students because of familiarity with cultural knowledge
  - “Urgent need for Professional development and development of curriculum materials to demonstrate importance of cultural understandings and schemas in comprehension of narrative texts” (p.28)
  - teachers in current education system who possess little understanding of Aboriginal perspectives
-

### *Middle Schooling*

**SOURCE: Australian Secondary Principal's Association**

[www.aspa.asn.au/polmdsch.htm](http://www.aspa.asn.au/polmdsch.htm)

States that curriculum for middle schooling should be guided by:

- personal identity of young adolescents as they have varied forms of personal and social communication
- peer support, pastoral care and life skills
- promotion of self-worth which is important in coping with stress of adolescence and progresses to adult world.

These aspects form the basis of holistic approach to curriculum organisation.

“The curriculum for the middle years should emphasise the successful acquisition of broad generally knowledge, skills and attitudes, in an iterative process which is relevant, accessible, and flexible in its pedagogy. Students should not be encouraged to over-specialise but rather to engage in a wide range of texts, materials, technologies and learning experiences” p. 1.

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**SOURCE: “Guidelines for teaching middle and high school students to read and write well” Judith A Langer – NRCELA**

- connection with life, instruction and curriculum
- reflection on work by teachers and sharing of ideas
- connect content, knowledge and skills across classes/units/lessons
- encouraging students to find their own connections not teacher driven
- 

**SOURCE: “Effective Middle Schooling” – Julie Boyd, Global Learning Communities, 2000**

“Curriculum which is meaningful to students and which challenges them at higher cognitive levels through the development of their capacity to effectively negotiate their learning, and through providing learning challenges which are open-ended rather than constraining, will assist in their intellectual development. Many teachers are taking a more conceptual approach to curriculum as a means of broadening students' experience across multiple learning areas and disciplines” (p.3)

- students need to take own responsibility for learning
  - see p.4.
-

**SOURCE: Chadbourne, Rod. (2003) "What makes middle schools and middle schooling distinctive, if anything?", *QJER*, 19, pp. 3-12.**

**SOURCE: Chadbourne, Rod. (2001) "Middle schooling for the middle years: what might the jury be considering?" Edith Cowan University, October 2001, The Australian Education Union.**

- papers investigating what it is that makes middle schooling different to other schooling levels. Argues that most arguments provide generic statements in regard to middle schooling rather than actually commenting on any 'distinctiveness'.

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**SOURCE: "Partnerships in the middle years of schooling in Queensland: a coordinated approach" – Susan Hearfield, Education Officer: Middle Schooling, BCE.**

Set of principles which guide middle schooling.

- learner centred
- collaboratively organised
- outcome based
- flexibly constructed
- ethically aware
- community oriented
- adequately resourced
- strategically linked

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**SOURCE: *Adolescent literacy and content area reading* – ERIC digest, National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement.**

<http://cela.albany.edu/>

- "A reader's existing knowledge of the subject matter is the single most influential factor in what he or she will learn from reading a text about that subject matter" (Anderson, 1984; Steffensen, Joag-Dev & Anderson, 1979) (see p.1)
- "...[T]heorizing and research in cognitive psychology led to the development of many instructional strategies that secondary teachers could use to increase students' comprehension of course materials" (p.1).
- "while the focus on the cognitive dimension of reading has helped some students become more proficient readers of content area texts (Ruddell, 2001) some assessment data indicates the need to reconsider adolescent literacy and content area learning. Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko and Mueller (2001) note that there are still persistent gaps in student achievement between students who are members of the dominant culture and those who are not" (p. 2)
- "some research indicates that an emphasis on reading solely as a cognitive process has not adequately addressed the needs of adolescent readers as they face learning from texts in the various subject areas at the secondary level" (p.2)

- “the extent to which readers are able to construct meaning with texts is also based on the personal, interpersonal and institutional contexts in which reading events occur. The work of sociolinguists, cultural anthropologists, and critical theorists has shown that it is not possible to separate classroom practices such as strategies for activating background knowledge from the larger social and cultural contexts in which the practices are enacted (eg. Heath, 1983; Gee, 1996)” (p. 2)
- ...what constitutes best practices depends on many factors: how students perceive themselves as readers, what their interests are at the time, the interactions of teacher and student, of student and student, the classroom environment in which the strategy is being used, and how institutional structures shape daily events that occur in classrooms and schools. This fertile ground of literacy as a complex process and research about adolescent literacy and learning in secondary classrooms is providing a means for reinventing ways to develop students’ academic literacies (Brynildssen, 2001) (p.3).

#### A new model for classroom practice and teacher education

- reading apprenticeship – “an instructional framework is based on the dual notions of literacy as a complex cognitive and social process” (p.3)
- “..the most appropriate place for students to learn these discipline-specific discourse practices is from teachers who are already experts in these fields” (p. 3)
- reading apprenticeship framework consists of four integrated dimensions of classroom life that teachers and students explore together: social, personal, cognitive and knowledge-building.
- Social – focuses on building a community of readers who use literacy to make connections between their interests, each other, and the larger social world they are engaged in learning about
- Personal – develops students’ awareness of themselves as readers, of their purposes in reading, and of their goals for improvement.
- Cognitive – incorporates instruction in and the use of comprehension strategies, problem solving – develop flexibility in reading
- Knowledge building – developing content knowledge (building schemata), knowledge of the discipline-specific vocabulary, and text and language structures
- These are “made visible to students through the meta-cognitive conversations that students and teachers engage in about the texts they are reading. Meta-cognitive conversations occur through class discussion, small group work, writing and individual reflection” (p. 3).

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**SOURCE: Cormack, Phil. (1997) “What can history offer literacy research in new times?” Australian Association for Research in Education, Brisbane. *New times or literacy, pedagogy and young people: research challenges.***

- schooling, literacy and the young adolescent – brought together as objects of study and concern in these ‘new times’
- ‘new times’ – ways of communication and information technology in all aspects of life.
- Multi-literacies – “new kinds of text production, and consumption are seen as essential to accessing social, economic and cultural opportunities” (p. 1)

- Comments on the fact that most students are “locked into remaining” at school until year 12
- “Adolescent, literacy and schooling have come together in a variety of policy and other contexts in Australian history – have emphasised the study of the ‘immediate’ and ‘local’ see Foucault – in examining how power is exercised, emphasising the complexity and fragility of events in history” (para 2, p.2)

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**SOURCE: *A Call to action: what we know about adolescent literacy and ways to support teachers in meeting students’ needs. A position/action statement from NCTE’s commission on reading – May 2004***

<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/literacy/118622.htm>

### **What is unique about adolescent literacy?**

- “in middle and high school, students encounter academic discourses and disciplinary concepts in such fields as science, mathematics, and the social sciences that require different reading approaches from those used with more familiar forms such as literary and personal narratives (Kucer, 2005). These new forms, purposes and processing demands require that teachers show, demonstrate, and make visible to students how literacy operates within the academic disciplines (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Tovani, 2000)
- students make meaning in multiple ways
- “in effective schools, classroom conversations about how, why, and what we read are important parts of the literacy curriculum (Applebee, 1996; Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko and Hurwitz, 1999). In fact, discussion-based approaches to academic literacy content are strongly linked to student achievement.
- Assessment does not necessarily provide substantial ways of approaching literacy instruction



