



# Evidence-based research for masterful literacy teaching

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# Executive summary

This paper presents the findings of evidence-based research in literacy education. It has been written to inform school leaders, teachers and other members of the school education community about the current state of knowledge regarding how best to improve literacy skills to maximise student outcomes.

The firm premise for the paper is that a substantial proportion of school effectiveness can be attributed to teachers, learning support personnel and the leadership of principals. A related premise is that masterful literacy teachers require deep understanding and knowledge of literacy processes and related theoretical underpinnings.

In what follows, various accounts of literacy education are presented that draw on major national and international studies to inform teachers in their efforts to improve literacy education for all students across all stages of schooling.

The paper is presented in three parts:

- *Accounts of literacy education* and the implications for curriculum planning and classroom practice
- *Key messages* from major national and international studies
- *School evaluation checklist* – guidelines for whole-school action

This paper is written in the context of the national focus on literacy education and the Victorian Department of Education's clear goal for improvement in the standards of literacy in primary and secondary schooling.

# Accounts of literacy education – implications for practice

Literacy education policy and research have generated various accounts of the nature of literacy and the features of quality literacy education in schooling and beyond. This part of the paper outlines these varying views. The aim is to inform the choices teachers make as they grapple with a variety of information regarding a range of approaches and views for improving literacy outcomes. The paper then moves on to provide an outline of some frameworks to inform practice.

What follows is organised around three contrasting approaches showing how these exemplify major debates in the literature: 1) the skills-based and whole language approaches; 2) the exclusively print-based and multiliteracies approaches; and 3) the cultural heritage and critical literacy approaches (Mills 2005). The following is necessarily a snapshot of some characteristics of these approaches.

Print-based approaches / Multiliteracies	
Print-based approaches	Multiliteracies
<p>Literacy instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mono-modal literacy with an emphasis exclusively on printed modes of communication</li> <li>▪ Construes literacy as primarily reading and writing – or print-based</li> </ul>	<p>Literacy instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasises the multidimensional nature of literacy (see p. 7) with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ greater variety of text forms associated with information communication technologies which are continually changing generating new literacies</li> <li>○ the plurality of texts coming from our culturally and linguistically diverse, globalised society</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Involves coordination of multiple literate capabilities – listening, viewing, reading, writing, speaking and critical thinking</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion</b> (<i>Print-based approaches / multiliteracies</i>)</p> <p>In this case the discussion is around relative emphases of each approach in school practice and how best to combine these approaches (new technologies and print-based literacy) to enhance learning. There is widespread agreement that print-based literacy is a necessary element in school practice but not sufficient of itself with new skills and competencies required for the changing world of work.</p> <p>The emergence of new technologies require a radical rethinking of literacy pedagogy with consideration of multiple modes of communication (see p. 7) and a focus on how technologies shape communication practices in local and global contexts (Wyatt-Smith &amp; Elkins, in press; Leu 2002).</p>	

While traditional (i.e. print-based) and new technologies have complementary roles in a range of contexts there is a need to change school curriculum design, instructional strategies and delivery modes to reflect new ways of using and creating knowledge.

Skills-based / Whole language	
Skills-based	Whole language
<p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whole understood from dynamics of parts</li> <li>▪ Focus on component parts where tasks are analysed and broken down into segmented parts – a generic set of portable skills</li> <li>▪ Claim a scientific approach to research – with detached objective point of view and use of deductive process</li> </ul> <p>Instructional approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifies units and individual skills in isolation</li> <li>▪ Learners are viewed as predominately passive where it is believed that without direct instruction some children will not develop or invent skills spontaneously</li> <li>▪ The role of the teacher to intervene regularly and systematically using explicit instruction or direct teaching methods</li> </ul> <p>Literacy instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasis on letter knowledge and phonics instruction – systematic code instruction</li> <li>▪ Literate practice is regarded as a fixed, static body of skills with a focus on ‘basic’ literacy skills through direct instruction</li> </ul>	<p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whole is viewed as more than the sum of its parts</li> <li>▪ Focus on contextual conditions and meaning making</li> <li>▪ Approach accepts that the observer and observed are connected rendering objectivity impossible with subjectivity in research inquiry an inseparable part of social phenomena</li> </ul> <p>Instructional approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stresses use in context and meaning</li> <li>▪ Learners are viewed as inherently active agents in their learning who construct their own knowledge in complex, challenging and collaborative learning environments with authentic tasks</li> <li>▪ Teachers provide assistance and guidance when required</li> </ul> <p>Literacy instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasis is on moving from meaningful units of language and highly contextualised texts to more abstract aspects of language</li> <li>▪ Less reliance on processing every characteristic of the word and letter – learn to read through being read to and being immersed in a literacy-rich environment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion</b> (<i>Skills-based / whole language</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recent national and international studies have been strong advocates for a skills-based approach with a focus on systemic direct teaching of phonics particularly in the early years of school.</li> <li>▪ These studies also recognise that the reading process involves more than word knowledge with several other strategies and requirements necessary including the reading of meaningful connected text.</li> <li>▪ Several have suggested that there is considerable agreement with the key question today about the balance of various approaches. From this vantage point the question is, how much and to what extent phonics instruction (including phonemic awareness) should be prioritised over other skills and strategies, and when should it be part of reading instruction?</li> </ul>	

