NSW GOVERNMENT

QUALITY OF INITIAL TEACHER
EDUCATION IN NSW

LITERACY LEARNING IN THE EARLY YEARS

GREAT TEACHING, INSPIRED LEARNING – A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION
ACTION 3.1 – THE QUALITY OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS
WILL BE ASSESSED AND PUBLICLY REPORTED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS

BOSTES

BOARD OF STUDIES
TEACHING &
EDUCATIONAL
STANDARDS NSW

QUALITY TEACHING COUNCIL

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AITSL
Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

APST
Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

AQF
Australian Qualifications Framework

BOS
Board of Studies NSW

BOSTES
Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW

DEC
Department of Education and Communities

EFTSL
Equivalent Full Time Student Load

IELTS
International English Language Teaching System

ITE
Initial Teacher Education

MAGLAN
Ministerial Advisory Group Literacy and Numeracy

NAPLAN
National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

NSWIT
NSW Institute of Teachers

OECD
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAT-R
Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading

PIRLS
Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

PISA
Program for International Student Assessment

SES
Socioeconomic status

TORCH
Tests in Reading Comprehension

UK
United Kingdom

USA
United States of America

CONTENTS

ABOUT *GREAT TEACHING, INSPIRED LEARNING – A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION*

Research shows that quality teachers are crucial for achieving an overall improvement in student learning outcomes.

In 2013, the NSW Government released *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning – a Blueprint for Action*, which outlines 47 actions to improve the already high standards of teaching in NSW.

Responding to extensive community feedback about teaching quality, the plan includes actions to:

▶ better understand and share what makes an excellent teacher

▶ ensure beginning teachers are well suited and thoroughly prepared for the classroom

▶ make the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers central to delivering fair and accountable performance and accreditation processes and high quality professional development for all teachers

▶ ensure career pathways and improved support for school leaders.

The Blueprint is designed to help students to achieve better results by researching and sharing what makes an excellent teacher, and supporting the career long professional development of all teachers.

BOSTES, the NSW Department of Education and Communities, the Catholic Education Commission NSW and the Association of Independent School of NSW are working together to implement the Blueprint's reforms across NSW.

Visit nswteachers.nsw.edu.au to find out how the Blueprint is improving the quality of teaching and student leaning outcomes in NSW schools.

The Blueprint is designed to help students to achieve better results by researching and sharing what makes an excellent teacher.

FIGURE 1: INSPIRED LEARNING DIAGRAM
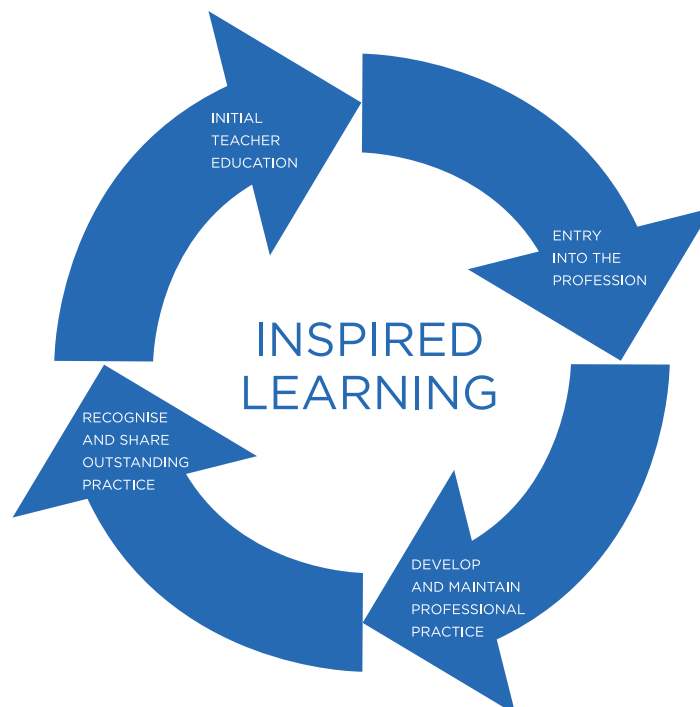
INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

ENTRY INTO THE PROFESSION

INSPIRED LEARNING

RECOGNISE AND SHARE OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report examines the adequacy of primary initial teacher education programs in addressing literacy learning, as required by the *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning – A Blueprint for Action* (GTIL) initiative of the NSW Government (DEC, NSWIT & BOS, 2013).

2. The report focuses on primary initial teacher education courses which incorporate the teaching of literacy in the early years (K–2), and specifically examines the approach of primary initial teacher education providers to the teaching of reading.

3. The report includes contextual information on literacy education in NSW, an overview of international and national research evidence on effective teaching of reading, a summary of findings from the examination of over 60 primary initial teacher education programs offered by 14 NSW initial teacher education providers, and a series of recommendations to improve the preparation of early years teachers to teach reading.

4. Primary initial teacher education literacy programs are accredited by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES), under the *Teacher Accreditation Act 2004*. Initial teacher education providers submit literacy program documentation to the BOSTES for assessment. Programs are required to address the National Program Standards, the National Priority Area – Literacy and Numeracy and must also prepare students to meet Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at Graduate level.

5. Examination of the documentation submitted by providers reveals a lack of clarity about approaches to the teaching of reading. Consultation with providers somewhat clarified approaches taken, however the extent to which providers take the integrated, explicit and systematic approach to the teaching of reading as recommended by international and national research evidence remains unclear. There is considerable variation across providers in the amount of course time spent on literacy components and in the emphasis on reading assessment and remediation strategies. The balance between theory and practice is also unclear.

6. Consistent between providers and programs is the commitment to preparing primary initial teacher education students to meet the literacy needs of diverse learners in classrooms.

7. All providers have processes in place to address the academic literacy skills and needs of primary teacher education students.

8. Assessment of primary initial teacher education students' knowledge, understanding and skills for teaching literacy, and in particular for teaching reading, varies considerably between providers. In many cases, it would be difficult to make a confident judgement about students' readiness to teach literacy/reading.

9. Many primary initial teacher education students are not getting adequate exposure to and practice in developing literacy/reading teaching skills during the professional experience.

10. There are significant concerns regarding the knowledge, understanding and skills for the explicit and systematic teaching of literacy/reading in the early years of current primary teachers. This impacts their capacity to provide adequate guidance to practicum students.

11. With limited time available for primary initial teacher education programs, core essential content for all literacy programs should be identified. Given the critical importance of developing effective reading skills, essential content should include the explicit and systematic teaching of phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, how to assess reading, the analysis of reading assessment/ data and monitoring student progress in reading.

12. Processes for the accreditation and approval of primary initial teacher education literacy programs should be strengthened and supported.

13. The teaching of reading is challenging and requires specialised knowledge and a particular skill set. Specialisation in early years literacy in teacher education programs should be developed. Current primary teachers with expertise in early literacy should be recognised and should be supported to supervise practicum students and early career teachers.

14. Primary initial teacher education students should have an opportunity to engage with the teaching of reading during the professional experience.

15. Measures to support assessment of the readiness of primary graduate teachers to teach literacy/reading should be developed.

16. Employing authorities should identify areas for improvement in the literacy teaching skills of current primary teachers and should ensure teachers access continuing professional development to improve knowledge and skills.

17. Where gaps in the provision of continuing professional development for literacy in the early years exist, courses should be commissioned.