### What current research is showing teachers:

1. literacy is a dynamic interaction of the social and cognitive realms with textual understandings growing from students' knowledge of their worlds to knowledge of the external world.
2. inexperienced adolescent readers need opportunities and instructional support to read many and diverse types of texts in order to gain experience, build fluency, and develop a range as readers.
3. most adolescents do not need further instruction in phonics or decoding skills – instruction should be targeted and embedded in authentic reading experiences

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**SOURCE: Chapman, Carolyn and King, Rita (2003). *Differentiated instructional strategies for writing in the content areas*. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California.**

- focuses on the fact that every student is a writer and has diverse needs
- can address a number of things to achieve successful writing goals for all students. By differentiating:
  - content
  - instructional strategies and activities
  - assessment tools
  - performance tasks (Gregory and Chapman 2001) p. 1 of 2003.

“Effective writing teachers know how students learn” p. 1 para 2

In differentiated writing classroom teachers plan goals for writers:

- to know how to apply information
- to think and write critically
- to think and write creatively
- to solve problems in the real world (p.2)

Aim for self-directed learners

- authors acknowledge that many teachers say their subject area does not have the focus on writing (p. 5)
- need to create a climate for writing – classroom environment – p.9
- There are many different stages of a writer – teachers need to understand this and be aware where each of their students are at (p.19)
- Be aware of multiple intelligences
- When writing in the content areas writers write to:
  - Demonstrate understanding
  - Enhance learning and memory
  - Inform and express important ideas in the real world (p. 29)

Chapter 3 on diagnosing and assessing writers – p. 31-48

Chapter 4 – development of grouping within classroom space – total group, alone, partner, small groups.

- types of writing to address – descriptive, expository, narrative and persuasive
- process of writing – pre-writing, first draft, spelling, revision (add exciting words), editing, final copy, publishing, sharing and celebrating.

Chapter 5 - Writing in different genres

- advertisements
- autobiography
- biography
- book review
- calendars
- cartoons
- dialogue
- email
- lists
- charts etc
- Gathering research strategies, note-taking

Chapter 6 – curriculum approaches for the differentiated writing classroom

- very teacher centred – text book for application in the classroom

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**SOURCE: Jackson, A. and Davis, G. (2000) *Turning Points 2000: Education adolescents in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Teachers' College Press, New York.**

[www.turningpts.org/pdf/Knowing Adolescent Literacy.doc](http://www.turningpts.org/pdf/Knowing_Adolescent_Literacy.doc)

- key international report about middle years
- adolescence is a time or 'turning point' when young people made choices that impacted on the rest of their lives (see Carrington, p. 11)
- a framework was developed by National Middle Schooling Association responding to adolescents' needs.

Differentiating secondary literacy from elementary literacy programs

- aligning with changes experienced by adolescents
  - include multiliteracies and multimodalities of composition
  - linking across the curriculum
  - become more academic, intellectual and rigorous
  - have polycultural perspectives
  - focus on four competencies a proficient reader possesses.
-

**SOURCE: Culican, Sarah & Emmitt, Marie. (2002) "Towards a model of collaboration and empowerment in middle years literacy research" AARE Brisbane, December 2002.**

<http://www.aare.edu.au/02pap/emm02090.htm>

- reviews "middle years literacy research project" – Deakin University
- presents case studies of selected schools

Assessing literacy development

- use of DART – developmental assessment resource for teachers – based on the Victorian curriculum and standards framework.

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**SOURCE: Comber, Barbara & Nixon, Helen. (2003) "Re-searching literacy development: visible and invisible repertoires in middle primary school" AARE Conference, Auckland, 2003. Centre for Studies in Literacy Policy and Learning Cultures, University of South Australia.**

- draws on "Socio-economically disadvantaged students and the development of literacies in school: a longitudinal study".
- This considered how children acquired literacies at school over time.
- Reports on fourth grader slump in reading levels

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**SOURCE: Carrington, Victoria (2002) "The middle years of schooling in Queensland: a way forward" A discussion paper, State of Queensland, Education Queensland.**

- a discussion paper for EQ 2002
- Provides recommendations in executive summary and a review of relevant literature

Literacy in the middle years findings (p. 21):

- literacy is one of the middle years agenda
- increasing student diversity has teachers facing new challenges
- evidence suggests that target groups eg. Low socio-economic carry literacy difficulties
- similarly, boys less results than girls
- "most upper primary and secondary tend to focus on literature and writing rather than on reading" p.21.
- impact of new technologies large
- secondary schools unlikely to have developed comprehensive literacy plan (Luke, 2002) - p.22.
- needs to be multimodal approach and connected to the world outside the classroom (p.22) – this will re-engage students

"It is evident that issues around literacy and numeracy must remain central to the middle years, particularly in relation to students in the various target groups. However, it is also clear that it is inappropriate to develop untheorised lists of 'teacher tips' as a solution to the issues. Attention to systemic and sustained

development of teacher knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy, linked to larger planning models and policy is required. Essential to upgrading and extending teacher repertoires and knowledge must be the pre-service preparation of teachers with a specialisation in the middle years (Carrington et al. 2002, Lingard, Martino, Mills 2002) (p. 23)

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### *Literacy And Curriculum Development*

**SOURCE: Gross, Patricia. (1997) *Joint Curriculum Design: facilitating learner ownership and active participation in secondary classrooms*. New Jersey, USA, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.**

- “learners need more central roles in curriculum concerns” (xiii)
- Talks about progressive education – linking learner ownership, participation and social agency
- Focusing on literacy, diversity and assessment across the curriculum (xiii)
- Uses 3 working theories – action research, critical pedagogy and critical literacy (p. 7)
- “changing curricular decisions into joint negotiable entities” (p. 7) – collaborative changes

Elements of Joint Curriculum Design:

- Methods of learning
- Goals
- Resources
- Inquiry and research
- Performances
- Future applications – p. 23-24

“Progressive teaching promotes experiential learning, integrates skills and knowledge, and cultivates individuality within social responsibility (Dewey, 1948) p. 27.

