

Reflection guide for

Bunyips in The Classroom: The 10 Changes

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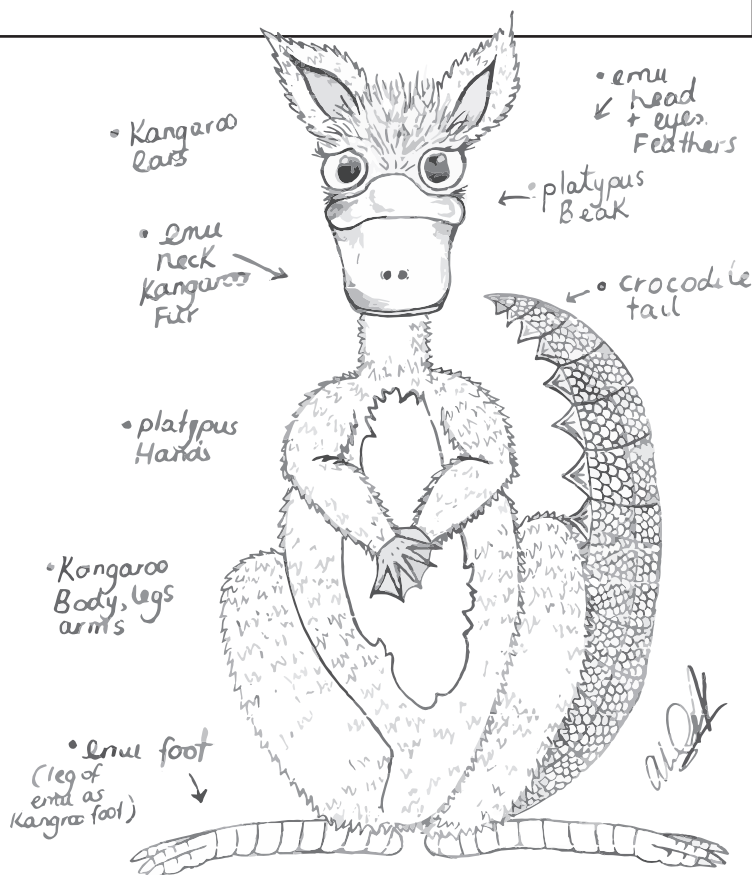
Bunyips in The Classroom: The 10 Changes is Book 1 of the Aussie Reading Woes trilogy by Dr Susan Galletly. Available in paperback and e-book from Pro-Ed Australia and all major online book sellers.

For information on the trilogy and stockists visitsusangalletly.com.au.

What is a Bunyip in the Classroom?

While an elephant in the room is incredibly obvious, a bunyip in the room hasn't been noticed. Once pointed out, however, it's blatantly obvious and clearly an important issue – it's well worth squirming about, as it feels both absurd and embarrassing that it could have been overlooked for so long.

We've far too many bunyips in our Aussie classrooms! It's time to start discussing the 10 Changes. Australia needs you!



This reflection guide is for use by all readers. It's also one that individuals, schools and organisations might use as part of professional development.

The issues raised in *Bunyips in The Classroom: The 10 Changes* are pertinent to all involved in education and supporting children's development in Australia. They highlight major issues currently impeding the effectiveness of education and child development, plus also suggest logical solutions, and directions for Australia to pursue, towards achieving strong improvement.

While reading the book is valuable, further value is obtained by reflecting on the books content, using stimulus questions, and then discussing the responses to those stimulus questions with others.

Part 1 of the reflection guide lists pertinent concepts of the book, including the 3 Wonderings, the 10 Changes, our ABCs, the 2035 Goal, the Thesis Statement, our Mantra, and the Aspects of Improved Resourcing for (a) Educational Research and (b) Education.

Part 2 of the reflection guide provides stimulus questions for readers to reflect on their reading of *Bunyips*, and record responses.



Part 1 Key Concepts of Bunyips in the Room: The 10 Changes

3 Wonderings

1. What factors cause our children's and adults' reading and literacy difficulties?
2. How can we reduce their struggles and suffering?
3. What are the ways we can do things better?

The 10 Changes

CHANGE 1. Understand how orthographies matter: English spelling is dragging us down.

CHANGE 2. Own our struggling reader woes: End hypocrisy and pretence.

CHANGE 3. Weigh workload: Our children and teachers are working far too hard.

CHANGE 4. One-size education does not fit all: Teach to the decidedly different instructional needs of upper-third and lower-third readers.

CHANGE 5. End our data deficiency: Build strong knowledge on word-reading levels.

CHANGE 6. Enrich every child: Ensure effective, supportive, tailored education.

CHANGE 7. Insist on easier early-literacy development: Reach regular-orthography nations' achievement levels.

CHANGE 8. Investigate the potential of fully-regular beginners' orthographies: Research shows they're key.

