

Tasmania's Community-wide Framework

ALEA National Council Submission to Literacy Advisory Panel

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General comments

- The 'skills needed to become literate' include more than 'The big six' skills for reading (page 13). Writing (the recursive process of gathering ideas, planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing and sharing as well as writing the various text types), spelling, punctuation, grammar, handwriting, and keyboarding are also skills needed to become literate.
- Phonics been singled out- 'In the early years of schooling, phonics is important for children to become successful readers and writers' (page 13). We agree that phonics is important, but so are all the other skills needed to become literate.
- 'Reading depends on speech' (page 13) is a misconception. Many people who can't hear and/or speak are still able to read.
- 'Reading is increasingly occurring 'within acts of writing' (page 13): This is a misnomer as reading does occur during writing.
- p. 17: For the Communication skills and general knowledge domain, the descriptors for 'Children developmentally on track' it is not clear if this relates to English only, home language or both if a language other than English is spoken in the home.
- This document suggests that there are concerns with literacy in Tasmania, yet much of the data included in the report suggests that Tasmania is doing quite well-on par with the national average in many instances, above the national average in others
- If this report concerns all aspects of literacy, why isn't NAPLAN spelling, grammar and punctuation data included? (page 18)
- Mandatory testing appears to be out of sync with the approach being taken through the community consultation process being undertaken and scoping of what works in Tasmanian schools or needs to be included to improve literacy.
- Page 23 'Annually, from 2022, phonics will be explicitly taught from Prep to Year 2, aligned to the Australian Curriculum'. Teachers have been doing this for years, it's not new. Like anything, phonics should only be taught until it is mastered which is before grade 2 for some students.
- 'Good quality data' (p. 26) doesn't have to be equated to test results and quantitative data
- While there is general agreement about the importance of teaching phonics, there is not general agreement about 'The importance of teaching **synthetic** phonics'. (page 28)
- Instruction is 'informed and modified' by many more assessment tools than NAPLAN and the year 1 Phonics Check (page 30)
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- The definition of what is actually meant by the term 'evidence-based' needs further exemplification and clarification. It is also important to ensure that teachers' professional knowledge is not devalued by an attempt to fit or promote a standard program for all which won't meet the needs to many.
- Allied health professionals (speech pathologists, psychologists, occupational therapists...) to 'screen, diagnose and support' (page 30) are lacking in Tasmanian schools eg one psychologist per 2000 students
- 'Provide incentives for people to become literacy trainers' What is a 'literacy trainer'? (Page 30) The Department of Education needs to 'provide incentives' simply by valuing literacy professionals by making their jobs permanent. At the present literacy coaches and lead coaches are on contracts. If literacy specialists want permanency at their current level, they have to move away from literacy.

What do you think is needed to improve literacy in Tasmania?

- A focus on the meeting the individual learner needs. Effective use of formative assessment to improve literacy outcomes not just big data. A clear vision of school improvement goals in the area of literacy and a shared understanding of what matters and where all staff work collaboratively to improve student literacy outcomes. Use of evidence-based practices such as Professional Learning Communities.
- Educating parents and wider community about literacy education.
- Emphasising the importance of interactional relationships in the learning process and other aspects of pedagogical practices that consider the affective domains of learning and not just focus on the cognitive domain.
 - Literacy coaches who work alongside classroom teachers who together design, implement, obtain data and reflect upon the literacy learning strategies, impact on student outcomes and adjusting their teaching practices.

Questions on current activity

1. What is currently working well to improve literacy?

- Literacy coaching strategy in DoE schools
- Provision of supportive resources to DoE schools eg *Quality teaching guide – literacy*
- A focus on the meeting the individual learner needs.
- Effective use of formative assessment to improve literacy outcomes not just big data.
- A clear vision of school improvement goals in the area of literacy and a shared understanding of what matters and where all staff work collaboratively to improve student literacy outcomes.
- Use of evidence-based practices such as Professional Learning Communities.

- Emphasising the importance of interactional relationships in the learning process and other aspects of pedagogical practices that consider the affective domains of learning and not just focus on the cognitive domain.

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

- Reading Recovery
- Reading Recovery was funded in Tasmania, but this stopped in 2010. Many schools continue to successfully use some of the Reading Recovery strategies but Reading Recovery teachers are needed to properly run this effective literacy intervention program.

3. Organisational map

Gaps: The Early Years 4-5 years old – collaboration between speech pathologists and educators not possible when many schools don't have a speech pathologist

The School Years 6-12 years old – Again, phonics is emphasised when it is only one of many literacy skills taught during the primary school years.

A lack of focus on using quality literature, real books and reading for pleasure.

The preamble states that there isn't an issue with the quality of teaching so listing particular strategies, approaches and programs appears to be incongruent to what the panel is trying to achieve.

Advocacy of teachers for their students and literacy practices that engage students in learning.

The place of other languages in learning of literacy in English and home/ other language and supports for families, communities and schools for the maintenance of home language, benefits of translanguaging approaches.

The heading Science of Reading (page 40) doesn't provide enough information.

ALEA Tasmania and National professional learning workshops are not included (page 43 Community organisations and other initiatives)

Opportunities: More Teachers – if we want quality, talented teachers the ATAR required for entry into teacher education at university needs to be raised and a high score must be required on the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students. Currently schools are receiving some teaching graduates with inadequate personal literacy and numeracy skills. Involving families in family literacy programs. Involving families in family literacy programs

Supports: Formative assessment strategies

The Fair Go student engagement and pedagogical frameworks would assist teachers to consider the strategies that promote literacy as well as student engagement.

Questions on measures and targets

1. What measures and targets do you think are required for the community-wide framework?

Obtaining and developing culturally and linguistically relevant measures of progression in literacy that are not simply embedded in a white middle-class perspective of what counts as literate practice but acknowledges the diverse languages and literacies.

2. Do you know of any sources of data, not listed in the organisational map that track literacy rates/development in Tasmania?

6–12-year-olds – many schools collect running record data to track student progress in reading (running records are one of Marie Clay's reading assessment procedures that provide information about the level at which students can independently read -ie decode with comprehension and fluency.

3. Are there any additional measures that you believe are required to track the progress of the community-wide framework?

The use of formative assessment tools such as those being developed by the Online Formative Assessment Initiative (OFAI). It provides formative assessment tools aligned to learning progressions for tracking the progress of individual students and achievement of students in a dashboard. It also provides strategy suggestions relevant to a particular child and tracking to determine if strategies are working to progress students.

4. What short term (less than three years) and medium term (three to ten years) measurable targets across the lifespan do you consider important?

One year of schooling equates to one year of measurable progress of students in literacy evidenced using qualitative and quantitative assessment strategies which track students and use a range of strategies.