Adolescent learners

- addresses special needs of adolescents
  - acknowledging individual differences, identifying strengths, thinking critically and making decisions p. 39.
- 

**SOURCE: “Meeting the literacy development needs of adolescent English Language learners through content area learning” Centre for Resource Management, The Education Alliance, Brown University.**

- vocabulary development
- understanding text structures
- recognizing and analyzing discourse features
- supporting the English classroom through literacy development
- supporting the Math classroom through literacy development
- supporting the Science classroom through literacy development
- supporting the Social Science classroom through literacy development
  - increased use of reading and writing in content areas

- content and language instruction as effective strategy
- contextual literacy learning in content-focused classrooms
- teachers need to know literacy demands of their particular content areas

Research says three discipline-based literacy strategies are central:

- vocabulary development
- understanding of text structures
- recognizing and analyzing discourse features

a combination of all 3 – supports development of adolescent literacy in startling ways (Langer, 1999; Mohan, 1992; Schoenbach, 1999)

- need discipline-specific vocabulary instruction
- understanding text structures – helps increase reading comprehension of content-area texts
- demystify expository and narrative text structures
- gives frames to interpret new information
- strategies for unpacking text structures include use of signals for predicating and mapping use of text queries
- recognize and analyse discourse features – content focused writing

Vocabulary Development – see article <http://knowledgeloom.org/practice>

- key to learning from and creating meaningful written texts
- vocabulary instruction has positive effect on reading comprehension

Allen 1999

- in content areas teachers should implement purposeful vocabulary instruction to
  - increase reading comprehension
  - develop knowledge of new concepts
  - improve range and specificity in writing
  - help students communicate more effectively
  - develop deeper understanding of words and concepts

“Students who are not strategic readers are handicapped in reaching the critical goal of becoming independent learners”. (p. 2 of 10)

“To do this students must be able to organize concepts and terms within their context, interact with the language of academic content in meaningful ways, and develop strategies to learn new words that may otherwise interrupt the fluency of their reading and, therefore, their reading comprehension” (p. 3 of 10 para 1).

- vocab and content should not be viewed as separate – eg. The word photosynthesis is not separate from developing biology content knowledge (p. 3 of 10 para 2).

“A content area is distinguishable by its language, particularly the special and technical terms that label the concepts undergirding the subject matter (Vacca, and Vacca 1999, p.314 – p. 3 and 4 of 10)

Understanding Text Structures - see article <http://knowledgeloom.org/practice>

- students can encounter many different types of texts in various content areas

- understanding texts structures is an important part of increasing students' comprehension and retention of demanding content (see p.2 of 8)
- 

**SOURCE: "Literacy in the Middle Years Initiative – 2005" – Jill McDonald**

- literacy defined – in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – extensive use of multi-media, multi-literacies
- middle years across all learning areas to address literacy
- student engagement is higher when literacy is explore in context of learning area
- will improve student learning in learning areas
- teachers across areas maximise literacy learning when have shared understanding.

Matrices – 4RM as a framework

- literacy development matrix
- literacy across curriculum matrix – consumer
- literacy across curriculum matrix – composer

of written, spoken and multimedia texts

4RM supported by an integrated approach to curriculum and pedagogy

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### *Literacy And Disadvantage*

**SOURCE: Alexander, Robin. (2004). "Still no pedagogy? Principle, pragmatism and compliance in primary education", *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 34, No. 1, March 2004. Cambridge, Carfax Publishing, pp. 7-33.**

- "this article revisits Brian Simon's 1981 judgement that for deep-seated historical reasons English education lacks a coherent and principled pedagogy" (p.7).
- 
- compares practice in English education to policy directions
- 
- defines pedagogy: "as both the act of teaching and its attendant discourse and postulates three domains of ideas, values and evidence by which both are necessarily framed" (p.7)
- 
- argues that definitions of concepts in education in policy are often incorrect and misleading.
- 
- Believes that comments made in 1981 (see above) are still valid
- 
- Simon's arguments revisited:
  - Pedagogy not coherent or systematic (p.8)
  - "Teachers tended to conceptualise, plan and justify their teaching by combining pragmatism with ideology" (p.8)
  - "trainees could not..connect educational theory with what they saw and did in schools" (p.8)
  - blamed Victorian public school view
  - "Ideology may define the ends in teaching and hint at aspects of its conduct, but it cannot specify the precise means" (p.8 – para3)
- Conceptualising pedagogy – p. 9-13.
- Problem in defining the term
- From "societally broad to procedurally narrow" (p9)
- Teaching, learning, curriculum, school, policy, culture, personal, social, assessment, interaction
- Primary strategy – 2003 – p.13-18

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**SOURCE: Comber, B. and Kamler, B. (2005) *Turn-around pedagogies: literacy interventions for at-risk students*. PETA, Newtown, Australia.**

- report on ARC Discovery project entitled – Teachers investigate unequal literacy outcomes: cross-generational perspectives. 2002-2004.

"We continue to grapple with unequal literacy outcomes at the same time as we face new populations of students, changing family and community circumstances and the challenges of new literacies. It is a period of intense pressure in schools as teachers deal with competing priorities, including the insistence on meeting normative benchmarks and continuous improvement. This ferment of change and demands, we argue, positions 'at-risk' children as

even more at risk. Indeed, it seems there are more children 'at risk' now than experienced teachers report ever remembering". (p.2, para 1)

"..We are sure that teachers' work is ever more complex and that schooling as an institution is suffering and identity crisis dealing with, among other things, overcrowded curriculum, competition for students, and the demand to integrate information and communication technologies". (p. 2, para 2)

- the project works with teachers as researchers
- turn to teachers to make sustainable difference
- redesigned aspects of their literacy curriculum and pedagogy to 'turn-around' at-risk students.
- This book presents a number of case studies of teachers and students involved.
- Teachers are partners in the research (p.3, para 2)
- Early and late career teachers working collaboratively p. 3, para 2
- Shape new and better practices for inducting teachers into the professions and providing professional renewal for long-term teachers (p.3 para 3)
- Within the next 10 years a large % of teachers will retire (para 3)
- Recently qualified teachers leave teaching within 5 years of starting (Johnson, 2004) (para 3)
- Different generations using different kinds of knowledge to address social problem (para 3)

"Rather than blame children for poor attention, disruptive behaviour, apathy or disinterest or parents for minimal attention to homework, disrupted family routines or too much turmoil in the home teachers took up more fully their own responsibility for 'turning around' literacy achievement (p. 5, para 1).

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**SOURCE: Kalantzis, M and Pandian, A. eds. (2001) *Literacy matters: issues for new times*. Common Ground Publishing, Australia.**

- advancing literacy in new times – Malaysian examples
- chapter 2 – Futures in the new globalised education markets – Peter Kell.
  - Argues that "influence of the market is responsible for the emergence of profound shifts that are fundamentally altering the rationale, purpose, process, products experiences and outcomes that characterise education and training" (p. 19, para 1)
  - Linking education to performance in world markets – p. 22.
  - 'world's best practice' – in Australia "to reach international benchmarks in quality to achieve an export oriented culture" (p. 22, para 1).
  - Comments on knowledge products – p. 25-27.
- Chapter 9 – Emotional Literacy: a conceptualisation based on the pedagogy of multiliteracies – Albert Liao, Agnes Liao, George Teoh and Michael Liao.
  - John Dewey saw emotional literacy as Moral education (p.145)
  - Schools' role to cultivate character by developing self – discipline and empathy (p.145, para 2)
  - Comments on Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* and multiliteracies – New London group



**SOURCE: Literacy for life: a scoping study for a community literacy empowerment project. A report prepared for the community of Wugularr, The Jawoyn Association and the Fred Hollows Foundation. (2004) Australia.**

Methodology:

- identifying local perceptions of literacy and education
- local people's understandings about the roles and responsibilities of local communities in developing literacy
- perceptions about role of government and other agencies in relation to education and literacy
- aims and aspirations for increasing literacy levels(p.1, para 5)
- project with Fred Hollows foundation and the Jawoyn association - 2001.
- - Foreword – “lack of literacy affects our health and our chances of getting good jobs” (p. iii) – Robert Lee, Jawoyn association.
- ...health improvements are and will continue to be hampered by the low literacy levels of people in that area” (p. 1).

