

the key to learning Literacy

Literacy the Key to Learning

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION 2006–2008



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Minister's Foreword



Literacy is at the heart of a student's ability to learn and succeed in school and beyond. It is essential we give every student from Prep to Year 12 the best chance to master literacy so they can meet the challenges of 21st century life.

Children in Queensland's state schools come from diverse backgrounds. While many students perform well, the priority is to enable *all* students to progress to a higher literacy standard, taking into account their diverse circumstances.

Literacy-the Key to Learning: Framework for Action 2006–2008 details the practical steps we need to take to achieve this.

The *Framework for Action* recognises that quality teaching can make the single biggest difference to students' literacy outcomes. All teachers, including those teaching subjects such as mathematics and science, are teachers of literacy. It is integral to all areas of learning.

Therefore, it is essential we ensure teachers and their schools have the knowledge, skills, leadership and support to make a quantum leap in the quality of literacy teaching – in all subject areas.

Our Government is committed to implementing the Framework's 17 actions to support all students and teachers in Queensland state schools.

Queensland is a leader in literacy reform in Australia as a result of the implementation of *Literate Futures* which underpins this action plan. The Framework will take us a step further in achieving excellence in literacy education, for the benefit of all students.

Rod Welford
Minister for Education and the Minister for the Arts



Literacy is an important focus for Education Queensland because it is integral to effective learning across all years of schooling. While many students perform well in literacy, significant challenges remain as we attempt to assist all students to develop the capabilities to lead literate lives in the 21st century.

Education Queensland has a commitment to ensure that every teacher has the support that they need to offer high quality literacy programs for all students. The core business of all state schools is to provide education for the diverse abilities, cultural backgrounds and life circumstances of all students who enrol in state schooling.

Queensland State Education – 2010 (QSE-2010) describes rapid changes in our economy, the world of work, communities, and civic and family life that have significant implications for teaching and learning and the way schools operate. These changes create particular challenges in implementing effective literacy programs.

Education Queensland, through its review and report on literacy in Queensland state schools, has set an agenda for literacy that is leading the nation. The *Literate Futures Report of the Literacy Review for Queensland State Schools* proposed a strategic plan for literacy. The plan was underpinned by an understanding of diverse Queensland school communities and a commitment to literacy improvement and innovation.

Strategies have been implemented to address the priority areas of the *Literate Futures Report*. These areas focus on enhancing teacher knowledge so that all teachers are able to effectively deliver inclusive programs that improve literacy learning for all students.

QSE-2010 and the *Literate Futures Report* are the basis for *Literacy-the Key to Learning: Framework for Action 2006–2008*. The *Framework for Action* identifies key priorities and areas for focused action.

The *Framework for Action* focuses on actions to address identified **challenges we face in improving literacy outcomes for all students**. These challenges are: **literacy teaching, literacy learning, literacy in the curriculum and literacy leadership**. The challenges are interrelated and not mutually exclusive or hierarchical. They serve as focuses for considering and acting on the issues that affect students' literacy learning.

Central to the *Framework for Action* is the notion that effective learning entails developing the literacy capabilities needed to learn in the curriculum.



1 LITERACY TEACHING – to increase professional knowledge and skills in teaching literacy

It is the quality of teaching that makes the biggest difference to students' literacy outcomes across the phases of learning. Teachers draw on a range of teaching practices to meet the literacy learning needs of individual students and diverse student communities.

There is a need for teachers to value and build on what students know and can do. There is also a need to develop intellectually challenging and connected learning opportunities that account for rapidly changing communication practices.

There is a need to build on each teacher's repertoire of approaches to the teaching of literacy. These should include a balance of skills approaches (including the systematic teaching of reading, writing, spelling and phonics skills), whole-language approaches (including the scaffolded and contextualised teaching of reading comprehension), genre approaches (including the explicit teaching of texts and grammar) and social-critical approaches (including the purposeful teaching of critical literacy). The integration of comprehensive approaches to the teaching of literacy in the curriculum, based on explicit instruction, enables children to read and view, speak and listen, and write and shape for learning in and out of school.

If all students are to learn effectively across the phases of learning, there is a need for teachers to align the teaching of literacy with curriculum, learning and assessment. There is also a need for teachers to develop detailed knowledge of the literacy capabilities students require to succeed in the area/s of learning for which teachers are responsible.

