Literate Futures

The Teacher Summary Version

Report of the Literacy Review for Queensland State Schools

Queensland Government
Education Queensland

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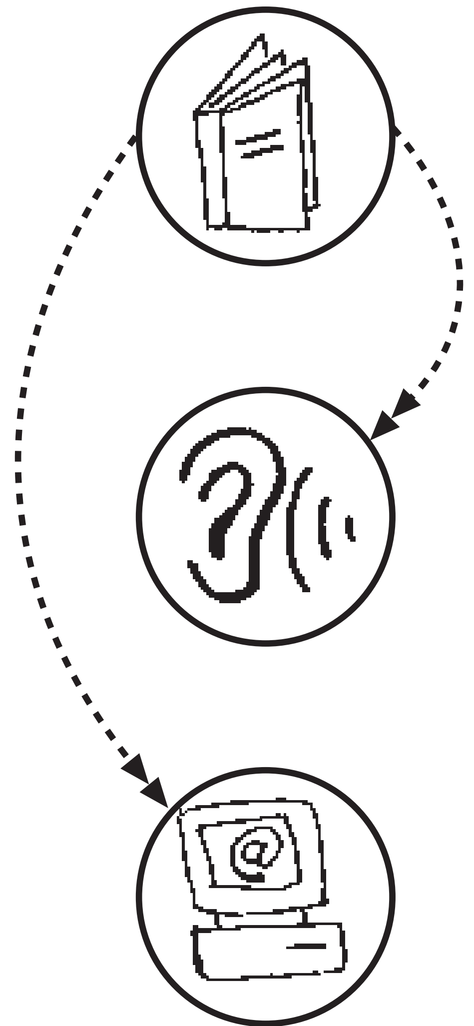

Queensland Government
Education Queensland

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This is a summary of a much more comprehensive document, *Literate Futures*, which is available from the Education Queensland website at http://education.qld.gov.au/

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Foreword

It is notable that the authors of this summary document of the Literacy Report have chosen to feature examples of effective practice by individual teachers. As I visit schools throughout Queensland, I have also been reminded that student achievement depends on the actions of dedicated professionals, assisted by support staff, aides and parent volunteers.

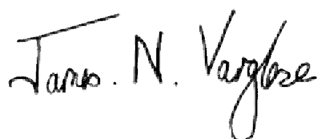
Strategies for strengthening the organisational capacities of schools and the competencies of teachers are at the heart of what the Literacy Review Report recommends to Education Queensland to assist our students in developing their 'literate futures'.

I am delighted with the extent of consultation with teachers and administrators across the State that underpins the recommendations in the report. The strategic implications of the Literacy Strategy have also been thoroughly examined and debated and provide an excellent platform for our organisation.

It is clear that we need to integrate and link our initiatives involving communications and information technologies with the core business of continual improvements in student literacy standards. This is the longer-term goal identified in *Queensland State Education — 2010* and one of our key challenges.

I express the sincere thanks of many staff to Professor Allan Luke of the University of Queensland, and Chair of our new Council for Educational Renewal, for his leadership in completing *Literate Futures*. I know that he was greatly assisted in this task by Professor Peter Freebody of Griffith University.

I am sure that the challenges established by this document for the system as a whole and for individual schools and staff will be taken up with energy, enthusiasm and commitment. I personally look forward to meeting these challenges, to ensure the literate futures of our students.



Jim Varghese
Director-General of Education
October 2000

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Introduction

This is a summary of a much more comprehensive document, *Literate Futures*, which is available from the Education Queensland website at http://education.qld.gov.au

The full Report contains a great deal of further information, ideas and argument:

- A background and chronology section that places the Literacy Strategy in broader State, national and international contexts;
- A set of effective practice vignettes for lower primary, upper primary and secondary teachers and Support Teachers: Learning Difficulties;
- A detailed outline and analysis of the student literacy performance context, drawing on State testing data, and national and international research literature;
- A set of selected extracts from submissions and quotes from meetings conducted around the State for the Review;
- A set of ten brief school case studies that exemplify effective literacy practices;
- A detailed Strategic Plan;
- A concluding summary outlining the implications of the Literacy Strategy;
- A detailed reference list;
- Lists of the individuals and organisations who contributed to or assisted the Review.

What is literacy and how is it changing?

The task for the educational community — teachers and administrators, parents and community stakeholders, researchers and teacher educators — is to begin a rigorous and ongoing debate over which repertoires of literacy practices students will need in the economies, cultures, communities and institutions of the new Queensland. To begin that debate requires that we define literacy in broader, more future-oriented terms than previously:

> *Literacy is the flexible and sustainable mastery of a repertoire of practices with the texts of traditional and new communications technologies via spoken language, print, and multimedia.*

By 'flexible', we mean that students are able to adjust and modify their performance to better meet contextual demands and varying situations. By 'sustainable', we emphasise maintenance and achievement over time. 'Mastery' involves performance characterised by high achievement. A 'repertoire' involves a set of options for complex performance of literacy practices.

From infancy and across their life pathways, children engage with spoken language, with print-saturated environments, and with visual, iconic images and texts of everyday life, mass media and consumer cultures. They must learn to deal critically with a range of texts. They have to learn to cope with a virtually infinite range of spoken, written and electronic texts on a daily basis.

Currently, to become literate members of information societies, students must master at least three overlapping media of communication:

- *Oral:* the systems of spoken language. This may be spoken English but also includes, for many Queensland children, other community languages spoken by their families and peers;
- *Written:* the systems of alphabetic writing and print culture. This includes traditional 'basics' of reading, writing, handwriting and spelling. It also includes those other formalised codes that have developed in parallel to spoken and written language, such as braille and sign language;
- *Multi-mediated:* the blended systems of linguistic and non-linguistic sounds, and visual representations of digital and electronic media. These require so-called multiliteracies that entail the processing, interpretation and critical analysis of online and on-screen sources of information that blend print information with visual, audio and other forms of expression (The New London Group 1996). This includes what have variously been called media literacy and computer literacy over the past decade.

Mastery requires not only basic skills, but also the capacity to stretch, blend, expand and exchange these skills for others to suit varied and specialised tasks. It is useful to think of literacy in terms of a *repertoire of practices* that, like the skills of a musician or tradesperson, expands and develops as one faces new technologies, techniques, possibilities, problems and contexts.

What we need is a systematic way for schools and teachers to begin to map and chart this new territory. How do we describe and categorise the repertoires of practice that are required? Several Australian States have formally adopted the 'four resources framework' (Freebody & Luke 1990; Luke & Freebody 1998) to describe and structure their literacy strategies and recommendations about balance in teaching. Several schools and many teachers and researchers have also used the framework, which breaks the repertoire of practices students must master into four broad roles:

- *Code Breaker:* The practices required to 'crack' the codes and systems of written and spoken language and visual images;
- *Meaning Maker:* The practices required to build and construct cultural meanings from texts;
- *Text User:* The practices required to use texts effectively in everyday, face-to-face situations;
- *Text Analyst:* The practices required to analyse, critique and second-guess texts.

