

Consultation Paper 1 -Response

To Literacy advisory panel - Tasmania 2022

Submitted by

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Questions on 'current activity'

Q 1. What is currently working well to improve literacy?

I am encouraged by the adoption of the Phonics check- (approximately 44 per cent of Year 1 government school students completed a Check-2021) and that **all** Prep and Year 1 teachers in government schools will complete the Phonics and Early Literacy Online Modules for professional learning in Term 1. This will be of advantage to both the student, and to the teacher. Does the course on offer cover the *Science of Reading* Model, explicit phonological awareness instruction, and evidence-based reading intervention?

I note however that from this year (2022) a *Phonics check* is mandatory in Catholic schools in Tasmania. Also, that resources to support the use of the Phonics check are available for independent schools in Tasmania. Could it not be made mandatory for Government schools?

Good to see that annually, from 2022, phonics will be explicitly taught from Prep to Year 2, aligned to the Australian Curriculum and the DoE Phonics Scope and Sequence.

All Prep and Year 1 teachers in government schools will complete the Phonics and Early Literacy Online Modules for professional learning in Term 1.

Reference: Literacy Coaching Initiative (DOE) *With reference to this initiative I would query the training of Literacy coaches. Do they receive any training about dyslexia?*

Is there any information included regarding early signs of dyslexia? If the literacy coaches have no training in the identification and intervention of dyslexic difficulties, that will be identifiable at this stage, then an opportunity is lost. Literacy coaches must have some instruction about dyslexia. They can then pass on that valuable information to parents/teachers.

Q 2. Program or activity that supports literacy development in Tasmania not listed

Name of the programme/activity- The *Orton-Gillingham Approach*-a direct, explicit, multi-sensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive programme. This is a highly successful program that works well with students that are 'at risk' of dyslexia. Also, *Toe-by-Toe -a highly structured phonics-based reading-coaching program. A daily intervention teaching (20 minutes daily) 1:1.* Letters and Sounds- A graduated phonic teaching programme for parents and teachers.

There are several teachers trained in Tasmania and who are engaged in working with students on a one-to-one, and there is now also a fully qualified program manager in Tasmania who is also a registered trainer. This programme is validated by the Australia Dyslexia Association (ADA). Please contact Amelia Jones the Chair of Square Pegs Tasmania for more information.

Q 3. Organisational Map.

Responses to Questions on Measures and Targets

Q1. What measures and targets do you think are required for the community-wide framework? Realistic targets and measurement that is meaningful and tracks progress. The children that are still struggling at the end of Year 2 must have a structured 1:1 intervention programme throughout the year. The target should be that no child will end Year 3 unable to competently decode words and have a secure knowledge of how to 'crack the reading code' independently.

I have not responded to the following questions. With the expertise represented on the panel, you should have access to such knowledge re: the appropriate measures.

Q 2.-

Q 3. -

Q 4. -

Summary of personal observations

Science of Reading (SOR) appears twice-page 41 & 42 Both attached to Catholic Education Tasmania. This is too important to NOT be included in any programme that the DOE are offering.

Dyslexia Appears four times (page 43 and 44) all attached to **Square Pegs Support and Advocacy Inc**, mentioned under the 'Community organisations and other initiatives'. Dyslexia affects at least 10% of the population, in children, getting it recognised early

enough for a strong intervention to be applied. Teachers need to be trained in what to look for, and as young as possible. This cannot be stressed enough. More support is needed for both the family and whole school community. It doesn't look as enough attention has been given in Paper One. Is this going to improve? Are there any investment suggestions to be eventually offered?

PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is a large-scale assessment designed to inform educational policy and practice by providing an international perspective of teaching and learning in reading literacy. PIRLS involves comprehensive assessments of reading literacy for students in Year 4.

PISA Programme for International Student Assessment. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD Part of the lack of match of jurisdictional comparisons based on NAPLAN compared with those based on PISA is a result of the different populations or samples. PISA is based on a sample of 15-year-olds in education where NAPLAN is based on specified year levels. As a result of differences in age by year level distributions among jurisdictions, discrepancies become evident. ... *“The Tasmanian mean for NAPLAN reading was a little higher than would have been expected from the PISA mean” (are they measuring the same thing?)*

Page 15 What current sources of data tell us *about literacy learning in Tasmania? What about literacy teaching?*

Page 16 Proportion of all children enrolled in Pre-school programme

P18 Comparison of means NAPLAN is made up of tests in the four areas (or 'domains') of: 1. reading 2. writing 3. language conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) 4. numeracy.

Data source: <https://reports.acara.edu.au/Home/StateRelativities>

Page 20 that NAPLAN is preferred over PISA for assessing literacy performance in Tasmania, Why? Tasmania only data is too narrow. Our children are competing Internationally in Pisa etc., there needs to be that information, 'how our children in Tasmania are doing when compared to the rest of the world?' Technology has opened up the world for everyone, Tasmania needs to keep its eye on the global picture otherwise you are limiting opportunities for the emerging young people.

Page 22 PAT Reading test most commonly in the upper primary years, to assist with monitoring individual student achievement and progress at the school level. *Find out more about the PAT tests.*

Page 23 Year 1 Phonics check- approximately 44 per cent of Year 1 government school students completed a Check. (2021). Are more undertaking them in 2022? From 2022 Phonics check is mandatory in Catholic schools in Tasmania. Resources to support the use of the Phonics check are available for independent schools in Tasmania. What about Government Schools?

Annually, from 2022, phonics will be explicitly taught from Prep to Year 2, aligned to the Australian Curriculum and the DoE Phonics Scope and Sequence. All Prep and Year 1 teachers in government schools will complete the Phonics and Early Literacy Online Modules for professional learning in Term 1. *This is encouraging news.*

Page 23 TCE -60% attained Tasmanian Certificate of Education a standard of 'everyday reading writing and communication'. Tasmanians are less likely to attain a senior secondary certificate than those in other states or territories except the Northern Territory. *Why the low expectation for Tasmania? Shouldn't your target look to make a major improvement here?*

Page 25 *Adult literacy data 2011 data that is 11 years old, what about more recent data.*

Page 31 Questions Programmes, IMSL Orton Gillingham approach

I would query the training of Literacy coaches. Do they receive any training about dyslexia?

Dyslexia is one of the possible causes of failure to achieve competent literacy skills, and this literacy dysfunction can be screened for. It is no good training teachers how to screen for dyslexia, if teachers are not taught about methods that are appropriate for the successful teaching of the dyslexic student. For example, the Orton Gillingham Programme mentioned above. This method will teach both children and adults to read, 1:1 or small group if the dynamics of the group are compatible.

It is stated at the outset of this paper that...

'When the word 'literacy' is used in this discussion paper, it refers to the full breadth of literacy encompassed in this definition, not just reading'

Definition of Reading adopted by the panel

"Literacy involves listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, and creating texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts. Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills needed to access, understand, analyse, and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others. It involves a continuum of learning to enable individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society."

It is a good and embracing definition *but without being able to read, you cannot be 'literate'*. Being able to *read* you first need to be able to crack the alphabetic code, and all its manifestations (e.g., 26 letter sounds, 44 unique sounds/ phonemes!)

We must not lose sight of this.



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