18. To improve and assure the ongoing quality of primary teacher education programs for literacy, a working party should be established to oversee the strategic coordination of actions arising from the recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Under *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning – A Blueprint for Action* (GTIL) the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) is responsible for assessing and publically reporting on the quality of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs in agreed targeted areas. The report will be provided to the Minister for Education (GTIL action 3.1).

GTIL action 3.1 requires an annual reporting process that targets two priority areas including:

▶ the preparation of teachers in the National Priority Areas

▶ the preparation of teachers to teach the curriculum content of NSW syllabuses, including those syllabuses that incorporate the Australian Curriculum.

GTIL specifies that initial priority be given to an examination of how ITE providers approach literacy learning, including an integrated, explicit and systematic approach to the teaching of reading, with a range of models, including instruction on how to teach phonics and phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension and interpretation, and writing (including grammar and spelling), speaking and listening.

Role of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW

Through the process of assessment and approval of all ITE programs, the BOSTES endeavours to ensure that programs are of high quality and that teacher education students gain the knowledge, understanding and skills required of beginning teachers.

In NSW, the BOSTES assesses and accredits ITE programs against the National Program Standards (Appendix 1). In addition providers must demonstrate how they prepare teacher education students to meet the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) at the Graduate Teacher level. Under APST Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it, teachers at the Graduate level are required to know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.

Providers are also required to demonstrate to the BOSTES how their programs address the National Priority Areas. Of particular relevance to this report is the National Priority Area – Literacy and Numeracy (Appendix 2).

Review and assessment of ITE programs is conducted by accreditation panels. These panels include BOSTES staff, school principals, school teachers, teacher educators and an interstate representative nominated by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

Process

This report contains a summary of findings and recommendations following an examination of 68 individual ITE Masters and undergraduate courses submitted for accreditation. The courses examined incorporated the teaching of literacy in the early years (Kindergarten to Year 2).

This material was supplemented with information gathered from ITE websites and phone consultations with the key ITE personnel responsible for coordinating literacy course content and/or for the delivery of courses with a literacy component. Questions posed to the key personnel are provided at Appendix 3.

The report includes information from the following 14 NSW ITE providers, who are accredited to deliver programs in the early years:

▶ Alphacrucis College
▶ Australian Catholic University
▶ Avondale College
▶ Charles Sturt University
▶ Macquarie University
▶ Southern Cross University
▶ University of New England
▶ University of Newcastle
▶ University of Notre Dame
▶ University of Sydney
▶ University of Technology Sydney
▶ University of Western Sydney
▶ University of Wollongong
▶ Wesley Institute

OVERALL SUMMARY
PART A – GENERAL FINDINGS

The importance of literacy education

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) asserted that students must learn the essential skills of literacy and numeracy and that these are cornerstones of schooling for young Australians.

The right to be literate is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development on which educational opportunities depend[1]. However, lifting the literacy skills of the population is a significant, complex and multi-faceted issue for educators and policy-makers to address. The acquisition of literacy skills is crucial to a society's social and economic progress as well as the health and wellbeing of individuals. Being literate is also essential for individuals to gain access to training, work and higher education.

People need strong literacy skills to participate constructively in a pluralistic society that is facing complex domestic and global challenges. Further, poor literacy skills in adults are associated with poor health and employment statistics. When estimates suggest that a significant proportion of the Australian adult population still struggles with reading and writing, there is a clear justification for continuing the effort to improve literacy education in schools[2].

The literacy demands of our society are expanding and increasingly we must all be able to 'read the word' and 'read the world' in traditional ways (the ability to speak, read and write effectively) as well as in new and different ways. New conceptions of literacy abound; visual literacies, multi-modal literacies, digital literacies. An example of a significant literacy demand relates to the increasing role of the internet in work and leisure. The internet has enabled limitless access to copious texts and visual information to be read and interpreted. This requires reading skills such as skimming and scanning, as well as higher order literacy skills like the ability to sift through conflicting arguments and to judge which pieces of evidence are valuable and hold up to scrutiny.

The teaching of reading as a key element of literacy is the specific concern of state education systems and while it is only one dimension of a broad educational program, it is a crucial and fundamental part. Home and other factors play a role in a child's development of language skills that form the basis for learning to read. Although children enter school with varying levels of skills and from varying kinds of backgrounds, well-trained high-quality teachers can significantly impact student literacy outcomes and it is possible to provide children with experiences that will develop the kind of skills that they need to be able to succeed regardless of their current level of skill and background.

Literacy performance of NSW students

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is the triennial international survey which since the year 2000 has assessed 15-year-old students from randomly selected schools worldwide in reading, mathematics and science.

Education systems in the OECD use the PISA data to assess the relative quality of their performance against other countries. Of concern to state governments in Australia is that while Australian students are ahead of the OECD average in all aspects of PISA, since 2000 Australian students' results have significantly declined in reading. Five jurisdictions (the ACT, NSW, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory) showed a significant decline in reading literacy performance between PISA 2000 and PISA 2012. There was also a significant decline in the performance of students at the higher levels of the 75th and 90th percentiles.

The Australian Council for Educational Research Report on 2009 PISA[3] results highlighted other challenges for Australia in reading: females achieve at a much higher level than males; students in remote locations perform relatively poorly compared to those in metropolitan schools; and students from disadvantaged backgrounds perform poorly. Indigenous students performed significantly lower than non-Indigenous students in reading literacy, on average behind by two-and-a-half years of schooling.

The findings are similar for students in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) which assesses the reading performance of a sample of Year 4 students in Australia and international countries.

1 http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/literacy/
2 http://www.acer.edu.au/files/NALLNAC2014_KeyNote_DaveTout_PIAAC.pdf
3 http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/PISA-Report-2009.pdf

The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results show that NSW ranks in the top three jurisdictions, behind either ACT or Victoria, for all year levels and tests (reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation and numeracy). In Years 7 and 9 writing however, NSW students' performance is further behind.

The combined findings from these assessments indicate that while NSW students perform reasonably well at reading, there are still key challenges to address if we are to lift the literacy achievement of all students. There is a need to address the overall decline in reading skills and in particular to improve the reading of students at the highest and lowest levels of performance.

Literacy knowledge and skills also enable students to better understand and negotiate the world in which they live and to contribute to a democratic society through becoming ethical and informed citizens.

The definition of literacy for NSW schools

The definition of literacy provided in the NSW English K–10 Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum outlines the broad conceptual frame for literacy education in NSW:

Literacy is embedded throughout the English K–10 Syllabus. It is the ability to use a repertoire of knowledge and skills to communicate and comprehend effectively in a wide variety of contexts, modes and media. Literacy knowledge and skills provide students with the foundations for current and future learning and for participation in the workplace and wider society. The knowledge and skills also provide opportunities for personal enrichment through social interaction, further education, training and skilled employment and a range of cultural pursuits, including engagement with literature and the arts. Literacy knowledge and skills also enable students to better understand and negotiate the world in which they live and to contribute to a democratic society through becoming ethical and informed citizens.

Being literate is more than the acquisition of technical skills: it includes the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create and communicate purposefully using written, visual and digital forms of expression and communication for a number of purposes in different contexts. The English learning area has a particular role in developing literacy because of its inherent focus on language and meaning. However all curriculum areas have a responsibility for the general literacy requirements of students as they construct meaning for themselves and others.

