

Response to the Literacy Advisory Panel's *Final Consultation Report*
for the Development of Tasmania's Community-wide Framework
on behalf of the School of Education, University of Tasmania

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Introduction

The University of Tasmania and the School of Education are dedicated to enhancing educational attainment in the state of Tasmania. Our strategic direction remains focussed upon this commitment. This is particularly vital for the Literacy Advisory Panel's 2023 report as the graduates of our Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses form an extensive component of the Tasmanian teaching workforce.

As a Working Group and on behalf of the University of Tasmania School of Education, our response reflects a more holistic and integrated perspective, as is aligned with our collective approach to literacy learning and development. In what follows, we address a number of aspects relevant to the *Lifting Literacy, Lifting Tasmania: Final Consultation Report for the Development of Tasmania's Community-wide Framework* (Literacy Advisory Panel, 2023).

- The Literature
- The Ecological Model of Literacy
- The Principles
- Foundations for Success
- An emphasis on standardised testing
- Reference to 'specific groups'
- Consultation questions – The Early Years, School Years and Adult Years

Following on from the Literacy Advisory Panel's previous report - *Lifting Literacy, Lifting Tasmania: Paper One Setting the Scene – Tasmania's Community-wide Framework* (2022), and continuing in a similar focus to our Head of School's last *Submission to the Literacy Advisory Panel Community Consultation* (Carrington, 2022), we hope that our current response is well considered.

The literature

The Literacy Advisory Panel (2023) states that they have accessed 78 articles to provide the panel members with a 'diverse range of perspectives' and to 'inform their thinking and their discussions" (p.9). Whilst this demonstrates some engagement with the literature in this space, the literature referenced in the sections relevant to the Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary schooling is somewhat dated (over 10 years ago). Notably, if such dated literature is being referenced, it seems essential to also include some seminal works regarding key principles of instruction in this area of teaching and learning (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986; Rosenshine, 2010; 2012); and the more recent works of Moats (2020) and Sherrington (2019). Another important reference to support the significance of the explicit teaching of writing is drawn from the social justice-inspired framework of Systemic Functional Grammar (Humphrey, 2016) - which underpins the Australian Curriculum.

It seems that the survey of the literature seems extraordinarily narrow for a report of this nature. The field of literacy is so broad and deep that articles on early years and middle years literacy count in the many thousands; thus, a consultation of 43 papers for the Foundation/Prep to Year 10, and only 12 papers regarding adult learning seems vastly disproportionate. No doubt the Literacy Advisory Panel are using Stewart, te Riele and

Stratford (2019a; 2019b), and of course the extensive research undertaken by the Peter Underwood Centre as valuable terms of reference during this process. Additionally, there is also some relevant Asian and Vietnamese literature which has been missed and is often underrepresented in the Tasmanian classroom contexts (Huynh, To, Carrington & Thomas, 2023; Huynh, Thomas & To, 2022; Huynh, Thomas & To, 2020).

The Ecological Model of Literacy (Literacy Advisory Panel, 2023, p.10)

It is promising to see the inclusion of the Ecological Model as a basis for understanding literacy in this report. The key themes identified in the report's Ecological Model of Literacy (and the What this tells us) section are focused on the school years (Literacy Advisory Panel, 2023). Yet, the foundations for a person's journey with literacy learning are laid in early childhood. According to the latest Australian Early Development Census [AEDC] survey (2021), 23.2% of Tasmanian children in their first year of schooling are deemed to be vulnerable on one or more AEDC domains, which is an increase on the last survey conducted in 2018 (AEDC, 2021). There is also a strong correlation between developmental vulnerability and socio-economic disadvantage, with children living in the most disadvantaged socio-economic areas (across Australia) being twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable and three times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable in more than one domain than children living in the most advantaged socio-economic areas (The Front Project, 2022). This correlation is highly relevant for Tasmania, which has the highest proportion of people living in the most disadvantaged areas as measured by the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (Tanton et al., 2021). Given the critical importance of the early years and the evidence that many young children in Tasmania are experiencing disadvantage during this pivotal developmental phase of their lives, policies focussed on improved outcomes in Early Childhood should also be highlighted within the themes of the Ecological Model.