CHANGE 9. First, play to learn: Start Standard English word-reading instruction from mid-Year 2.

CHANGE 10. Build needed research knowledge as quickly as possible: Use collaborative school-based research.

The ABCs of Improving Education

- A. **ACT** locally while looking globally.
- B. **BOOST** the lower-third to benefit everyone.
- C. **CHANGE** effectively to work less and achieve more.

The 2035 goal

By 2035, Australian education will be routinely, efficiently, gently and easily achieving highly effective, rapid development of children's word-reading, spelling, writing and early-literacy skills, in **GENTLE** manner, in every early-years classroom, in all schools across our nation, as efficiently as is achieved routinely across schools in regular-orthography nations such as Taiwan, Japan and China, with at least 98% of Australian school children being confident, independent readers and writers, able to read 95% of the 10,000 most-frequent words, by age 8.5 years, or within 18 months of starting formal word-reading instruction.



The Thesis Statement

Australian education is currently insufficiently effective for most students, and grossly ineffective for our lower-third students – our at-risk and struggling readers. Causal factors include English orthographic complexity and its impacts, our beginners' very young age, many children starting school highly at-risk of difficulties, insufficient school resourcing, too high child and teacher workload, and our having too many struggling readers with major difficulties.

Our struggling readers' major instructional needs add additional teacher workload to what is already extremely high workload, making it excessive. This in turn reduces effectiveness of education for all our children, because our teachers are too busy to effectively meet all children's instructional needs.

This complex struggling-education problem can be resolved, and powerful positive changes are possible at relatively low expense, if we explore and implement effective methods used in other nations.

Possible changes include using a fully-regular beginners' orthography when children first learn to read and write, raising our starting age for formal reading instruction, adding in strong play-based language enrichment and allied-health intervention supports prior to formal reading instruction, reducing teacher workload, and providing ample, effective school supports.

These changes have powerful potential to expedite early-literacy development and mastering of Standard English literacy, and reduce early-literacy difficulties, time pressure, and child and teacher workload. These, in turn, can make Australian education both far more effective and considerably less expensive.

The Mantra

“There are no such things as reading difficulties. There are only teaching challenges.”

Jackie French , Children's Laureate 2014-15, Acceptance Speech for the award of 2015 Senior Australian of the Year

Four Aspects of Increased Educational Research Resourcing

(pp. 214-216)

1. Increased research funding, to a level perhaps equivalent to four times that of Finland.
2. A focused Australian research project, exploring 10 Changes factors.
3. Teacher researchers and school-based research.
4. Open access and knowledge sharing.

Four Aspects of Increased School Resourcing

(pp. 131-134)

1. Reduced class-teaching hours, by perhaps 200 hours per year.
2. One full-time teacher aide for every teacher, additional to special needs teacher-aide time.



3. Increased supports for at-risk children, including for every 500 enrolled children at every primary school and high school, including
 - a. One learning-support teacher with Masters-level qualifications, and four well-trained learning-support teacher aides.
 - b. One speech language pathologist with education training, and four communication aides.
 - c. One occupational therapist with education training, with four occupational therapy aides.
 - d. One social worker with education training.
 - e. One psychologist with education training.
4. Increased Australian Curriculum supports, including
 - a. Streamlined options for children with learning difficulties.
 - b. Optional textbooks and workbooks for all subject areas for each yearlevel.
 - c. Resources towards effectively differentiated instruction for each subject and yearlevel.
 - d. Heightened development of curriculum and resources at national level, to reduce workload at school level.



Part 2 Stimulus Questions for Reflecting on Bunyips in the Room: The 10 Changes

The book's contents page is listed below, followed by suggested reflection questions for 15 consecutive sections of the book (Sections A-0).

While each set of questions is followed by space for writing reflections, towards space for expanded writing as desired, it's likely some readers will choose to record their reflections elsewhere.

PART 1 - SETTING THE SCENE

Chapter 1. An Informal Aussie Glossary	pp. 3-6
Chapter 2. Welcome	pp. 7-11
Chapter 3. The 10 Changes, ABCs and Mantra.....	pp. 12-14
Chapter 4. Who am I?	pp. 15-18
Chapter 5. Snapshots of Our Struggles	pp. 19-26
Chapter 6. Our Sad Bad Early Years Factory.....	pp. 27-32
Chapter 7. The Massive Differences Orthographies Make.....	pp. 33-45
Chapter 8. Orthographic Complexity Can Be Managed Well	pp. 46-52
Chapter 9. Our Struggling-Education Problem	pp. 53-63
Chapter 10. Our Disappointing Reading Results.....	pp. 64-75
Chapter 11. Let's Solve This!	pp. 76-80