The established functions of speaking and listening, reading and writing and viewing and representing remain central to being literate together with literacy demands related to a range of visual and multi-modal texts as well as those that have evolved from the growth of digital technologies. Students today need the knowledge and skills required for judicious use of these technologies and to question, challenge and evaluate the role of these technologies and the wider implications of their use for contemporary society (BOSTES 2012, p.28).

The mandatory curriculum for literacy is integrated into the syllabus and this definition underpins the work of sectors, schools and teachers from initial teacher education through to continuing teacher professional development programs.

Research evidence about the teaching of reading K–2

There have been persistent enquiries into what constitutes the specialised knowledge and skills needed to teach reading, and within the last 15 years there have been major reports from the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. Notably, these reports concur that in the early years of schooling and for students that struggle with reading, the explicit and systematic teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness is essential.

The National Reading Panel, USA

In 2000, the National Reading Panel prepared the *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and its Implications for Reading Instruction* report. The report contains arguably the most comprehensive review yet of the research evidence relating to the factors underlying the acquisition of reading and the effectiveness of different approaches to the teaching of reading. The Panel found that a combination of techniques is effective for teaching children to read. These have become known as the 'five big ideas' or 'five pillars' of reading instruction.

The Panel concluded that:

1. Teaching children explicitly and systematically to manipulate phonemes (phonological and phonemic awareness) significantly improves their reading and spelling abilities and the evidence on this is so clear cut that this method should be an important component of classroom reading instruction.

2. Systematic phonics instruction (compared to non-systematic phonics instruction or no phonics instruction) produces significant benefits for children from K–6 and for children having difficulties in learning to read. The Panel's conclusion was that the evidence relating to the effectiveness of phonics instruction was sufficiently strong to indicate that synthetic phonics instruction should be a part of routine classroom instruction, but also noted that depending on the needs of different groups of students, no single approach to teaching phonics can be used in all cases.

3. Teaching fluency is important – the ability to recognise words easily, read with greater speed, accuracy and expression, and to better understand what is read. Children need to gain fluency by practising reading until the process becomes automatic.

4. Teaching students new vocabulary, either as it appears in text or by introducing new words separately, aids their reading ability.

5. The deliberate teaching of reading comprehension strategies is key to students gaining a better understanding of the meaning of what is read.

The Rose Review, England

In England, Sir Jim Rose was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education to undertake the *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading*. The 2006 report outlined findings from a review of available research, consultation feedback and school and training observations.

The report acknowledged that to be an effective reader and writer, students require a range of knowledge, understanding and skills in order to be able to comprehend and compose texts. Phonics instruction is given particular prominence in this report.

Recommendations are captured in five key aspects, four of which pertain to contextual issues within the English education system. The most relevant contribution of the Rose Report to this discussion is the evidence that synthetic phonics is critical to the teaching of reading. The report defines best practice in early reading as:

> A vigorous programme of 'phonic work' to be securely embedded with a broad and language-rich curriculum: that is to say a curriculum that generates purposeful discussion, interest, applications, enjoyment and high achievement across all the areas of learning and experience in the early years and progressively throughout the key stages which follow.

Rose endorsed an explicit approach to the teaching of phonics, through a well-defined and systematic sequence. He suggested that improvements in reading standards are possible through a structured program that specifically outlines content and processes for the teaching of phonics.

The Rose Report noted that many conceive phonics as most closely related to reading and that emphasis on 'phonic work' is essential in the development of writing skills, especially spelling. Through phonics instruction, students should be led to an understanding of the relationship between reading and writing.

The Rowe Report, Australia

The 2005 *National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy – Teaching Reading* chaired by Dr Ken Rowe offered the most recent analysis of the theoretical and professional issues related to improving the teaching of reading in Australia.

The report's first recommendation asserted that teachers should be provided with knowledge and teaching skills that are demonstrably effective (based on findings from rigorous, evidence-based research) in meeting the learning needs of children from diverse backgrounds during their first three years of schooling.

Further, the Rowe Report's recommendations reflect those of the earlier report prepared by the National Reading Panel in the USA:

> The evidence is clear; whether from research, good practice observed in schools, advice from submissions to the Inquiry; consultations or from Committee members' own individual experiences that direct systematic instruction in phonics during the early years of schooling is an essential foundation for teaching children to read. 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 knowledge and comprehension.

Importantly, the report also notes findings from related research that systematic phonics instruction that is integrated with other reading instruction strategies within a print-rich environment is more effective than phonics instruction alone. Further research found that provided synthetic phonics formed the basis of initial instruction, the combined effects of phonics and whole-language approaches (where 'meaning' is prioritised and where students learn the elements of reading as they engage in it) yielded achievement results up to four times greater than phonics instruction alone.

Balanced literacy teachers combine the strengths of whole-language and skills instruction, and in doing so, create instruction that is more than the sum of its parts.

Related to this issue is the need for teachers to deliver regular literacy assessment of all children by teachers at school entry and then through the early years of schooling, especially to identify children who are at risk of falling behind.

Timely and reliable diagnostic information about the progress of individual children in reports to parents and to other teachers is essential.

Ministerial Advisory Group on Literacy and Numeracy, NSW

In 2012 the NSW Minister for Education adopted the recommendations from a NSW Ministerial Advisory Group on Literacy and Numeracy (MAGLAN). These recommendations focused on the early identification of the level of attainment in literacy and numeracy of each individual child and tailoring a specific program of learning to that child's needs; changes in teaching practice from a focus on the whole class to a focus on the needs of the individual student; and using tiered interventions where remediation in literacy or numeracy was needed. The change to the focus on the needs of individual students involved three key elements: personalised learning, diagnostic assessment and teacher professional development in the classroom under the direction of an expert instructional leader.

To determine which literacy interventions should be promoted in schools MAGLAN commissioned research from the Australian Council for Educational Research (February 2013) through an analysis of research evidence on the efficacy and effectiveness of a range of interventions in the early years of schooling (Kindergarten – Year 3).

This research found that in general there was a scarcity of independent, valid and reliable evidence for the efficacy and effectiveness of most interventions currently being implemented in schools. A number of the interventions were found to embed 'good practice' principles from the wider research literature, but that 'effectiveness' is often assumed and not supported by independent monitoring and evaluation. It concluded that as well as incorporating greater research scrutiny on the implementation of interventions so that they have a strong evidence base, a number of general principles underlying effective intervention can also be drawn from the literature and should be adopted by school systems.

The research recommended that:

▶ interventions should be embedded in a whole school approach

▶ early diagnosis for literacy and numeracy difficulties is vital

▶ effective diagnostic assessment should be delivered by a skilled teacher

▶ assessment materials and sufficient opportunity for training and practice should be available

▶ an individualised approach to intervention is preferred where instructional approaches are targeted to particular patterns of difficulty

▶ effective teaching principles should be incorporated into literacy interventions.

ITE and the teaching of reading

The Rowe Report found that there was little research evidence on the most effective way to prepare pre-service teachers to teach reading. However, improvements could be made by increasing the time on reading instruction, improving the content of teacher preparation courses and practicum arrangements, together with improvements in new graduates' personal literacy.

