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PRACTICES IN LITERACY
EDUCATION

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION VOLUME 11

INCLUSIVE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES IN LITERACY EDUCATION

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CONTENTS

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	<i>ix</i>
FOREWORD	<i>xi</i>
INTRODUCTION	<i>xiii</i>

PART I LITERACY, INCLUSION AND ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM: INTERNATIONAL INSIGHTS

LITERACY AND INCLUSION: CURRENT PERSPECTIVES <i>Marion Milton</i>	<i>3</i>
MULTILITERACIES, MULTIMODALITY, NEW LITERACIES AND WHAT DO THESE MEAN FOR LITERACY EDUCATION? <i>Maureen Walsh</i>	<i>19</i>
EXAMINING THE LITERACY WITHIN NUMERACY TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM FOR ALL <i>David Evans</i>	<i>35</i>
LEADERSHIP APPROACHES TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: LEARNING FROM AN IRISH LONGITUDINAL STUDY <i>Michael Shevlin and Richard Rose</i>	<i>53</i>
INCLUSIVE LITERACY EDUCATION AND READING ASSESSMENT FOR LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS AND STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN GERMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS <i>Katrin Böhme, Birgit Heppt and Nicole Haag</i>	<i>69</i>

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY, SCIENCE LITERACY, AND URBAN UNDERREPRESENTED SCIENCE STUDENTS <i>Randy Yerrick and Monica Ridgeway</i>	87
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DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE LITERACY PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS <i>Juan Bornman</i>	105
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**PART II
IMPROVING STUDENT LITERACY WITH VULNERABLE COHORTS**

<i>THE FIRST TIME I'VE FELT INCLUDED: IDENTIFYING INCLUSIVE LITERACY LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH THE EVALUATION OF BETTER BEGINNINGS</i> <i>Caroline Barratt-Pugh, Mary Rohl and Nola Allen</i>	125
--	-----

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION FOR PRIMARY GRADE STUDENTS WHO STRUGGLE WITH READING FLUENCY <i>Timothy Rasinski and Chase Young</i>	143
---	-----

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN INCLUSIVE LITERACY LEARNING WITH TECHNOLOGY <i>Grace Oakley</i>	159
---	-----

INCLUSIVE READING PRACTICES FOR ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA <i>Susan Main and Deslea Konza</i>	177
--	-----

ENCOURAGING LITERACY THROUGH INCLUSIVE SCIENCE INVESTIGATIONS: HOW A SENSE OF WONDER CAN CATER FOR DIVERSITY <i>Elaine Blake and Pauline Roberts</i>	195
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TRANSITION TO JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLING FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES: A STUDY IN PERSONALISED LEARNING AND BUILDING RELATIONAL AGENCY IN SCHOOLS <i>Mary Keeffe</i>	213
REFLECTIONS OF STAFF AND STUDENTS ON THE INTRODUCTION OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING AS AN INCLUSIVE LITERACY INITIATIVE IN AN ENGLISH SECONDARY SCHOOL <i>Mary Doveston and Una Lodge</i>	231
INCLUSIVE LITERACY FOR STUDENTS FROM OTHER LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS <i>Marion Milton</i>	249
INDEX	267

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FOREWORD

The adoption internationally of inclusive practice as the most equitable and all-encompassing approach to education and its relation to compliance with various international Declarations and Conventions underpins the importance of this series for people working at all levels of education and schooling in both the developed and developing worlds. There is little doubt that inclusive education is complex and diverse and that there are enormous disparities in understanding and application at both inter- and intra-country levels. A broad perspective on inclusive education throughout this series is taken, encompassing a wide range of contemporary viewpoints, ideas and research for enabling the development of more inclusive schools, education systems and communities.

Volumes in this series on *International Perspectives on Inclusive Education* contribute to the academic and professional discourse by providing a collection of philosophies and practices that can be reviewed in light of local contextual and cultural situations in order to assist educators, peripatetic staff, and other professionals to provide the best education for all children. Each volume in the series focuses on a key aspect of inclusive education and provides critical chapters by contributing leaders in the field who discuss theoretical positions, empirical findings, and impacts on school and classroom practice. Different volumes address issues relating to the diversity of student need within heterogeneous classrooms and the preparation of teachers and other staffs to work in inclusive schools. Systemic changes and practice in schools encompass a wide perspective of learners in order to provide ideas on reframing education so as to ensure that it is inclusive of all. Evidence-based research practices underpin a plethora of suggestions for decision-makers and practitioners; incorporating current ways of thinking about and implementing inclusive education.

While many barriers have been identified that may potentially inhibit the implementation of effective inclusive practices, this series intends to identify such key concerns and offer practical and best practice approaches to overcome them. Adopting a thematic approach for each volume, readers will be able to quickly locate a collection of research and practice related to a particular topic of interest. By transforming schools into inclusive communities of practice all children should have the opportunity to access and participate in quality education in order to obtain the skills to become contributory global citizens. This series, therefore, is highly recommended to support education decision-makers, practitioners, researchers and academics, who have a professional interest in

the inclusion of children and youth who are marginalising in inclusive schools and classrooms.