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**SOURCE: Taylor, B., Graves, M.F., and Van Den Broek, P. eds. (2000) *Reading for meaning: fostering comprehension in the middle grades*. Teachers' College Press, New York.**

Chapters:

- The mind in action: what it means to comprehend during reading – Paul van den Broek and Kathleen Kremer
- Comprehension instruction in elementary school: a quarter-century of research progress – Michael Pressley
- Explicit and implicit instruction in comprehension – Janice Dole
- Balancing literature and instruction: lessons from the book club project – Taffy Raphael
- Building student capacity to work productively during peer-assisted reading activities – Lynn Fuchs and Douglas Fuchs
- A vocabulary program to complement and bolster a middle-grade comprehension program – Michael Graves
- Classroom talk about texts: is it dear, cheap, or a bargain at any price? – Donna Alvermann
- Beyond balance: goal awareness, developmental progressions, tailoring to the context, and supports for teachers in ideal reading and literacy programs – Jere Brophy

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**SOURCE: Bernardo, A.B.I. (1998). *Literacy and the mind: the contexts and cognitive consequences of literacy practice*. UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, Germany.**

- Research study conducted in five Philippine communities
  - To study the effects of literacy acquisition on thought.
  - On five thinking processes: conceptual understanding, conceptual organisation, conceptual comparison, reasoning and explanation
  - Designed to allow for investigation of different forms of such effects, whether direct or mediated on these thought processes(p. 2-3)
- 

### *Reading Recovery*

**SOURCE: Reading Recovery Descubriendo la Lectura – National Data Evaluation Center (NDEC)**

[www.ndec.us/Mission.asp](http://www.ndec.us/Mission.asp)

#### **Reading recovery and scientifically based research**

Comments on and provides evidence for the quality of their data collection:

- Use of rigorous, systematic and empirical methods
- Adequacy of the data analyses to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn
- Reliance on measurements or observational methods that provided valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations

In addition data was collected on all children participating in RR program during one school year (even if only one session)

Children categorised as the following:

- discontinued – met criteria to be discontinued in program
- recommended action after a full program
- incomplete program at year end
- moved while being served
- none of the above

There were six tasks to pre-test and post-test children:

- text reading
- letter identification
- word test
- concepts about print
- writing vocabulary
- hearing and recording sounds in words

All RR students did 6 tasks – even if left program  
Ohio State University

- comment on study done by Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk & Seltzer (1994) – notes that RR subjects performed significantly better than other treatment and comparison groups on all measures.
- Reading Recovery Descubriendo la Lectura – for students who read Spanish – results were successful also.

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**SOURCE: *Reading Recovery: Indigenous text research project.*  
State of Queensland, Education Queensland - November 25<sup>th</sup> 2003.**

<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/procedure/program/reading-recovery/atsi.html>

- investigates use of Indigenous texts trialled with Indigenous children in Reading Recovery in 2002
- culturally-responsive pedagogy was developed and trialled also

Two questions:

- would culturally appropriate texts facilitate Indigenous students' acquisition of reading and writing?
- would culturally responsive instruction facilitate Indigenous students acquisition of reading and writing?

13 schools and 17 teachers participated

- schools grouped into three categories:
  - community schools,
  - urban schools and
  - remote schools

Three groups of RR teachers involved

Others exposed to Grant's (1998) cross cultural framework through PD

### **Key findings:**

#### **A. Texts**

- students exposed to project texts left RR program faster than others
- teachers did less prompting
- children's reading errors indicated they were attending to meaning as a source of information more often on project texts than others
- teachers thought books were suitable
- teachers' perception of what was important matched Grant's elements – land, language, culture, time, place and relationships.
- Teachers wanted more culturally appropriate texts
- Teachers saw texts as particularly effective
- Teachers in remote and community schools valued them more
- Texts prompted student-initiated conversation
- Improvement in motivation and enjoyment of reading occurred
- Students liked valuing of own culture (p. 2)

#### **B. Culturally responsive instruction**

- teachers using strategies had their students discontinue RR quicker
- teachers said framework was powerful in these ways:
  - understanding of and sensitivity to students' needs increased
  - could build on students' strengths
  - non-acceptance of limited progress
  - broadened understanding of literacy development
  - improved knowledge on how to cater to needs of students
  - applicability of framework to general classroom teaching
  - facilitation of more effective communication between teacher and student (p.3)

**Recommendations:**

- report be published
- community be informed
- AccessEd publish texts
- List of texts be made available
- Refine some texts
- Continue design of texts
- Further investigate needs of urban and TSI students
- Consider linguistic patterns of Indigenous students

**PD**

- PD on Grant's cross-cultural framework be provided to RR teachers of Indigenous students
  - TSI perspective in PD needed
  - Link with Indigenous Education and training alliance be maintained
  - - students should not be given culturally relevant texts exclusively
  - topics made sense to students
  - information provided to teachers provided satisfactory educational experiences for teachers and students
  - the framework equipped teachers with better skills and knowledge
  - awareness of socio-cultural factors on learning assisted teachers to hold high expectations of students
  - positive results would seem inevitable to continue program
-

**SOURCE: Blaiklock, Ken. E. (2004) "A critique of running records of children's oral reading" *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 241-253.**

- running records of children's oral reading – part of Reading Recovery process
- teachers records child reading a passage of text and records what they do
- words read correctly, incorrect responses, repetitions, omissions and self-corrections are all recorded
- teacher calculates error ratio, accuracy rate and self-correction ratio
- errors are marked according to influence of meaning, structure, visual information
- four concerns for Blaiklock:
  - the appropriateness of using running records for beginning and fluent readers
  - the use of running records to assess accuracy rate
  - the value of self-corrections
  - the analysis of oral reading errors
- lack of clarity in guidelines about suitability of using running records to assess reading at any level (p. 242 para 3)
- Running records widely used – the reliability of this procedure has not been established (p. 243 para 2)
- No research that supports self-correction as an indicator of skilled reading (p. 246 para 3)
- An analysis of errors in running records is problematic and may provide a misleading portrayal of a child's reading (p. 247 para 1)

#### Conclusion

"Running records that are carried out according to these guidelines [Ministry of Education and Clay 2000] are time-consuming and may provide misleading information about children's reading. It is important to note, however, that it may be of value to use a simplified form of running records to monitor children's progress in reading" (p. 250 para 3)

