

Leah Waugh

I am aware that you are now looking for community consultation on your Setting the Scene paper. I only became aware of this document when I saw this on Facebook and as an educator I wanted to share my thoughts as this is an area I am passionate about.

Questions: 1. What is currently working well to improve literacy?

Professional Learning Teams in schools that are inquiring into effective ways to teaching literacy. Teachers being challenged to think about the best way to be teaching and not just doing what has always been done. We are living in an everchanging world and need to be moving with it to provide the best education for our children.

Margate Primary Professional Learning Teams are using The Big Six of reading as a focus area to further inquire into the elements impacting growth on comprehension. The PLT inquiry cycle being used to identify student need, growth in outcomes and identify effective teaching practices. Whilst we have some assessments that can identify where students are at with each of the elements, not all are age appropriate and too time consuming for a class teacher (eg PROBE). Looking at data such as PAT and NAPLAN helps us identify that comprehension is impacting student growth, but does not let us identify which element of The Big Six should be a focus. This makes me wonder if other schools have already created this formative assessment / screener with input from their school support team. Can these be shared?

The PLTs have added the element of introducing the research of 'The Science of Successful Learning' to support the metacognitive thinking about how we learn. I would be interest to find out if there have been more connections with neuroscience research to support further development in identifying effective ways to learn and teach. For example, if we know that students with dyslexia need to create new pathways within the brain and a multisensory approach will help this, or that psychologists are using EMDR therapy to reprocess trauma, are there ways can we make connections/ pathways to support learning that is challenging (sorry, super simplified and not thoroughly researched, just a wondering)

Question 2. Do you know a program or activity that supports literacy development in Tasmania that is not listed in this document?

In working with two primary schools, I have seen improvement (or anticipate to see considerable improvement) in Response To Intervention from the Literacy Team. Whilst there is still a lot to be developed and explored some of the elements that supported this success are..

- Teachers firstly being supported in embedding a whole school approach to a common instructional model, where collaborative and co-operative groups were established. Formative Assessment needed to be unpacked to identify what the students knew in for explicit teaching to be differentiated (Not to say the other teaching practices from the Pedagogical framework would not benefit, these areas were of need in my context)
- Additional support given to students at need (using whole school summative and formative assessment to identify), with connections to in class teaching practices and not in isolation.
- A targeted focus
- Multi -sensory approach
- An understanding of the need of a synthetic phonics approach to complement an analytics, whole word approach. (My experience in teaching exposed me to the idea that you had to choose a synthetic approach or a whole word approach. I believe you need both to support explicit teaching of decoding and comprehending and making connections to prior knowledge)
- In later readings on The Science of Successful Learning – Peter Brown, some of the key practices of retrieval, spaced practice and interleaving are all evident in these small group sessions.
- Consistency, regularity and reflective staff are crucial.

Currently the Literacy Team at Margate Primary School (Emma Stafford- Literacy Coach, Kate Longey – Literacy Support and myself, along with Stacey, Helen and Janice (our teaching assistants we are training up) are implementing the beginning phases of this approach. Previously the Huonville Literacy team (Myself and Andrea Partridge) explored a similar RTI approach, however, further development and

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thinking on this has been able to make this approach develop. The Literacy Team at Margate are collaborating with the school speech pathologist (Jess Rooke) and school psychologist (Nikki Saunders) to further develop this as their input should be taken advantage of.

The gaps are the funding needed to train and resource staff within schools, along with the opportunity to be able to collaborate with educational and support team professionals to research and develop this thinking in a way that will reach the schools and be understood.

We are fortunate enough to have a teacher that is also an author/ writer at Margate who has the skills to construct writing programs. With the increase of release time for teachers we were concerned that the core subjects were not getting enough time. We have introduced a new 'specialist lesson' at Margate called 'Story Circles', Karen Harrland (the specialist teacher) works with children using the outdoor environment where possible to inspire their writing. A focus on a writing skill or area or structure is taught to the children along with the opportunity to develop their voice, oral language and vocabulary. This is linked to the Australian Curriculum and planning and feedback is shared with teachers so they can consolidate and connect this learning to what is happening in the classroom. Not all stories are constructed or presented in writing form, oral language and a wide vocabulary are just as important and valued. Already we have seen children shine and engage in creating stories, finding their voice and expressing their ideas.

Karen also runs our 'Stories Under kunyani' program (supported by her winning application to with ALEA) where our indigenous students are invited to participate along with other students that would benefit from making connections to place, self, the world and other. Students learn the tools of storytelling and develop confidence in sharing their ideas and voice.

We really put Karen to work as she also runs our extension writing program 'Words Make Me Fly' which is designed to teach students how to develop specific writing techniques. Communication is key with these programs, the teachers need to know what is happening when these children participate in these lessons, the families need to know what is happening and connections need to be supported for success.