The challenge for the masterful literacy teacher is not simply about choice of one approach over the other in all pedagogical contexts. Instead it is to design literacy learning opportunities that deliberately draw on elements of each approach, separately and in combination, taking account of needs of individual students.

Cultural heritage / Critical literacy	
Cultural heritage	Critical literacy
<p>Literacy instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasises the transmission of culture through the study of literature perceived to be of high quality</li> <li>▪ Merit ascribed to canonical works –other genres (e.g. picture books, popular texts, digital texts, romance and science fiction) are perceived to be of lesser value</li> <li>▪ Meaning is understood to reside in the text</li> </ul>	<p>Literacy instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasises that literacy and culture are fundamentally intertwined and that texts are ideologically saturated</li> <li>▪ Emphasises language use is context dependent, involves not only knowledge of generic structure and other linguistic features but also knowledge of how text conveys attitudes and values</li> <li>▪ There is need to consider the diverse purposes of literacy and to make available for scrutiny the belief systems presented in texts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion</b> (<i>cultural heritage / critical literacy</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On one side there is belief in the unchanging merit and meaning in historically ratified texts, but also implicit affirmation of the conservative systems of belief represented in these texts (Hollindale 1995).</li> <li>▪ On the other side texts are viewed as “ideological and involved in producing, reproducing and maintaining arrangements of power which are unequal” (Kamler &amp; Comber 1996, p. 1)</li> <li>▪ “While mastery of high levels of critical literacy does not automatically ensure that social class and power structures are transcended by the individual” (Mills 2005, p. 77) broadly speaking there is agreement that schools continue to provide opportunities for critical thinking in the classroom (Leu 2000).</li> </ul>	

The masterful teacher knows how to work with traditional valued texts while building in critical thinking opportunities for students to discover the ideological work of the texts in the world.

# Frameworks for coordinating the varying views

While the differing views are presented as discrete above, in classroom practice teachers routinely combine them variously to support student learning. What is important therefore is teachers' explicit knowledge about their work in making deliberate combinations for specific instructional stages and for providing particular learning opportunities based on identified student learning needs.

Quality literacy education involves teachers in:

- knowing that they are drawing on particular combinations
- knowing how these approaches in combination open up (and close down) learning opportunities for students
- monitoring the impact of these approaches and collecting assessment evidence to determine student outcomes within whole-school planning approaches.

This balancing and combining of approaches does not mean hitting a mid-point between contrasting views but rather a careful consideration of multiple theoretical views from across a range of sometimes contradictory methods or perspectives (Anstey & Bull 2003; Reid & Green 2004) bringing together a connective web of theory and approaches to provide each child with a quality learning experience (O'Shea et al. 1998).

As Pressley (2002, p. 337) describes 'balanced teaching is the orchestration of many components'. It is about masterful teachers weaving together these various approaches and views in response to the unique needs of individual students in local contexts.

Several literacy scholars have provided frameworks that attempt to capture the multiple perspectives and dimensions of literacy to make available to students the full repertoire of skills and competencies required in today's society. A summary table of these frameworks is provided below based on Unsworth (2002, p. 70).