This volume focuses on Literacy for all students within regular classes. Adopting both constructivist and socio-culturalism positions there is a strong emphasis on the practical implementation of supporting the literacy learning of all students through structured, sequential literacy pedagogy and a cross disciplinary approach. Many examples are provided of authentic ideas that incorporate explicit teaching, with the provision of activities that engage students in their own learning. The authors in this volume are highly experienced academics, researchers and teachers and bring a wealth of both theoretical and practical perspectives to improving literacy learning across the curriculum and for all learners. The philosophy of inclusive literacy is embedded within all chapters and this is especially evident in those that address how teachers can support the challenges faced by students from diverse backgrounds who find literacy very difficult. Issues of social justice in relation to teaching literacy are also discussed. Although this book undoubtedly promotes an inclusive approach to teaching literacy within the regular classroom, the authors bring their own experience to the fore when they acknowledge that this is not always possible to achieve. By suggesting that for some students front-loading may be necessary, undertaken in small group or pull-out sessions, this actually strengthens the possibility that the differentiation occurring within the regular classroom will be of greater benefit subsequently to all students. Targeting the individual needs of some students might at times require specialized interventions; these may be more suitably and effectually undertaken outside of the regular classroom. For example, many teachers already appreciate how difficult it can be to implement direct instruction methods with small groups of children within a busy classroom situation. The realism of the ideas suggested in this book are most welcome. Teachers and leaders can confidently read this book knowing that the suggestions are grounded in evidence-based best practices and that the proposed pedagogies and differentiations to the curriculum are directed towards what is manageable for all regular class teachers. I highly recommend this book for all teachers of literacy and for those continuing the important role of researching best practices for effective inclusive literacy.

Chris Forlin
Series Editor

INTRODUCTION

In this volume, theories, key principles and research are examined along with policies and practices that operate in several countries, where mainstream teachers provide inclusive literacy education. The major theme of the volume is *Literacy for all* in regular classes. This encompasses both the changes in requirements to be literate in today's society, the literacy demands across the curriculum and the difficulties faced by a wide range of students, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those coming from social disadvantage and poverty. Some authors examine the challenges for teachers in current education systems, with packed curricula, additional demands for accountability, assessment and record keeping, and how the further challenges in literacy teaching might be addressed. The introduction begins with the overarching theoretical frameworks in the volume, followed by some understandings around inclusive literacy, then authors and their chapters are introduced.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In accordance with current theories in the field, the umbrella theoretical frameworks in this book incorporate Constructivism, Socio-culturalism and Social Justice. An Explicit Literacy Pedagogy is also supported. Constructivism is viewed as the active process in building knowledge and learning that occurs through experiences (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 321). In an educational sense it means that students learn and understand through their experiences, and the learning activities provided, rather than through a solely didactic approach. Closely aligned to Constructivism, Socio-Culturalism includes an approach to teaching that focusses on interactions, face-to-face either in pairs or groups, but also interacting with ideas in texts and media. It incorporates the notions that learning takes place in a social context and we learn through social interaction (Carrington et al., 2012). The understanding of Social Justice used here is that all children, regardless of circumstance, deserve a high-quality education with qualified, knowledgeable teachers; that the education of every child matters and supporting student learning and well-being are prioritised (Carrington et al., 2012; Munns, Sawyer, & Cole, 2013). These frameworks are a shift away from

a medical perspective that views the difficulty/disability as the major limiting factor for education, towards an understanding that learning and progress is possible with the appropriate programs, explicit instruction, interactions and support. Explicit Literacy Pedagogy encompasses teaching that uses explicit instruction such that literacy learning goals are made clear to students, and students are taught a metalanguage for talking about language and for using it as an object of thought (McLachlan, Nicholson, Fielding-Barnsley, Mercer, & Ohi, 2013). Instruction follows a progressive pathway and ongoing monitoring of understanding and feedback is undertaken by the teacher (Shanker & Ekwall, 2003).

Individual authors in this book may describe their work in terms of additional theoretical positions, or use specific definitions that apply in their particular contexts.

INCLUSIVE LITERACY

Inclusive literacy is discussed in detail in the first chapter. Here, however, a note is made that the forms of explicit teaching and support required for children with a learning difficulty or disability in literacy, often go beyond what a regular class teacher can reasonably be expected to provide whilst teaching a whole class. Given the range of student abilities in a regular class, it can be extremely difficult, at times, for teachers, no matter how competent, to provide sufficiently differentiated instruction to improve each child's literacy during the allotted time for literacy. That support in regular classrooms often needs to be in the form of additional time for literacy, in one on one or small group instruction, that is targeted towards an individual student's literacy learning needs. Inclusive regular class differentiated literacy instruction can then, have some additional pull-out or in-class teaching undertaken by a knowledgeable instructor, at a different time to the regular class literacy instruction. In this way, the student who needs it, is exposed to more literacy instruction.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE VOLUME

In this volume authors consider the issues associated with developing and improving the literacy of every student in mainstream classrooms and provide examples of good practices and models of effective inclusion in literacy teaching at different year levels, for different groups of students and the application to important subjects such as mathematics and science. At this point, it is noted that different authors may use a range of terms, that can be read interchangeably across or within chapters. For example, the terms 'regular', 'mainstream' or 'general' classroom are used to indicate a class containing students with a

range of abilities from those with learning disabilities to those who are gifted and to differentiate that classroom from a special education class. Further, the terms 'students', 'learners' and 'children' are used interchangeably. Authors indicate more specific groups with terms such as early years, young children, pre-school, primary, elementary, secondary, high school and students in transition.