New literacies combined with traditional literacies create significant challenges for many teachers. There is a need for the professional development of teachers so they can systematically monitor students' progress in learning literacy over time. There is also a need to provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching and assessment practices as they teach literacy in the curriculum. This includes processes for evaluating the effectiveness of their interventions for individuals and diverse groups of students. There is no one approach that will meet the needs of all students. Literacy teaching must take into account the diverse languages, dialects, experiences and futures of students in diverse communities.

There is also a need for an ongoing process to support the personal literacy capabilities of teachers so they can increase their explicit knowledge about literacy, their professional practice and school–community partnerships.

2 LITERACY LEARNING – to assess, track and improve literacy learning outcomes for all students in the context of diverse backgrounds and abilities

There is increasing diversity in the student population and students bring with them to the classroom rich and diverse languages, dialects and literacy skills. The combination of poverty with diversity (for example, gender, ethnicity, location and disability) creates one of the most significant challenges for literacy teaching in the 21st century.

There is a need to value and acknowledge the language and literacy that students bring from their homes and communities. There is also a need for every student to master Standard Australian English and the literacies that they need for success in school and beyond.

As literacy is pivotal to all learning, the early identification of children with difficulties is crucial. There is an increasing need to develop better school-based diagnostic capacities and ways of monitoring literacy interventions. It is also important to understand that early literacy intervention is not of itself sufficient to secure sustained improved literacy outcomes. There is a need for explicit teaching of literacies in the mainstream classroom as students move through the phases of learning.

There is a need to provide support for schools in monitoring the strategic use of the data collected from statewide literacy testing. There is also the need to support schools to integrate this information with school-based assessment evidence. The analysis of this composite body of evidence will enable longitudinal tracking to identify progress in the literacy learning of individual students and cohorts of students.

There is a need to develop a literacy learning profile for each student that will form the basis for identifying specific, appropriate and effective literacy interventions. This literacy learning profile also responds to the need for portable assessment information as a student moves through schooling.

There is also a need to document and disseminate the repertoires of effective teaching practice that lead to improved learning, in particular for students at educational risk.



3 LITERACY IN THE CURRICULUM – to improve literacy capabilities for learning in all areas of the curriculum

If all students are to learn effectively, they must become literate to learn in different areas of the curriculum across the phases of learning. Literacy demands in the curriculum interface with a body of knowledge such as a Key Learning Area or a subject. For example, in Science, students may need to write science reports after undertaking investigations or experiments. This requires using language systems including specialised text and language structures, vocabulary and graphics that are specific to constructing knowledge in Science and that may not be learnt in other areas of learning. If these literacy demands are left implicit and not taught explicitly they provide barriers to learning.

There is a need for school and regional leaders to ensure that all teachers see literacy teaching as part of their repertoires of essential skills. There is then a need for all teachers to take responsibility for the literacy learning of all their students.

There is a need to investigate the literacy capabilities that students require for learning in all areas of the curriculum, including those of the Key Learning Areas, subjects, or domains of learning.

There is a need to develop standards for literacy in the curriculum that set clear expectations of literacy learning in each phase of learning.





4 LITERACY LEADERSHIP – to enhance curriculum leadership

Curriculum leadership is pivotal in supporting school communities and teachers to engage in professional development relating to literacy in the curriculum. Whilst it is acknowledged that schools have teachers with literacy expertise, it is imperative that literacy leadership in schools should be provided by Heads of Departments and Principals. It is also acknowledged that Principals require support from other curriculum leaders to take up this leadership. Executive Directors (Schools), Regional Executive Directors, and Assistant Directors-General have a role in providing this support.

There is a need to raise curriculum leaders' understanding of the relationships between literacy, curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment. This will enhance their capacity to support their own and teachers' professional development.

There is a need for curriculum leaders to develop systems and cultures that focus on teacher professional development and to disseminate examples of effective classroom practices across the entire school community. There is a need for Principals to build positive cultures and articulate high aspirations and expectations in their schools for all students to succeed.

There is a need for curriculum leaders to support the professional development of their teachers by making informed decisions about the allocation of resources, time and space for teachers to reflect on and improve effective teaching practice.

Ways Forward

Actions have been developed to respond to each of the four identified key challenges.

The actions have been grouped into those for which the **system**, Education Queensland, will take general responsibility and be accountable and those for which **regions** will be responsible and accountable. A **regional resource agreement** will be developed to assist in monitoring the implementation of regional actions.