Moreover, we need to be cautious not to over-medicalise learning to read, as our children will never receive the quality teaching they deserve. Quality instruction that is tailored to the needs of the students and the demands of the curriculum is how students learn to read and write and effectively use texts for early years and school-based learning. However, it is important to also note that this is not to diminish the many rich experiences and resources that children bring from home which should always form a foundation for learning.

Although several key themes focus on student wellbeing (and the poor wellbeing that many children and young people experience), there should be a specific theme that highlights how trauma – in particular, complex/developmental trauma – impacts on an individual's ability to engage with learning, and what this means for a community-wide effort to address literacy needs across Tasmania. Evidence shows that many adults who struggle with their literacy have experienced some form of prolonged trauma in their lives (see for example Horsman, 2013). An awareness of the impacts of complex, prolonged trauma is important at all life stages, but it is especially relevant in the early years, when prolonged exposure to trauma may permanently alter a child's neural pathways that are responsible for stress management, affect regulation, impulse control and social cognition (Teicher et al., 2003) –

the pathways that are key in determining how a child or an adult manage along their educational journey.

The Principles (Literacy Advisory Panel, 2023, p.13)

Equity: The principle of equity refers to ‘all Tasmanians’. There are many people living in Tasmania (children and adults) who do not yet consider themselves (nor are they considered so by the authorities or the wider community) to be Tasmanian. To ensure that everyone is included in the principles of the Community-wide Framework, it may be worth considering whether to rephrase the subject of this principle as ‘all people living in Tasmania’.

The learner is at the centre: Understanding how a learner’s circumstances impact on their learning is a critical first step, but for this principle to be truly visionary, it should be paired with the ability to respond to this understanding.

Underpinned by evidence-based research: The use of evidence-based research on how we learn (to read, write or any other skill) is important as much in the early years as in adulthood. There are many adults living in Tasmania who struggle with reading and are currently working on improving their skills. The tutors supporting these adults need to use tutoring/teaching practices that are evidence-based, just as much as the educators who are working in the early years. This is particularly relevant in the Tasmanian context, where many tutors working with adult learners are volunteers.

Foundations for success (Literacy Advisory Panel, 2023, pp.15-21)

Parents, families and carers: Many of the key themes under the ‘Parents, families and carers’ section focus on the positive effects that parental involvement in their children’s literacy development has on the children’s literacy outcomes. However, there is no mention of the proven correlation between parent’s own literacy levels and the literacy outcomes of their children (Taylor et al., 2016). Where a parent is struggling with their own literacy, they are unlikely to feel confident in supporting their own children’s literacy development, which is why difficulty with literacy often becomes a multigenerational issue. The supports that are currently provided to parents, carers and families are almost exclusively focussed on enhancing learning outcomes for children, not on the learning needs of parents/carers. Yet there is great potential for synergy arising from programs that would aim to serve the needs of multiple generations, building on the great wealth of experience with multi-generational literacy programs from around the world (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019).

The second key theme listed under the ‘Parents, families and carers’ section focuses on the importance of immersion in spoken language (which the report defines as ‘speaking and listening’) and on reading activities at home. This provides a very narrow picture of what it means to support literacy development in the home setting and promotes a dominant stereotype of what constitutes literacy. It would be helpful to list other important activities

that families do at home to support literacy development, such as storytelling, singing, playing, cooking, reciting religious texts or engaging with digital media, among others.

The last point in the 'What this tells us' section suggests that the needs of vulnerable students (including students in Out of Home Care) could be supported with not-for-profit literacy tutor programs. If the first principle of Equity applies, it is not clear why the needs of vulnerable students should be supported by not-for-profit literacy tutor programs, which are subject to the uncertainties of funding and are often dependent on a volunteer tutor base, rather than by the formal education system. Indeed, if the principle of Equity applies, then the needs of vulnerable students should be met first and foremost by the formal education system.