The chapters are arranged in two parts. The first presents a wide perspective on theory and research into how literacy and the requirements to be literate have changed and the current demands on teachers and students. Part I also includes information on the research, policies and practices of inclusion in several countries. Part II focuses on research-based practices that can be used in everyday settings and within regular classrooms and as a supplement to provide targeted inclusive literacy for specific cohorts of students, from early childhood through to adolescence, and for children from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

In Part I, the first chapter by Marion Milton provides an overview of Inclusive Literacy with definitions, an outline of current research and examples of practice in the field, focussing on the Australian context. In order to ascertain the literacy learning needs of students in regular classrooms, Maureen Walsh considers the complex multi-modal world of literacy in today's society and the impact this has on our understanding and expectations for literacy in classrooms. Then David Evans examines the literacy needed for mathematics and what teachers need to consider when using the language of mathematics in order to be inclusive of all the students in their classrooms. Following, there are several chapters from international authors that outline particular research, policies, and practices in their countries. Michael Shevlin and Richard Rose present information from a large research study they undertook on inclusion in Ireland. Then Katrin Böhme, Birgit Heppt and Nicole Haag present the outcomes of their research which investigated literacy for students with special needs and those from other language backgrounds in Germany. While the students in their study were learning in German, it is very interesting to reflect on the fact that there are many similarities to the difficulties faced by students with special needs or learning in their second language in English speaking countries.

For literacy in science Randy Yerrick and Monica Ridgeway describe their research in the United States of America amongst urban secondary students and how sections of society are disadvantaged through the language and assessments used to measure science knowledge. The final chapter in this part is by Juan Bornman who discusses literacy and inclusion in South Africa, and the difficulties experienced by teachers facing large classes and students with low literacy levels. That chapter highlights the situation for teachers and students that may be different or amplified compared with the context presented by a number of the other authors.

Part II begins with a chapter on theory and research related to inclusive practices for young pre-school children. In this chapter Caroline Barratt-Pugh, Mary Rohl and Nola Allen describe research projects into an early years community-based initiative which is having a positive impact on beginning literacy.

Then several chapters focus on aspects of literacy learning and teaching that occurs in the primary/elementary level of schooling. Timothy Rasinski and Chase Young present some practical strategies to use with students struggling in reading fluency, based on their research into reading difficulties. Grace Oakley investigates the use of multimedia and technology for improving literacy outcomes for students struggling with certain aspects of literacy. Elaine Blake and Pauline Roberts examine how to use children's literature to develop science and literacy within science teaching. Following that, Susan Main and Deslea Konza share initial findings from their research with Australian Aboriginal students, who in general have lower literacy and poorer outcomes from schooling than the rest of the population. The authors discuss the issues that surround the teaching of these students and how teachers may work to improve literacy outcomes.

Next, Mary Keeffe tackles the difficult role faced by teachers of adolescent students with literacy difficulties, including those with dyslexia, in their transition to secondary school. Then Mary Doveston and Una Lodge examine some of the findings from their research into the introduction of a reading comprehension strategy into a large multi-cultural secondary school in England. Finally, Marion Milton examines the context for a proportion of children who come from language backgrounds other than English and how teachers may inadvertently inhibit student learning by the style of teaching, assumptions they make about the students' command of English, and the language teachers use in the classroom, that acts to exclude those students. A number of useful research-based strategies are presented in the chapters in this part, which teachers in a regular class may use to assist the literacy development of children from other language backgrounds.

Marion Milton

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PART I
LITERACY, INCLUSION AND
ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM:
INTERNATIONAL INSIGHTS

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LITERACY AND INCLUSION: CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

Marion Milton

ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses the concept of Literacy for all under a broadened view of inclusion in education. Definitions of inclusion, literacy and inclusive literacy are provided prior to consideration of some of the issues associated with developing and improving the literacy of every student in regular classroom contexts. It presents a brief overview of theory and international research, and as an example, provides some insights into current educational policies, practices and provision in Australia in relation to literacy education.

Keywords: Literacy; inclusive education; inclusive literacy practices; literacy difficulties; literacy in Australia

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with definitions of inclusion, literacy and inclusive literacy education. Inclusive education is increasingly a focus of schooling across the world, as is the provision of appropriate literacy learning environments, so an international perspective has been taken. Surveys conducted by international organisations have been consulted to obtain an indication of the range of definitions. A brief overview of current perspectives and international research is then presented and policies and practices in Australia are outlined.

