



To whom this may concern,

Intervention Y 1 and 2 – Reading Recovery.

I would like to address some comments the Honorable Jan Tinetti made during the Q&A interview on Sunday. It was wonderful to hear her say that we will be using an intervention programme for students that is based on the latest evidence. To hear her confirm that this is the science of reading is reassuring and shows that the Minister and the Ministry are moving towards the correct approach.

That being said, the fact remains that we are still using Reading Recovery (RR) in schools which is based on the three cueing approach. This approach has no evidence to support it in mainstream classrooms and there is even less evidence to support it in intervention.

It is my understanding that Reading Recovery is bound by the Marie Clay trust which has stated that no changes can or will be made to RR lessons.

I note that your website addresses the use of phonics plus books and there is mention of 12 months of training. Who has been contracted to do the training and is it based on the Science of Reading? If it is not based on the Science of Reading what approach is being used in the training and what evidence is there to back it up?

In the interview, Ms Tinetti mentioned there could be a rebranding and/or a total change in the way it is taught. I would like to ask why we are still calling it RR?

I agree with Ms Tinetti - we definitely need an intervention programme/approach for schools and teachers need to know the next steps for the children that need T2 and T3 support in ALL school classrooms across all year levels.

I recently did some digging around how RR works as I couldn't understand why schools were still signing up to RR when they have committed to teaching a Structured Literacy approach school-wide. It made no sense to me until I discovered that schools are not signing up for RR - they are signing up for the actual percentage (0.2) of a teacher that they need in their school and cannot fund themselves.

These schools need the physical teacher, not the RR programme however they have no choice due to a lack of funding to be able to hire another teacher.

What we now know is happening around the country is schools are taking the funding, but the RR teacher has now trained in a Structured Literacy approach (self-funded) and is using Structured Literacy in intervention instead of RR to support their students.

This will falsify any research RR will bring to the table this year for the renewal of its contract. Schools are not openly saying that they are using the funding for other methods of intervention out of fear that they will have to pay the RR money back and they would then lose the ability to support at least four times the number of students with the money the RR programme funds. It is, once again, the children who are missing out.

Right now we have schools signing contracts under duress just to access funding for a teacher, so they can provide a non-evidence based intervention to children who are drowning in your system because of the Three Cueing approach which is exactly one of the reasons that is causing the extremely high need for intervention in year 1 students in the first place.

This is not acceptable. Schools are being bullied into taking contracts and then being made to adhere to a programme (RR) that does not work and is the only funded and approved intervention by the MOE to help students.

The constraints of how a RR lesson must be taught are based on outdated research and it is harmful to children. What makes this even worse is that the cost of RR means only a few can get this intervention that doesn't even work for a large proportion of children.

When I ran a few simple numbers I was horrified to realise that the Ministry of Education is spending \$30 million of taxpayer's money on RR. My understanding is this figure doesn't even include the money the schools need to pay on top of what is given once they have committed to the percentage of the teacher.

To make matters worse this outdated (and ineffective for most) intervention that costs \$30 million a year is only for year 1 and Year 2 students and the programme only lasts for 20 weeks. In a time where budgets are being cut and we have a cost of living crisis going on, the Ministry needs to be addressing how and where money is being spent.

We do not need different intervention approaches for different year levels. We need to be using a Structured Literacy approach that supports all teachers and students in a school in any year level.

When I ran some basic figures I realised how you could better spend this money and train at least a third of your primary teacher who include Rtlb's, Rtlits, Lsc's, and Sencos. I achieved this by doing some simple maths.

I have chosen the training provider The Institute of Multisensory Structured Language Education (IMSLE) to show value for money:

1. Their training is designed for intervention first and foremost but it can also be transferred to the classroom for whole class teaching. This means that children who are struggling are at the heart of this training. This training provides the why, the what and the how to teach.

2. It is based on the Science of Reading and the training is in a Structured Literacy approach, not a programme.

3. After the initial 5 full days of training there is a 12-month accreditation process to complete which is recognised under the Australian Dyslexia Association (ADA).

The ADA monitor all members to ensure they continue to upskill themselves and they must provide samples of lesson plans as well as submit papers based on the latest research after the 12 months. This is an ongoing process to provide accountability for practitioners and to ensure best practices are being adhered to in order to keep their registration with the ADA.

Now for the math

According to the last Census, we had **33,519** primary school teachers working in New Zealand in 2018.

To do the training I have mentioned above as of 5/9/22 the cost would be \$2790 New Zealand dollars using the current exchange rate as the course is quoted in AUD (2500)

If we divide 30 Million dollars by \$2790 that is 10,752 primary teachers trained in a GOLD standard Structured Literacy approach at an intervention level and classroom level. This training has no age or school year limitations. It will cover YEAR 0-8 and YEARS 9-13.

My question is, why we are not investing \$30 Million of taxpayer's money in quality training for teachers so they can tackle the nationwide problem of struggling children and our dyslexic children? I would like to remind you that you have already stated that Structured Literacy is the best approach.