One component of this report examined teacher education courses to identify the extent to which prospective teachers were provided with approaches and skills for teaching reading that are effective in the classroom. Another component examined whether prospective teachers had opportunities to develop and practise the skills required to implement effective classroom reading programs. The findings reported that in almost all these courses, less than 10% of course time was devoted to preparing teachers to teach reading; in about half of these courses this percentage was less than 5%.

Practicum experiences are recognised as key and valued experiences in the preparatory education of pre-service teachers and there is general agreement that the importance of pedagogical knowledge alongside content knowledge cannot be overlooked. Teachers must be able to combine content and pedagogical expertise in order to design and implement learning experiences that will enhance and improve student achievement. The significance of well-designed practicums is built on the premise that 'authentic and deep learning occur when students apply relevant knowledge and skills to solving real-life problems encountered by actual practitioners in the field'. Advantages gained from practicum experience include the professional skills needed for adaptation, the building of values and attitudes that are required in particular contexts, recognition of the professional context and a strengthened opportunity for employment.

In developing effective pre-service teachers in the area of literacy, the literature suggests more course time should be spent on how to teach literacy, including specific aspects of reading instruction. Also, that there should be a stronger focus on literacy during practicum experiences. The variation in time and emphasis spent by ITE programs on the teaching of reading led Rowe to declare:

> The key objective of primary teacher education courses is to prepare student teachers to teach reading.

One national research project that aimed to discover how well prepared beginning teachers are to teach literacy found that while both primary and secondary beginning teachers saw some gaps in their preparation to teach literacy, those who took part in the surveys felt prepared for teaching literacy at the most general level. Beginning teachers rated more time on practicum and teaching rounds in schools before graduating and more effective mentoring after graduation as important. They were satisfied about their preparation to teach the language modes of literacy but were more concerned about their fine-grained skills in areas such as spelling, grammar and phonics and were generally sceptical about the balance between theory and practice.

Conclusion

The Rowe Report successfully captures the key issues relating to the preparation of ITE students to teach literacy:

> The effective teaching of reading is a highly developed professional skill and teachers must be adequately prepared both in their pre-service education and during subsequent years of practice if children are to achieve at levels consistent with their potential.

> Because not all children, tasks and teachers are the same, teachers must have a full repertoire of strategies for helping children develop literacy and a clear understanding of how and when to implement each strategy. Preparing pre-service teachers for their roles as literacy teachers requires cognisance of evidence-based literacy teaching. Beginning teachers need to be armed with adequate knowledge and skills for teaching literacy given that they will be challenged in their contexts by students, parents and communities.

OVERALL SUMMARY
PART B – CONCLUSIONS

ITE provider approaches to the teaching of literacy

Information for this report was initially taken from documentation submitted by ITE providers to the BOSTES for approval of their programs. This documentation consisted primarily of outlines of courses where the teaching of literacy was addressed, and included information on related assessment tasks and required readings.

In general, analysis of the documentation revealed inadequate information about the approach to the teaching of literacy taken by ITE providers. Most course outlines referred to coverage of theories and models of literacy development without referencing any particular theories or models. Several referred to literacy frameworks, past and current theories and a 'balanced', 'functional' or 'social' approach, the nature of which was unclear. A small number of providers incorporated a focus on the theories which underpin contemporary curriculum approaches to literacy development and one provider included a focus on how theories shape literacy programs.

Some course outlines did specify one or more theories or models of literacy development, such as Freebody and Luke's Four Resources model, Cambourne's Conditions of Learning model, the Five Pillars of Reading, the Social Model of Literacy and the Curriculum Cycle Model; and some referred to specific literacy programs such as Learning by Design, the National Accelerated Literacy Program, and Reading to Learn. Even with such references in the documentation, it was difficult to gauge the balance between exposure to theories/models of literacy development and the development of actual literacy teaching skills and strategies.

Most course outlines referred to various aspects of literacy development, such as alphabetic principles, breaking or cracking the code, phonics, cue systems, vocabulary knowledge, fluency, text comprehension and interpretation, spelling, grammar, writing, speaking and listening; however the emphasis placed on these aspects of literacy development seemed to vary between institutions. In some course outlines there was no explicit reference to the teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness and in some it appeared to be assumed knowledge. For the teaching of reading, most providers appeared to emphasise strategies such as modelled, guided, shared and independent reading more than foundational strategies such as phonics, phonemic and phonological awareness.

In general, in the documentation there was a stronger emphasis on literacy development strategies appropriate for students in Years 3 to 6, rather than for students in Kindergarten to Year 2. Many course outlines featured a focus on literature and teaching literacy in the context of literature. This appears to be in response to an emphasis on extended texts and literature in the Australian Curriculum for English and in the NSW English K–6 Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum. On the whole though, the proportion of time dedicated to the various aspects of literacy was unclear, making it difficult to measure the depth and breadth of treatment and to judge whether an 'integrated, explicit and systematic' approach to the teaching of literacy was taken.

Consequently, the decision was taken to supplement the information from the submitted documentation outlined above with information directly gathered from the key personnel at each institution with the responsibility for oversight or delivery of the courses.

As expected, consultation with key personnel provided a somewhat clearer picture of the treatment of the teaching of reading by initial teacher education providers. On the whole, the teaching of reading, including phonics and phonemic awareness, appeared to be addressed in a more systematic and integrated fashion than the course documentation had suggested. Providers clarified their approaches and described a wider range of theories, models and resources incorporated into their courses than was evident in their course outlines. Some providers described the initial teacher education curriculum as 'crowded' and acknowledged the challenge around what can be addressed and the depth in which it can be addressed, within the available course time. Some academics emphasised a strong personal commitment to the explicit teaching of foundational reading skills such as phonics and phonemic awareness and gave personal anecdotes of family members who had not been properly taught how to read.

During consultation it was noted that institutions may or may not have a course convener who is a literacy specialist to coordinate and oversee the quality of literacy courses or courses with a literacy component. In some cases it was possible to identify a consistency of approach to the teaching of literacy across courses and across campuses. In other cases there appeared to be a lack of consistency in approach across courses and that the final authority for an approach to the teaching of literacy lay with individual lecturers or tutors.

Overall, it was noted that while most providers described their approach to the teaching of literacy as 'balanced', the definition of a 'balanced' approach varied somewhat between providers. The depth of treatment of aspects of literacy development, especially phonics and phonemic awareness, was also variable. It was also noted that the emphasis on knowledge and understanding of literacy development as opposed to the development of teaching skills for literacy varied considerably between providers.

Literacy and diversity

In the course documentation submitted, the development of ITE students' understanding of student diversity was addressed by most providers. Course outlines referred variously to coverage of strategies for students with English as a Second or Other/Additional Language or Dialect, students of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal students, indigenous students, gifted and talented students, students with challenging behaviours, reluctant/disengaged students and students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds. Explicit strategies for such students or groups were generally not referenced.

During consultation, some providers stressed the need for ITE students to understand that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the teaching of reading and that they encourage students to develop a range of teaching strategies for literacy and to differentiate literacy learning for the needs of particular students or groups of students.

In the documentation, most providers also incorporated general references to home/family and community literacy practices, and some providers referred specifically to strategies for establishing links between home and school, working with parents to encourage literacy learning, maintaining students' bilingualism or multilingualism, bidialectal pedagogy, language variation, Aboriginal English and literacy in the context of Intensive English Centres.