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DEFINITIONS: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In general terms, inclusive education can be viewed as education in which the barriers to participation and learning are eliminated from classrooms and schools. This interpretation is in accord with the United Nations (UN) goal of *Education for All*. A statement by the UN indicates the goal is only achievable if inequity related to poverty, gender, health, access, provision and disability is addressed (United Nations, 2015).

In UNESCO's 'Policy Guidelines to Inclusive Education', it is stated that 'an inclusive education system can only be created if ordinary schools become more inclusive – in other words, if they become better at educating all children in their communities' (UNESCO, 2009, p. 8). Inclusive education is defined as 'an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination' (UNESCO, 2009, p. 18). The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2015, p. 2) hereafter called the European Agency states that in inclusive education 'all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers'.

Another view looks at barriers which lead to exclusion, and examines the ways in which unintentional exclusion may occur due to programs, texts, language, activities or behaviours that limit full participation and understanding for some students (Munns, Sawyer, & Cole, 2013). Some notions of inclusive education go further than removing barriers and indicate that inclusion values difference (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). In order to value difference, teachers and students need to welcome and respect all students regardless of background, culture, language or disability. In many cases a Values Framework is introduced in schools to assist teachers to understand how the values and attitudes they hold towards students' impact on outcomes (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

A socio-cultural perspective on inclusive education originates in the notion that all knowledge is co-constructed in a social context and students form a community of learners to learn through interaction with others. In the case of inclusion, all students are expected to contribute within the community to the best of their ability, and their contributions will be accepted (Danforth & Jones, 2015).

An overview of inclusive educational policies, presented definitions from seven international regions. For example, policy documents from Finland describe inclusive education as usual instruction that could be partially or fully in special placements. In Alberta, Canada inclusive education aims to provide all students with the most appropriate learning environments, which include segregated forms. In the United Kingdom, policies indicate that inclusion is about encouraging mainstream and special schools to come together to support students and to form a community. Italian policy mentions specialised personnel responding to the needs of vulnerable students and the reallocation of resources to regular schools (Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler, & Sharma, 2013).

Australian curriculum documents note that inclusive education provides age-appropriate differentiated learning and high expectations of all students, this provision includes a range of placements including partial regular class inclusion along with co-location of special and regular schools (ACARA, 2016). In the aforementioned survey of international literature, it was noted that curriculum statements on inclusion differed across the literature surveyed, and there was a disparity between policies and practices in schools (Forlin et al., 2013).

In this chapter, the tenets of inclusion outlined by Booth and Ainscow (2011), the understandings of inclusion provided by UNESCO and the European Agency are taken into consideration. Their statements along with those found within Australian curriculum documents (ACARA, 2012, 2016) are used as the basis for developing the following definition of inclusion:

Inclusive education is one that provides high quality, age-appropriate education either wholly or partially in a supportive regular class environment, in which each student's learning needs are recognised and can be met through acceptance, high expectations, differentiation and explicit, personalised learning.

DEFINITIONS: LITERACY

In terms of literacy, there have been many definitions, historically and from a range of perspectives, and in different contexts. In 2006 a UNESCO Global Monitoring Report titled 'Literacy for Life' indicated how literacy was defined by aid agencies who often fund and deliver schooling programs, and by governments around the world, which will influence policies and schooling practices. The agencies included UNICEF and World Bank, and International Development Organisations/Agencies from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Germany and New Zealand. Some definitions were about the basic skills of reading, writing and number, whilst a few indicated that these skills were for further learning or effective functioning in society. A survey of literacy definitions stated in government documents from a number of countries revealed: some stated that literacy was the ability to read and write simple sentences; others added 'in any language'; some indicated a literate person could read a newspaper with ease, and some indicated age criteria, such as over 5 or over 12. A few indicated that it was about reading and writing skills needed to fulfil tasks required in daily life (UNESCO, 2006).

A summary statement on the evolving definition of literacy indicates literacy as being; 'beyond simply "the set of technical skills of reading, writing and calculating" ...to a plural notion encompassing the manifold of meanings and dimensions of these undeniably vital competencies'. It is also stated that literacy is a basic human right (UNESCO, 2006).

The International Literacy Association defines literacy as: 'the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual,

audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context' (International Literacy Association, 2016).

The following, rather broad definition of literacy is used in the Australian curriculum: 'the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school' (ACARA, 2016). A statement in the Australian curriculum on how literacy develops indicates that: 'Students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts' (ACARA, 2012, p. 16).

Literacy is complex and there is a range of differing definitions, depending on the focus of the definition, such as whether an author is discussing early literacy, literacy difficulties, adult literacy, literacy in relation to technology and so on. It may also depend on the purpose of the definition; whether, for example, it is written as part of a journal article, a curriculum document, or a professional association or agency's stance on literacy. Some sources avoid defining literacy indicating that it is complex, changing and constantly being investigated or that the distinction between literacy and use of technology has dissolved (Groundwater-Smith, Brennan, McFadden, Mitchell, & Munns, 2009; McLachlan, Nicholson, Fielding-Barnsley, Mercer, & Ohi, 2013).