Dimensions of literate practice – Unsworth (2002)	Three dimensions – Durrant and Green (2000)	Four roles of the literacy learner – Freebody & Luke (1990)
<b>Recognition</b> - involves learning to recognize and produce the verbal, visual and electronic codes that are used to construct and communicate meanings.	<b>Operational</b> - involves being able to read and write within a range of contexts in an adequate and appropriate manner employing conventional print and electronic media.	<b>Code-breaker</b> - the practices required to 'crack' the codes and systems of written and spoken language and visual images.
<b>Reproduction</b> - involves understanding and producing conventional visual and verbal text forms that construct and communicate the established systematic knowledge of cultural institutions.	<b>Cultural</b> - involves understanding texts and information in relation to the contexts- real life practices- in which they are produced, received and used. Here literacy acts are not only context specific but also entail a specific content. Rather than being literate in and of itself but of being literate with regard to something, some aspect of knowledge or experience.	<b>Text participant</b> - the practices required to build and construct cultural meanings from texts. That is, how do the ideas represented in the text string together? What cultural resources can be brought to bear on the text?  <b>Text user</b> - the practices required to use texts effectively in everyday, face to face situations. That is, how do the uses of this text shape its composition? What do I and others do with this text?
<b>Reflection</b> - which necessitates an understanding that all social practices, and hence all literacies, are socially constructed. Because of this, literacies are selective in including certain values and understandings and excluding others. This entails interrogating the visual and verbal codes to make explicit how other choices of visual and verbal resources construct alternative views.	<b>Critical</b> – it is based on the understanding that social practices and their meaning systems are always selective and sectional; they represent particular interpretations and classifications. It involves being able to innovate, transform, improve and add value to social practices and the literacies associated with them.	<b>Text analyst</b> - the practice required to analyse, critique and second-guess text. That is, what kind of person, with what interests and values, could both write and read this naively and unproblematically? What is this text trying to do to me? In whose interests? Which positions, voices and interests are at play? Which are silent and absent?

None of these frameworks is advocating a particular order for teaching or hierarchy for working with the different dimensions of literacy but rather view them as providing a useful template for coordinating and addressing these different dimensions simultaneously where 'literate practice is ideally an integrated expression of all the roles and dimensions in question' (Durrant & Green 2000, p. 102).

# Key messages from the research

This section documents the key messages from recent major studies and meta-analyses that draw on a range of different methodological and disciplinary perspectives providing different lenses through which to explore effective provision of literacy education. It is considered that a sound basis for action comes from evidence from multiple sources, where no single study, methodology or finding is considered a sufficient basis for action. The greatest challenge for masterful teachers is to bring together this wide variety of information into a useful framework that informs practice.

The key messages have been distilled from published literacy education research and represent a synthesis of findings and insights about quality literacy learning in schooling. The focus therefore is necessarily on students, teachers and classroom practices, schools and school leadership, and communities.

## Literacy is multidimensional

Fundamental changes in society (e.g., the emergence of radio, television and mass digital computer and online communications) require new ways of thinking about literacy.

To be a literate member of society today students need to master three overlapping media of communication:

- *Oral* – the systems of spoken language which includes spoken English and other community languages
- *Written* – the systems of alphabetic writing and print culture which includes reading, writing, handwriting and spelling
- *Multi-mediated* – the blended systems of linguistic and non-linguistic sounds, and visual representations of digital and electronic media (The State of Queensland 2000).

While there appears to be an international and national focus on the 'basic skills' (e.g. phonics) most studies acknowledge the multidimensional nature of literacy (Education and Science Committee 2001; National Reading Panel 2000).

Several studies support an integrated approach to literacy education to include 'the development of oral language, vocabulary, grammar, reading fluency, comprehension, and the literacies of new technologies' (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005a, p. 14).

## Instructional approaches need to be systematically organised over time in response to diagnosed student need – three waves of provision

A number of stages of schooling have been proposed that suggest a model of intervention at different levels of need, based on *three waves of provision*:

1. The first wave refers to initial whole class teaching with the importance of quality first teaching emphasised to minimise the risk of children falling behind. A balanced literacy curriculum and a comprehensive view of literacy is encouraged with competence in printed

texts (i.e. word and text level knowledge including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and writing), viewing, speaking, listening and critical thinking. Most studies acknowledge the importance of 'breaking the code' or word skills in the early years and particularly systematic phonics instruction (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005a; Education and Science Committee 2001; House of Commons 2005; Louden et al. 2000; National Reading Panel 2000; Snow et al. 1998).

2. The second wave refers to early interventions for those students falling behind which may be individual or group interventions. The emphasis is on a wide range and balance of literacy approaches including explicit teaching of sound-letter associations and phonological awareness using direct and strategy instruction approaches (Ellis 2005; Louden et al. 2000). Intervention taking place outside the classroom must be linked with the regular classroom through close communication between the teacher providing the intervention and the classroom teacher.
3. The third wave refers to subsequent interventions for older students still experiencing difficulties in literacy. This minority of students require highly qualified specialist assistance (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005a; Snow et al. 1998). Some argue for structured, explicit word-level instruction (Wheldall & Beaman 2000; e.g. MUTILIT program) and others focus on authentic texts with real world connections, strategy instruction to foster metacognitive skills, student autonomy and choice in lesson design (Luke et al. 2002) - these are not mutually exclusive. It is important to consider optimal engagement and motivation with support provided before persistent failure occurs and with any support continually monitored and adjusted based on such assessment (Alloway et al. 2002).