What this means is that we can begin to chart and describe the multiliteracy practices that students need to master along two axes: media of communication and roles of the literate:

Communication media Roles of the literate	Oral	Print	Multimedia
Code Breaker			
Meaning Maker			
Text User			
Text Analyst			

Broadening of current scope in many schools, to include Text Analyst role:

Communication media Roles of the literate	Oral	Print	Multimedia
Code Breaker			
Meaning Maker			
Text User			
Text Analyst	↓	↓	

Broadening of scope in many schools, to include multimedia modes of communication:

Communication media Roles of the literate	Oral	Print	Multimedia
Code Breaker			→
Meaning Maker			→
Text User			→
Text Analyst	↓	↓	

New times require broadening of scope both ways:

Communication media Roles of the literate	Oral	Print	Multimedia
Code Breaker			→
Meaning Maker			→
Text User			→
Text Analyst	↓	↓	

These multiliteracies are already taught and learned in many Queensland schools, but the Queensland Literacy Strategy that follows is an attempt to recognise, consolidate and generalise the many effective approaches currently being undertaken by teachers and schools. It is also an attempt to move Queensland schools into the demands of this century based on a constructive, proactive engagement with new multiliteracies.

What purpose is served by a literacy strategy?

The Queensland Literacy Strategy is an attempt to refocus our resources on the core business of teaching and learning literacy in classrooms. An effective literacy strategy must not be an 'add-on' of systems for accountability or reporting of performance. It must be focused on enhancing and renewing teaching. At the same time, Australian schools are facing complex issues about relationships between centralised control and local school management, between accountability for funding and student outcomes, and about the local flexibility and capacity building required to meet community needs.

Accordingly, we have adopted the following principles to guide this Strategy:

- *Literacy is core business that is already occurring in every classroom, every subject area and every school — it is not an 'add-on' for only some teachers or for some students.*
- *We need to acknowledge, document and consolidate effective approaches to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment focused on literacy development of students.*
- *Systemic educational frameworks and support mechanisms for schools to exchange and proliferate these approaches on a statewide and cluster basis are crucial, along with a recognition that these activities must be generated, owned and sustained by local schools.*
- *New times call for new efficiencies, new economies and smarter teaching — principally by enhancing local exchange, professional development, and consolidation of existing resources.*

Our aim here is to provide principled, research-based frameworks for guiding the development of whole-school literacy programs and effective classroom literacy practices. We need to build whole-school plans that are based on close analysis of local and community resources and informed professional analysis of diagnostic data and possible curriculum and teaching approaches. What this requires is direction setting, guidance and the marshalling of resources within Education Queensland.

The purpose of this Strategy is to ensure that Queensland schools lead the nation in productive and innovative approaches to literacy. It sets the conditions for Queensland schools and teachers to build literacy education in ways that maintain our commitment to traditional standards of mastery with reading and writing, and begin to blend these with standards of mastery of new technologies, new literacies and new ways of expression and interpretation. It offers a forward-looking vision of the repertoire of literacy skills and practices our children need.

The Literacy Strategy also sets out to positively embrace the diversity of Queensland students and communities and to translate the varied skills, knowledge and practices that children bring to and use in their communities and homes into results that will enhance their life pathways and opportunities. This Strategy sets a context for the recognition and furthering of the quality literacy teaching that is underway in Education Queensland schools, and it provides a road map for future directions.

Why does Education Queensland need a literacy strategy?

Recent initiatives in literacy education have combined with school-based management and local decision making to produce a truly wide variety of policies and practices relating to literacy education. Yet this variety is so extensive and eclectic that our efforts are at risk of losing their way. Nor has this variety sufficiently engaged with recent advances in our understandings of communities and curricular reform, teaching and literacy learning, or the impact of new technologies on literacy. Our response is not to re-establish a centralised 'control' over these efforts — quite the contrary.

The research reviewed in *Literate Futures* shows that effective literacy education relies on teachers' professionalism, local flexibility, and innovation in program development at the school level. Teachers need to have the skills and time to read and analyse community and student cultural change, and to modulate their programs on that basis, selecting and developing approaches that show demonstrable changes in student outcomes. However, they cannot do this without intellectual leadership and access to useful research and theory-based frameworks.

It is also important to take stock of student test and outcomes data in state schools. It is clear to us that there are no indications in the data that there are serious documentable declines in literacy performance in Queensland, even less evidence that there is a crisis. What is evident is the ongoing under-provision to particular groups of students, and a potentially counterproductive but forceful discourse of 'new deficits' that runs the risk of blaming students, their families and communities for literacy problems.

Those groups showing consistently low levels of performance on these literacy tests are: boys, Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students, students for whom English is not a first language, students living in socioeconomically disadvantaged circumstances, and in some cases non-urban students.

An important point to note here is that the data effects of these groups are related to complex interactions among them, and that these interactions are not well documented or understood. Further, these groups are fluid; they are not clubs with single membership criteria. There are two issues related to this:

- First, treating the traditional target groups as hard-and-fast categories in the community is simply empirically unfounded;
- Second, treating these groups as homogenous, at the system and school level, can lead to counterproductive and countereducational interventions and outcomes.

Unless we recognise the local complexity and diversity of target groups, we run the risk of creating systematic mismatches between students and interventions. We know that basic print reading and writing are necessary to avoid economic marginalisation, but mobility and access to higher incomes, economic and social power, and improved life chances and outcomes already require new repertoires of skills and competencies. Perhaps the biggest challenge for the Literacy Strategy is to help Queensland students, teachers, schools and communities manage this gradual and unprecedented transition from industrial to information-based cultures and economies and from print-based to multi-mediated education and schooling.

Another reason Queensland needs a literacy strategy relates to whether we are making best use of the resources available to us. At present, there is over $114 million of State funding and a large number of augmenting programs for literacy in Queensland. Additionally, a substantial core of school operating grants is focused on literacy and literacy-related teaching, materials, assessment and specialised intervention. From educational and fiscal perspectives, literacy

education remains the core business of state schooling. Yet there has been no recent systematic survey of activities in the field, or of the materials and approaches teachers use. This strategy seeks to redress at least part of that need.

What priority areas for action arose from the Literacy Review?

The following set of statements captures some dominant perceptions of current literacy practices and issues, as presented to the Review:

- 'The early years of schooling are foundational for literacy development'
- 'Literacy develops via a sequence of speaking, reading and writing modes'
- 'Schools have to cope with complex social issues masked as literacy problems'
- 'Early literacy identification and intervention are crucial for many children'
- 'Meeting diverse student needs requires specialised packages and training'
- 'Whole-school planning is essential to meet diverse literacy learning needs'
- 'Syllabus documents provide inadequate advice on literacy development'
- 'Literacy isn't a key organising principle for secondary school programs'
- 'Secondary teachers assume basic literacy skills are developed in primary'
- 'Accurate, relevant literacy data isn't provided on students entering Year 8'
- 'Specialist secondary subject teachers aren't trained to remediate literacy'
- 'Professional development, especially in teaching reading, is a priority task'
- 'Pre-service teacher education has failed to provide adequate preparation'
- 'Allocative funding is no guarantee of effective school literacy strategies'

These themes do not capture all the literacy issues presented to the Review. They should not be taken as either exhaustive or factual, as some issues, like vocational education, new workplaces and life pathways, and school to work and school to further education transitions, went virtually without comment in the Review process.