PART 2 - THE 10 CHANGES

Chapter 12. Setting Our Goals.....	pp. 81-83
Chapter 13. Change 1 Understand How Orthographies Matter	pp. 84-97
Chapter 14. Change 2 Own Our Struggling Reader Woes	pp. 98-112
Chapter 15. Change 3 Weigh Workload	pp. 113-135
Chapter 16. Change 4 Respect Learning Differences	pp. 136-148
Chapter 17. Change 5 Investigate Word-Reading	pp. 149-164
Chapter 18. Change 6 Enrich Education for Every Child	pp. 165-172
Chapter 19. Change 7 Insist on Easier Literacy Development.....	pp. 173-182
Chapter 20. Change 8 Investigate Beginners' Orthographies.....	pp. 183-195
Chapter 21. Change 9 Play to Enriched Language and Learning ...	pp. 196-209
Chapter 22. Change 10 Build Useful Research Knowledge	pp. 210-220



PART 3 - INTO THE FUTURE WE GO

Chapter 23. Let's Work Upstream and Down.....	pp. 223-226
Chapter 24. Keep Change Thinking Happening.....	pp. 227-228

REFLECTION SECTIONS

A. Chapters 1-3The 10 Changes, ABCs and Mantra	pp. 3-14
B. Chapters 4-6 Snapshots of Our Struggles	pp. 15-26
C. Chapters 7-8 The Massive Differences Orthographies Make	pp. 33-52
D. Chapters 9-12 Our Needs for Improvement	pp. 53-83
E. Chapter 13. Change 1 Understand How Orthographies Matter	pp. 84-97
F. Chapter 14. Change 2 Own Our Struggling Reader Woes.....	pp. 98-112
G. Chapter 15. Change 3 Weigh Workload.....	pp. 113-135
H. Chapter 16. Change 4 Respect Learning Differences	pp. 136-148
I. Chapter 17. Change 5 Investigate Word-Reading.....	pp. 149-164
J. Chapter 18. Change 6 Enrich Education for Every Child.....	pp. 165-172
K. Chapter 19. Change 7 Insist on Easier Literacy Development	pp. 173-182
L. Chapter 20. Change 8 Investigate Beginners' Orthographies.....	pp. 183-195
M. Chapter 21. Change 9 Play to Enriched Language and Learning.....	pp. 196-209
N. Chapter 22. Change 10 Build Useful Research Knowledge.....	pp. 210-220
O. Chapters 23-24 .. Into the Future We Go	pp. 223-228



Section A Chapters 1-3: The 10 Changes, ABCs and Mantra (pp. 3-14)

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways are any of the 10 Changes new or surprising to you?
2. What are your thoughts on the three wonderings (pp. 9)?
3. What terms in the Informal Aussie Glossary seem new or interesting (pp. 3-6)?
4. What are your thoughts on the mantra for our education improvement journey (pp.13)?

REFLECTIONS:



Section B Chapters 4-6: Snapshots of Our Struggles (pp. 15-26)

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

5. What roles do you find yourself taking as you read this book, e.g., parent, professional, an Aussie, interested citizen, others?
6. Note down a few Matties, Jamies and Nathans, who've had school difficulties, that you have had experience of (pp. 20-25). To what extent do you think their difficulties were unexpected, prior to starting school?
7. What are your thoughts on our teachers being so overworked? Does Wendy's experience seem familiar (pp.25-26)?
8. What are your thoughts on our '*Sad Bad Early Years Factory*? To what extent do you think our education difficulties across primary and high school might start in our early years?

REFLECTIONS:



Section C Chapters 7-8: The Massive Differences
Orthographies Make (pp. 33-52)

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

9. In what ways are orthographies and their impacts new to you?
10. What are your thoughts on many nations using highly regular orthographies and their children so quickly and easily learning to read and spell, and become independent readers and writers?

REFLECTIONS:



Section D Chapters 9-12: Our Needs for Improvement (pp. 53-83)

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

11. What are your thoughts on orthographic advantage vs disadvantage that nations have through it being easy vs difficult for children to become effective readers and writers (p. 53-60)?
12. What are your thoughts on our Early Years Factory's nasty byproducts (pp. 60-63)?
13. What are your thoughts on Australia's difficulties improving literacy and education (pp. 64-75)?

REFLECTIONS:



Section E Chapter 13: Change 1
Understand How Orthographies Matter (pp. 84-97)

Change 1. *Understand how orthographies matter: English spelling is dragging us down.*

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

14. Record your reflections on Change 1 (pp. 84-97)?
15. What are your thoughts on the impacts of orthographies on children learning to read and write, and their easing vs impeding education in other ways?
16. In what ways might Australia, and we as individuals, engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section F Chapter 14: Change 2
Own Our Struggling Reader Woes (pp. 98-112)

Change 2. Own our struggling reader woes: End hypocrisy and pretence.