Even in year 0/1 the intervention has to be right and teacher training in this area is vital. It is not the same as mainstream teaching.

The saying "Teach all children as if they have dyslexia" needs to be adopted by this Ministry if they wish to have an inclusive education system.

How many RR teachers do we have in New Zealand who are trained in intervention for year 1 and 2 and are only allowed to use the programme they are given?

Why is RR tied to paying for a teacher and training?

When are the regional and national contracts dates up for renewal?

Can you provide the numbers dividing what part of the \$30 million is for the RR teacher's salary and what part of the cost is the actual cost to train a teacher in RR and the ongoing training after that?

If the model of 0.2 of a teacher is an MoE model, then will it be continuing with this model of bullying schools to commit to what the MoE provide so that they can access funding for a teacher in the school? Or will you be providing funding to allow a school to access training from whoever they chose as long as it fits the criteria that you have stated? Year 2-8 must be included in your action plan.

I haven't attached any research papers showing how RR is failing children and has no longevity or evidence behind it. I am confident you have already received these from other sources. I am however happy to send them if you would like a copy.

I would like to disclose that I am trained in a Structured Literacy approach through (IMSLE). I am also registered under the ADA for coming up three years this October.

This training allows me to create and adjust my own scope and sequence for an individual child or group and adjust all materials to that scope and sequence (words cards, fluency sheets , decodable passages/books etc).

I am also trained in being able to recognise when a child is struggling from day 1 and scaffolding to those students needs on day 1.

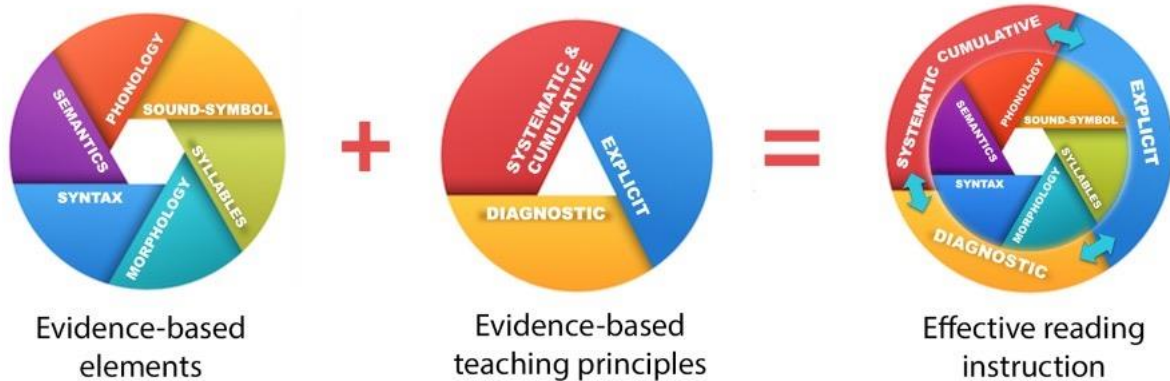
This also means I can adjust and support all neurodiverse children. This training allows me to do what is best for the child.

A programme however, means the child needs to fit that programme and the materials that are provided with it. I have been given the knowledge to create my resources and assessments if needed. This is why Structured Literacy is an approach you are trained in, so you can deal with problems as they arise.

A Structured Literacy approach must include the six evidence-based elements involved in the teaching, and the three principles that guide how those elements are taught as stated by the International Dyslexia Association.

Structured literacy

Explicit teaching of systematic word identification
and decoding strategies



Source: © 2016 Cowen for International Dyslexia Association
<https://app.box.com/s/2yqu2ke21mxs0hz9l77owdlorgvtesyq>

What I have listed above MUST be included in an approach that is called a Structured Literacy Approach.

Please don't confuse semantics around what a Structured Literacy approach is and what a structured approach to literacy is (or a tagline that says that something is aligned to Structured Literacy).

This is not the same and it will fail dyslexic students throughout schools in New Zealand. Even worse though, you will be cutting corners with struggling learners and dyslexic children's education by not providing them with what they need to be successful, literate, independent adults in the future.

This system has, and still is, failing struggling learners and dyslexic children. If you continue to use Reading Recovery and the model of funding tied to it, you will be continuing to fail these children.

It is time to be brave and kick this rubbish to the curb once and for all.

I would like to thank the members of your team who have taken the time to acknowledge Structured Literacy and create the guide on your TKI website.

I welcome any conversation around RR and a Structured Literacy approach for intervention and I look forward to your responses.

Kind Regards

Sharon Scurr

Founder of the Dyslexia Evidence Base Community
Practicing MSL Educational Specialist (IMSLE, Aus)
Accredited Member of the Australian Dyslexia Association (ADA)
Global Partner of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA)
AMADA Registration: 420268
www.deb.co.nz



Institute for
**Multisensory Structured
Language** Education