"It is time to reappraise the widespread use of running records as the main assessment of children's reading in the first years at school. There is a need for other assessments that link more directly to what it is that children require for fluent reading. Teachers need to have access to carefully constructed tests of reading accuracy and comprehension, as well as measures of grapheme-phoneme correspondences, phonological awareness, and word recognition. The use of such tests will provide teachers with crucial information about what children currently know and what they still need to learn to become successful independent readers" (p. 251, para 1)

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**SOURCE: Blaiklock, Ken. *Commentary guided reading*.**

- notes that guided reading "important in NZ classrooms as provided opportunities for teachers to work with small groups and give explicit instruction about reading strategies" (p.333)
- also argues that NZ Ministry guidelines "could result in ineffective teaching as they gave little attention to assisting children to develop word identification skills" (see Blaiklock, 2001)

- argues that children need skills to “identify the printed form of words that are already part of their oral vocabulary” (p.333)

This paper addresses Ministry’s publication *Guided reading: years 1-4* – book and Videos

- argues that only a slight change has been made from previous policy
- says that overall message is that “teachers should spend most of the guided reading lesson talking about the meaning of a story and give only a small amount of attention to word-level processes” (p.334)
- the theory and research section of document fails to understand the small number of references used
- comments on discrepancy between Ministry saying teachers should work in ability based small groups and also spreading reading levels in small groups to avoid stigmatism
- another discrepancy noted is suggested children read aloud text, whereas on the video children are encouraged to read silently – making it difficult for the teacher to make judgments on child’s capacity
- the paper continues to point out discrepancies in the document released to teachers

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**SOURCE: National Data Evaluation Center. (2005) *Data entry procedures for reading recovery and descubriendo la lectura, 2005-2006.* (NDEC Rep. No. 2005-07). Columbus: The Ohio State University.**

- data entry to the NDEC website – [www.ndec.us](http://www.ndec.us)

Item 1 – first day of school?

Item 2 – last day of school?

Item 3 – how many years RR has been active?

Item 4 – how many years school involved in Descubriendo la Lectura?

Item 5 – how many first grade students enrolled at school?

Item 6 – how many first grade children need RR at school?

Item 7 – how many first grade children need Descubriendo la Lectura at school?

Item 8 – what sources of funding contribute to RR or Descubriendo la Lectura at this school?

Item 9 – is there mandatory language or literacy testing or assessment for all first grade students in this school?

Item 10 – what language or literacy tests or assessments are mandated, when are they administered, and who mandates the testing?

Item 11-34 – extra building data fields

- Teacher data survey also
- Student data survey
- Entry questionnaire
- Mid-year questionnaire
- Exit questionnaire
- Site-specific questionnaire

**SOURCE: Grossen, Bonnie. Coulter, Gail & Ruggles, Barbara. (1997) *Reading recovery: an evaluation of benefits and costs.* University of Oregon.**

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~bgrossen/rr.htm>

- RR widely adopted in US and Canada
- Discusses process of RR, increased popularity and expense
- More independent evaluators are raising questions and reviewing the research that support claims of RR's effectiveness

Summary of paper:

Research on RR highlights:

1. *RR data reporting system is flawed*

- states that “the in-house RR evaluation system results in considerable bias in data collected through that system” (p. 1)
- persons responsible for success collect data on success
- without explanation about half the data on children eligible for RR are omitted from final analyses (Shanahan and Barr, 1995)
- measures used to evaluate RR (Clay diagnostic measures) emphasise tasks that align with specific strategies taught in RR

2. *The standard for successful completion of RR is not equitable*

- RR's goal to bring lower kids to average “falls short of more equitable standard level – such as national average
- There is an inequity issue of RR impacting on minority children as raises ability to lowest percentile on National standard

3. *RR does not raise overall school achievement levels*

- RR not appropriate intervention to use
- Overall school achievement scores are not improved with use of RR (Hiebert, 1994; Pinnell and Lyons, 1995)

4. *Far fewer students than claimed actually benefit from RR*

- RR claims that 75-85% of children are successful
- Not true when nearly half the data are systematically omitted from the analyses (Shanahan and Barr, 1995) and
- Successful does not mean children are ‘readers’
- Successful is defined as “being able to read text level measures at the average level of the child's class”

5. *RR does not reduce the need for other compensatory reading services*

- RR does not eliminate need for Special Education

6. *Children successful in RR are often not successful later*

- it has been documented that children who complete RR seem to immediately begin falling behind again
- learning rate of RR children was slower than other low-achieving students

7. *Research-based alternative interventions are more effective than RR*

- independent evaluations have compared RR with other programs (Battele, 1995; Fincher, 1991; WCPPS, 1995)
- “explicit instruction in phonemic awareness beginning in kindergarten followed by explicit systematic instruction in phonics combined with extensive practice reading decodable text are emerging as important factors in the effective treatment of reading disabilities” (p.4 of 23).
- “decodable text different from the predictable text used for practice in RR

8. *RR is extremely expensive and does not save other costs*
- 30 hours of instruction for one child costs more than full year of schooling for one child
  - RR argues saving overall however.
- 

**SOURCE: *Six reading recovery studies: meeting the criteria for scientifically based research.* North American Trainers Group Research Committee.**

Retrieved from: Reading Recovery Council of North America - [www.readingrecovery.org](http://www.readingrecovery.org)

Comments on strength of five studies – doesn't look at what didn't work

- Presents information on studies in following format:
  - systematic and empirical
  - rigorous data analysis
  - valid data collection
  - strong research design
  - information reporting and expert scrutiny
  - significant positive effects

**Study A:**

**Y.Center, K. Wheldall, L. Freeman, L. Outhred, and M. McNaught (1995) "An evaluation of reading recovery". *Reading research quarterly*, 30(2), pp. 240-263.**

- 10 schools
- compared students in RR to those that were not
- at post-test (15 weeks after intervention) states:

"Reading recovery students significantly outperformed control students on all tests measuring words read in context and in isolation, but not on some tests of metalinguistics skills" (p. 252)

"The Reading recovery group continued to perform significantly better than control students on all tests measuring word reading in context and on a phonemic awareness measure. However, on tests measuring phonological recoding and syntactic awareness, not specifically addressed by the program, the difference just failed to reach significance" (p. 252)

- argues that this study is a "high-quality, independent evaluation of RR showing highly significant and long-lasting effects of the intervention.