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

17. Record your reflections on Change 2 (pp. 98-112)?
18. What are your thoughts on Australia perhaps currently under-supporting our at-risk and struggling readers?
19. In what ways might Australia, and we as individuals, engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section G Chapter 15: Change 3 - Weigh Workload (pp. 113-135)

Change 3. *Weigh workload: Our children and teachers are working far too hard.*

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

20. Record your reflections on Change 3 (pp. 113-135)?
21. What are your thoughts on Australian children and teachers perhaps having higher workload than children and teachers in other nations, because we spend so many more hours developing early-literacy skills and providing support for slowly developing literacy skills?
22. In what ways might Australia, and we as individuals, engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section H Chapter 16: Change 4
Respect to Learning Differences (pp. 136-148)

Change 4. *One-size education does not fit all: Teach to the decidedly different instructional needs of upper-third and lower-third readers.*

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

23. Record your reflections on Change 4 (pp. 136-148)?
24. What are your thoughts on cognitive-processing skills and children with strong literacy learning skills having somewhat different learning and support needs to children with weaker skills?
25. In what ways might Australia, and we as individuals, engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section I Chapter 17: Change 5 - Investigate Word-Reading (pp. 149-164)

Change 5. End our data deficiency: Build strong knowledge on word-reading levels.

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

26. Record your reflections on Change 5 (pp. 149-164)?
27. What are your thoughts on word-reading being a particularly important skill as regards international differences in reading and literacy, because orthographic complexity impacts word-reading so directly?
28. In what ways might Australia, and we as individuals, engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section J Chapter 18: Change 6
Enrich Education for Every Child (pp. 165-172)

Change 6. *Enrich every child: Ensure effective, supportive, tailored education.*

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

29. Record your reflections on Change 6 (pp. 165-172)?
30. What are your thoughts on every Australian child needed tailored instruction, supports and mentoring, and the contrast of GENTLE vs HEARTSH?
31. In what ways might Australia, and we as individuals, engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section K Chapter 19: Change 7
Insist on Easier Literacy Development (pp. 173-182)

Change 7. *Insist on easier early-literacy development: Reach regular-orthography nations' achievement levels.*

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

32. Record your reflections on Change 7 (pp. 173-182)?
33. What are your thoughts on the ethical aspects of Australian children having slowed and impeded early-literacy development and learning relative to children of many regular-orthography nations who have easy, rapid word-reading and spelling development, and are soon confident, independent readers and writers?
34. In what ways might Australia, and we as individuals, engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section I Chapter 20: Change 8
Investigate Beginners' Orthographies (pp. 183-195)

Change 8. *Investigate the potential of fully-regular beginners' orthographies: Research shows they're key.*

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

35. Record your reflections on Change 8 (pp. 183-195)?
36. What are your thoughts on Taiwan, Japan and China now using beginners' orthographies to strong effect, and their major educational and economic improvement since they introduced beginners' orthographies?
37. What are your thoughts on the value of Australia using an English beginners' orthography?
38. In what ways might Australia, and we as individuals, engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section M Chapter 21: Change 9
Play to Enriched Language and Learning (pp. 196-209)

Change 9. *First, play to learn: Start Standard English word-reading instruction from mid-Year 2.*

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

39. Record your reflections on Change 9 (pp. 196-209)?
40. What are your thoughts on our young starting age of 4.5 to 5 years, with our children thus having immature cognitive processing skills and greater risk of developing word-reading and early-literacy difficulties?
41. What are your thoughts on the value and importance of using play-based learning for language and learning enrichment for our first 2.5 school years?
42. In what ways might Australia, and we as individuals, engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section N Chapter 22: Change 10
Build Useful Research Knowledge (pp. 210-220)

Change 10. *Build needed research knowledge as quickly as possible: Use collaborative school-based research.*

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

43. Record your reflections on Change 10 (pp. 210-220)?
44. What are your thoughts on our needs for efficient research, often at school level, to build useful knowledge in 10 Changes areas?
45. In what ways might Australia and individuals and schools engage in this change?

REFLECTIONS:



Section O Chapters 23-24: Into the Future We Go (pp. 223-228)

The 3 Wonderings:

- 1. What factors cause our children's and adults' reading and literacy difficulties?*
- 2. How can we reduce their struggles and suffering?*
- 3. What are the ways we can do things better?*

STIMULUS QUESTIONS:

46. Record some final thoughts and reflections on the issues raised in *Bunyips in the Room: The 10 Changes*, perhaps as a summary of your thinking on this area. In doing so, perhaps reflect on the 3 wonderings, listed above.

REFLECTIONS:

Thank you for reading *Bunyips in the Room: The 10 Changes* and reflecting on the issues it raises. Please keep discussions happening on the 10 Changes. Australia needs you!

The future is bright. Let's move there!