Workforce: The sixth key theme in the 'Workforce' section states that the community consultation indicated that there appears to be a shortage of professionals for a range of services. But there is strong evidence for this shortage. Waiting periods for an assessment for a young child by a speech therapist or another allied health professional are on the order of years, as are waiting periods for a school-age child to be assessed by a school-based educational psychologist. These are often children that are struggling with language and literacy development. It is important that the Community-wide Framework acknowledges the great paucity of specialists in Tasmania and encourages the government to address this critical issue.

An emphasis upon standardised testing (Literacy Advisory Panel, 2023, pp.47-49)

The Panel presents a strong emphasis upon standardised testing throughout the section titled 'The use of data to inform teaching'. While standardised tests can certainly provide some evidence of literacy learning, the issue relates to the appropriate use of standardised tests and the data they can provide. Standardised testing often ends up driving and narrowing curriculum, and distracting from individual learners and learning contexts. Therefore, there is a strong need for us to endorse what these tests can provide us with in terms of data, while cautioning that standardised tests are only one measure.

Reference to 'Specific Groups'

The relegation of the needs of particular groups of individuals (what the report calls 'Specific Groups') to the very back of the report only underscores the fact that the needs of such groups are often treated as an afterthought. Migrants/refugees (isn't the term Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Individuals preferred?) and people with disabilities are represented among all the three groups of learners identified in earlier sections of the report, so it would seem appropriate to include considerations relating to these (and other groups) holistically within the specific categories of learners (i.e., Early Years, 5-18, Adult Years)?

Relating to this, it would be good to consider a more person-centred approach when referring to particular groups of individuals. For example, 'Adults in the Criminal Justice System' takes a more person-centred approach than 'Adult Prisoners', a term that defines

adults by their (hopefully temporary) imprisonment status. It also includes individuals who are in the criminal justice system but are not imprisoned (i.e., individuals carrying out community service orders), many of whom are also known to have needs around literacy support.

With respect to the report's content in relation to 'People with disability' (Literacy Advisory Panel, 2023, p.46), there appears to be a misunderstanding of the NDIS mandate. Problems with the design, operations and sustainability of the NDIS notwithstanding, the NDIS is not meant to cover supports within the education system. Per information on the NDIS website, the school education system is responsible for supports where the primary purpose is to help a person learn, study and achieve education outcomes. This includes adjusting teaching methods, providing learning assistance and aids, modifying the school building, and other adjustments (Department for Education, Children and Young People [DECYP], 2022). Framing the Community-wide Framework as it relates to the needs of people with disabilities (while not omitting our neurodivergent learners) around the outcomes of the NDIS review appears to sideline the responsibility that the education system holds for delivering equitable education to everyone, regardless of their disability status.

The second 'What this tells us' point in the content relating to 'People with disability' refers to one recommendation from the 2022 Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read inquiry (2022). Unfortunately, it misses many other recommendations that are equally relevant to addressing the literacy development needs of people with disabilities, such as timely access to evidence-based assessments and speech/language therapy supports as well as evidence-based assistive technologies. We must consider carefully how we are effectively supporting our diverse students in their ability to engage in literacy learning.

Consultation Questions

Key themes to improve literacy across:

- **The Early Years (0-4 years-old)**

The report has done well to specifically address the Early Years. It is important to take a holistic approach to literacy learning and development. It is also excellent that the report has taken into consideration the importance of the First 1,000 Days.

It is pleasing to see key themes of immersion in literacy-based activities in the home, and the pivotal role of parental involvement in shaping a child's literacy success brought to the fore in this report. We know that a child's literacy development begins at birth, and the magic of early learning and development occurs between the conception to 5 years. Programs (and parental support) dedicated to promoting literacy during these early years are essential. For instance, the *Books in Homes* program (Books in Homes Australia, 2018-2023) was implemented by members of the UTAS English teaching team in schools across Burnie, Launceston and Hobart in Tasmania to promote parental involvement and early literacy exposure, particularly for children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Such programs are incredibly valuable, especially for children/families who are not able to access Library services.