**Study B:**

**S.Iversen and W.E. Tunmer (1993). "Phonological Processing Skills and the Reading Recovery Program". *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85(1), pp. 112-126.**

- looked at progress of 3 matched groups of at-risk first grade students
- 32 students
- administered battery of tests

Significant Positive Effects



- three groups understanding research were equal and low on all measures at pre-test.
- At discontinuation of RR scores were significantly higher on all outcome measures – particularly in Text Reading Level.
- Results showed clear large advantage for RR students
- Learning of phonemic awareness knowledge and application of that knowledge to text reading and writing

**Study C:**

**G.S. Pinnell (1989). “Reading Recovery: helping at-risk children learn to read”. *The elementary School Journal*, 90, pp. 161-81.**

- 21 teachers – all training in RR
- six urban schools with low-socio economic students
- 55 RR children
- administered tests at four points

**Results:**

- four groups – means and standard deviations were calculated on all measures
  - RR children in program classrooms
  - RR children in regular classrooms
  - Comparison children
  - Random sample children
- children in RR program achieved significantly higher results on all measures than comparison children

**Study D:**

**G.S. Pinnell, C.A. Lyons, D.E deford, A.S. Bryk and M. Seltzer (1994) “Comparing instructional models for the literacy education of high risk first graders”. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 29, pp. 8-39.**

- four treatment groups
  - RR individual tutoring
  - RR-like intervention
  - RR-like small group intervention
  - Basic skills small group intervention
- 40 school sites

**Results:**

- RR (indiv tuition) only group for which the mean treatment effect was significant on all four measures

**Study E:**

**L.C. Quay, D.C. Steele, C.I. Johnson, and W. Hortman (2001). “Children’s achievement and personal and social development in a first-year reading recovery program with teachers in training”. *Literacy teaching and learning: an international journal of early reading and writing*. Vol 5, pp. 7-25.**

- looked at progress of two equivalent groups of at-risk first graders across the year

**Results:**

- two groups were performing and essentially equivalent at pre-test
- end of year RR children were significantly superior to the control group children

**Study F:**

**Schwartz, R.M. (2005) "Literacy learning of at-risk first-grade students in the reading recovery early intervention" *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 97 (2), pp. 257-267.**

- 37 RR teachers from different schools submitted two names of at-risk students
- A web based program was used to collect data
- A variety of literacy measures were used

**Results:**

- the at-risk students who received RR performed better at the end of intervention period than others
  - at risk kids closed the achievement gap with average peers
- 

**SOURCE: Center, Yola, Freeman, Louella and Robertson, Gregory. (2001) "The relative effect of a code-oriented and a meaning-oriented early literacy program on regular and low progress Australian students in year 1 classrooms which implement reading recovery" *International Journal of disability, development and education*, Vol. 48, No. 2, 2001.**

Discusses literacy program know as - Schoolwide Early Language and Literacy – SWELL

- Applied two different early literacy instructional programs on reading proficiency of Year 1 students in three schools in NSW – all did RR programs

**Aims of the study:**

- whether all students differ in their levels of literacy proficiency
- whether two classroom programs (SWELL and non-SWELL) affect literacy performance of RR students by end of year 1
- whether two classroom programs affect progress of students during the RR intervention program

**Method:**

- Three schools using RR as Year 1 intervention program decided to implement SWELL in Kindergarten and Year 1
- Four early literacy tests at end of Year 1 for all students
  - Passage reading test
  - Expressive word attack skills tests
  - Developmental spelling test
  - Diagnostic reading test

**Results:**

- literacy proficiency of all year 1 students in comparison and experimental classes
  - reading proficiency of all students is higher than that of all students in non-SWELL classes.
  - RR students were significantly below the mean scores of all regular classroom students not receiving RR (p. 218)
- 

**SOURCE: Center, Yola. & Wheldall, Kevin (1992) "Evaluating the effectiveness of reading recovery: a critique" *Educational Psychology*, Vol 12 Issue 3/4, pp. 263-275.**

- paper aims to critically evaluate RR studies
- comments on that “some studies have conceptual and methodological shortcomings which have characterised many evaluations to date” (p.263)
- comments that RR requires “a carefully designed set of interlocking principles and actions requiring the support of a school system to ensure and sustain quality results” (p.263)
- to achieve success the authors suggest four dimensions of change:
  - behavioural change on part of teachers
  - child behaviour change achieved by teaching
  - organisational changes in schools achieved by teachers and administrators
  - social/political changes in financing by controlling authorities (Clay 1985)
- therefore a systems-based intervention
- RR teachers help at-risk students to learn “kinds of strategies good readers use” (p. 264) [problem is good readers may use many/varied approaches]
- States that about 25-30% of kids in RR programs are withdrawn if they fail to make the expected rate of progress (p. 265)
- Evaluations for this paper focuses on systemic, behavioural and organisational change in schools that have implemented the RR program

#### **Concluding comments**

- suggest that further evaluations are performed that address the conceptual and methodological weakness highlighted in this paper
- comment on the problem that students are withdrawn and not followed up
- Robinson (1989) found “inconsistencies between text level scores for some students obtained at discontinuation by RR teachers and by their class teachers upon return to the regular classroom” – this should be investigated
- RR needs to be compared with an alternative individualised programme
- Need also to look specifically at ‘cost-effectiveness’

#### **Overall:**

“[there is] little doubt that students who have been exposed to RR make impressive short-term gains in reading words in context relative to comparison groups who have no had the benefits of daily, individualised tutoring. However, it is not possible, from the evaluations so far, to establish whether it is the conceptual model/programme content or simply the individualised instruction which is associated with short-term reading gains after exposure to RR” (p. 278).

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#### *Policy*

**SOURCE: LITERATE FUTURES: REPORT OF THE LITERACY REVIEW FOR QUEENSLAND STATE SCHOOLS. The State of Queensland, Education Department 2000.**

#### Review of major findings:

- from consultations and analyses
- identifies key problems, issues and areas that need to be addressed
- classroom pedagogy is main theme
- “any approach to literacy must lead to a focus on classroom pedagogy” p.66

- there are extrinsic aspects to the school – community, social, mass media, political and economic
- there are extrinsic aspects to classroom – funding, administrative leadership, school organisational capacity, accountability systems

Findings focus on one aim:

- - effective research-based and balanced classroom pedagogy for improved literacy outcomes

Findings based on three things: (p.65)

- literature review and assessment data on student performance
- issues raised in consultations and submissions
- observations of classrooms and schools in the field

4 key areas for goal-setting and priority action are warranted:

- student diversity
  - whole-school programs and community partnerships
  - teaching of reading
  - future literacies – multi, technologies etc.
- 
- Looked at Early, primary, middle – post-compulsory years
  - At-risk students are still at risk – (p.66)
  - Queensland schools' approaches to literacy vary greatly... (p.69)
  - Successful schools used multiple indicators, tracked student outcomes, focused on continuous and sustainable improvement of student outcomes, communicated and coordinated staff well
  - The biggest concern was the 'teaching of reading'

Recommendations:

5 strategic areas for action:

- in-service and PD
- syllabus and program development and implementation
- school-based assessment and state-wide testing
- funding and accountability priorities
- pre-service teacher education

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**SOURCE: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND. United State of America Government Policy –**

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/reports/no-child-left-behind.html#1>

- notes that many students with most needs are being 'left behind'
- federal government addressing this failure
- admits that too many programs offered for all problems – costing too much

NCLB will:

- increase accountability for student performance
- focus on what works
- reduce bureaucracy and increase flexibility
- empower parents

7 performance-based titles:

1. improving the academic performance of disadvantaged students
2. boosting teacher quality
3. moving limited English proficient students to English fluency
4. promoting informed parental choice and innovative programs
5. encouraging safe schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
6. increasing funding for impact aid
7. encouraging freedom and accountability

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act – ESEA key components will be addressed.

