Literacy at EPPS – December 2013

Quotes from the Australian Curriculum - Literacy

In the Australian Curriculum, students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students in listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

Success in any learning area depends on being able to use the significant, identifiable and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area.

The definition of literacy in the Australian Curriculum is informed by a social view of language that considers how language works to construct meaning in different social and cultural contexts. The social view of language enables insights into differences between ‘spoken-like’ and ‘written-like’ language, and the increasing complexity of language as students progress through school.

Our practices at EPPS are guided by this social view of Literacy, the Australian Curriculum including the organising elements of the Literacy Capability, Language and Literacy Levels, and our beliefs and strategies gained by personal and school based Professional Learning and Reading, from a range of sources including Carmel Crevola, Deslea Konza, Stephen Graham, THRASS, Sheena Cameron, Alison Davis, Beverly Derewianka, Anne Bayetto and ‘Literacy for Learning.’

Morning Reading occurs for the first half an hour of school in each classroom on at least four mornings per week. The structure is guided by the documents in the ‘English Agreements Folder’ which is updated at the beginning of each year. Initially R-2 classes use the JP Morning Reading Program and 3-7 classes the R5 reading program. Year 2 students are transitioned to the R5 process in the second half of the year with a focus on the reflection, responding and rapping stages of R5.

All teachers have copies of the English Agreements which inform them of the data collection and classroom expectations based on that data, in English. Data collected about student achievement in the Big 6 – Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency and Reading Comprehension is used to inform the ‘Teaching and Learning Cycle’ for classroom Literacy programs.

Oral Language programs focus on the 4 teaching foci – expressing ideas thoughts and opinions; listening and responding; questioning, challenging and clarifying and justifying an opinion. The Phonological Awareness and Phonemic Hierarchy, and Oxford Sight Word lists are used to monitor student progress and guide the classroom Phonological Awareness and Spelling programs. The THRASS methodology of choosing appropriate graphemes for phonemes is explicitly taught to students, as well as developing their ability to use auditory, visual, morphemic and etymological knowledge with their spelling choices.

Classroom programs target the development of Vocabulary to support student oral language, reading and writing. Students increase their sight words using the Oxford Sight Word Lists to develop their Fluency. Fluency levels are monitored against school benchmarks and strategies like rereading known texts, activities from the ‘Florida Center for Reading Research’ and Reader’s Theatre are used to support their fluency development. Students are taught to use the Reading Comprehension strategies – predicting, visualising, questioning, inferring, making connections, summarising and synthesising using a metacognitive approach, resulting in their ability to recognise which strategies support them to comprehend the text and how it does this.

Our Genre Map comprehensively details the teaching that needs to occur for each text type at each year level, including the text and grammar knowledge. It includes reference to texts that need to be composed in History, Science and Geography. Other subject areas will be included as they are introduced.

Literacy needs to be explicitly taught using a Teaching and Learning Cycle which gradually releases the responsibility from the teacher to the student. It should involve the stages of: Setting the Context, Modelling and Deconstruction, Joint Construction and Individual Construction. Micro scaffolding through mini-cycles may occur at any stage of this process.
Classroom structures need to occur that allow for ‘individualised’ reading instruction. The R5 reading time is a time when students practise the skills that have been explicitly taught to the whole class or small groups. It allows an opportunity for teachers to assess how individual students comprehend texts and provides time for individualised intervention.

**Group Reading**, for want of a better title, is what we do in the Early Years of schooling, to support beginning readers with their early strategy development. **Guided Reading** starts when students are able to read emergent reading books, usually past Level 5. Instead of using the round robin reading approach after the initial orientation ‘book talk’, students read independently and the teacher hears each child read part of the book, providing individual instruction as needed. **Reciprocal Reading** is a small-group procedure to help improve the comprehension and critical thinking of fluent readers. It involves four explicit strategies for reading comprehension: formulating questions, clarifying ideas, predicting and summarising. The teacher initially leads the group, explaining and modelling the strategies to show how the reader actively constructs meaning. The students gradually take over more and more of the responsibility by taking turns to lead the group and generate discussion as the group members jointly examine and interpret a text.

In **Literature Circles** the students generate the discussion, which is based on their own interpretations of the text. Small groups of students read the same book independently, examining the text from a particular comprehension strategy perspective – a questioner, inferrer, connector, predictor, summariser, visualiser or synthesiser. They then share their personal responses and interpretations with others in the group.

All teachers need to teach the **Literacy skills** needed to be successful in all curriculum areas. As stated in the Literacy Capability, “…while much of the explicit teaching of literacy occurs in the English learning area, it is strengthened, made specific and extended in other learning areas as students engage in a range of learning activities with significant literacy demands.”

Literacy teaching needs to be differentiated for all. Except when identified, all students should have access to quality teaching that enables them to achieve the required standard for their year level. It is the scaffolding that we provide that supports this to happen. Our classrooms should have 3 **WAVES**.

They are as follows:
- **Wave 1**: High-quality inclusive teaching supported by effective whole-school policies.
- **Wave 2**: Wave 1 plus intervention designed to increase rates of progress and put children back on course to meet or exceed national expectations
- **Wave 3**: Wave 1 plus increasingly personalised intervention to maximise progress and minimise gaps in achievement

**Common Language** – Grammar has ‘traditional’ and ‘functional’ labels. The advantage of the ‘functional label’ is that it identifies the role that language features play in the text, e.g. is it a participant, process or circumstance. However as
students will be exposed to both throughout their schooling and later, it is important that they know the traditional label as well as its function e.g. a verb is a process. The glossary of the Australian Curriculum- English can be referred to, for terms that are used in that document.

It is vital that they have the ‘metalanguage’ to talk about language and the way they can manipulate it.

Recommended texts