## Literacy education needs to take account of the major transitions during schooling and ensure continuity between classrooms and year levels

As students experience several transitions during schooling (preschool and primary years, primary and secondary years) it is important to be aware of the need to put programs in place to foster a seamless transition between the stages of schooling (Hill et al. 1998).

On a smaller scale is the transition between classrooms and year levels with the importance of whole-school planning and involvement in literacy initiatives emphasised to ensure continuity of programs, initiatives and any new innovations – the importance of school leadership and specialist support for whole-school approaches is discussed further below (Cumming et al. 1998; Department of Education, Science and Training 2005a; Dilena & van Kraayenoord 1996; Lankshear et al. 1997).

This includes dialogue and sharing of information between the various levels of schooling and if possible a highly trained specialist teacher responsible for linking the whole-school planning process (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005a).

## All teachers are teachers of literacy and need to teach explicitly the literacy demands of curriculum learning in all stages of schooling

Literacy teaching is viewed as continuing through schooling in all areas of the curriculum and is seen as the responsibility of all teachers (i.e. primary, middle and secondary years).

Teachers need to be aware of the interface between a specific curriculum and its literacies – or ‘curriculum literacies’. As teachers plan and design curricular tasks they need to take into account the specific literacy demands of the particular curriculum area (Cumming et al. 1998; Wyatt-Smith & Cumming 2003).

## **Effective, supportive leadership is a critical factor in providing a systematic, whole-school approach to literacy education**

Effective provision requires staff and school leadership to work in a coordinated manner with opportunities for regular professional exchanges and collaboration. It is important for school leaders to ensure there is an infrastructure for necessary resources and support (including time) for ongoing professional development and creation of learning clusters with other schools (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005b; Education & Science Committee 2001; House of Commons 2005; Rose 2006).

Where possible, the employment of a literacy specialist is recommended (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005a; Snow et al. 1998) to coordinate a whole-school literacy program ensuring continuity and to identify students at risk of failure, to offer informal and formal professional development to colleagues, organise support, maintain and analyse a database on performance outcomes, and monitor progress. The professional development offered to colleagues may take the form of a coaching model where teachers are provided with opportunities to observe, critique and reflect on good practice.

## **Explicit provision in the school timetable for literacy education is important for coverage of the full-range of literate capabilities**

It is important that whole-school timetabling allows for focused time with minimal disruptions for the full range of literacy activities – particularly in the early years of schooling (Rose 2006; Snow et al. 1998).

Time is also a factor in terms of the careful pacing of lessons to allow students time to ask questions, share their work and make necessary links to previous learning.

## **Student motivation and engagement are critical determinants of quality literacy outcomes**

Student motivation, engagement and self-efficacy are important for improved literacy outcomes. Student engagement is related to how competent and confident students are about their literacy abilities.

Development of competence may involve a number of strategies including:

- the co-development of core learning goals by the teacher and students
- real world connections
- interesting texts and tasks (e.g., debating and oral performances, use of technology, role-play, movies, videos games, production of magazines)
- encouraging collaboration among students in a learning community

- positive feedback for successful engagement with literacy practices

(Alloway et al. 2002; Alvermann 2001; Guthrie & Wigfield 2000; Snow et al. 1998)

Ultimately it is important to teach the skills and literate practices that will enable students to assume their role as participating members of society (Department of Education and Training 2006).

## Monitoring and assessment are essential elements in literacy provision at both an individual and program level

Assessment needs to be understood as involving the principled collection of assessment evidence of student learning over time and in a range of contexts. When assessment is understood as evidence-based practice, learning and teaching can be informed by that evidence.

The use of continuous and varied means of monitoring and assessment are essential to build up detailed profiles at both class and individual student levels to inform planning and teaching and permit timely responses when difficulty or delay is apparent (Curriculum Corporation 1999; Department of Education, Science and Training 2005a; Hill et al. 2002; Loudon et al. 2000; Snow et al. 1998).

When considering the multidimensional nature of literacy no single assessment tool or type of tool (e.g. paper and pencil) can provide all necessary information. No decisions about an individual's education should be made on the basis of test scores alone with a need for multiple sources of evidence (American Educational Research Association 2000).