In general, there seemed to be more of an emphasis on developing ITE students' knowledge and understanding of the diverse literacy needs of particular groups of students, than on developing specific literacy teaching strategies or skills to cater for the diverse needs of students.

Assessment and diagnosis of children's literacy skills

General references to strategies for assessing the literacy skills of students were evident in the course documentation of all providers. Such strategies were referred to variously, including: running records, reading records, portfolios, commercial literacy tests, standardised achievement tests, formal reading tests, informal reading inventories, analysis, interpretation, observations, mapping children's development, miscue analysis and using formal and informal data. In their course outline, one provider referred to issues with assessment and the purposes, characteristics and limitations of various types of literacy assessments.

Some providers referenced support materials for assessing students' literacy skills such as the Early Years Framework, the Literacy Continuum and the ESL scales. One provider referred to specific diagnostic tools such as the Tests of Reading Comprehension (TORCH) and the Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading (PAT-R).

A small number of providers referred to national testing and reporting and incorporated analysis and interpretation of NAPLAN data as a topic in their course outline documentation.

One provider included a reference to oral and written feedback to scaffold literacy development and some providers addressed the use of assessment data to plan and program for further literacy development and to develop individual or personalised learning plans for students.

In general there seemed to be more of an emphasis on developing ITE students' knowledge and understanding of the diverse literacy needs of particular groups of students, than on developing specific literacy teaching strategies or skills.

Students requiring additional literacy support

In the documentation, some providers referred to coverage of strategies for students requiring additional literacy support. References to explicit strategies were generally not made, although a focus on intervention programs or resources such as Reading Recovery, MultiLit and the National Accelerated Literacy Program was incorporated into course topics by some institutions. One provider made a reference to interagency support and working with support personnel.

Overall, it was difficult to ascertain whether ITE students have adequate opportunities to develop teaching skills in specific strategies to cater for students requiring additional literacy support.

Assessment of ITE students' skills for teaching literacy

In the course documentation, all ITE providers incorporated tasks designed to assess students' knowledge, understanding and skills for teaching literacy. Some providers outlined very specific and detailed tasks, however the nature of the tasks of other providers was unclear as they were described in very general terms, for example, 'in-session tasks', 'journal tasks', 'written task on a child's language and literacy development'.

Assessment tasks included critical evaluation of literacy theories, models, programs and resources; describing home and community impacts on literacy; creating learner literacy profiles; designing and implementing lessons/units of work/programs with a literacy focus; assessing, analysing and designing interventions for a particular student or group of students; interpreting NAPLAN data; providing feedback on literacy to students, colleagues, parents/caregivers; developing drama strategies for literary texts and so on. A small number of providers incorporated formally assessed opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills specific for the teaching of reading, including skills for teaching phonics and phonemic awareness.

The format of the assessment tasks included in-class or online quizzes, presentations, case scenarios, essays, portfolios and formal examinations. For some courses at some institutions, some literacy assessment tasks were based on data or information gathered from the professional experience and/or school visits.

On the whole, it was noted that the nature and weightings of literacy-related assessment tasks were highly variable from institution to institution. Some providers had a greater emphasis on assessment for certain aspects of literacy development than others, and some had more emphasis on assessing knowledge and understanding than on actual teaching skills for literacy. It is possible to assume that from the assessment program for some courses, providers would find it difficult to judge the readiness of ITE students to teach literacy in general, and reading in particular.

Literacy and the professional experience

When asked for observations about literacy and the professional experience, many providers expressed frustration with the 'luck of the draw' approach to practicum placement which does not guarantee ITE students adequate or any exposure to and practice of the teaching of literacy. In particular, some providers reported that during practicum often their students do not experience the teaching of reading, including phonics and phonemic awareness, and do not have an opportunity to observe or partake in diagnostic assessment, analysis and interpretation of children's reading skills.

Several providers commented on a gap between the literacy theory and skills development that students are exposed to in current ITE programs and the literacy teaching knowledge and practices of some supervising teachers in schools.

A number of providers commented that some supervising teachers appear to have little knowledge and understanding of literacy theories/models and ineffective literacy teaching skills. It was reported that the emphasis on literacy seems to vary greatly across classrooms, schools and school systems and that, in some cases, discredited teaching strategies or strategies not based on research evidence are being used. It was further suggested that some supervising teachers overly rely on one teaching model, program or resource and are not confident or capable of differentiating instruction for the range of students' literacy development needs. Some providers also observed that the use of diagnostic tools and analysis and keeping records of students' literacy are not as prevalent in schools as they used to be.

Two providers reported that they organise practicum placements in such a way as to guarantee that their students observe and have opportunities to develop literacy teaching strategies. Through agreements with particular schools and the provider, the supervising teachers are engaged as literacy teaching mentors, and structured experiences in all aspects of literacy development are negotiated. In some cases the supervising teachers are previous ITE students of that particular institution.

Overall, it appears that many ITE students are not receiving optimum professional experience in regards to the teaching of literacy in general, and the teaching of reading in particular.

Readiness to teach literacy

On the whole, it was difficult to evaluate from the course documentation how well prepared ITE students are to support the development of students' literacy skills and in particular to teach reading in primary school. When asked for an opinion about this, most providers were confident that their students were exiting ITE programs with at least the basic literacy teaching skills to build on. One academic commented that "teaching reading really is rocket science", emphasising that the teaching of reading is challenging and requires particular effort and advanced understanding and skills to do well.

A few providers commented that their students were very well prepared and were leaving the institution with a strong theoretical foundation and/or a range of teaching strategies or 'tool kit'. Two providers stated that their students were often "cherry-picked" for permanent positions and/or long-term casual teaching blocks in schools, as employers had great confidence in the literacy teaching skills of students exiting their institutions.

The personal literacy of ITE students

During consultation, many providers commented on the variable nature of the literacy skills and understandings of ITE students at the commencement of their courses. Several providers referred to many students entering teacher education courses, particularly undergraduate courses, with a poor understanding of language and literacy and so they include mandatory foundation studies in language acquisition and/or linguistics to underpin the introduction to theories and strategies for literacy.

Most providers assess students' literacy skills through course assessment tasks and a small number of providers through discrete literacy tests. Some providers require students to reflect on their own literacy development and to analyse their current levels of literacy, and some providers incorporate a focus on academic literacy and/or professional literacy for teaching in their courses.

Some providers expressed concern about the poor literacy skills of some of their ITE students and described interventions such as referring students for academic literacy support within their institutions or of having to fail a small number of students. This issue appeared to be more problematic for regional institutions which enrol a higher percentage of students from regional, rural and remote NSW, and for online ITE courses.

Some providers commented on the outstanding literacy skills of their students. These institutions tend to have high ATAR entry requirements into their ITE courses. As would be expected, the literacy skills of students enrolling in Master of Teaching courses are excellent overall.

Summary: Literacy Learning

The documentation and consultation information gathered from primary initial teacher education providers does not provide enough evidence to make a confident judgement about the adequacy of programs in preparing graduate teachers to teach literacy in the early years.

To make more informed assessment and to provide appropriate advice to primary ITE providers, BOSTES Initial Teacher Education Accreditation Panels require more detailed program information from providers and further support for interrogating the quality of literacy programs.

Documentation currently submitted for accreditation varies considerably in course/unit content, depth of treatment of content, range of theoretical approaches/models presented and balance of theory to practice.