Literacy-the Key to Learning: Framework for Action Departmental Steering Committee

Literacy-the Key to Learning: Framework for Action 2006–2008 will be overseen by a Departmental Steering Committee including the Assistant Director-General (Curriculum) and representatives from Regional Executive Directors, Executive Directors (Schools), Strategic Human Resources and Learning, Education Queensland Strategic Management Team, and the Curriculum Branch literacy team.

The Steering Committee will support, facilitate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the *Framework for Action* and report outcomes of the *Framework* to the Minister for Education and the Arts.

<p>System responsibility</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <p>1. Conduct professional development conferences and workshops with a focus on literacy, including literacy in the curriculum.</p> <p>Professional development conferences and workshops for teachers and teacher aides will be organised to focus on the literacy knowledge and skills that students will need for learning in the curriculum and for work and citizenship in and out of school.</p> <p>The professional development will specifically focus on improving each teacher’s understanding of the relationships between literacy, curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment and on building their repertoire of skills for the teaching of literacy. This will also involve learning to integrate comprehensive approaches to the teaching of literacy in the curriculum, based on explicit instruction, to enable children to read and view, speak and listen, and write and shape for learning in and out of school.</p> <p>Professional development will also include teachers sharing local, flexible, innovative approaches in program development at the school level.</p> <p>2. Conduct pre-service teacher education summits.</p> <p>Pre-service teacher education summits will be conducted in collaboration with the tertiary sector to develop and review a teacher education strategic plan that addresses priority areas for teacher pre-service education in literacy.</p> <p>The summit will focus on three related areas: the explicit teaching and assessing of literacy, including literacy in the curriculum; understanding and valuing students’ diverse learning needs; and improving learning for all students.</p>
<p>Regional responsibility</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <p>3. Conduct professional development activities focusing on effective practices in the teaching of literacy.</p> <p>Professional development activities will be conducted to develop teachers’ professional capacity to teach, assess and monitor literacy in the curriculum.</p> <p>The professional development activities will focus on developing authentic learning and assessment tasks and activities that are connected with student and community experiences to facilitate improved learning outcomes.</p> <p>The professional development activities will also focus on developing the knowledge and skills of teacher aides as they support teachers in teaching, assessing and monitoring literacy in the curriculum, particularly for students at educational risk. The activities will also focus on developing constructive teaching and learning partnerships between teachers and teacher aides.</p> <p>Productive partnerships between primary and secondary schools and teachers across the curriculum will be established by curriculum leaders to broaden understandings of literacy and its interface with curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment.</p> <p>4. Conduct literacy teaching induction programs.</p> <p>Literacy teaching induction programs will be conducted in all schools for beginning teachers and teacher aides.</p> <p>Collaborative partnerships will be organised with experienced teachers to ensure valuing of traditional literacies and engagement with new literacies by all teachers.</p> <p>Guidelines to support regions in conducting these programs will be developed.</p>

System
responsibility

5. Review allocation models for state and commonwealth funding of literacy interventions.

State and commonwealth funding models and the allocation of resources for systemic literacy interventions will be reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness in terms of maximum impact on student learning outcomes.

Guidelines will be developed for the system and schools outlining efficient and effective use of funds, accountability requirements and evaluation processes necessary to ascertain the efficiency and effectiveness of literacy interventions.
6. Develop mechanisms for collecting and using data at school and system level.

Data collection instruments will be developed to collect and monitor school and system information. This will assist schools to track student literacy improvement and to plan, assess and report effectively.

A database of quality literacy assessment tasks and activities will be developed to establish greater sharing of effective practice and to provide a useful resource for all practitioners.

Examples of literacy learning profiles that track individual student's progress will be provided on the database. Standards for literacy in the curriculum will be used to track progress.
7. Investigate ways of addressing the literacy learning needs of students in the Preparatory Year to Year 3.

Effective transitions between home and the early phase of learning will be investigated to ensure that school literacy practices take account of home and community literacy practices.

A website with guidelines and resources will be developed to encourage active collaboration between teachers and caregivers in the literacy education of young people. This will facilitate timely and early intervention that is responsive to the diverse range of literacy and language resources that students have acquired.