In responding to the need for more diverse professional development (PD) opportunities for early years practitioners, the UTAS School of Education is willing to play an active role in creating and facilitating new opportunities, in collaboration with community partners. The School of Education is in the process of new course development, with an aim to address both the PD needs to deliver literacy instructions, as stated in this report, as well as the wider issue of early childhood teacher shortage, as identified nationally.

The Key Themes for the Early Years completely omit the role of the Child and Family Learning Centres [CFLCs], which were established in 2009 by the Tasmanian Government to serve as single point entry for early childhood services in communities identified as having higher needs (Taylor et al., 2017; DECYP, 2022b). This is puzzling. They also omit the government's Launching into Learning [LiL] program, which is a program aimed at families of children aged zero to four in which parents and carers learn in a supportive environment how to be involved in their children's learning (and is hosted in many communities by the CFLCs). There is a lot of text devoted to the Child Health and Parenting Service [CHaPS], an undisputedly important program, but nothing devoted to CFLCs and LiL. The CFLCs have been in existence for a decade and there is much that can be learned from their experience in supporting early childhood services in communities of higher need and building on such experience (as part of the Community-wide Framework). This is missing in the Early Years section of the report.

Whole of Community – Literacy Resources (pp.39-40)

The significance of play-based learning: It is reassuring to see mention of the significance of play-based learning in the promotion of literacy, and a recognition for literacy resources to be made available within broader community spaces. However, it is unclear how organisations and communities could work in partnership to develop such resources. Furthermore, although the report suggests that would reflect 'best practice' (p.40), greater clarity is needed to specify what constitutes 'best practice' in terms of community-based literacy practices and resources.

Integration with the Early Years Learning Framework [EYLF]

We wish to reiterate the importance of the transition from prior-to-school to school settings. Currently, Version 2.0 of the Early Years Learning Framework [EYLF] (ACECQA, 2022) is used as the key curriculum document for children in early education and care settings and in kindergartens in schools (ACECQA, 2022). Meanwhile, when commencing formal schooling, teaching and learning are underpinned by the Australian Curriculum [AC] framework (ACARA, 2022). We recommend that teachers teaching Prep/Foundation should be familiar with and adopt the EYLF alongside the Australian Curriculum, due to its strong emphasis on wellbeing, belonging, and inclusiveness. This is important in promoting holistic

education and a wider definition of “school readiness”, that is, classrooms are prepared to support children who are diverse and bring their individual strengths to the classroom.

Although the report attempts to acknowledge ‘Equity’ by stating that ‘all Tasmanians have access to the support they need to develop literacy skills’ (Literacy Advisory Panel, 2023, p.13), there is a clear misalignment regarding diversity, inclusivity, belonging, safety and wellbeing. More specifically, the report seems to ignore the valuable range of skills that children bring to the learning, their ability to communicate in diverse ways, and the importance of early interactions and sense of belonging. Additionally, the report identifies wellbeing, but does not consider safety. It is essential that these aspects are considered authentically, as children need to feel safe before they can learn (Bomber, 2020; Tasmanian Department of Education, 2020). This is particularly relevant to the Tasmanian context, as there are significant connections between trauma and language delay – which can severely impact children’s ability to communicate and respond (Westby, 2018). Educators require vital upskilling to build this awareness and its connection to literacy development and learning more broadly.

- The School Years (5-17 years-old)

The Science of Reading

The Literacy Advisory Panel (2023) has done well to encompass the inclusion of, and respect for, the Science of Reading. The panel has stated the ‘importance of a phonics-based approach to reading in the early years’ (p.29). It is important to distinguish that the systematic, synthetic phonics-based approach is most appropriate, and yields superior results, to prevent confusion with analytic or embedded phonics-based approaches.

The panel states that a systematic phonics-based approach was trialled in South Australia and ‘was showing good results in improving student reading levels’ (p. 29). However, ‘good results’ does not quite do justice to what has been found in South Australia, as other regions have also been using such an approach (Western Australia, for example). It is essential to highlight that the need for systematic, phonics-based approaches to the teaching of reading continues beyond Year 2 (even into secondary school). Moreover, Science of Reading is not an ‘approach’ but rather a vast body of scientifically based research. A detailed definition of the Science of Reading could better encapsulate the terminology. Additionally, the Science of Reading is not a program or a ‘solution’. The knowledge gained from this body of scientifically based research, and the application of this knowledge to practice, will be the key. Adequate and accurate teacher preparation programs and professional development for in-service teachers will be essential to ensure a comprehensive understanding of this body of work and how best to implement explicit instructional approaches into the classroom.