From these themes and other research into related literacy strategies used in other jurisdictions, a set of four key areas for goal-setting and priority action were identified for Queensland state schools :

- *Student diversity:* the challenges raised by diverse students and school communities, and young people's increasingly diverse life experiences and pathways;
- *Whole-school programs and community partnerships:* the challenges of renewal, integration and balance of literacy programs within schools conducted in partnership with parents, other educational service providers and community organisations;
- *The teaching of reading:* the challenge of a shared, understandable professional vocabulary and dialogue around the teaching of reading;
- *Future literacies:* the challenges raised by multiliteracies, new technologies and new work practices.

The four priority areas have implications for all grade levels, subjects, and disciplinary fields, and hence all schools. Below we report findings in each of these priority areas in relation to all three broad age/grade bands: early childhood years, primary years, and middle to post-compulsory years.

Student diversity

Queensland State Education — 2010 provides an overview of the changing demographics and community profiles for the new Queensland. Key points are:

- Community diversity has become the norm rather than the exception.

- New configurations of poverty have impacted on non-urban 'edge cities' particularly hard, with increased family mobility, intrastate mobility by families looking for work, inexpensive costs of living and housing, and other community factors.
- A changing economy is creating new fields of work and economic activity, some based on industries like mass media and popular culture.

Diversity also has to do with the kinds of cultural, economic and social changes that are occurring in life pathways. Young people need to be prepared to become literate participants in diverse social contexts outside of schools.

What this means is that literacy educators need to learn to 'read' the signs and products of diversity, and to develop teaching that translates the resources and capital that students bring to schools into productive educational pathways leading out into these same diverse, uncertain life pathways, jobs and community contexts.

Our review of the data on student achievement suggested several trends: an overall satisfactory level of State performance, but with identifiably at-risk and under-provided groups. However, we noted that the assumption that Aboriginal status or Torres Strait Islander status, second language status, location or gender are themselves indicators of risk does not reflect the research findings or offer productive ways forward. It is clear that the *single strongest indicator of under-provision appears to be socioeconomic status*, and that this factor interacts with these other categorisations in complex ways.

Queensland has the largest proportion of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students of any state system, but increasingly their performance has begun to vary greatly depending on location, gender, and particularly on socioeconomic status and its implications for access to quality learning outcomes. At the same time, the cultural diversity of the State has increased (using current Commonwealth classification techniques), with currently almost 9000 English-as-a-second-language-funded, non-English-speaking background (NESB) students. But these classification techniques themselves can be a problem. NESB families range from business migrants to political refugee populations, from Indigenous students who speak a second dialect of English to children born in Australia of migrant second-language-speaking parents. Serious questions have been raised about the adequacy of categories for identifying and classifying non-English-speaking students.

Teachers also report that there is a high percentage of 'hidden' second language needs, particularly among Indigenous students and children of first generation migrants. Because these children fall between the 'gaps' of classification for funding, they are frequently turning up as needing other kinds of remediation, often without additional funding. This situation needs addressing.

Given that the educational issues and challenges presented by change are not going to diminish, we need to consider how this change affects literacy, and how to manage this change. Our key point is that diversity is not simply a matter of changing the clientele input, of expecting that the State, media, government, or other social service agencies can fix the apparent deficits of cultural and economic resources that children do or do not bring to school. Others are making efforts in this regard as part of a larger social policy, and in place-specific strategies like the current Cape York Partnership Plan.

It appears that schools can best cultivate home–school links and relationships on a local basis. We encountered several schools that had successfully mobilised parents, community Elders and others in tutoring, teacher aide work and parent education programs. Such two-way parent–school relationship programs also tend to focus on the exchange of knowledge about community linguistic and cultural resources, in which teachers and administrators can learn about their students' community contexts and literacy practices. State and regional strategies have, to date, been less successful.

Teachers and administrators reported to us that they were encountering more students with learning difficulties across the board. Teachers tended to use a descriptive vocabulary of deficit, speaking in general terms about 'oral language problems', about 'school socialisation difficulties' and 'behaviour management problems'. These, specifically, were linked to boys, to students from lower socioeconomic and economically marginalised families and communities, to some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and to some migrants.

At the same time, the student assessment data suggest to us that the patterns of systematic under-provision for literacy achievement, as measured by relatively limited standardised achievement results, can be localised in terms of specific but diverse groups. We have reported here that the students who apparently are experiencing problems with literacy tend to come from groups with particular combinations of poverty, gender, language and culture. We noted that a more complex analysis of these interactions was possible and needed, but at present it did not appear that free-standing status — for example, being a boy or being from a rural community or being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander — could be taken as an index of risk in literacy achievement. What is needed is a more complex analysis that begins to break down how these factors interact with socioeconomic risk, that is, with poverty. What this suggests is that 'broad banded' approaches are perhaps less effective than targeted approaches based on a finer-grained analysis of who is at risk in which district and school populations.

However, the extent to which early literacy is cause, correlation or effect of poverty remains a complex and debatable point, with a long history of research and theoretical dispute. What is obvious is that teachers' observations that children from at-risk backgrounds are more likely to have literacy problems is accurate. What is problematic is that teachers' understanding of how and in what ways configurations of risk influence, torque or mediate classroom performance is highly variable. Clearly, the profession lacks a clear, consistent vocabulary with which to discuss, debate and plan to cope with these configurations. As a result, there is a tendency to read a range of factors such as lack of early print knowledge, differing cultural and social patterns of childhood, behavioural problems, difficulties in school-based socialisation, nutritional input, and even differing family configuration, as indicative of a 'language deficit'.

Any effective whole-school strategy and individual intervention approach must have a vocabulary with which it can move beyond stereotypic deficit thinking and be based on a more precise and productive professional analysis and diagnosis of literacy problems. Systematic frameworks for tailoring school-based literacy programs for particular groups of students' literacy needs are required.

Whole-school programs and community partnerships

There is a long tradition in literacy education of whole-school approaches and programs to literacy. In some primary schools this has meant adherence to particular schools of thought in one of any number of great debates over methodology. For instance, in the 1980s and 1990s it would not be uncommon to encounter schools that had adopted 'phonics' or 'whole language' or 'genre' or 'sustained silent reading' or 'literacy across the curriculum' as their principal focus for literacy education. *However, the wholesale adoption of a philosophy or method does not constitute whole-school planning*.