The definitions supported in this document are those of the International Literacy Association and the Australian Curriculum. The reason for the choices is that they both reflect the complexity of literacy and are appropriate for the mix of international and Australian authors. Individual authors may use slightly different definitions according to their contexts.

In a discussion of what literacy means in the 21st century, Gregson states that the notion of being literate has changed with complexities developing that had not been previously considered. She goes further to state that 'literacy has become more than a right, and being literate has become a necessity' (Gregson, 2013, p. 8). These notions are supported by others. In a background, ministerial paper titled *Skills for a digital world*, increased skill demands are noted. 'The pervasiveness of digital technologies in daily life is fundamentally changing the way individuals access and elaborate knowledge. Individuals have to process complex information, think systematically and take decisions weighting different forms of evidence' (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016, p. 4). Expanded views are expressed in a publication of the Association of International Educators, in which it is noted that change in world demands means that students need scientific and technical literacy along with critical thinking and problem solving skills (West, 2012).

LITERACY EDUCATION

Literacy is currently considered to be multimodal, integrating reading and writing with viewing, analysing and responding (Gregson, 2013; Walsh, 2008). It requires teaching that encourages learning that is collaborative and participatory, multimodal, self-directed and creative, particularly at the secondary level (Kajder, 2010). There has also been a shift to curriculum content that is more relevant to students and cross-curricula teaching and learning. One such iteration is 'problem-based' learning, with the intent to prepare students for the real-life world of work in which people work in teams to solve problems. In problem solving there is a focus on developing the skills outlined in an upgraded Bloom's Taxonomy that include: remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating (Frey, Fisher, & Gonzalez, 2010, p. 19). In real terms, it means that literacy and digital literacy are embedded across the curriculum such that students learn and apply literacy skills in all school subjects. Today there is more to learn and more to do in expanded curricula that require sophisticated, complex literacy skills and highly trained teachers who understand such factors and how to provide the best learning experiences for students' literacy to flourish.

A UNESCO Global Monitoring Report in 2014 investigated the quality of education and the amount of schooling needed to become literate. A survey of the schooling and literacy levels in 41 countries was undertaken. The summary indicates: 'Analysis confirms the assumption that children need to spend at least four years in school to become literate' (UNESCO, 2014, p. 34). It also indicates that of the children who spent less than four years in school, over 75% could not read all or part of a sentence. It was also stated that even five or six years in primary school did not guarantee literacy in some countries with low literacy levels overall. Poverty, poor health, low parental education, low quality teaching and low expectations were noted as factors related to reduced literacy levels (UNESCO, 2016).

If a child has a learning difficulty or disability, then the added impact of any of the above influences will compound and increase the time needed to become literate. Students who have difficulty early in their schooling will struggle with *Matthew effects*, in which poor readers fall further behind while good readers improve rapidly (Stanovich, 1986). Matthew effects increase each year, without appropriate, targeted, intervention (McLachlan et al., 2013). The implementation of numerous early intervention initiatives and programs have resulted in varying degrees of success. Reviews of policies and programs such as *Head Start* introduced in 1975 and the *No Child Left Behind Act* from 2001 in the United States of America (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2003); the *Literacy Hour* in Britain (Machin & McNally, 2004), *Close the Gap* initiatives in Australia (Turnbull, 2016) and Clay's *Reading Recovery* programme from New Zealand (Tunmer, Chapman, Greaney, Prochnow, &

Arrow, 2013) indicated that these either they have not achieved anticipated outcomes or have only experienced partial success. Several of the authors of those critiques indicated ways in which the programs could be adapted to yield greater effects. There are some newer early literacy intervention programs that are achieving success over time and for more information and an example, see the chapter by Caroline Barrat-Pugh, Mary Rohl, and Nola Allen in Section 2 of this volume. If some programmes aimed at early intervention for vulnerable students have limited success, then the task of assisting those students improve their literacy usually falls to regular classroom teachers. Regular classes usually comprise up to 30 or more students with literacy levels ranging from low to high. Hence, it is not surprising that regular class teachers often struggle to provide the additional small group and individualised instruction students with literacy difficulties often need.

DEFINITION: INCLUSIVE LITERACY

In a regular classroom, a teacher often needs to teach students who have a complex array of learning needs including those who experience difficulty in literacy. A view of literacy teaching and inclusion gleaned from foregoing research and scholarly articles is that literacy teaching requires specific, structured and sequential instruction. For literacy teaching to be inclusive, it must be targeted to address the differentiated needs of each student, through creating interest and motivation, by using language that will be inclusive, whilst teaching the language needed for the discourse and the subject.

In this text the following definition is proposed, which incorporates elements from cited definitions of both inclusion and literacy and is in accordance with the theme and overarching theoretical framework of this document.