English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) learners

There seems to be little (or any) distinction between children for whom English is a first language and those for whom it is an additional language (EAL/D). A few considerations would be helpful here:

1. The needs of these students may overlap but are also distinct in important ways. This needs to be acknowledged and with this need to come recommendations to equip teachers to understand the needs of such learners.
2. Related to the above, EAL/D learners often bring with them rich linguistic resources that need to be recognised and valued in the classroom, adopting a strengths-based rather than a deficit discourse.
3. Literacy development for EAL/D learners tends to be syphoned off to literacy experts. Approaches that encourage closer integration of the work of classroom teachers in the primary and discipline teachers in the secondary with that of literacy experts would contribute to a more coherent and cohesive learning experience for students and would encourage all teachers to understand the ways in which literacy work should be integrated into discipline teaching. It would also encourage schools to see this as integral to effective curriculum delivery.

Supporting teachers to recognise and value the multiple and diverse literacies students bring to the classroom is essential to a strengths-based approach. The conceptualisation of literacy in the secondary sector seems rather narrow. A progressing expansion of this conceptualisation to include notions of critical literacy would be welcome. Learning additional languages (other than English) strongly supports literacy development. Languages teachers play a key role in developing literacy, but this potential is untapped.

Acknowledging reading and writing

The report is heavily biased to the consideration of “reading”. There is mention of writing in terms of it being reciprocal to reading and so forth, but no mention of evidence-based literature on the significance of the explicit teaching of writing, drawing from the social justice – inspired framework of Systemic Functional Grammar, which underpins the curriculum. The most recent NAPLAN report argued that of all areas, the area of writing tracked across the years of doing NAPLAN has not only not improved but results have deteriorated. Writing should be up front and centre, with an equal amount of attention and structure and frameworks referred to as the teaching of reading.

Whilst core six skills of reading are necessary (and we teach these all here at UTAS), they are not sufficient in the teaching of reading, which also needs to incorporate 'critical literacies', 'multimodality' (the teaching of more than simply text – images, film, etc), and 'multiliteracies' (an even broader term acknowledging cultures, contexts, social practices, technologies etc.).

The report mentions just some aspects from the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2022), and neglects to mention significance of writing, storytelling, books, text analysis – all

important elements of literacy that are part of the UTAS teacher education curriculum c.f.: 'Robust evidence-based phonics programs should be one part of broader, evidence-based, rich classroom language arts instruction, including but not limited to storytelling, book reading, drama, and text analysis. Evidence-based direct, explicit instruction for **spelling and writing** are also important to literacy' (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2022, p.5).

Whilst there is a note about the role of books and decodable readers, the science of reading is privileged over the role of Literature in children's lives, and the actual knowledge about the field of literature (Literacy Advisory Panel, 2023). One third of the English curriculum is dedicated to teaching children about reading, critically interpreting and creating literary texts. Once again, the issue is not so much about what is present in the report, but what is missing.

Learning as a social interactive process

It is important to note here that we foreground a sociocultural view of learning both in the DoE Tasmania and in the School of Education at the University of Tasmania, and while studies of brain development provide important information about reading, they cannot be at the expense of awareness of learning as a social process. A sociocultural view of learning emphasises the critical importance of interaction and talk to learning. Learning is a social interactive process negotiated through language and any literacy policy must foreground the centrality of social interaction to both learning and language development.

Consistency of quality educators

We note and agree with the Literacy Advisory Panel's point that high quality educators are needed to teach literacy in the early years, but we need high quality educators throughout the schooling years (2023, p.16). While the early years are critical, literacy develops over the schooling life of the child and the literacy demands of schooling change significantly over the years of schooling and at critical transition points. Students who are supported to make good progress or catch up are vulnerable to falling behind again after the early years, when support for quality literacy instruction and continuity of such learning drops off. Further to the data presented by the Literacy Advisory Panel (2023, p.16) on trained professionals, further interrogation of the literacy training and qualifications of teachers would be apt. Non specialist instructors will struggle to make an impact with students with high literacy support needs.