As we noted in our research review, several major re-analyses of studies on literacy in the United States show that there is no magic method or single approach that produces improved literacy outcomes for all. The focus on method invariably focuses on teacher and method/curriculum (often packaged) rather than looking to the two extrinsic variables in any intervention: the sociocultural and community backgrounds of the student populations, and the changing life worlds of the communities, workplaces and cultures outside of schools. Schools and school systems create 'selective traditions' of literacy, including and excluding particular texts for study and particular kinds of literacy events and practices, and using particular approaches to the assessment of literacy.

One of our key findings here, reiterated throughout this Report, is that Queensland schools' approaches to literacy vary greatly in focus and quality, and that a framework and direction to consolidate and focus teachers' and students' work are needed. Work in the ethnography of literacy and in sociocultural psychology tells us that local flexibility is desirable and necessary for the building of strong, focused literacy programs based on school–community links (Moll 1992). Unprincipled eclecticism can, at best, lead to 'hit and miss' whole-school programs. At worst, as we note below, it can lead to unbalanced school programs that have the effect of narrowing students' repertoires and outcomes.

Many lessons can be found in the schools that we encountered that had built successful, balanced, whole-school programs. (The full Report contains brief case studies on many such schools). We encountered several primary schools that were having considerable success at enhancing the literacy of their advanced students, and at turning around the performance of the most at-risk students. These schools tended to use multiple performance indicators, tracking student outcomes using the Year 2 Net and statewide tests, but also through teacher profiling of students' work and other qualitative and quantitative indicators. They were focused on continuous and sustainable improvement of student outcomes, with a premium placed on staffroom and administrative communication about changing patterns of outcomes. Their staff and administrative leadership worked in a coordinated manner, with regular professional exchanges of information about strategy and tactics, and about students and programs.

One notable aspect of these successful schools was that the actual bases and blends of methods and approaches they used varied greatly: some had focused strongly on early instruction in the code, others were working around integrated, holistic project-based instruction, others had built their programs around community literacy and critical literacy, and yet others had drawn heavily on Reading Recovery expertise and techniques to build school-wide foci on reading. These choices depended on the expertise of their staff but also on how that expertise interpreted the strengths and needs of the students and the literacy issues in the community.

In short, there was no single formula or universal method. Instead, what we saw were variable blends of pedagogic and informed leadership, focused teaching, balanced programs, professional networking, parental involvement or, at the least, support, exchange and growth, and the clever and efficient use of student performance data and records. But almost always, some staff in the school had a theoretical overview of literacy that enabled them to frame up a balanced program. Often these people, occasionally the principal or learning support teachers, were former district resource officers or educational advisors, ex-Reading Recovery or Early Literacy In-service Course (ELIC) tutors, and frequently these individuals had postgraduate training in some aspects of literacy education.

This is not to say, as we have argued throughout this report, that any approach will do. The key seems to be *informed and theorised balance*, as advocated in the four resources framework. As a negative exemplar: one whole-school program had focused on improving its benchmark testing scores in spelling, torqued around large sections of instructional time at all grade levels to studying spelling and vocabulary. With strong administrative support and, reportedly, parental endorsement, the program appeared to be achieving what it set out to achieve. There were demonstrable improvements in these domains on tests, which were publicised to parents and the community. Yet there was no evidence in this school that the students were receiving systematic instruction in reading comprehension, critical and higher-order analysis, varied written genres, and so forth. In other words, *an unbalanced and misdirected whole-school program can systematically deprive students of the broad repertoire of literacies they will need.* So not just any blend of practices will do. Uninformed leadership and misinterpreted accountability systems can steer whole-school programs in directions that narrow and constrain the literate development of students and their communities' aspirations.

The work of Hill and Crevola (1998) in Victoria has emphasised that schools need to make principled, data-driven decisions about how to build whole-school approaches. They offer a series of options for schools, explaining the importance of key 'design elements of an effective school literacy program'. However, their work does not focus as clearly on a close analysis of community linguistic and cultural resources, or on the theorised matching of program decisions to the needs of distinctive at-risk groups. Furthermore, for all of its many strengths, their whole-school approach does not emphasise the need for a theoretical overview of models of literacy that might lead to informed blending and selection from the varied elements they suggest. Just as the reproduction of a single method runs the risk of narrowness, the building of a balanced program does not require simply a 'shopping list' of literacy approaches and activities. Selections must be made on the basis of theory about literacy use and acquisition, and on the basis of data about the community. It is such knowledge, for example, that has enabled the varied whole-school programs in evidence at Thursday Island State School, St Paul's State School, Mornington Island State School, Garbutt State School and Yarrabah State School to deliver significantly improved literacy outcomes for at-risk Indigenous children.

At the same time, there is an extensive literature on partnership with parents and community members. Many of our teacher participants, particularly those who repeated to us claims of community linguistic deficit, attributed reading problems to parents' failure to provide print-based experiences in the home. This, they argued, was symptomatic of poor parenting and the decay of the family structure. They went on to call for large-scale state and Education Queensland programs to, in the words of one teacher, 'fix parents'. Shopen and Liddicoat (1998) argue for a 'two-way model' of parent–community involvement, pointing out that their interviews and observations show that current practice tends to be 'one-way', school to home, thus allowing any 'blame' for literacy 'failure' to be shifted onto the home's language and literacy practices rather than the schools' inability to construct mutually intelligible and productive relationships. There have been large-scale parenting programs trialled in NSW and other States, and these need to be further reviewed for policy consideration. However, it is our position that the jury is out on the effectiveness of large-scale 'read to your children' programs. They are expensive, hard to sustain, and have difficulty capturing other than middle-class parents, unless they are 'owned and operated' by local schools.

There is evidence in Australia that parental involvement programs can make a difference in student progress. We found several powerful local programs where parents were directly involved in school-based literacy programs. The use of parent aides for Support-a-Reader and Support-a-Writer is common in Queensland schools with, it appears, variable results. However, in two schools we visited, one working class urban with a high proportion of Indigenous children and another working class urban with predominantly lower socioeconomic Anglo-Australian children, parents were directly involved in working with children's reading. They had been trained, their own literacy skills had reportedly improved, and they had been used as resources in the school for getting teachers in touch with children and the community. In other words, the community-involvement programs that we saw making a difference took parents seriously, invested in their training and engaged them as productive resources in the school directly with students. We believe that these kinds of effective programs could be encouraged statewide to dovetail with enhanced whole-school programs. They would then provide more cost-effective approaches than large-scale parent literacy programs.

By contrast, we found only a few whole-school secondary literacy programs characterised by substance and sustainability. There are some fledgling attempts, and many principals and staff we spoke to saw the need for such programs. But many others candidly admitted that they themselves did not have the expertise to frame or lead a whole-school literacy program. The consistent message we received from informants, triangulated in observations and visits, was that 'literacy across the curriculum' efforts were moribund. While some teachers still reportedly used reading comprehension and genre approaches in secondary content areas, most did not. The dominant approach in most secondary schools still viewed literacy

education as the domain of the English teacher and department, and few other subject specialist teachers came to the open consultation meetings or made submissions.