In addition to student focused assessment, monitoring of particular program or intervention effectiveness needs to be considered including the use of innovative assessment instruments for the formulation of better targeted programs (The State of Queensland 2000).

## Classroom talk is a key medium for learning with clarity of classroom talk essential for effective literacy education

An important dimension of literacy is the oral medium with a focus on listening, speaking, and classroom talk. Talk (teacher and student) should be at the heart of the enacted curriculum. Effective learning is a socially interactive process that is conducted primarily through talk and active listening on the part of the teacher and the student (Department for Education and Children's Services 1995).

Student talk may assist teachers to gain a greater depth of knowledge about students' learning and provide improved opportunities for immediate follow-up and reteaching compared to written forms of assessment. A variety of activities that promote productive student talk allows students to revisit and refine their knowledge and skills (Cormack & Wignall 1998).

Clarity of classroom talk is essential. Teachers need to examine the clarity of their talk and ensure they make clear the particular focus or goal of any literacy activity.

Students' answers may be heard as an analysis of teacher questions (talk), rather than as a lack of student understanding or knowledge (Freebody et al. 1995).

Teachers need to be mindful of the extended periods of listening placed on students constantly checking how students are engaging with and making meaning of the classroom talk (Cumming et al. 1998).

## The emergence of new technologies requires a rethinking of literacy pedagogy

The impact of new technologies needs to be addressed with possibilities ranging from the use of technology as an instructional tool for assisting with teaching basic word skills, to a blending of traditional literacy with mastery of new technologies enabling new literacies and new ways of expression (Leu 2002, Leu et al. 2005).

It is important that teachers have opportunities to gain competence and confidence in the new technologies in face of a student body that have grown up in the IT world (Lankshear et al. 1997).

## Productive home-school partnerships are a contributing factor for effective literacy provision

Parents and carers are an important part of effective provision with parents being offered more choice in relation to their children's education (e.g., Tutorial Voucher) but also expected to take more responsibility (Louden, et al. 2000).

Several writers (e.g. Leler 1983; Louden et al. 2000) have suggested that schools facing the challenge of developing productive partnerships work on a developmental basis moving through several levels from schools as transmitter of expertise, to schools as sharer of expertise, and finally to school and home as equal sources of information and experience.

Other factors for ensuring productive partnerships include:

- whole school involvement
- employment of key staff to facilitate partnerships
- professional development of all staff
- movement from deficit views towards some family backgrounds recognising homes of children from ethnic and disadvantaged backgrounds as rich sources of literate practices (Cairney & Ruge 1998; Freebody et al. 1995)

## It is important to acknowledge and respond to student diversity

When considering the increasing diversity of the student population it is important to develop a clear, consistent professional vocabulary for discussing and planning literacy programs to meet the diverse range of students. This vocabulary should move beyond stereotypic deficit views to one of high expectations and a view that all students can learn. Given this, there is a need for pre-service and ongoing professional development around teacher beliefs and views regarding diverse student populations (The State of Queensland 2000).

## Teacher education is vital with substantial proportion of school effectiveness attributed to teachers

A substantial proportion of school effectiveness can be attributed to teachers with teacher effects being cumulative and additive (Hattie 2003; Hill & Rowe 1998, Louden 2005). There is a need for a greater focus on teacher education in both pre-service and in-service programs.

For pre-service programs, there is a need for more time to be devoted to preparing teachers to teach literacy and an improvement of professional experience components of programs in terms of length, quality and structure.

For in-service programs short, one-off courses are deemed insufficient. Rather teachers require ongoing, coordinated approaches to professional development (Louden 2005). This should include:

- time to work and collaborate with colleagues within schools and within clusters of schools
- opportunities to talk with expert teachers and for reflection on practice
- intensive, sustained, theoretically-based yet practically-situated learning
- opportunities to observe good practice, to be involved in coaching and mentoring processes and to take time for reflection.

# School self-evaluation checklist

The brief outline of the key messages from the research demonstrates that effective literacy teaching is not simple, it requires professional skill and knowledge to bring together a connective web of theory and approaches to provide each child with quality learning experience. The following provides a set of guidelines derived from research for schools to consider when working with their particular student cohort. If the answer is no to any of the guidelines for action then school leaders may wish to review their provision. Effective leadership has been recognised as a critical factor in efforts to improve literacy outcomes. In using the guidelines below it is assumed that the school leadership team will work with teachers across year levels and discipline areas to identify strategic directions for implementing the key messages in ways responsive to their context.

