

Note: The sections in the Paper which are headed “What this tells us” will be the basis for the Panel’s recommendations.

Where questions are broken into life stages (early years, school years and adult years), you can provide responses to any or all life stages.

Please indicate clearly at the beginning of any responses you wish to remain confidential.

Unless indicated as confidential, responses will be treated as public information and published on our website. Please see the [Public Submissions Policy](#) for further information.

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Question One: Are there any key themes we have not identified to improve literacy across:

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

There are many references made to evidence based approaches and systematic literacy. As an educator with 40 years experience and a passionate interest in literacy I have questions and concerns about these terms and what they are specifically referring to. It is difficult to give unqualified agreement without specificity. Literacy is based on a strong foundation of oral language and the ability to speak, think and understand continues to be an imperative as students progress through school and into adulthood. Little reference was made to developing student’s oral language and supporting them to become critical and capable thinkers.

While explicit and systematic teaching of literacy skills, knowledge and understanding is imperative and a system approach would be optimal, I have grave concerns that we are heading towards a one size fits all program approach. Our learners are diverse from the moment they begin schooling and their needs are complex. I have been proud to work in a system that emphasises that the student is at the centre and the importance of knowing a learner and building on their strengths. I wonder how this will continue if we move to to a structured literacy approach. I worry what this will look like in classrooms and how it will meet the needs of all our learners. Teaching is a highly expertised craft that involves teachers responding to students, monitoring and adjusting to scaffold learning. I do not want to work in a system that puts a program above teacher knowledge and expertise.

In the paper there is only one reference to writing and the connection between reading and writing. ‘Reading and writing are complementary skills that have a reciprocal relationship’

I feel that reading has been prioritised and is being given more importance. In the classroom each area is of equal value and are interconnected. Students learn about reading and how to be a reader by writing and developing their authorial skills.

“Reading and writing are not only connected by reciprocal purposes, but according to the shared knowledge theory, readers also draw on knowledge while reading that overlaps with the knowledge they draw on when writing, and vice versa (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). Although reading and writing are not identical processes (Langer, 1986), the knowledge and cognitive systems that makes one possible makes the other possible, too.” (Graham, 2020) Graham, S. (2020). The Sciences of Reading and Writing Must Become More Fully Integrated. Reading Research Quarterly, 0(0), 1-10.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.332>

Luke and Freebody’s Four Resource model reminds us that learning to read is a complex process. Even learning to be a code breaker requires more than just applying phonic knowledge and skills. I am hoping that the details of this paper include continuing to teach learners the complex process of reading. As learners progress through their school years they continue to need explicit teaching and guidance to read increasingly complex texts for a variety of purposes. The Science of Reading has been named in the paper, however I would hope that members of the panel have had opportunities to read more widely and to consider the most up to date and well researched findings about learning to read. I hope that they have read research by Nell Duke and Kelly Cartwright and The Active View Of Reading. [The Science of Reading Progresses: Communicating Advances Beyond the Simple View of Reading \(foundationforlearningandliteracy.info\)](https://www.foundationforlearningandliteracy.info) This model builds on the simple view of reading and includes the vital areas of bridging processes and active self regulation. Teaching is a profession and as a member of the profession I am committed to ensuring I am familiar with current research and evidenced best practice. I would hope that the panel when they are making long term and vital decisions for our children are ensuring that they are widely read and consider all evidence in order to make optimal recommendations for our children and the future of our state.

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

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

The Early Years (0-4 years-old)

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

Make clear recommendations based on evidence for each of the three tiers. What content and practices should be used as part of quality classroom practice. What should wave 2 and wave 3 intervention look like and how will schools be supported to use best practice intervention to meet the individual needs of their learners.

Provide schools with clear advice and the resources to support student well being and ensure a positive culture where the pre conditions of learning are in place so that students are ready for learning. Included in this is ensuring that schools have access to support services and classrooms have support/people resources to best support the diverse range of learners.

Develop further resources/documents and professional learning and provide expert mentors to build teachers' capacity and support schools to develop consistent and aligned approaches to teaching and learning. Our system needs to be clear in what it recommends and provide support for teachers to build capacity in a respectful manner.

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

Question Three: 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)

The School Years (5-17 years-old)

The Adult Years (18+ years-old)

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

Question Five: Are there any other comments you would like to make?

I found it interesting that decodables were explained in this document and yet other vital pieces of information were missing. The revised Australian Curriculum clearly states that in Foundation “Beginning readers start with and practise reading using decodable texts that align with phonic development.” Then in Year One “Some students will continue to practise their reading with decodable texts that align with phonic development.” In both these years it is stated that readers should also be reading authentic texts. Learning to decode texts using phonic knowledge is an important skill however there are other reading strategies that learners should be taught right from the beginning.

” Given the absolute necessity of foundational word-reading skills, it is tempting to think that instruction should begin with a focus on developing those and later turn to comprehension.

However, research has supported a simultaneous, rather than sequential, model of reading instruction. Along with the development of phonological awareness, print concepts, and alphabet knowledge, young learners in preschool and early elementary school benefit from efforts to develop oral language comprehension, including efforts to develop oral comprehension of written language (i.e., through read-alouds; e.g., Cervetti, 2020; Swanson et al., 2011). As young learners begin to read texts themselves, comprehension instruction, alongside phonics and other foundational skills instruction, has an important place." Duke, Ward and Pearson.

While decodable texts have a place in learning to read so do other texts. I wonder why decodable texts are highlighted yet you did not discuss complex texts or the importance of reading a range of texts. I hope that while the focus is on ensuring learners develop the skills to read due weight is also given to learner engagement and motivation to read. If a child has a purpose for reading and is introduced to a variety of materials and purpose they will be more enthused in learning to read and continuing to read.