Most secondary schools have set up some kind of entry-level diagnostic system for tracking the reading performance of Year 8 students. Typically, this is run by a learning support teacher or a primary-trained teacher who happens to be on staff. However, there is no consistency in the instrumentation or diagnostic methods used, with some schools using comprehension tests to assess decoding, and other anomalous practices. With the increased visibility of literacy issues, and many unresolved questions about student pathways, it is essential that secondary schools develop vocabularies, expertise and programs to deal with literacy, multiliteracies and new training requisites. Over 4000 students are currently enrolled in the senior Communications SAS subject each year. Yet the lack of systematic whole-school programs that support those secondary students with special needs, English as a Second Language (ESL) needs and students with continuing basic literacy problems remains a huge gap. The silence from content-area teachers about literacy, except when problems arise, is both informative and disturbing.

It is interesting that the claims of recent school reform literature (Fullan 1992, 1993; Newmann, King & Ringdon 1997) correspond to our understandings of what makes whole-school programs succeed. Within-school accountability may be as important, if not more, than interschool and intersystemic accountability in generating improved school outcomes. Where this is the case, it points to the real significance of a peer-based, professional culture of collaborative professional development and coordinated efforts to effect change. The effective whole-school programs that we saw had a number of the following features:

- Strong administrative and key teacher leadership, with theoretically grounded expertise in literacy education;
- Substantial school-level investment in professional development;
- A coordinated focus on teaching, in and across classrooms;
- An encouragement of broad, multi-method instructional programs;
- A staffroom and administrative culture that rapidly and continually exchanged information and data about student achievement, problems, needs, etc.;
- Constructive and clever use of student outcome data to set 'smart targets';
- A shared vocabulary and vision of literacy;
- A high degree of community/parental involvement.

Yet, ironically, even where there were successful whole-school programs, principals and teachers complained that there was little systematic communication between schools. During our consultations, teachers complained that they hadn't heard about the innovations at a school in the same area until the Review consultation process. They argued that interschool communication had fallen apart, and, if in existence, was sporadic and accidental. We noted that, with the diminution of common professional development activities, postgraduate upgrading and poor interschool communication, many teachers building whole-school programs felt they were 'reinventing the wheel'. A further danger is that competitive school differentiation policies might discourage the kind of cooperation so essential for schools to learn from each other about effective literacy practices.

On the opposite side of the coin, there were also cases where alliances, clusters and consortia of schools had pooled their professional development resources and set up networks for exchange and growth. Schools had cooperatively appointed literacy coordinators and swapped expertise; teachers had visited successful programs for co-teaching and planning sessions. These 'grassroots' developments of professional and interschool networks need to be recognised, encouraged and supported on a statewide basis.

The teaching of reading

When the Review team asked groups of administrators, teachers, parents and others about their concerns about the current provision of literacy education, almost always the first and most forceful concern was the teaching of reading. It was clear that the debates that dominated the literacy education area in former decades — whole-language versus skills, word recognition versus phonics, process versus genre, implicit versus explicit teaching — no longer offered a clear-cut or satisfactory set of alternatives in the teaching of reading. These debates have been resolved and internalised, forgotten or ignored by many teachers. Yet a clear-cut set of ideas about how to go about the teaching of reading with students' evidencing increasing linguistic and cultural diversity has not emerged in place of these debates. *What is needed is a new and renewed vocabulary that connects theories of reading, theories of learning, models of teaching and strategies for classroom practice and lodges these within the practices of effective school reform*.

This concern with the teaching of reading expressed itself in a number of ways. Teachers were concerned that many students were advancing through the school grades without a satisfactory grasp of the fundamentals of decoding and reading for meaning. Teachers also expressed concern about the selection of appropriate reading materials. They requested guidance on an increasing range of commercially available reading packages, on the validity of sophisticated claims about the programs made by publishers and curriculum developers, and on the ways in which they could be productively used in the classroom. Serious concern was frequently expressed, as well, about the ways in which beginning teachers were being prepared in their pre-service educational programs to teach reading effectively.

There was a strong view that the acquisition of reading was essential to effective progress in schoolwork. It was also apparent that most viewed the first two or three years of schooling as the appropriate educational phase for the teaching of reading to be achieved successfully. What is evident in the profession is a residue of practices that come from a variety of approaches. We can identify these approaches in the traditional terms of, on the one hand, whole-language, experience-based, student-centred approaches, and on the other hand, skills-based approaches, including phonemic awareness practice, drilling in spelling and punctuation, and a variety of teacher-led, decontextualised skills development exercises. Even though these approaches have been developed from strongly opposing theoretical perspectives, and have traditionally been associated with entire, coherent programs of work in classrooms, it was not uncommon to hear about, or to view, classroom practices that drew, relatively indiscriminately, on ideas that come from all schools of thought. Regardless of the efficacy of such activities, it is clear that there is a need to develop, from within the profession and informed by recent developments in research and theory about reading, a consistent and portable framework of ideas and terms that relate to the teaching of reading. There is a need for a shared professional vocabulary that spans pre- and in-service training, early years through to senior schooling, and across all key learning areas.

It is also clear from the discussions and observations that such a consistent and portable framework is not currently characteristic of the studies and practical work conducted by teachers in their pre-service education. There was significant and relatively widespread discontent expressed to us about pre-service programs in relation to the teaching of reading. This included critical commentary by some educational researchers and teacher educators, and direct reports from some young teachers that their training in the teaching of reading was inadequate. There was, at the same time, a minority of teachers and school administrators who expressed considerable satisfaction with these programs. So it is evident that there is diversity in the pre-service experiences offered to beginning teachers across the State and little evidence of a shared vocabulary, particularly regarding the teaching of reading. It is also clear that the eclecticism in the 'field' of classrooms across the State is reflected in student-teachers' practicum experiences. In this way, it appears that the lack of cohesiveness in the teaching of reading in classrooms is both influenced by and influences a lack of shared approaches in pre-service teacher education.

Many of the discussions we had with teachers about the teaching of reading were concerned with the relative merits or otherwise of commercially available packages. There is now a considerable number of such packages available on the market. Some of these entail individualised programs, some involve small-group work, some are whole-class activities, and some use combinations of groupings. In our discussions, we heard the full range of support for such packages. Some schools had invested considerable amounts of money on one or more of these packages, with teachers and school administrators strongly advocating for particular packages and showing us school-based data that supported their views. Other schools had consciously avoided the adoption of such packages, with some teachers expressing an aversion to them, claiming that they were not suitable for their children, or that they differed so dramatically from what were viewed as appropriate approaches to the teaching of reading that their use would not be entertained. Some schools were debating the possibility of investing in particular commercial packages, and undertaking research on their relative efficacy.