The intention of tailoring story telling/ writing lessons has been to teach children how to express their ideas and ask questions (either to create dialogue or rhetorically)

Some other thoughts that don't directly relate to your questions

The family engagement work we do is imperative to making a difference. For this to be successful teachers need support in building the relationships and then working in partnership with the specific learning areas (which as part of the ARACY pilot project I understand the support of this development, would be great if they could go further than the 10 schools).

I do wonder if there is a need to 'translate' things at times. Different agencies working together and even 'teacher talk' to families impacts the opportunities for literacy development. In conversation with non-teaching friends, it has been evident they have been wanting to ask what something really means and the right questions to ask to support their understanding in knowing how to support their child's understanding.

Basic understandings that we are all experts in different fields and with this often have a whole separate meta-language (just ask me to fill out a Centrelink form and you will see how lost I get!) needs to be shared and understood.

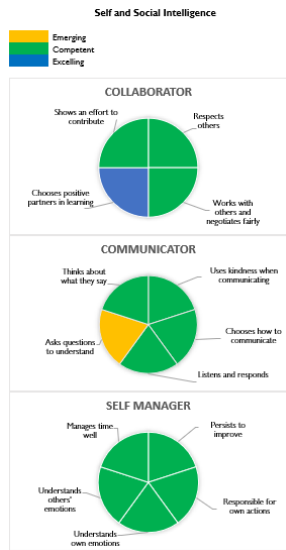
- strategies to know how to ask questions to build a common understanding to bridge gaps and build connections.
- emotional intelligence to support in building relationships, interpreting questions and conversations (purpose of behaviour).

- information that has been have been lost along the way, such as... reading is decoding and comprehension, a level 30 book is not the ultimate goal. Comprehending is more that reciting what the text was about and English/ Literacy is not just about reading and writing.

Looking at the key ideas behind Blueschool.org (Graphic below can be found on their webpage under 'Our Approach'), and using this to influence our new report format to communicate with families help demonstrate our expertise in different fields (Child or adult) impact our literacy (and other) skills . I believe it is even more important to show, explain and support families knowing about the importance of academic mastery, creative thinking, self & social thinking.



ample of our Mid Year



reports

Creative Thinking – Thinking that Students do

As a Thinker in ENGLISH your child is able to:

Explain what they are thinking	Competent
Explain what they are learning and where to next	Competent
Use their imagination and be creative	Competent
Asks questions to know more	Competent
Use what they know to improve their understanding	Competent

As a Researcher in ENGLISH your child is able to:

Be curious to discover more	Competent
Decide and find the more useful information	Competent
Try new ways to find things out	Competent
Reflect whether their thinking has changed	Competent

Creative Thinking – Thinking that Students do

As a Thinker in MATHS your child is able to:

Explain what they are thinking	Competent
Explain what they are learning and where to next	Competent
Use their imagination and be creative	Competent
Asks questions to know more	Emerging
Use what they know to improve their understanding	Competent

As a Researcher in MATHS your child is able to:

Be curious to discover more	Competent
Decide and find the more useful information	Competent
Try new ways to find things out	Competent
Reflect whether their thinking has changed	Competent

Many times I have used the Blueschool diagram with families when they are distressed about their child's learning, but know they are such an intelligent kid in so many ways. This provides an element of relief and also lets us identify strengths and use them to support development. For example, if a child does not have the academic mastery to understand a complex instructional manual, they may use their creative and critical thinking to find a way to build what needs to be done (Think 80's MacGyver) or there is a pandemic and we need to figure out a way to continue learning at home, whilst working and dodging covid.

Following on from this the importance of understanding and teaching executive functioning skills is becoming more evident. Being able to regulate emotions and communicate effectively is key to functional literacy. Not to mention other executive functioning skills that would support literacy development.



Whilst a lot of my ramblings have been with a focus on primary aged children. In my role supporting the development of teacher capacity many of these thoughts translate to adult learning. I reflect on my own experience; in primary school I was told I was a 'bad speller'. My mum not knowing what to do, bought me a workbook to work through after school. Surprise, surprise it did not make a lot of difference and there was my belief that I was a bad speller and not smart. When I started to work with a Literacy Team and attended a spelling Professional Development session, I saw that there were strategies that could help me. When I started teaching other teachers about them, they became even clearer to me (hello, retrieval and spaced practice). I started thinking about what other strategies are there in other areas? why didn't I know about them? what else could I have learnt? Then the idea that I could create new pathways in my brain and learn new things, does this mean I can learn anything? Point being that whilst I am working with teachers to teach children, the strategies and practices benefit me in my lifelong learning.

I hope some of these thoughts have been a little bit of what you are after. I am interested in discussing effective strategies for teaching and learning and am looking for other school-based people to bounce ideas off, please keep me in mind if you know of others.