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Review provides insights into literacy teaching and teacher education

Five reports aimed at supporting teacher education and professional development to improve literacy outcomes for Tasmanian students were formally launched in Hobart this morning, on International Literacy Day.

The reports were produced by the Peter Underwood Centre, at the University of Tasmania, for the Department of Education as part of the Review of Literacy Teaching, Training and Practice in Government Schools.

Lead researcher and Peter Underwood Centre deputy director Professor Kitty te Riele said it was fitting for the reports to be launched on International Literacy Day, which highlights the importance of literacy both for our state and for each young Tasmanian.

“Literacy skills and confidence are fundamental to engagement and success in learning, empowering young people to find and follow their interests, and to individual and community wellbeing,” Professor te Riele said.

The review paid attention to all elements of literacy in the Australian curriculum; included Kindergarten to Year 10, and examined practices in schools as well as in pre-service teacher learning.

“The review is unusual in this regard, and its breadth has allowed high-level insights to emerge,” Professor te Riele said.

“The findings included the importance of enhancing collaboration and communication between parties contributing to literacy teaching and teacher learning, and establishing a consistent approach to literacy practice and a shared language, while still providing scope for professional judgment and innovation.”

“While the research was limited to Tasmania, the conclusions are applicable to other jurisdictions in Australia and globally.”

The review also highlighted the importance of:

- Teaching practice that is ‘fit for purpose’ and adaptable to different contexts.
- Equipping teachers and teacher educators with a toolkit of good literacy teaching strategies based on existing and emerging evidence, and practice-based research.

- Systematic and appropriate monitoring, using a range of different assessment types for different purposes.
- A commitment to and support for lifelong learning.

Professor Kitty te Riele said collaboration between the project reference group from the Department of Education enabled research findings to inform the development of the Department's 2019-2022 Literacy Framework and Action Plan.

"Our comprehensive three-year review is supporting achievement of the department's system goal to ensure all Tasmanians have the skills and confidence in literacy for success in learning and life." Professor te Riele said.

Professor te Riele said a debt of gratitude was owed to the participants to the review.

"Staff from 28 schools, beginning teachers, pre-service teachers, and academics from the University of Tasmania Faculty of Education gave generously of their time to participate in the research," she said.

The three-year review was commissioned by the Tasmanian Department of Education as part of a 2016 State Budget initiative.

Five detailed reports - two literature reviews, two reports based on the findings of empirical fieldwork and a final report, [*Literacy Teaching in Tasmania: Teacher Practice and Teacher Learning*](#) - were written by the research team.

In addition, the team produced 11 fact sheets - released today - which will be of immediate practical benefit for teachers as well as for parents and carers.

The Minister for Education and Training, the Honourable Jeremy Rockliff MP, launched the review reports at a COVID-safe function for stakeholders.

University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Professor Rufus Black also spoke at the event.

Two videos were shown, showcasing creative work on multimodal literacy by pre-service teachers from the university, as well as a delightful demonstration of oral literacy by Tasmanian primary school students.

Interviews:

Peter Underwood Centre deputy director Professor Kitty te Riele - 0418 296 614.

Media contact: Sean Stevenson 0438 244 162, email: sean.stevenson@utas.edu.au

Information released by:

Communications and Media Office
University of Tasmania

+61 3 6226 2124

Media.Office@utas.edu.au

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