There were no yardsticks for judging the relative cost–benefit of the purchasing of packages and their affiliated professional development programs against other available alternatives and the particular local needs of schools. It would be interesting to do a broader survey of why and on what grounds approaches and in-service support for the approaches were selected. Our hypothesis would be that individual teacher/administrator choice, word of mouth, conference exposure, and presentations by publisher representatives and program developers are key factors in determining where schools invest their curriculum and professional development funds. But systemic guidelines or frameworks do not at present appear to have a great deal of influence in shaping teachers' and schools' construction of the teaching of reading.

There are three issues that need to be taken into account in the evaluation of such packages for the teaching of reading: first, it is the case that many of these packages are based on a relatively narrow and, in some cases, highly reductionist notion of what reading entails. Many focus on decoding and spelling, with little regard for comprehension. Others involve often elaborate rituals or ceremonies of learning, which necessitate children acquiring other kinds of skills such as hand signing or diacritical marking. An interrogation of such packages needs to begin with the question of how comprehensive the package is in the practices that it allows young people to develop. With a broad view of literacy as a repertoire of practices, a danger arising from the use of some of these packages is a highly differentiated achievement profile, in which students are strong at particular aspects of reading, but have had little systematic experience of other domains of practice or other understandings that underpin their development as readers.

Second, the package needs to be interrogated for the degree to which it is consistent with and enhances mainstream classroom practice. One of the dangers expressed to us was that 'the package becomes the literacy program', reshaping mainstream classroom practice for all students, and, in the process, inappropriately limiting the range of achievement that those students can experience.

The third point concerning the use of these packages is that they are effectively stand-alone, strictly guided programs of instruction that are not, in general, responsive to the particular needs of the students in any given classroom. With increasing diversity evident in most Queensland classrooms on matters of language and culture, this presents a potentially serious caution to educators who are examining the use of reading packages. Issues of oral language development and second language/dialect acquisition are not directly addressed in most packaged programs.

Finally, the view was consistently expressed to us that teachers who work in the upper primary and secondary school do not have the expertise or the time or space in their daily work to deal effectively with reading problems. It is clear that the Queensland school system, along with many others in Australia and elsewhere, has invested much of its attention in the very early

years of schooling in with regard to the teaching of reading. These views were expressed to us in terms of the 'abandonment' of students who continue to have difficulties in reading beyond Year 3 or Year 4. Teachers in the upper grades of school, as well as some of the parents with whom we spoke, clearly expect the learning of reading to have been successfully accomplished by the end of the first three years of school, and find the persistence of reading problems to be a measure of ineffectual early education.

In terms of reading, it appeared that a 'cycle of blame' was developing across the system, whereby secondary and middle school teachers blame early primary teachers for the apparent increase in reading problems. Many early primary teachers in turn blame parents, communities, changing family configurations and sociobiological causes for these problems. New teachers blame the universities for not preparing them adequately, and some university educators blame the school. And so on ... It appears that the focus on early intervention, however justified, has had the unintentional effect of allowing abrogation of responsibility for the system at large. Reading is everybody's business.

Future literacies

The study of educational futures was focal to the *Queensland State Education — 2010* agenda. It anticipates three key futures scenarios for Queensland schools and young people:

- *Higher credential and skill requirements* of a service- and information-based economy based on global trade and information exchange;
- *New workplace and educational skill and knowledge demands* accelerated by the introduction of new technologies into all phases of economic and cultural activity;
- *Diverse and recursive life pathways* from community to school to work that involve multiple entries into education and training across life spans.

Since the publication of the 'pedagogy of multi-literacies' paper (The New London Group 1996) in *Harvard Educational Review*, increased international and national attention has been given to the melding of traditional literacy with other literacies. This agenda has been placed on the table as part of the New Basics Project in Queensland, and there are curriculum debates around multiliteracies occurring in, among other places, Singapore and Toronto.

These futures scenarios go far beyond a focus on the emergence of 'high tech' literacy skills, though these are indeed focal aspects of the agenda. They also take up the matter of how 'traditional' skills — with visual texts, oral performance, the interpretation and use of graphics, layout and other sign systems — are becoming increasingly focal in service- and information-based economies. There entry-level jobs will require technological end-user skills, an increased emphasis on face-to-face spoken interaction, and, with a globalising economy, intercultural and multi-lingual communications. Areas of study like art and design, drama, public speaking, media analysis and production and languages other than English could become focal preparations for new workplaces.

At the same time, recent Education Queensland research (Smith, Matters & Cosier 1999) and 'pathways' studies underway in almost all States show that students' life pathways from schools into vocational education, higher education and the workplace have become more complex, recursive and unpredictable. Many of the stable assumptions built into post-war schooling and curriculum (for example, dual but autonomous vocational and academic pathways, that students' post-compulsory options will lead to linear routes into a relatively stable and permanent employment situation) appear to be coming undone. In many ways, schooling systems nationally are predicating their pathways and curriculum planning on 'educated guesses' about the requisites of emergent workplaces.

Since the national debates over the Finn and Mayer Competencies, there has been little sustained public or educational debate over the generic literacies that might be needed by youth entering a risky job and training market. The early 1990s debate over competencies,

which stressed such goals as 'problem-solving', 'group work', and even 'inter-cultural communication', has been overtaken by a debate about the testing of basic skills and core curriculum. Despite almost every Australian State having moved towards 'Smart State', 'intelligent isle', 'learning communities' policies, national debate on new life pathways, futures and new work and civic practices has yet to emerge with the force of discussions underway in, for example, Sweden and Singapore. Furthermore, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs policy initiatives have tended to separate literacy education projects from technology education projects, an interesting educational and historical decision.

The participants in this study stated a growing concern about and awareness of futures issues, and more specifically, transitions from traditional print literacies to online multiliteracies. Many spoke of the need to improve attainment levels and to give more systematic attention to guarantees of basic skills achievement. There was a strong, emergent commitment to outcomes-based education. Many teachers also spoke about the necessity to learn about and critically engage with youth cultures and with popular cultural texts and knowledge as a key part of effective teaching. It was apparent that the debate around *Queensland State Education — 2010* and New Basics has had some impact in opening up these issues. The use of text-in-context models to study out-of-school texts from popular cultural and everyday life also appears to have been broadly accepted among teachers.

But there were few comments and submissions on literacy in changing workplaces, on literacy requirements for school-to-work transitions, or on how to cater for those students who are still struggling with basic literacy skills prior to post-compulsory entry into the workforce. Despite invitations, few vocational and workplace educators or stakeholders made submissions to the Review and few teachers offered comments on the 'new work order' (Gee, Hull & Lankshear 1998). Most primary teachers did not express great concern or interest in new work patterns or pathways; their focus was on early intervention. Many of the secondary teachers and administrators who participated in this Review admitted that their knowledge of community employment patterns and new trends was weak; their focus seemed to be on basic skills and content area achievement. Secondary school administrators stated that they have not been able to systematically track graduated students through their pathways of training and retraining, and into workplace and community.