Speech pathologists are well placed to support students with additional needs in their speaking. Early years classroom teachers though are trained to teach sound symbol relationships. Speech pathologists are neither trained educators, nor familiar with the Australian Curriculum English. It is the role of institutions such as the University of Tasmania to train their teachers in phonics among other critical aspects of literacy and we do. Speech pathologists are an important resource for students who have oral language delays. This does not replace the imperative to ensure all teachers are properly trained to teach phonics, which is something that is carefully planned in UTAS literacy teacher training.

The significance of literacy for creating knowledge across the curriculum

There is an existing literacy capability framework used in the National Australian Curriculum (ACARA. 2022). It would be important to clarify why Tasmania would produce its own progression or literacy framework, rather than using the national one p. 16. There is a relatively thin evidence base for literacy development in relation to writing and the most recent reports in response to NAPLAN data suggest that existing literacy progressions may not be accurate. Production of such a framework, while an admirable goal, would require specialist knowledge of language and literacy development, to which the University of Tasmania literacy team could contribute.

Secondary school years

It is excellent to see the inclusion of the need for explicit instructional approaches within the secondary school learning environment, and the acknowledgement of literacy teaching as a responsibility for ALL secondary teachers, not just the English teachers. As the Literacy Advisory Panel (2023) state, 'all secondary teachers are teachers of literacy relevant to their subject areas...' (p.33). The Panel have also done well to highlight the need to ensure students in secondary grades receive support in phonics and phonological development, as 'there will be students who require explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics' (p. 33). It is important to note that ALL secondary teachers need to receive adequate preparation and support to teach literacy across the curriculum and support students within their own subject areas.

• The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

As in the case of the school years, recognition of the literacies adults do bring would be important in shaping a strengths-based approach. This would again suggest a need for a broader and richer conceptualisation of 'literacy'. Related to the above, the recognition that literacy is likely to differ across languages needs recognition. References to 'low literacy' do not acknowledge this. As in the case of the school years, recognising the varying needs of adults with English as a first language and those of EAL/D backgrounds would enable adequately targeted provision.

Building on the previous three points, there is a need to acknowledge that many adults who are struggling with literacy are not accessing the supports that are currently available through 26TEN/Libraries Tasmania or other community initiatives. There are many documented barriers that adults face in accessing supports, such as the social stigma associated with literacy difficulties; attitudes, beliefs and aspirations that limit motivation to learn; the demands of raising children; actual and perceived costs of attending support programs; and the attitudes, requirements and perceived inappropriateness of government and community programs, to name a few (Donnet-Jones, 2011). It would be helpful to

recognise this in the report and to identify some goals around working on better supports to adults who have literacy support needs.

The report states under the 'Primary year's section headed 'Tiered approach and structured literacy' that a trauma informed approach should be used. This is an important consideration and should not be understated, but one that is not specific to the Primary years. This is an essential requirement of all teaching and learning, regardless of age/context. Specific consideration to the adolescent period and brain development at this stage should be considered.

What are the three main things we should prioritise doing in:

• The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

1. Consider utilising a more holistic, integrated and place-based approach to literacy learning
2. Address the misalignment with diversity, inclusivity, belonging, safety and wellbeing
3. Fostering a love of reading (and literacy more broadly) through programs such as 'Books in Homes', collaborations with parents, early education and care centres, and other care-givers, in English and/or children's home languages.

• The School Years (5-17 years-old)

1. Teaching the essential elements of reading and writing; teaching how to creatively work with a diverse range of texts, genres, literature, images, film, etc for particular purposes; and teaching how to critically interpret and analyse texts for truth, validity, context, purpose
2. Supporting expanding repertoires for engaging with the increasingly literate, disciplinary and abstract texts that characterise content area classrooms from the middle school and which increase in difficulty as students progress through the school years and are essential to engage with different forms of knowledge (Christie & Derewianka, 2008).
3. School discourse is the pre-eminent text and research base for charting writing development across the school years so it would be essential if the Do E Tasmania wanted to proceed with any kind of description of literacy across the school years (used by ACARA to produce the literacy continuum for writing).

