

Key Concepts of the Aussie Reading Woes Trilogy

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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 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

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.

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.



The future is bright. Let's move there!

Please keep discussions happening on the 10 Changes. Australia needs you! For more information visit susangalletly.com.au