In sum, it seems obvious that both primary and secondary sectors have not been encouraged or given the opportunity to engage with changes in the world of work that are having a direct and immediate impact on youth's life pathways. We do not believe that this marks out a 'deficit' among teachers or administrators, but rather that it is indicative that post-war schooling, predominantly print based, has continued to look *inward* at school organisation, classroom techniques, and content to address futures scenarios rather than turning *outward* to dialogue with employers, parents, researchers and others about emergent workplace demands and problems. The causes notwithstanding, this is a huge knowledge gap. If the findings of the School Reform Longitudinal Study (Ladwig et al. 1999) are to be heeded, there is little chance of the schools' adjusting teaching and curriculum to improve 'connectedness to the world', and thereby improve overall student outcomes, until teachers', curriculum planners' and administrators' gaze is shifted *outward* to communities, economies, technologies and cultures.

At the same time, there remain serious problems with the teacher knowledge and proficiency base around use of the new technologies for professional development, teaching and accessing curricular and professional materials, a finding empirically verified by two major recent DETYA studies that included Queensland teachers: *Real Time* (Meredyth et al. 1999) undertaken at Griffith University, and *Digital Rhetoric* (Lankshear et al. 1997) undertaken at the Queensland University of Technology. Both studies verify that, despite in-service efforts and incentives to upgrade, the overall online computer use of teachers remains low. The latter study is insistent that even where the boxes and wires and training issues have been addressed, the actual translation into innovative, multiliterate teaching has been slow. That is, the international and

Australian evidence suggests that even where schools have brought new technologies into the classroom, teachers have tended to replicate old, print-based techniques (e.g. multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank worksheets and online listings of lecture and study notes).

In terms of literacy education, there are several distinctive issues around new technologies. Electronic, digital and online technologies have been viewed by many as having revolutionary potential for literacy education (Snyder, Lankshear & Green 2000). Further, the challenge of new, critical multiliteracies has been viewed as central for adult literacy education (Luke, C. 1996). The conceptual linkages between literacy and technology can be made in various ways:

- *Literacy as communications technology:* Writing, the alphabet, typographic print and the 'book' are actual communications technologies, dominant and with long traditions and practices. In this regard, print is itself a technology for endeavours such as distance education. Literacy education itself is actual mentoring, in Vygotskian terms, in social practices with the technologies of writing (Vygotsky 1962).
- *Literacy teaching via new communications technology:* New communications technologies, specifically computer-aided instruction, instructional software and online courses, are being used to teach people print literacy and how to be literate.
- *Multiliteracies with new communications technology:* Life and work in contemporary cultures are requiring new blends of skills and practices that engage simultaneous and blended uses of traditional print literacies with designs of visual, aural, aesthetic and other kinds of representations (The New London Group 1996).

There are compelling historical and conceptual, educational and pedagogical links between literacy and multiliteracies, and between print and new technologies. Some are emerging now in Queensland schools, actually being invented and explored by teachers. Yet some teachers recounted to us myths about the relationship between print and electronic technology that have been demolished in the research literature. For example, that students needed the 'basics of reading and writing' *before* they could engage with online learning. Or, to take another example, that these same 'basics' were the core of skills students needed to become proficient, without any further instruction, with online learning. There is now compelling international and national evidence that students can learn with and through online learning environments while they acquire print skills. Further, among some at-risk populations print literacy learning can be remotivated and improved through engagement with multiliteracies (for examples, see Cole 1998; Kaptizke, Mayer & Renshaw, in press).

Yet we note that all Education Queensland training, in-service and hardware development strategies of the 1990s have occurred totally independently of literacy planning and development and independently of models of teaching. That is*, the technological upgrading of the teaching force, on the one hand, and the integration of new technologies with print literacy and multiliteracy-focused teaching, on the other, have been separated.* This is a significant problem, because it treats technological competence as 'button pushing' and 'technical know-how', rather than critical pedagogical intervention. This approach, the two aforementioned DETYA studies suggests, may create as many problems as it solves. It also may be a very cost-inefficient use of precious in-service resources, setting up a situation where we need to superimpose or layer pedagogical training over rudimentary technical expertise, rather than dealing with both in an integrated fashion.

Teachers who participated in this Review cited many reasons for the slowness of engagement with new multiliteracies. These focused on significant limits in the technological infrastructure in the school, the available in-service opportunities, time to begin planning and experimenting with the use of technologies, and systemic guidance on resources on where to find out about multiliteracies.

For strategic planning purposes, each of the above four priority areas is considered across five *strategic areas for action*. These are:

- In-service and professional development;
- Syllabus and program development and implementation;
- School-based assessment and statewide testing;
- Funding and accountability priorities;
- Pre-service teacher education.

The result is a set of twenty 'key strategies' proposed for introduction over a five-year period. These are outlined in the tables that follow.

In conclusion, the most heartening aspect of our work on this Strategy was the documenting of effective practices and the high levels of commitment among Queensland teachers. Education Queensland has a considerable amount of talent and a shared commitment to literacy education. The major point of the Strategy is to foreground such practices and commitments, to allow the space for their development, refinement and responsiveness to a changing information and communications environment. This is a new road map.

Extracts from Literacy Strategic Plan

Priority	Major Review Findings	Goal Statement	Key Strategies
Student diversity The challenges raised by diverse students and school communities, and young people's increasingly diverse life experiences and pathways.	• There is a general problem with the recognition of the distinctive needs of ESL students, the categories for identifying such students and adequate funding of ESL programs. • Early intervention is important in dealing with diversity, but a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to early literacy and early childhood education is unproductive and, for some young people, counterproductive. Diverse literacy development needs and community contexts require a repertoire of interventions. • Oral language variation is recognised by many teachers, but schools lack the systematic diagnostic, analytic and intervention capabilities that might enable the matching of teaching to the problem (for example, developmental disability, second language/dialect variation, different norms and patterns of interaction). • As the summary of data shows, early literacy problems are evident among some groups of Indigenous Australians and boys. However, such groups are not homogenous; they intersect significantly with poverty, and the assumption that a single targeted intervention will make a difference is inappropriate. • There is a need for expansion and consolidation of teachers' professional knowledge and understandings about changing community dynamics, including changing childrearing and family practices, and the ways these affect home–school relations. • There is a growing belief that there is an increasing number of diverse learning difficulties/disabilities evident in Queensland students. How literacy issues intersect and interact with these factors is poorly understood and not sufficiently well documented to allow firm conclusions to be drawn. • With the spread of socioeconomic disadvantage across the State in new configurations, a 'safety net' model for the bottom 10 per cent is not adequate. The combination of diversity and socioeconomic marginality has become a mainstream pedagogical issue for literacy teachers.	Over 2000–05, Education Queensland will use the Literacy Strategy to focus the efforts of staff in all state schools towards: • Dealing productively with diversity in student and community characteristics; by • Acknowledging, valuing and building on the range of linguistic and cultural resources brought to school by students from diverse backgrounds; thereby • Enhancing the literacy outcomes for many students who are experiencing difficulties with learning or under-performing in assessments; by • Implementing systematic plans to reform and refocus relevant school practices in curriculum programs, classroom teaching and assessment. By the end of 2001, as part of their whole-school literacy plan, schools will have identified particular at-risk groups, and have specified realistic annual and triennial 'distance travelled' targets for improved student outcomes using a range of assessment data, including school and teacher-based assessments of diverse multiliteracies.	In-service and professional Development: Contracted Literacy Education and Practice (LEAP) sites, some with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community partnerships Syllabus and Program Development and Implementation: Identifying literacy outcomes in KLAs and subjects to provide advice to schools Assessment and Testing: More inclusive Queensland School Curriculum Council (QSCC) tests and better integration of their outcomes with school-based assessment Funding and Accountability: Sustained school funding for improved student outcomes Pre-service Teacher Education: Teacher education summit meeting — core program components and student internships model

