

## Perspectives about reading

**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2003, p. 108)** state that “Reading literacy is understanding, using and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential and to participate in society” and this definition is the basis for constructing the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

**International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA, n.d.)** also highlight the importance of teaching foundational reading skills so that students can read for pleasure and information. The IEA also gathers data about students’ purposes and processes of reading as well as reading behaviours and attitudes. Both the OECD and IEA emphasise the personal, social, political and economic benefits afforded to those who can read.

**Ontario Expert Panel on Early Reading, 2003:** Reading abilities continuously develop and readers never stop learning as they engage with print and multimodal texts.

**(Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).** It is paramount that students get off to a good start so that any reading difficulties do not exponentially increase such that by the time students enter middle or secondary school there are complex and potentially intractable educational, social, and personal issues to address

**Bruner (2010, p. 5)** says “Reading by the end of third grade is a key milestone in a child’s educational development and a sentinel indicator of future educational success.”

**Report of the National Early Literacy Panel Birth-5 (Lonigan & Shanahan, 2008)** points out that what happens in the pre-school years has a significant impact on children’s facility and uptake of literacy experiences offered at school. They stress the importance of providing information to families and caregivers as well as clearly coaching early years educators about how to build on emergent literacy skills.

**Chall (1967) and Adams (1990)** conclude that significant benefits are provided to students who are explicitly and systematically taught both word recognition and comprehension strategies along with having many opportunities to read interesting texts so that what has been learned can be applied.

**Snow, Burns, & Griffin (1998)** recommend these same features while also stressing the importance of students reading texts at their (emphasis added) reading level. Snow, Burns, & Griffin (1998) also emphasise the necessity to teach students how to effortlessly read high-frequency words and that educators should regularly use assessment processes so they can quickly respond to what is shown about students’ developing reading abilities.

**Moats (1999)** further adds to the debate by declaring that the process of reading is actually a very sophisticated skill and she describes what educators should (and should not) be teaching in classrooms. According to Moats learning to read is not automatic and neither is it a natural outcome of immersion and incidental teaching: it must be systematically and efficiently taught by well informed and expert educators.

**Wolf (2007) and Wren (n.d.)** also assert that learning to read is not an innate process. In fact, Wren (n.d.) points out that just because educators teach does not guarantee that all students learn and argues that students learn to read because of educators' advanced knowledge, creativity, flexibility, and competence.

**National Reading Panel (2000)** that has galvanised wide attention with strong recommendations about key components of effective reading instruction. The National Reading Panel (2000) endorses phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as the foundations of reading development and emphasise that these skills should be explicitly taught. Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn (n.d.) have built on these recommendations by describing how educators may implement them in practice.

**The Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading (Rose, 2006, p. 4)** supports the recommendations of the National Reading Panel and emphasises that:

"...reading involves far more than decoding words on the page...[and that] phonic work is therefore a necessary but not sufficient part of the wider knowledge, skills and understanding which children need to become skilled readers and writer, capable of comprehending and composing text."

**National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (Teaching Reading) (DEST, 2005, p. 11)** declares that: "Findings from the research evidence indicate that all students learn best when teachers adopt an integrated approach to reading that explicitly teaches phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, vocabulary knowledge and comprehension."

**Allington (2005)** suggests that successful teaching requires that educators attend to other features needed for successful instruction. Allington believes that thoughtful teaching, using a mix of whole class and group instruction, carefully matching students with interesting texts, making links with writing, providing choice and collaboration, and ensuring high-quality teaching for struggling students will make the difference.

**(Ofsted, 2010, 2011).** Recommendations from the major reports have had supporters and detractors but it is evident that some governments and education systems have used these reports as a basis for funding allocation, curriculum development, and instructional requirements For example, reading literacy results from recent PISA assessments show that

**PISA.** Australian students' scores have fallen and a number of countries have been placed ahead of Australia on the comparison tables (Thomson, De Bortoli, Nicholas, Hillman, & Buckley, 2011). Australia's relegation has resulted in increased government and societal interest in the work of educators and a range of initiatives being introduced to address these lower standings.

**Kame'enui, Simmons, & Coyne (2000, p. 34)** make the point, students "...all have to learn to read in a complex environment of people, pedagogy, policies, and programs called a school."

**Australian Curriculum** has the teaching of reading as a key component across the English strands as well as being part of the General Capabilities: Literacy and Literacy across the curriculum (ACARA, 2012).