Inclusive literacy education is the provision of age-appropriate curriculum, using explicit, sequential, differentiated instruction that includes learning activities in oral language, reading, viewing, writing and creating a range of texts in traditional and digital formats.

This definition encompasses the reading pre-requisites of phonological awareness and phonics, and the writing subskills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Inclusive literacy education assumes a supportive regular class environment in which each student's literacy learning needs are recognised across the curriculum and can be met through acceptance, high expectations, differentiation, explicit teaching and personalised learning. It is acknowledged that the definitions of inclusion and inclusive literacy may not encompass all aspects of inclusion/literacy and individual authors may specify ways in which an understanding of inclusive literacy education may differ in their countries and/or contexts.

THE CONCEPT OF INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

The concept of inclusion has been developing and changing over time, from physical inclusion, to partial participation to full participation with differentiated and personalised instruction. The major change factors of a civil rights agenda, increasing notions of social justice and questioning of special education research methodology led to changes in education laws (Danforth & Jones, 2015). In 1975 the United States of America passed the Education for Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142 which stated that every child had the right to an equal education in the least restrictive environment (United States Government Publishing Office, 1975). In the United Kingdom, the Warnock Report in 1978 criticised the practice of categorising and labelling children and the Education Act of 1981 ended provision based on categorisation (Danforth & Jones, 2015, p. 5). The impact of those laws, along with the U.N. conventions on the *Rights of the Child* and a second convention on the *Rights of Disabled People*, led to a number of governments enacting laws related to racism, equality and educational provision for students with special needs, including physical, emotional and cognitive disabilities (Savage, 2015).

Prior to this time, children were assessed in terms of the severity and category of a diagnosed disability and placed in special education facilities which had targeted resources, teachers who were, in the main, trained to provide special education and small class numbers. Various types of inclusion operated in different countries and different contexts. In many cases inclusion simply meant physical integration in a classroom perhaps without much regard to the educational learning needs of individual students. In other situations, an Education Assistant was assigned to the classroom or the student to give individual help. Sometimes the student had a completely different programme of work to the other children in the class. These models reflected integration rather than inclusion. Integration means that the person being integrated has to adapt to fit in. The understanding behind current notions of inclusion is that the student does not have to change, the change is made to the environment, teaching methods and support (Danforth & Jones, 2015).

Enacting inclusive education is complex, for example, when policies and practices intersect, and well-intentioned or aspirational policies are difficult to enact on the ground in classrooms due to a range of reasons, including lack of appropriate resources, support, teacher transience, training or quality. Inclusion was often seen as an added burden for teachers who had little or no training in how to cater for students with special needs. Improving teachers' professional learning related to inclusion is an important factor for the success of inclusive education (Forlin, 2010). An examination of inclusion identified the following factors that resulted in exclusion: access, responsibility, lack of accountability, attitudes and values, knowledge and bullying (Carrington et al., 2012, p. 25). An examination of teacher attitudes and beliefs revealed that some teachers did not see it as their responsibility to teach all the children in their

classroom. Findings also indicated that teachers' beliefs, values and attitudes were critical in providing effective inclusion and that they need to develop an inclusive mind-set (Kearney, 2011). Often schools in which staff saw themselves as inclusive through implementing the principles of partial participation (PPP) were in reality, acting to exclude those students by not providing appropriate support (Thompson, 2015).

The Index for Inclusion developed in the United Kingdom by Booth and Ainscow (2011) has been widely used internationally as a tool for teachers to gauge their own inclusivity of students, and by school communities to investigate the inclusivity of all aspects of school communication and provision. The Index includes a Values Framework to allow staff to investigate the inclusivity in structures and relationships which lead to the actions needed in a broad sense to be inclusive, such as respect for diversity. In the school situation it assists staff and community members review policy, practices and culture to examine whether or to what degree the literacy education they are providing is in fact inclusive of all children.

Poverty is another factor that needs to be considered as students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often need ongoing support in the classroom. A report titled 'Equity and Quality in Education' found that 1 in 5 students across OECD countries failed to reach minimum education standards and those from economically deprived backgrounds were twice as likely to be low achievers, who were unlikely to finish secondary school (OECD, 2012). The Australian report, 'Dropping off the Edge' (Vinson, 2007), investigated the relationship between low educational achievement and social disadvantage. The indicators of disadvantage outlined in the report include social distress, health, community safety, economic factors and education. The study found that in nearly 2% of postcodes across Australia the population was seven times more likely to exhibit the major factors that cause intergenerational poverty and disadvantage. Further, poor education and poverty were linked in all cases. It was further noted that government funded initiatives to address the impact of poverty were not in place long enough to have a substantial impact (Vinson, Rawsthorne, Beavis, & Ericson, 2015). It has been noted that teachers often don't live in the poorest communities, and economically disadvantaged people accessed fewer educational resources than others (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2009).

Another possible fear is that inclusion may decrease levels of high achievement in classes and schools. A study presented by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development demonstrated that improvement for students performing at the lowest level does not have to be at expense of others (OECD, 2012). The UNESCO report 'Learning Divides' (Willms, 2006) found that strong school performance and equity can occur together.