• The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

1. Ensuring a sense of felt safety for all learners; without felt safety, students are unable to engage in any learning, and consider the following literature sources:
 - a. Bath, H. (2015). The three pillars of traumawise care: Healing in the other 23 hours. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 23(4), 5–11.
https://www.traumebevisst.no/kompetanseutvikling/filer/23_4_Bath3pillars.pdf
 - b. Porges, S.W., & Furman, S.A. (2011). The early development of the autonomic nervous system provides a neural platform for social behaviour: A polyvagal perspective. *Infant and Child Development*. 20, 106-118. DOI: 10.1002/icd.688.
 - c. Porges, S. (2017). *The pocket guide to the polyvagal theory. The transformative power of feeling safe*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc.

Are there any data sets not considered in this paper that should be used to monitor literacy achievement in:

• The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

Given the documented Australia-wide correlation between socio-economic disadvantage and developmental vulnerability (The Front Project, 2022), it would be good to overlay AEDC data for Tasmania against data from the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage to confirm whether this correlation stands for Tasmania, and if so, to focus resources on areas of greatest need.

Also, anecdotal evidence from conversations with staff at Child and Family Learning Centres suggests that there are very long waitlists (on the order of years) for early intervention assessments and services for children in the Early Years age category. This data should be available, and it should be monitored to see if progress is being made over time in assessing/supporting children earlier, especially in areas identified as having higher needs.

Related to the above, a useful data source may be the NDIS Early Intervention program (NDIS, 2022) Eligibility and early intervention FAQ | NDIS), which works in partnership with local service providers (in Tasmania these are Baptcare and Mission Australia) to deliver early intervention support to children who may have developmental delays and/or disabilities. If available, their data may provide insight into the percentage of children who are accessing early intervention services, the type of services being offered, and the waiting periods involved.

• The School Years (5-17 years-old)

Regarding learning to read, while much emphasis has been given to the teaching of different kinds of phonics, it is timely to look at another innovative approach to improve student reading and spelling, known as 'Structured word inquiry' [SWI]. SWI has shown evidence for positive improvement to students' spelling, vocabulary and reading comprehension (Bowers & Kirby, 2010) in different parts of the world. These include improved literacy outcomes for all students particularly the youngest and the most at-risk (Bowers & Kirby, 2010; Bowers et al., 2010), or students with low literacy skills, or students with dyslexia. Morphology is a critical element of successful vocabulary development and accurate decoding, and awareness of morphology has been shown to be a strong indicator of and positive influence upon reading comprehension.

• The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

Literacy support services for adults are delivered through the 26/TEN initiative, Libraries Tasmania, and various community programs. There does not appear to be a comprehensive data source on how many individuals are being supported across these providers, in what ways, by whom and where, and this results in missed opportunities for sharing information about strategies that have proven to be particularly effective. Knowing who is doing what, where and how would be very helpful for knowledge sharing and for monitoring of effectiveness and progress.

If you are a provider of a service, what kinds of guidance would you hope to see in the Community-wide Framework?

- Learner voice, learner agency, and learner focussed goals embedded within the framework to encapsulate prior-to-school and post-school learning
- Stronger cohesion with the Australian Curriculum: English
- Accepting and embracing diversity (cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, diversity of social and local practices) as opposed to prescriptive "one model for all"
- Development of an infrastructure which supports and provides:
 - Investment in teacher education
 - Investment in programs to foster recognised/certified teacher professional development in English and literacy (for example, places in HECS-free Masters in Literacy Education).

On behalf of the University of Tasmania's School of Education, we thank the Literacy Advisory Panel for the opportunity to respond to the *Development of Tasmania's Community-wide Framework* process. We strongly hope that our feedback is taken into consideration.

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