A research-based project will develop quality materials to support professional development, curriculum, learning, teaching, assessment and reporting, which addresses the development of the oral language of Preparatory and Year 1 students in Standard Australian English.

Advice will be provided to schools and teachers about how to facilitate effective transitions before and during the early phase of learning.
8. Document and disseminate effective literacy learning practices.

Effective literacy learning practices that have led to improved performance in the Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program and in school-based assessment in both primary and secondary schools will be documented and disseminated. These practices will demonstrate alignment between whole-school, classroom and intervention programs.

The existing Literacy Gateway will be expanded to include examples of intellectually challenging, connected and inclusive approaches to literacy curriculum, teaching and assessment across the phases of learning.

Regional responsibility	<p>9. Conduct research and development with a focus on improving learning outcomes for all students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>A research and development project will be conducted in schools to design assessments and pedagogies for the improvement of students' learning outcomes, especially those students from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Intellectually challenging and connected assessment tasks and activities will be designed, assessment evidence will be collected, and targeted interventions will be designed, implemented and reviewed as part of classroom practice.</p> <p>This project will link to the implementation of the standards for literacy in the curriculum, and will be informed by the review of allocation models for literacy interventions. The project will contribute to the database of quality literacy assessment tasks and activities, particularly those assessments that focus on students from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>The project will also draw on mechanisms for collecting and using assessment data to inform pedagogy.</p>
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ACTIONS

Literacy in the curriculum

System responsibility	<p>10. Conduct research into the literacy capabilities for learning in the curriculum.</p> <p>Research to identify the literacy capabilities required for learning in the curriculum and the implications for pedagogy and assessment will be conducted.</p> <p>The research will inform the development of standards for literacy in the curriculum and the implementation of the standards.</p> <p>11. Develop standards for literacy in the curriculum.</p> <p>Standards for literacy in the curriculum will be developed. The standards will set clear expectations of student literacy learning in the curriculum in each phase of learning, including in the Key Learning Areas or domains of learning.</p> <p>The standards will be developed at key junctures of schooling and be aligned to the <i>Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) Framework</i>.</p>
Regional responsibility	<p>12. Implement the standards for literacy in the curriculum.</p> <p>School-based professional development will be conducted by teachers supported by curriculum leaders to implement the standards for literacy in the curriculum.</p> <p>The literacy standards will be used by schools and the system to track students' progress in literacy learning profiles.</p>

System responsibility	<p>13. Conduct annual regional literacy leaders forums.</p> <p>Forums to share expertise with literacy leaders will be conducted to reinforce the links between literacy, curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment.</p> <p>The forums will emphasise that all professional development activities align with a focus on literacy in the curriculum and valuing and responding to diverse student needs.</p> <p>14. Develop effective practice literacy competencies for Principals and aspiring Principals.</p> <p>Effective practice competencies for Principals will be developed to assist them to develop and monitor whole-school literacy planning and school and classroom cultures that align with the challenges and actions of the <i>Framework for Action</i>.</p> <p>Effective practice in leadership and whole-school planning in literacy across the state will be documented and disseminated. Effective practice stories from diverse school communities from both primary and secondary schools will be published on the Curriculum Exchange.</p> <p>15. Develop a communication strategy with a focus on literacy in the curriculum.</p> <p>A communication strategy will be developed to increase community understanding of, and provide constructive information about, the robust and integrated nature of literacy capabilities required for learning in the curriculum and for social futures, work and citizenship.</p>
Regional accountability	<p>16. Review whole-school literacy planning annually.</p> <p>Cycles of whole-school literacy planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken annually and reviewed by Executive Directors (Schools).</p> <p>Planning will demonstrate a renewed focus on literacy in the curriculum. Planning processes will be informed by student assessment data.</p> <p>Planning will include documentation of processes involved in developing: a community profile that informs the literacy curriculum; a whole-school literacy curriculum framework; integrated and balanced literacy interventions; and professional learning communities responsive to diverse school and community needs.</p> <p>Principals will monitor, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the planning and implementation processes.</p> <p>Principals will demonstrate localised responses to the <i>Framework for Action</i> challenges and actions through their whole-school literacy planning processes.</p> <p>17. Monitor, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of curriculum leadership.</p> <p>The effectiveness of the Principal in supporting teacher professional development and sharing and disseminating excellent practice within and across schools will be monitored, evaluated and reported by Executive Directors (Schools).</p>