A *raising standards* agenda is currently being followed by a growing number of countries. This includes increased school and teaching staff accountability for the improvement of all students. A standards agenda has had a positive impact on the outcomes for students with diverse learning needs. Under a

standards regime teachers and schools need to demonstrate overall growth in student outcomes and also outcome improvements for different cohorts of students such as those from other language backgrounds, indigenous students and those with learning difficulties or disabilities (Hardman & Dawson, 2008). For an in-depth examination of the historical research and antecedents to the adoption of inclusive policies and practices in schools internationally, see Volume 6 in this series edited by Jones and Danforth (2015).

THE CONCEPT OF INCLUSIVE LITERACY EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

The important link between literacy and children with special educational needs was described by McGill-Franzen (2000, p. 891) who stated that the Education for Handicapped Children Act in the United States was significant for the field of reading, because the majority of referrals to special education services were because students could not read. There was a difference between those referred to special education and those referred to compensatory educational services as there was an assumption that the latter children could catch up with extra instruction. For children referred to special education, however, the reading failure was thought to be due to an underlying organic/cognitive disability and a new category *learning disabled*, also referred to as *reading disabled*, was launched. McGill-Franzen further noted that the number of children referred between 1976 and 1993 in America drastically increased. She cited the National Research Council finding that by 1995 10% of all school children were classified as learning disabled (p. 891).

Data reported in 2001 by the U.S. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (Lyon, 2003) indicated that 20% of elementary school students were 'at risk' for reading failure. This aligns with current U.S. indications that around 5% of public school students have a formal diagnosis of a learning disability, but a further 15% of students struggle due to unaddressed learning needs (NCES, 2016). Recent data retrieved from the U.S. National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES, 2016) indicated that there was an increase of 5.7% of students identified as learning disabled in 2004–2005, yet there were decreases in the percentage of students in programmes to assist that disability in 2004–2005 (13.8%) and 2012–2013 (12.9%).

In the United Kingdom, the percentage of children in need with a recorded disability has decreased, from 14.2% in 2010/2011 to 12.7% in 2015/2016 (U.K. Government, 2016). These figures cover all students in need, not only those with a physical or learning disability, but also those suffering abuse. It is somewhat difficult, therefore to compare prevalence across countries.

A report into the special educational needs of children in Europe indicated that around 6% had a diagnosed learning disability (European Commission,

2013). There appeared to be some degree of consensus, despite the use of differing terms and measures, that between 5% and 6% of school aged students had a learning disability and up to 20% overall had some difficulty with literacy.

Many children with reading/literacy difficulties referred to compensatory services receive their targeted instruction in pull out sessions often while literacy was being taught with the rest of the class. Studies found that such students often did not progress, but fell further behind (Shanker & Ekwall, 2003). This was because the pull out classes often focused on isolated skills, so that the students missed out on the wider aspects of literacy taught in the class. The effect was such that the students who needed the most instruction received less. The key is to differentiate some literacy instruction for students in the regular class environment and then provide the personalised, targeted teaching and learning that students with learning and reading difficulties require. This requires optimum pedagogical practices in a supportive environment which may mean some students do need additional one to one in-class or pull out assistance with a knowledgeable instructor but this needs to be at a different time to in-class literacy lessons so that they get more rather than less literacy instruction.

Further, the amount of time spent actually reading can be critical to developing reading skills. An examination of effective and less effective teachers of literacy found that while teachers spent similar amounts of time overall on literacy, in the classrooms of less effective teachers, students spent little time, sometimes as little as 10 minutes of an hour's instruction, in reading. The rest of the time was spent undertaking activities related to the content. In the classrooms of effective literacy teachers, students spent at least half of the allotted time for literacy in reading (Shanker & Ekwall, 2003).

In an examination of recent brain based research into early literacy, Mclachlan et al. (2013) conclude that a number of children require more explicit and intensive instruction in early literacy than their classmates, and that the type of teaching and learning opportunities provided is a determining factor in literacy development. The National Early Literacy Panel Report (NELP, 2009) listed the following six variables as critical to developing literacy: alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid automatic naming (RAN) of letters or numbers, RAN of objects and colours, writing letters and phonological memory. The Rose Report from the United Kingdom (2006) that analysed different methods of teaching phonics found that a synthetic approach, in which students are initially taught a limited number of letters and immediately taught to blend them into words that can be decoded and encoded in writing, was the most efficient way to teach the letter sound correspondences and decoding skills that are critical to reading. This system of teaching phonics has been adopted for teaching literacy in several English-speaking countries. The prerequisites and subskills of literacy need to be taught explicitly, but within a wider literacy environment. For optimum literacy development, young children also need effective teachers (Mclachlan et al., 2013).

In a preliminary report on preservice preparation for teaching literacy, the International Literacy Association (ILA) indicated a need for increased attention on how preservice teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 12 are prepared, as all teachers need to be able to teach literacy and there is great variability between different state requirements in America (ILA, 2015). One of their findings was that ‘preservice teachers need to be better prepared to address the needs of learners with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds across all grades and in all disciplines’ (ILA, 2015, p. 8).