In particular, although research evidence from recent major studies into the teaching of reading unequivocally supports the explicit and systematic teaching of phonemic awareness and phonics in the early years of schooling, it is not apparent that all graduate teachers would be able do so. While all programs address early literacy learning, the place of phonics in programs is variable. For example, phonics is variously addressed as one teaching strategy that may be used, as a remediation strategy only, or as an essential strategy for the teaching of reading.

To ensure a consistent state-wide approach to the preparation of graduate teachers to teach literacy, guidelines which explicate current course approval requirements and identify essential content, expected depth of treatment, balance of theory to practice and range of evidence-based approaches should be developed and communicated to providers. Specifically, every primary ITE program should incorporate substantial study on how to teach reading. Providers should be further supported with improved accreditation submission templates and sample course outline/unit exemplars.

At present, documentation submitted by providers for program accreditation purposes is the only means of assessing the quality of programs. Evidence of the quality of programs actually delivered needs be gathered to effectively evaluate programs. Feedback on primary literacy programs should be collected from graduate teachers, early careers teachers and professional experience supervising teachers to support valid and reliable judgement about the quality of programs and to inform continuous improvement of programs.

Currently, the assessment of primary initial teacher education students' knowledge, understanding and skills for teaching literacy, and in particular for teaching reading, varies considerably between providers. Additionally, the absence of a common output measure makes it difficult to make a confident judgement about the readiness of primary graduate teachers to teach literacy in general and reading in particular. Measures to support assessment of the readiness of primary graduate teachers to teach reading should be developed.

The professional experience plays a very important role in the preparation of teacher education students to teach. It provides a necessary nexus between theory and practice, and should give students not only the opportunity to observe and learn from best practice, but also to develop teaching skills in context.

At present, practicum students are not guaranteed exposure to or practice in developing teaching skills for reading in the early years. Greater collaboration between providers and school authorities is required to ensure that, regardless of the class/grade taught by the supervising teacher, each teacher education student has at least one opportunity to engage with the teaching of reading during professional experience. Processes to support collaboration between providers and schools, and materials to support schools, supervising teachers and practicum students in the provision of essential practicum literacy experiences should be developed.

It was noted anecdotally by primary ITE providers that many current primary teachers do not have adequate knowledge and skills for best practice in the teaching of reading and are unable to provide appropriate guidance to practicum students. The professional learning needs of current primary teachers for teaching reading should be identified by teacher employers and professional learning, particularly for the systematic teaching of phonics, and should be undertaken. Where there are gaps in the provision of relevant professional development courses, such courses should be commissioned. Further work to survey the existing practices used by the sectors and schools will inform any future developments.

Primary teachers must have highly developed skills in assessing, diagnosing and implementing the full range of strategies for students at risk of falling behind in reading. A diagnostic literacy check should be developed to support K–2 teachers in identifying students in need of additional literacy support.

It is important to acknowledge that teaching early years students how to read is a challenging task which requires advanced knowledge and skills to do very well. Expertise is developed over time and is dependent on many variables. To ensure expertise is developed, early career teachers should be supported with targeted professional experiences and development opportunities as they work towards accreditation at Proficient Teacher level of the APST.

Currently, there are not enough primary teachers with such expertise in NSW schools. More must be done to encourage teachers to specialise in this area. Primary teacher education providers should develop and implement programs which allow for specialisation in early literacy and teacher employers should recognise such specialisation in processes for recruitment.

In addition, primary teachers with expertise in early literacy should be recognised so that they can contribute to the learning of others. Primary literacy expert teachers should be encouraged and supported to undertake accreditation at the Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher levels of the APTS and should take an active role in supervising practicum students and early career teachers, and in contributing to school-based professional collaboration and learning.

OVERALL SUMMARY
PART C – RECOMMENDATIONS

This report highlights a number of areas where the preparation of primary ITE students to teach literacy, and in particular, how to read, needs improvement. The recommendations below are designed to address the identified issues.

Recommendation 1

To improve and assure the ongoing quality of teacher education programs for literacy, a working party should be established to oversee the strategic coordination of actions arising from the recommendations. Members should include representation from ITE providers, employing authorities, students, teachers and principals who have demonstrated expertise in the teaching of literacy. An initial focus will be to gather information on existing literacy development approaches and school improvement strategies employed by systems and schools.

Processes should be established to investigate and report on literacy education in NSW. This should include data on ITE, ongoing professional learning and current literacy education practices.

Primary ITE providers

Recommendation 2

Providers should ensure that primary ITE students are provided with evidence-based literacy conceptual frameworks/models. Providers should also ensure an appropriate balance between developing knowledge and understanding for the explicit and systematic teaching of literacy (theory) and developing skills for the teaching of literacy (practice).

Recommendation 3

Programs for specialisation in early literacy (K–2) should be developed and implemented by providers. ITE providers and the BOSTES will work with school authorities regarding the development of such specialist courses and school authorities should recognise such qualifications in recruitment processes.

Recommendation 4

Primary ITE programs should include a substantial focus within and/or across units on the explicit and systematic teaching of reading in years K–2 and also in years 3-6. Units should include content specific to phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, how to assess reading, the analysis of reading assessment/data, the identification and selection of appropriate literacy strategies, particularly for students who are at risk of falling behind, and monitoring student progress in reading. Advice on the nature of this study will be incorporated in BOSTES guidelines.

Recommendation 5

Providers should ensure that each primary teacher education student has the opportunity to engage with approaches to the explicit and systematic teaching of reading during professional experience. Teacher employers/supervisors should facilitate this opportunity.

Recommendation 6

The Professional Experience Report should include references to the range of primary literacy teaching experiences, including observations and opportunities for skill development, that occur in the professional experience placement.

Assuring the quality of primary initial teacher education for literacy

Recommendation 7

To support consistent judgement of the readiness of primary teacher education graduates to teach literacy in general, and to teach reading in particular, the BOSTES should work with teacher education providers and school systems to develop sample assessment tasks and annotated and graded work samples for providers and teacher education students to access.

Recommendation 8

The BOSTES will work with teacher education providers and school systems to ensure that Initial Teacher Education Accreditation Panels are provided with support materials and/or training to assist them in their assessment of literacy education in ITE programs,

Recommendation 9

The BOSTES will use qualitative research methodology and identify large samples of graduates to seek information directly from them and their employing principals about the quality of their preparation to teach, as a way of measuring the outcomes of teacher preparation programs.

Continuing teacher professional development

Recommendation 10

The BOSTES should commission the development of a continuing professional development module on best practice for the supervision of professional experience students. The module should incorporate a focus on the facilitation of essential literacy teaching experiences for practicum students.

Recommendation 11

The BOSTES should encourage and support primary teachers with expertise in literacy to be accredited at the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher levels of the APST. Accredited teachers should share responsibility for practicum supervision, supervision of early career teachers and school based continuing professional development.

Recommendation 12

Early career teachers should continue to engage in existing structured and targeted programs of professional learning for literacy K–6 while working towards Proficient Teacher accreditation. The BOSTES will work with schools, systems, sectors and professional associations in the development of additional teacher professional learning programs focused on explicit and systematic literacy teaching, including phonics and phonemic awareness as appropriate.