Guidelines: School self-evaluation checklist	
Key Messages	Guidelines for action Does the school's literacy provision include:
Literacy is multidimensional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ in the early years, explicit instruction and practice in word skills (e.g. phonemic awareness) in concert with other aspects of reading (vocabulary knowledge, fluency, comprehension, use of text and critical analysis of text) and competence in other dimensions of literacy - writing, viewing, speaking, listening, critical thinking and the new technologies</li> <li>▪ a well-integrated program where the demands of the various literacy dimensions are the focus of explicit teaching and assessment and are situated in the curriculum</li> </ul>
Instructional approaches need to be systematically organised over time in response to diagnosed student need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a three wave approach, with early high quality classroom programs, early intervention for those at risk of falling behind, followed by a range of interventions for those older students experiencing difficulties in literacy</li> </ul>
Literacy education needs to take account of the major transitions during schooling and ensure continuity between classrooms and year levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a whole-school planning approach with particular attention to fostering a seamless transition and continuity of approaches and pedagogy across the year levels</li> <li>▪ transition programs during key junctures of transition between school levels (e.g., pre-school-primary school; primary-secondary school)</li> </ul>
All teachers are teachers of literacy and need to explicitly address the literacy demands of curriculum learning throughout all stages of schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a distribution of literacy support across the years of schooling while recognising that initial early support is crucial in reducing the number of students requiring support in the later years</li> <li>▪ an awareness of the interface of a specific curriculum and its literacies (i.e. curriculum literacies) taking into account the specific literacy demands of the particular curriculum area</li> </ul>
Effective, supportive leadership is a critical factor in providing a systematic, whole-school approach to literacy education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an infrastructure of necessary resources and ongoing support for literacy initiatives including opportunities and time for regular professional exchanges</li> <li>▪ the appointment of a well-qualified literacy specialist as a member of the school leadership team charged with ensuring continuity of literacy focus across the school, offering informal and formal professional development to colleagues, identifying students at risk of failure, conferring with parents and teachers, organising support, maintaining and providing an analysis of a database on performance outcomes, and monitoring progress</li> </ul>
Explicit provision in the timetable for literacy education is important for coverage of the full-range of literate capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ suitable allocation of time for regular uninterrupted daily literacy lessons (primary)</li> <li>▪ careful pacing and sequencing of lessons and time to take account of the specific literacy demands of the particular curriculum area</li> </ul>
Student motivation and engagement are critical determinants of quality literacy outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the use of well-documented practices that ensure optimum student motivation and engagement (e.g., co-development of core learning goals, use of real world connections and interesting texts and tasks, positive feedback)</li> </ul>

Guidelines: School self-evaluation checklist	
Key Messages	Guidelines for action Does the school's literacy provision include:
Monitoring and assessment are essential elements in literacy provision at both an individual and program level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the use of continuous and varied means of assessment, including systematic diagnostic techniques, to inform planning and teaching at an individual and class level</li> <li>▪ a collection of relevant evidence to regularly review the mix of programs, to ascertain program effectiveness based on student outcomes.</li> </ul>
Classroom talk is a key medium for learning with clarity of classroom talk essential for effective literacy education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an awareness of the key role of teacher talk in facilitating classroom learning with particular attention to clarity about what is to be learnt, listening purposefully to student talk as a way of gaining an awareness of student understandings and hearings of teacher talk, and being mindful of the extended periods of listening placed on students</li> </ul>
The emergence of new technologies requires a rethinking of literacy pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ preparation of teachers to engage with the demands and potentials of new technologies</li> </ul>
Productive home-school partnerships are a contributing factor for effective literacy provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ working together with the community to establish productive two-way partnerships which acknowledge the school and home as equal sources of experience and support</li> </ul>
It is important to acknowledge and respond to student diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ engaging with issues of student diversity including exploration of, and respect for, community knowledges, students' home backgrounds and the impact of cultural and linguistic backgrounds</li> <li>▪ critical reflection by teachers of their accounts and assumptions about diversity and the professional vocabulary employed for discussing and planning literacy programs to meet the diverse range of students</li> </ul>
Teacher education is vital with substantial proportion of school effectiveness attributed to teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an allocation of professional development resources for the establishment of coordinated and ongoing approaches to professional development in literacy education</li> <li>▪ professional development that is intensive, sustained, research and theory based; involves practically-situated learning, with opportunities to observe good practice; and include coaching and mentoring processes with time for reflection on changes in practice</li> </ul>

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