Priority	Major Review Findings	Goal Statement	Key Strategies
Whole-school programs and community partnerships The challenges of renewal, integration and balance of literacy programs within schools conducted in partnership with parents, other educational service providers and community organisations	• Successful literacy programs are driven by a combination of people in school leadership roles (especially involving strategic/administrative and operational/key teacher or literacy coordinator), are given priority in the school, and are based not on 'shopping list' approaches but a firm empirical and theoretical grasp of literacy. • There has been a general lack of guidance and support in the formulation of whole-school literacy programs by Education Queensland over recent times, such that many innovative schools had based their initiatives on interstate models. • Literacy across the curriculum and discipline-specific literacy programs in middle and secondary schools have not proved sustainable in most locations. • There remains a dominant assumption in secondary schools that literacy is the domain of English teachers, perhaps with assistance from learning support teachers. • There is a proliferation of 'pull-out' programs for withdrawal of children, frequently without planning how these might best fit together to comprise whole-school programs. • The use of assessment instruments and data for formative and summative evaluation of students, and for the formulation of smarter and school-specific value-added targets, is highly variable and inconsistent between schools and districts. • Successful school–community partnership programs in literacy are typically based on a school and community-specific engagement with, exchange with and training of parents as productive pedagogical and community resource people. • Alliances, clusters and consortia of schools have arisen without central support or recognition to serve professional development needs and networks in schools, and have demonstrated remarkable effectiveness.	All Queensland state schools — primary, secondary, special and others — will develop a whole-school literacy strategy by the end of the 2001 school year, with a systematic implementation plan through the school curriculum program over 2002–04. The strategy and plan are to contain at least the following components: • Community profile — demographic, cultural, linguistic, aspirations and needs; • Shared vision for literacy development across the school/community; • Standards and targets for literacy performance of students and staff; • Assessment monitoring and reporting of student progress; • Classroom organisation and teaching for balanced literacy program; • Intervention and special needs support for at-risk students; • Leadership, coordination and support for professional learning; • Strategic community liaison, networks and partnerships.	In-Service and Professional Development: Training for LEAP site coordination and administration Syllabus and Program Development and Implementation: Redevelopment of school literacy programs Assessment and Testing: Systemic evaluation advice to schools on the selection and use of literacy packages and standardised tests Funding and Accountability: Ensure funding for professional development for administrators and literacy coordinators to develop literacy strategy priorities Pre-Service Teacher Education: Teacher education summit meeting — whole-school planning and community partnerships

Priority	Major Review Findings	Goal Statement	Key Strategies
The teaching of reading The challenge of a shared, understandable professional vocabulary and dialogue around the teaching of reading	• There needs to be a much stronger vocabulary and shared theoretical frame for teaching of early reading. • Teachers without systematic pre- and in-service support in the teaching of reading are increasingly turning to packages. These packages are variable in quality, but may lead to unbalanced and unresponsive literacy programs. • Pre-service teacher education appears to be highly variable, resulting in different approaches, vocabularies and practices. • There is a general loss of focus on in-service work and further professional upgrading in the teaching of reading. • There is a marked lack of expertise in and focus on the teaching of reading in the middle years and virtually no evidence of such expertise and focus in the secondary years. • There is an overall lack of systematic direction and guidance from Education Queensland and from universities and professional organisations on the teaching of reading.	By the end of 2001, Queensland schools will adopt, as part of their whole-school literacy strategies, balanced, multi-method approaches to the teaching of reading that meet the assessed needs of their diverse student bodies. To achieve this, all current and future Queensland teachers will be trained in the teaching of reading in the context of their specific age/subject area expertise by the end of 2005.	In-service and Professional Development: Outsourced training and LEAP mentoring in the teaching of reading Syllabus and Program Development and Implementation: Integration of Early Years Net and Years 1–10 English Syllabus around reading outcomes Assessment and Testing: Systemic advice to schools regarding balanced assessment of reading in school programs Funding and Accountability: Ensure funding for reading professional development and for independent evaluations of systemically supported intervention activities in schools Pre-service Teacher Education: Teacher education summit meeting — analysis of core courses and practicum experiences for priority on the teaching of reading

Priority	Major Review Findings	Goal Statement	Key Strategies
Future literacies The challenges raised by multiliteracies, new technologies and new work practices	• While many teachers and administrators wish to begin moving on multiliteracies, there is very little across-the-curriculum and pedagogical support or resources for innovation in engaging with the literacies of new technologies. • Training in the use of technology currently does not have any explicit engagement with the use of technology to enhance teacher or student multiliteracies. • Overall understanding of and engagement with popular and media cultures are improving among teachers. • The only consistent use of technology to support literacy education is via increasing student access to word processing. In other areas, there appears to be little systems-wide coherence or consistency in the use of new technology for literacy teaching. Specifically, email, online bibliographic and information resources, software for teaching aspects of reading and spelling, and electronic books are all used, but in highly variable and inconsistent ways. • The balance between print and electronic resources in classrooms, libraries and school resources is developing with little strategic planning or research. • There is little available knowledge or dialogue in schools on new workplaces, the emergent work order, and the skill and knowledge demands of service and information economies. • There is little systematic tracking of students across life pathways as they leave schooling and take up further employment, unemployment, education and training.	School curriculum programs will be redeveloped over 2001–05 to demonstrate blends and balances between traditional and emergent modes of communication (oral, print and multimedia), such that teachers and students are progressively engaged in working with multiliteracies that are increasingly required for work and leisure, citizenship and community participation, personal growth and cultural expression.	In-service and Professional Development: Literacy professional development summit and strategic plan Syllabus and Program Development and Implementation: Implementation of KLA syllabuses via the concept of multiliteracies Assessment and Testing: Research into literacy demands of QSCC statewide tests and New Basics Rich Tasks Funding and Accountability: Ensure funds for Education Queensland and QSCC research and development that integrates advice on school-based assessment and statewide testing Pre-service Teacher Education: Teacher education summit meeting — ensure that core courses, practicum and mentoring provide knowledge and experience with multiliteracies

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