POLICY AND PRACTICE IN AUSTRALIA

The policy that frames the Australian curriculum is informed by the ‘Melbourne Declaration’ (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2008). Two goals from the Declaration that are embraced in the curriculum are to ‘promote equity and excellence’ and for all children to become successful learners’ leading to them becoming ‘confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens’. In ‘The Shape of the Australian Curriculum’ Version 4 (ACARA, 2012, p. 8) a number of factors are indicated, including the following which are embedded in the curriculum to address those goals:

- each student can learn
- the needs of every student are important
- teachers should account for each student’s current level of learning and rate of development
- teachers will plan from the curriculum to respond to the interests of students
- high expectations should be set for each student

These notions are reflected in the Australian Curriculum. In a document titled ‘Propositions that Shape the Australian Curriculum’, Item 16c states that the Australian Curriculum:

Enables high expectations to be set for each student, as teachers account for the current levels of learning of individual students and the different rates at which students develop. (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2012, p. 8)

Further, it is acknowledged that many students with disability are able to achieve educational standards commensurate with their peers, as long as the necessary adjustments are made to the way in which they are taught and to the means through which they demonstrate their learning (ACARA, 2012, p. 20). An underlying tenet of the Australian Curriculum is that it provides the flexibility for teachers to deliver curriculum content at age-appropriate levels to suit the learning needs of all students, so that each child receives personalised learning. Differentiated instruction is expected. All students take part in whole class

instruction, questioning can be structured to give success to all, and tasks set that consolidate learning and provide repeated practice in different contexts for those who need it to gain understanding and develop skills. In Australia inclusion is mandated in regular classes. However, special classes and schools are still provided for those children whose learning needs cannot be fully met in regular classes and for those with greater needs. The final decision on placement is a result of joint consultation with parents, teachers, school psychologists and other professionals.

The growth in the number of Independent Public Schools (IPS), which are government schools given a certain degree of autonomy, has seen an increased focus on meeting every child's educational needs (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2016). Under the terms of its agreement with a State Education Department, an IPS is required to monitor learning and improve the learning outcomes of all students. Many schools are using the principles and techniques described as *visible learning* by Hattie (2012), which he explains as student improvement of more than 4% per year. Through meta-analysis he demonstrated the factors that can have the most impact on student learning outside of student ability. The major schooling factor to impact on student learning is teacher effectiveness (p. 23). For effective inclusive literacy teaching teachers still need to be aware of four principles identified by Shanker and Ekwall (2003, p. 4). These are: (1) that students require systematic sequential skill instruction to learn how to decode and pronounce words; (2) nearly all require some form of direct instruction of information in small increments in which the pace of learning and introduction of new material is carefully monitored; (3) the reading level needs to be right; and (4) students need time to practise reading. A statement in the Australian curriculum indicates the importance of literacy teaching across other subjects, noting: 'Success in any learning area depends on being able to use the significant, identifiable and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area' (ACARA, 2012, p. 16).

In terms of literacy teaching in Australian schools, teachers were strongly influenced by a model proposed by Freebody and Luke (1990, p. 7) in which they indicated that in order to become literate students need to take on the following four reader roles.

Role 1: As a Code Breaker, students need to be able to decode the print;

Role 2: As a Text Participant, they must understand what they read;

Role 3: As a Text User, students use the information from the text in some way;

Role 4: As a Text Analyst, they become critical readers able to analyse the intention and viewpoint of the author.

The roles have been applied to new media, particularly the importance of ascertaining the authenticity of information found on the web. Although the

model has been useful in highlighting different aspects of a literate person, and what needs to be taught, it has not specified how to monitor improvements. Teachers have more recently turned to practical programmes that often have a sequential, progressive structure that can be used to monitor outcomes through the primary years and sometimes into secondary school. Many of those commercial programmes have an online component or are completely technology based. Literacy education practices for students with literacy difficulties have embraced technology as it can provide motivation, personalised learning and a means to monitor learning (Oakley, 2008).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, literacy is arguably the most important skill a child will learn at school, as it is the basis for almost all other learning. As such, achieving success from an early age is vitally important for all children. Children who struggle to learn to read and write require more targeted support. There are a range of different policies and provisions for inclusive education depending on systems and educational structures in different countries. Policies related to provision for students with literacy disabilities/difficulties filter down through government and education departmental directives and/or school-level decisions and are enacted through instructional and assessment practices. The research discussed indicated that students with literacy difficulties benefit from explicit teaching, using a structured sequential approach, and that some children need additional intensive instruction, in addition to the broader whole class approach.

Policies delineated in Australian curriculum documents were used as an example of inclusive education principles to be enacted in literacy teaching in regular classrooms. These include providing differentiated instruction and personalised learning; literacy curriculum that is age and needs appropriate, and ongoing monitoring of both student learning and teacher effectiveness.

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