1. Closing the achievement gap:
  - accountability and high standards
  - annual academic assessments
  - consequences for schools that fail to educate disadvantaged students
2. improving literacy by putting reading first:
  - focus on reading in early grades
  - early childhood reading instruction
3. expanding flexibility, reducing bureaucracy:
  - title I Flexibility
  - increased funds to schools for technology
  - reduction in bureaucracy
  - new state and local flexibility options
4. rewarding success and sanctioning failure:
  - reward for closing the achievement gap
  - accountability bonus for states
  - “no child left behind school” rewards
  - consequences for failure
5. promoting informed parental choice:
  - school reports to parents
  - charter schools
  - innovative school choice programs and research
6. improving teacher quality
  - all students taught by quality teachers
  - funding what works
  - strengthening math and science education
7. making schools safer for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - teacher protection
  - promoting school safety
  - rescuing students from unsafe schools
  - supporting character education

PART A – closing the gap for disadvantaged students

Title 1 Project:

- schools must have clear measurable goals
- annual state assessments
- failed schools get special assistance

- students have freedom to choose 'un-failing' schools
- need to set high standard
- annual assessments
- progress reports on all student groups
- expects adequate progress
- technical assistance for low performing schools
- needs corrective action
- rewards schools that narrow gap
- consequences for failure – lose portion of administrative funds

#### PART B – Improving Literacy By Putting Reading First

- ensure every child can read by third grade
- Initiative known as "Reading First" initiative
- National Panel issues report – April 2000 after reviewing 100 000 studies on how students learn to read

"Effective reading instruction includes teaching children to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words (phonemic awareness). Teaching them that these sounds are represented by letters of the alphabet which can then be blended together to form words (phonics), having them practice what they have learned by reading aloud with guidance and feedback (guided oral reading), and applying reading comprehension strategies to guide and improve reading comprehension" (p. 7 of 15)

- create comprehensive state-wide reading programs to ensure every child is reading by third grade
  - supplements "reading first" with an early childhood reading initiative
-

## **LITERACY FOR ALL**

*Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools.* Australian Schooling Monograph Series No. 1/1998, Commonwealth of Australia.

Government wants:

- better educational accountability through improved assessment and reporting
- parents will be fully informed about their children's education
- schools will focus on the needs of students
- students and their parents will have a choice of schools
- schools will focus on outcomes which prepare individuals for work and for longer term learning
- all students will be given an equal opportunity to learn
- schools will have less regulation and greater autonomy
- schools will support quality teaching
- Literacy for all
- identify literacy difficulties as soon as possible
- address these with suitable interventions
- need to consider diverse needs and learning styles of students – encourage broad range of teaching
- establish literacy benchmarks – accepted by whole community
- recognises significance of professional development and high quality research
- PD and research underpins effective literacy teaching and learning – opens new ways to enhance literacy outcomes for children
- Parents, teachers, principals, educators etc. need to work together positively (pp. 23-24)
- There is no single approach to teaching literacy across school systems in Australia
- There is a need for effective pedagogy and practices in early years

Students:

- different learning styles
- different motivations to learn
- different learning contexts

Other varied ways of teaching literacy:

- ways students are grouped
- provision of explicit attention to teaching oral language
- balance of whole language and phonic approaches
- approaches to identification of literacy learning difficulties
- approaches to early intervention to prevent future problems

Need PD that focuses on:

- Use of comprehensive screening strategies to identify those students at risk of not making adequate progress towards the national literacy and numeracy goals
- Intervention as early as possible to address the needs of students at risk
- The assessment of student progress against national benchmarks

### *4.6 Teacher Education*

- “All beginning teachers and teachers must have appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to enable them to improve literacy levels of Australian school students”
- all teachers in all curriculum areas, at all levels

- teacher education courses should focus on “relationship between literacy achievement and success in all learning areas”
- “need a varied repertoire of literacy teaching approaches, and intervention strategies to meet diverse needs of students”

#### 4.7 *Professional Development*

- will demonstrate best practice professional development
- link with teacher professional associations, networks and providers
- 
- PD will focus on:
  - Use of comprehensive screening strategies to identify those students at risk of not making adequate progress towards the national literacy and numeracy goals
  - Intervention as early as possible to address the needs of students at risk
  - The assessment of student progress against national benchmarks

#### Funded activities:

- strategies committed to best practice, comprehensiveness and innovation
- extent of collaboration across sectors and the strengthening of existing educational partnerships to assist teachers to maximise the literacy outcomes for students
- commitment to ensure that teachers have the skills to enable their students to achieve the national literacy and numeracy goal

#### Crevola and Hill (1997) – ELRP

- shows link between successful early assessment, intervention and enhanced literacy achievement, and PD for teachers
- need for ongoing effective PD of teachers

#### Blenkin and Yue (1994)

- “knowledge of child development most influential factor in PD”

#### Gunn (1996) – research map of children’s literacy

- teachers need access to meaningful PD

#### 4.8 *Literacy Research*

1997-1999 - \$5 million

#### 5.1 – *Approaches to Literacy teaching in the early years*

- no single approach to teaching literacy across school systems in Australia
- need for effective pedagogy and practices in early years

#### Students:

- different learning styles
- different motivations to learn
- different learning contexts

#### Other varied ways of teaching literacy:

- ways students are grouped
- provision of explicit attention to teaching oral language



- balance of whole language and phonic approaches
- approaches to identification of literacy learning difficulties
- approaches to early intervention to prevent future problems

Other suggestions include:

- effective deployment of class time to allow for explicit literacy teaching
- integration with other curriculum activities in early years
- balanced classroom language program
- the ELRP – enabled teachers to combine a number of approaches within a lesson, day or broader program
  - teachers had better understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses
  - included – reading to and writing with children, language experience, shared reading and writing, guided reading and writing, and independent reading (Crevola and Hill, 1997, 8)
- need to carefully select reading materials

Uses Four Roles Model (Freebody and Luke) as framework.

“The use of this framework as a guide for literacy educators in deciding on what to provide in instructional programs emphasises the importance of engaging students in particular forms of literacy which will enable them “to use texts effectively, in their own and collective interests, across a range of discourses, texts and tasks” (Freebody and Luke, 1990, 7-8).