Recommendation 13

The BOSTES, schools, systems and sectors will further develop comprehensive support materials including a description of essential literacy teaching skills for teachers of K–2 students. Using the essential literacy teaching description, teacher employers/supervisors should undertake an analysis and evaluation of the literacy teaching capabilities of current primary teachers and identify areas for improvement. Employers/ supervisors should, as a matter of priority, collaborate with teachers to identify continuing professional development opportunities for literacy teaching and incorporate such opportunities in teacher professional development plans.

Recommendation 14

The BOSTES will work with schools, systems and sectors to create comprehensive support materials including the development of a simple and quick-to-administer 'literacy diagnostic' for use by K–2 teachers to identify students at risk of falling behind.

APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL PROGRAM STANDARDS

Standard 1: Program outcomes

1.1 At the time of initial accreditation, providers must show that graduates of their programs will meet the Graduate career stage of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and how this will be demonstrated.

1.2 At the time of re-accreditation, providers must demonstrate that graduates of their programs meet the Graduate career stage of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

1.3 Programs meet the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) so that, on satisfactory completion, the graduate has a four-year or longer full-time-equivalent higher education qualification structured as:

— a three-year undergraduate degree providing the required discipline knowledge, plus a two-year graduate entry professional qualification[4], or

— an integrated qualification of at least four years comprising discipline studies and professional studies, or

— combined degrees of at least four years covering discipline and professional studies, or

— other combinations of qualifications identified by the provider and approved by the teacher regulatory authority[5] ('the Authority') in consultation with AITSL to be equivalent to the above, and that enable alternative or flexible pathways into the teaching profession[6].

Standard 2: Program development

2.1 Programs take account of:

— contemporary school and system needs

— current professional expert knowledge

— authoritative educational research findings and

— community expectations.

This occurs through consultation with employing authorities, professional teacher bodies and/or the direct involvement of practising teachers, educational researchers and relevant cultural and community experts (eg local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander groups, parents' organisations).

2.2 Programs at self-accrediting higher education institutions have been assessed as meeting internal accreditation processes such that there is coherence and rigour in the intended program outcomes, approaches to teaching and learning, and related student assessment.

2.3 Programs of non-self-accrediting institutions meet both the relevant accreditation requirements for such institutions and the requirements for national accreditation of initial teacher education programs. Wherever practicable, the two accreditation processes will be undertaken concurrently, ensuring there is coherence and rigour in the intended program outcomes, approaches to teaching and learning and related student assessment, as well as economy of effort.

Standard 3: Program entrants

3.1 All entrants to initial teacher education will successfully demonstrate their capacity to engage effectively with a rigorous higher education program and to carry out the intellectual demands of teaching itself. To achieve this, it is expected that applicants' levels of personal literacy and numeracy should be broadly equivalent to those of the top 30 per cent of the population.

3.2 Providers who select students who do not meet the requirements in 3.1 above must establish satisfactory additional arrangements to ensure that all students are supported to achieve the required standard before graduation.

3.3 Graduate-entry initial teacher education programs have clear selection criteria and equitable entry procedures that require students to have achieved a discipline-specific qualification relevant to the Australian curriculum or other recognised areas of schooling provision.

For secondary teaching this is at least a *major* study[7] in one teaching area and preferably a second teaching area comprising at least a *minor* study[8].

For primary teaching this is at least one year of full-time-equivalent study relevant to one or more learning areas of the primary school curriculum.

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4 In this document, references to the duration of academic programs or elements of them should be read in terms of 'equivalent full-time student load' (EFTSL). This defines the amount of study required for completion rather than the calendar duration.

5 While in most jurisdictions the accreditation functions will be undertaken by teacher regulatory authorities, jurisdictions may choose to make other arrangements, including cooperative arrangements with other regulatory authorities. In this document, the teacher regulatory authority or other body performing this function in a jurisdiction is referred to as 'the Authority'.

6 The Authority will make an initial determination about the eligibility of a program for accreditation, based on Program Standard 1.3. Where a program is "(an)other combination of qualifications" as provided for in the standard, the Authority will report its determination to AITSL, who will confer with all of the teacher regulatory authorities and either endorse or recommend reconsideration of the determination before a final decision is reached by the Authority.

7 Study undertaken for a major study will be equivalent to a total of three-quarters of a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over three years. In most programs, this equates to six units, with no more than two at first-year level and no fewer than two units at third-year level.

8 Study undertaken for a minor study will be equivalent to a total of half a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over two years. In most programs, this equates to four units, with no more than two at first-year level.

3.4 Students admitted to programs on the basis of an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) assessment, or an equivalent English language proficiency assessment, have attained an overall IELTS (or equivalent) score of 7.5 (with no score below 7 in any of the four skills areas, and a score of no less than 8 in speaking and listening), either on entry to or on graduation from the program.

3.5 Recognition of prior learning or credit transfer arrangements are determined by providers in accordance with the *AQF National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning and Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from Vocational Education and Training to Higher Education.*

Standard 4: Program structure and content

4.1 Program structures must be sequenced coherently to reflect effective connections between theory and practice.

4.2 Professional studies in education include discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies, general education studies and professional experience. The professional studies in education will comprise at least two years of full-time-equivalent study[9].

4.3 Discipline studies will normally be completed either in a separate discipline degree completed prior to a graduate-entry initial teacher education program, or as part of an integrated undergraduate teaching degree or combined teaching/discipline degree program.

4.4 Primary programs

Teacher education programs that prepare primary teachers must include study in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum sufficient to equip teachers to teach across the years of primary schooling.

In undergraduate primary programs, at least one half of the program (ie normally two years of full-time-equivalent study) must be dedicated to the study of the discipline of each primary learning area and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies. This must include at least one quarter of a year of full-time-equivalent study of discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in each of English/literacy, mathematics/numeracy, and at least one eighth of a year of full-time-equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in science.

The remainder of the program may be structured to include extension or specialist studies in priority areas or related curriculum areas.

Graduate entry primary programs must comprise at least two years of full-time-equivalent professional studies in education.

These programs must include at least one year of full-time-equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies across the learning areas of the primary school curriculum. Programs must include at least one quarter of a year of full-time-equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in each of English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, and at least one eighth of a year of full-time-equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in science.

These programs may include up to one quarter of a year of full-time-equivalent study of relevant discipline studies as elective units which could be undertaken by applicants who do not fully meet prerequisite discipline study requirements.

4.5 Secondary programs

Undergraduate secondary programs must provide a sound depth and breadth of knowledge appropriate for the teaching area/s the graduate intends to teach.

These programs should provide at least a *major* study[10] in one teaching area and preferably a second teaching area comprising at least a *minor* study[11].

In addition, these programs must include a minimum of one quarter of a year of full-time-equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies for each teaching area the graduate intends to teach.

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9   These standards refer to the amount of study to be undertaken in particular areas in terms of years of full-time equivalent study. This is compatible with the measurement of student load in terms of equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL). In a traditional structure of eight units per year, one unit would be equivalent to one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study.

10 Study undertaken for a major study will be equivalent to a total of three-quarters of a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over three years. In most programs, this equates to six units, with no more than two at first-year level and no fewer than two units at third-year level.

11 Study undertaken for a minor study will be equivalent to a total of half a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over two years. In most programs, this equates to four units, with no more than two at first-year level.

Discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies will prepare graduates to teach across the years of secondary schooling.

Graduate entry secondary programs must comprise at least two years of full-time-equivalent professional studies in education.

