

## Feedback on Literacy Advisory Panel Final Consultation Report

### Questions:

- On page 6, the paper notes that “individuals can align their work to the framework.” Will this be a requirement, or a choice?

### I agree with the following from the report:

- We need to support parents with the tools to read (and speak) effectively to their children. How will we offer this support?
- We need more teachers, and more teacher support, we need more time for teachers to do their jobs, and more PL to support teachers to teach reading.
- Utas and TAFE need to know what our common instructional practices are so that teachers in training learn them before becoming a fully qualified teacher. How might we forge these connections to make this happen?
- Literacy generally, and reading more specifically, must be the work of all teachers, including teachers in learning areas other than English. This is imperative.
- Every school and every teacher should engage in PL around literacy (specifically reading as this is our current state-wide focus) every year.
- Schools need libraries and teacher librarians. How will this look, and how can we make it happen?
- Often those children and families who would benefit most from early years services – and services and support in general – are not reached by services and supports.
- The Big Six are relevant to all students, and in a high achieving literacy system the majority of its secondary students should be able to focus on fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. I would also suggest that oral language is very important in the secondary years, as the requirements for oral language do in fact change and become more complex as students age, needing to learn the different registers of language for different contexts that they will be exposed to in adulthood.
- The Gradual Release model is relevant to all students in all contexts.
- Reading and writing are reciprocal and should be taught in tandem.
- There should be options for teaching methods including Science of Reading, but not excluding other methods such as the Balanced Literacy Approach. Looking at the Australia-wide data, and specifically in our Tasmanian context, our current approaches are working in our cohort up to Year 3, which demonstrates that current approaches to teaching decoding (which does include the explicit teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness) are working. The next steps in teaching reading, which require a much more explicit approach to the teaching of reading within the disciplines, are where our practice is lacking, and this is reflected in our reading data from Year 4 onwards. The Science of Reading in the early years is unlikely to impact this, but the teaching of discipline specific reading practices will.
- We need to utilise both decodables and rich texts to teach reading.
- Where the SoR is employed by schools as a method of teaching reading, we should also be sharing successful practices already undertaken in schools which demonstrate high growth in literacy results. The SoR is not the only approach to teaching reading.
- All learning area teachers are teachers of literacy.

What I found interesting from the report:

- The choice of teachers to prepare graduate teachers might be vetted more closely to ensure that these are quality teachers who have the time and requisite skillset to teach new teachers.
- Although there are a number of mentions of the Science of Reading in the key themes discussed by the panel, there is no mention of the Science of Reading in the 'What This Tells Us' sections of the report, which the introduction clearly states will form the basis for the targeted recommendations. Does this mean that there will not be a push for SoR as the main focus of reading instruction?

Concerns that I have from the report:

- I am concerned that a firm push for the Science of Reading approach to teaching reading will result in students who can decode faster but understand less as time goes on and texts become more complex, as they have not been taught to use structural cues from the texts. This becomes more relevant as students progress through the year levels and are required to read texts with more complex structures and with more complex vocabulary and content. In this case, being able to decode the words on the page will be irrelevant because they have never encountered words like these before, which are subject specific and completely new for students. Rather than throwing all of our eggs in one SoR basket, we need to ensure that we are teaching students to read in subject areas from Year 3 onwards, where our data shows a drop off of student reading and understanding of texts. This is because the texts become more subject specific, and more complex, and we do not teach students the skills to tackle (and understand) these texts.
- I am concerned that the only measure of success in reading for Years 11 and 12 students will be the Everyday Adult Standard for Reading, Writing and Communication (in English). Having taught English at Senior Secondary level for around 15 years, this target gives a pretty skewed view of the data, and also suggests that teaching reading is only the job of the English teacher when the rest of the panel report suggests that it is the job of all teachers. I would suggest that a more accurate measure of assessing reading is the whole TCE, as if students can read and comprehend across learning areas, they should have success in all of their subjects and therefore be able to attain their full TCE rather than just the literacy standard. Please do not devalue the work of all subject teachers by making the success of the English teachers the only measure of success. Reading, and literacy, is everyone's business. Please also take into account the TCEA as a measure of attainment – some students, as a result of disability or other circumstances, will not attain their full TCE or the adult standard for literacy, but their work to improve their reading and understanding should also be acknowledged in our data set.