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**SOURCE: InLaN – Interventions in Literacy and Numeracy**

<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/inlan/>

- to identify interventions in literacy and numeracy in Years 2-7 in all QLD schools
- data included – year 2 Net, RR, years 3, 5 and 7 Literacy and Numeracy tests
- also information about learning contexts, student achievements
- Funded by Aust govt – States Grants and administered by DEST
- Three education sector partners – association of independent schools in Qld, Qld Catholic Education Commission, Griffith University

Four stage to the research:

- Review of literature – investigating effective interventions in literacy and numeracy.
- looking at effectiveness of current practices – views from various stakeholders
- analysis of data from 2000-2006 – year 2 Net, RR, 3 5 7 tests
- analysis of selected case study sites

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**SOURCE: *Successful interventions: literacy research project. State of Victoria, January 2001.***

[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/mys](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/mys)

Findings:

- whole school policies and practices
- classroom practices and strategies in all key learning areas
- policies and practices for specific interventions

Recommendations:

- linking support for low-achieving students to teaching and learning in all KLA's
  - monitoring and collecting evidence of improved literacy learning
  - Increasing students' self-esteem, confidence and motivation
  - Changing attitudes and beliefs about responsibility for literacy learning in secondary schools
  - Developing teaching knowledge about literacy learning and expanding teaching repertoires.
- 

*Professional development:*

**SOURCE: McCallion, Paul (1998) *Literacy across the curriculum*. London, The Stationery Office.**

Chapter five – Whole school literacy teaching strategies

- need effective feedback systems
- reward improvements in performance
- need parental involvement

Observations by author:

- “secondary schools generally do not seem to have had a whole school literacy policy – suggesting some resistance from subject teachers” (p. 52)
  - generally a feeling of resentment from some subject teachers
  - timing seems to be an issue in developing a whole school plan
  - need clear leadership vision – someone responsible for overseeing program
  - initial visions tend to become irrelevant as time passes
  - review of achievement and celebrating success very important in maintaining motivation of staff (p. 53)
  - whole staff must feel as though they own the process from the beginning
  - early success is important – shows school is serious about the program
  - definition of objectives can be difficult (p. 54)
  - teachers don't like having measurable targets
  - most schools fail to follow through with initiatives – outside person can help here
  - most schools expect they won't get things right the first time so think need for change through process – observed not always the case
  - some compromise perhaps
  - “key issue at the initial stage relates to self-confidence” (p. 55)
- 

**SOURCE: Hill, Peter and Crevola, Carmel. (1997) *Key features of a whole-school, design approach to literacy teaching in schools*. University of Melbourne.**

- reports of two large scale longitudinal projects in Victoria
- aims “to refine, implement and evaluate whole-school design approach to improving early literacy outcomes” (p.1)
- 
- schools participating mainly from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds

### PROJECT 1 – Early Literacy Research Project – ELRP

- 
- ages 5-8
- began end of 1995 – official formal project length was 1996-1998
- whole-school design
- data collected at beginning and end of each school year in 27 trial schools and 25 reference schools
- intensive PD in 27 trial schools

The findings were used as a basis of material and support programs in schools (Victorian Dept of Education 1997) EYLP – Early Years Literacy Program

### PROJECT 2 – Children’s Literacy Success Strategy – CLaSS

- commonwealth government funding through the literacy strategy
- P-2 – systemic approach to maximising literacy achievements
- Kids ‘at-risk’ were targeted group
- Start 1998 with 39 schools
- In 1999 – another 90 school joined up

Whole-school, design approach recommended as differences across classes can be substantial.

- main characteristics of effective teaching? (Bosker and Scheerens 1997) p. 2
  - time on task
  - closeness of content covered to assessment instrument
  - structured approach – specific objectives, frequent assessment and corrective feedback
  - types of adaptive instruction that can be managed by teachers

This aligns with Hill and Crevola (p.2)

- high expectations of student achievement
- engaged learning time
- focused teaching that maximises learning within each students’ “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1978)

From these three – developed key elements (diagram on p.3) of schools that facilitate effective teaching –

End result is whole-school design (see NASDEC in States)

Professional learning teams was one element. What constitutes an effective approach to PD?

Common aspects over the two studies were:

- teachers in early years were formed into teams
  - attended off-site university based PD sessions
  - sessions focused on providing impetus for further thought and discussion
- complemented by on-site PD – daily within the context of the school
  - team coordinator appointed in each school with significant time allocation to the role
  - coordinator acts as mentor and lead learner and organises visits to teams in other schools, demonstration teaching and classroom observations

- coordinator chairs weekly professional learning team meetings

“The team is the main vehicle for growing professionally. Team members take joint responsibility for all students supervised by all team members and also assume responsibility for each other’s professional growth. The professional learning team is the key strategy for bringing all classes up to the level of the most effective class and for then moving on to become even more effective” (p. 6).

### Conclusions:

“...substantial, measurable improvements in early literacy outcomes can be achieved when schools adopt a whole-school, design approach. These results have not been achieved through the implementation of new methods or techniques, since we believe that teachers already have access to a repertoire of powerful and effective strategies for teaching students to read. Rather, they have been achieved by attending in a systematic fashion to all elements in a school that continue to improved learning outcomes” (pp. 10-11)

Most significant features in promoting change and development in PD include:

- ongoing, externally provided structured professional learning for teams of teachers to challenge teachers’ thinking, develop their beliefs and understandings, and help them to understand how they can use a range of powerful teaching strategies in meeting the needs of the range of students in their classes
- on-site professional development through observation, team teaching, weekly team meetings and visits, mentoring and coaching as facilitated by the coordinator
- separate professional development sessions for principals focusing on the principal as and instructional leader and their role in promoting and managing the early literacy program of the school (p. 11)

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**SOURCE: McKenzie, Barbra and Turbill, Jan. (1999) *Professional development, classroom practice and student outcomes: exploring the connections in early literacy development*. AARE, Melbourne, 1999.**

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- staff development program must be measured in terms of student outcomes p.1
- key arguments from literature on staff development:
  - is a process not an event
  - process takes time to show in student learning
  - process necessitates that changes in student learning are preceded by changes in teachers’ beliefs, understandings and practices
  - these changes are often accompanied by perceived changes in school culture

*A design approach to improving literacy outcomes – ClaSS*

- attempts to improve student learning outcomes rarely have been sustained (p. 4)
- schools have narrow ‘window of opportunity’ to make a difference
- kids who fail to make progress in literacy during the first two years of schooling rarely catch up
- ELIC – was a course designed to improve teaching of literacy in early years
- Little evaluation of its impact on student achievement
- Victoria’s EYLP
- NASDC – original nine designs in whole-school approaches to improvement

**SOURCE: McGill, Ian & Beaty, Liz. (2001) *Action learning: a guide for professional management and educational development*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, Kogan Page.**

- discusses what action learning is in terms of running professional development programs

“Action learning is a process of learning and reflection that happens with the support of a group or ‘set’ of colleagues working with real problems with the intention of getting things done” (p. 1)

- any group that participates is called a ‘set’
  - gives examples of meetings using action learning as the framework
  - also provides skills required by those that use this framework in professional development
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## **SUGGESTED READINGS IN LITERACY EDUCATION**

### *Early Years And Literacy*

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Worthington, John. (2001) *A longitudinal study of early literacy development and the changing perceptions of parents and teachers*. St. Lucia, Qld. Unpublished PhD Thesis.

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### **CIERA Publications**

CIERA Report (2002) - *Parents and teachers talk about literacy and success*

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