Programs must include a minimum of one quarter of a year of full-time-equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies for each teaching area that the graduate intends to teach. The discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies should prepare graduates to teach across the years of secondary schooling.

These programs may include up to one quarter of a year of full-time-equivalent study of relevant discipline studies as elective units which could be undertaken by applicants who do not fully meet prerequisite discipline study requirements.

4.6 Specialist programs

Where initial teacher education programs include specialist area studies (eg primary physical education, secondary special education, secondary teacher librarianship, etc.), these studies must comprise one year of full-time equivalent study relevant to that specialist area.

4.7 Non-traditional and other settings

Some teacher education programs prepare graduates for teaching across traditional boundaries.

Programs that prepare graduates to teach in both early childhood settings and primary schools are expected to prepare graduates for teaching the curriculum in both contexts.

Programs that prepare graduates for middle school teaching may have a stronger emphasis on teaching particular year levels (eg Years 5 to 9) but must fully address the requirements for primary teaching and for secondary teaching in at least one *major* study or two *minor* studies in secondary teaching areas.

Programs that prepare graduates for teaching across P/F/R/K–Year 12 must address the requirements for both primary and secondary teaching.

Programs that prepare graduates for teaching in other specialised teaching roles in schools and other educational settings must address the specific content and pedagogy of the specialisation[12].

Standard 5: School partnerships

5.1 Providers have established enduring school partnerships to deliver their programs, particularly the professional experience component.

5.2 The professional experience component of each program must include no fewer than 80 days of well-structured, supervised and assessed teaching practice in schools in undergraduate and double-degree teacher education programs and no fewer than 60 days in graduate entry programs.

5.3 Providers describe in detail the elements of the relationship between the provider and the schools, the nature and length of professional experience placements, the components of the placement, including the planned experiences and related assessment criteria and methods, and the supervisory and professional support arrangements.

5.4 Providers and their school partners ensure the professional experience component of their program provides their program's students with professional experience that enables:

— working with learners in a variety of school year levels

— appreciation of the diversity of students and communities which schools serve (eg rural and metropolitan settings, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, indigenous communities, etc.).

5.5 Providers and their school partners ensure that teachers supervising professional experience (in particular the supervised teaching practice) are suitably qualified and registered. They should have expertise and be supported in coaching and mentoring, and in making judgements about whether students have achieved the Graduate Teacher Standards.

5.6 Providers require that the supervised teaching practice:

— mandates at least a satisfactory formal assessment of the program's students against the professional practice elements of the Graduate Teacher Standards as a requirement for graduating from the program

— is undertaken mostly in a recognised Australian school setting over a substantial and sustained period that is relevant to an authentic classroom environment

— includes a designated role for supervising teachers in the assessment of the program's students.

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12 Specific requirements will be developed for programs preparing teachers for settings other than traditional schools where required.

5.7 School partnership arrangements provide for the timely identification of program students at risk of not satisfactorily completing the formal teaching practice, and of ensuring appropriate support for improvement or program counselling.

Standard 6: Program delivery and resourcing

6.1 Programs must use effective teaching and assessment strategies (linked to intended learning outcomes) and resources, including embedded information and communication technologies.

6.2 Programs are delivered by appropriately qualified staff, consistent with the staffing requirements in the relevant National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes, including an appropriate proportion who also have contemporary school teaching experience.

6.3 Providers ensure that programs use contemporary facilities and resources, including information and communication technologies, which students can expect to be available in schools.

6.4 Providers ensure that their facilities conform to the general expectation for a contemporary higher education learning environment appropriate to the mode of delivery, including such matters as access to:

— education-related library resources

— information and communication technologies.

Standard 7: Program information and evaluation

7.1 Providers use a range of data, such as student assessment information, destination surveys, employer and other stakeholder feedback to drive program improvement and periodic formal evaluation.

7.2 Providers report annually to the Authority outlining challenges encountered or any changes in programs.

7.3 Providers supply data as required to support local and national teacher workforce supply reporting, to support program and provider benchmarking and to build a cumulative database of evidence relating to the quality of teacher education in Australia. Data collected is held in a centrally managed database and, under agreed protocols, will be available to all jurisdictions and teacher education providers for research, evaluation and program improvement.

APPENDIX 2: NATIONAL PRIORITY AREA – LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Initial teacher education program outcomes

Initial teacher education programs should ensure that graduate teachers have demonstrated skills and/or knowledge, as noted below.

Knowledge

▶ Understanding of the literacy and numeracy demands of the curriculum areas they teach

▶ Understanding of the pervasive nature of literacy and numeracy and their role in everyday situations, and of the importance of home and community literacy and numeracy practices

▶ Awareness that all students can be literate and numerate

▶ Understanding of the diversity of literacy and numeracy abilities and the needs of learners, including English as a Second or Other Language needs

▶ Understanding of the explicit teaching of reading and writing, speaking and listening appropriate to their level and area of teaching

▶ Sound knowledge of mathematics appropriate to their level and area of teaching

▶ Knowledge of contemporary understandings of research evidence related to teaching reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics appropriate to their level and area of teaching

▶ Knowledge of a range of resources to support students' literacy and numeracy learning, appropriate to their level and area of teaching.

Teaching strategies

▶ Ability to identify the literacy and numeracy needs of students and understand a range of strategies to support those needs

▶ Ability to analyse the literacy and numeracy demands of the subjects and curriculum in their teaching areas

▶ Ability to recognise and exploit opportunities to support literacy and numeracy learning within their curriculum areas

▶ Ability to develop units of work and teaching plans that embody a literacy and numeracy focus and incorporate the effective use of literacy and numeracy strategies and assessment tasks to inform teaching and the selection of subject matter

▶ Ability to analyse student work samples to identify areas of literacy and numeracy need

▶ Ability to provide accurate written and oral feedback for students in relation to their literacy and numeracy development

▶ Ability to develop specific strategies to cater for students requiring additional support

▶ Ability to interpret data (school-based and system) to make informed decisions about student literacy and numeracy needs in the context of their subject and in a broader whole school context

▶ Ability to teach reading and writing, speaking and listening and mathematics appropriate to their level and area of teaching using approaches based on knowledge and evidence

▶ Where relevant, ability to use a range of effective teaching and assessment strategies in reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics

▶ Where relevant, ability to sequence reading, writing and mathematical learning experiences appropriately.

Program design

Initial teacher education programs may address these issues in specific units of study or by embedding them across the program of study.

The literacy and numeracy priority area is specifically relevant to the Standards noted below:

Standard Descriptor 2.1.1	Standard Descriptor 2.5.1
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.	Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.

APPENDIX 3: PHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS POSED TO KEY ITE PERSONNEL

Report on literacy learning in ITE programs

1. We have a list of the units where literacy learning is addressed. Is there anywhere else that literacy education occurs in these programs?

2. In a few words how would you describe your approach to the teaching of literacy in the courses you deliver?

3. Where does the teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness 'sit' in your program/s?

Supplementary (if needed)

4. Regarding your literacy learning units, what knowledge and skills are you intending your students to leave with?

5. In the courses that you deliver in the early years what proportion of time is spent on phonics and phonemic awareness?

6. For literacy in the early years of schooling K–2, would you describe your approach as balanced or one that gives particular emphasis to the teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness?

7. Is there anything else that you would like to highlight in your approach to literacy education/teaching?

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