

The most efficient and effective way forward for the Commonwealth Government would be to over-see an implementation across all states and territories of the 20 recommendations contained within the 2005 National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy.

This will be no small undertaking, as there is a large research-practice gap in teacher education and considerable resistance and indifference within the ranks of teaching academics in Australian universities to adopting these recommendations.

There is also a significant short-fall with respect to the knowledge and skills required to provide early literacy education that is in line with then 2005 NITL (and indeed, the recommendations of the UK Rose Report in 2006 and the US Reading Panel Review in 2000).

All of the evidence from these reviews points towards the need for formally embedded systematic synthetic phonics instruction. The response of teacher educators, however, has been a poorly-differentiated middle-road referred to as "Balance Literacy".

It is impossible to know what this means in practice and therefore impossible to research it effectively. There is no evidence of which I am aware that Balanced Literacy reliably entails evidence-based systematic synthetic phonics instruction.

The cognitive science has not changed in the 11 years since the 2005 NITL; if anything it has strengthened. There is nothing to be gained from gathering further evidence. The evidence that we already have needs to be acted upon.

Pamela Snow