



Early Action for Success Phase 2

Assistant Principal and Deputy Principal Instructional Leadership Handbook

Assisting the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017 - 2020



Introduction

Early Action for Success (EAfS) Phase 2 aims to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills through a targeted approach in the early years of schooling.

EAfS Phase 2 is part of the department's implementation of the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017-2020. *EAfS Phase 2* aims to improve students' performance through targeted support for primary schools in the lowest quartile of NAPLAN performance in literacy and numeracy. *EAfS Phase 2* maintains and extends the focus on instructional leadership to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of at-risk Kindergarten to Year 2 students.

EAfS Phase 2 strengthens the focus on:

- Early identification of level of attainment in literacy and numeracy of each individual child in K-2
- Differentiating teaching practice that focuses on the needs of the individual student
- Using targeted interventions in literacy and/or numeracy according to need
- On-going monitoring of student progress against the Literacy and Numeracy Continuums/Learning Progressions.

From 2017, 22 Assistant Principals and 366 Deputy Principals, Instructional Leadership, Literacy and Numeracy, will support 533 schools to drive improvement in literacy and numeracy. The Instructional Leadership positions will be allocated to schools commensurate with average K-2 student enrolments.

Schools were identified as eligible using a determined methodology which included the following criteria:

- Schools performance data with the highest proportion of students in the bottom two performance bands in NAPLAN.
- The degree of disadvantage of the schools, as reflected in the Family Occupation and Employment Index (FOEI) values.
- Participation in Early Action for Success Phase 1.

Provision is made to accommodate up to 50 non- *EAfS Phase 2* schools to self-fund instructional leadership positions and for staff to participate in the support and professional learning provided through the EAfS strategy.

Schools will also be supported by 20 Deputy Principal, Instructional Leadership, Literacy and Numeracy Trainers.

Resources

The Assistant Principals Instructional Leadership, Literacy and Numeracy are appointed to small schools as part the *EAFS Phase 2* rural and remote strategy. The Assistant Principals will work with Principals in consultation with Directors, Public Schools NSW. They will use a range of delivery models including Adobe Connect, teleconferencing, video and face-to-face conferencing to provide high quality, differentiated professional learning and support and will work with principals and teachers in regularly monitoring each student's progress. Assistant Principals Instructional Leadership, Literacy and Numeracy work alongside teachers in classrooms to both model and improve teaching and assessment skills in early literacy and numeracy.

The Deputy Principals, Instructional Leadership, Literacy and Numeracy are appointed to medium and large schools. Deputy Principals will work with Principals, in consultation with Directors, Public Schools NSW as part of the leadership team within the school. They will use data on student progress to strategically plan targeted interventions as well as identify and support the professional learning needs of staff.

Literacy and Numeracy Trainers have been appointed to support schools participating in the Early Action for Success strategy. Trainers collaborate with school leadership teams, including instructional leaders to deliver professional learning as required.

Assistant Principals, Instructional Leadership, will report to the *EAFS Phase 2* principal of their base school, as determined by the Director, Public Schools NSW, of the relevant Principal Network. Deputy Principals, Instructional Leadership, will report to the *EAFS Phase 2* principal.

Expectations of schools

- Demonstrate within the 2017-2020 School Plan and Annual School Reports how student needs, Kindergarten to Year 2, are being addressed and literacy and numeracy targets met, through the use of diagnostic assessment, differentiated teaching and targeted interventions.
- Starting with the Best Start Kindergarten Assessment, monitor and track K-2 student progress at 5 weekly intervals, against the Literacy and Numeracy Continuums/ Progressions.
- Maintain K-3 student literacy and numeracy achievement data as well as any data required for the purposes of evaluation.
- Participate in the external evaluation of *EAFS Phase 2*.
- Maintain accurate financial records of funds expended.

Schools will not be expected to develop a separate plan. They will need to identify the actions they will take to address the requirements to meet their targets for improving students' literacy and numeracy performance and ensure this is incorporated in their School Plan. Directors, Public Schools NSW, will endorse the processes associated with developing the School Plan, including literacy and numeracy targets, actions to be taken and budgets.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leaders in *Early Action for Success Phase 2* work directly with teachers to build student and teacher capacity in both literacy and numeracy. Instructional Leaders draw upon a strong understanding of, and high expertise in, quality teaching in literacy and numeracy across Kindergarten to Year 2 and beyond.

Instructional Leaders are responsible for developing and implementing effective practices to systematically collect, analyse, track and monitor student progress in order to support and enable quality teaching practices. Instructional Leaders coordinate the identification of the literacy and numeracy achievement of all Kindergarten to Year 2 students and beyond. They make use of end of year expectations to determine current learning need, identifying ‘at risk’ students. In conjunction with the school executive, this information is used to determine the professional learning needs of staff to support them in differentiating instruction and strategically planning appropriate targeted interventions in literacy and numeracy across Kindergarten to Year 2, extending into Year 3. Within *EAFS Phase 2* there is a strong focus on evidence-based decision making. In the classroom, teachers map the progress of students against key aspects of the literacy and numeracy continuum to support decision making around the types of interventions needed by individual students.

To support effective, high quality professional learning and coaching, Instructional Leaders create strong learning-focused school cultures built on trust and collaborative practices. They lead the professional learning of teachers in effective literacy and numeracy teaching practices, strengthening teacher capacity and teaching expertise. Instructional leaders provide tailored, differentiated professional learning and direct literacy and numeracy support within a school or group of schools. They support teachers in developing the skills to effectively use on-going assessment for learning strategies to personalise learning in literacy in numeracy using tiered intervention and instruction. Instructional Leaders work in the classroom with teachers and with the children for whom that teacher is responsible.

By gathering feedback and data, Instructional Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning, mentoring and coaching they’ve implemented. They do this to ensure teachers gain expertise and knowledge in differentiating and targeting instruction to improve student Literacy and Numeracy outcomes in the early years of schooling and beyond.

Instructional Leaders contribute to organisational management of schools by planning appropriate support and resources to gain shift for students in literacy and numeracy. The Instructional Leader together with the principal and early years executive team conducts a situational analysis, gathering evidence from appropriate internal and external data sources. This provides the evidence underpinning the school planning process and authentic data on which to base school planning decisions. This process supports a systemic approach to implementation, evaluation and reporting, including reporting the outcomes of the school’s *EAFS Phase 2* strategy in the Annual School Report.

Role statements for Assistant Principal/Deputy Principal Instructional Leadership can be found in *Appendix 1*.



High quality professional learning

Contextually responsive professional learning that takes place over extended periods of time are important characteristics of impactful teacher learning (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009; Higgins and Parsons, 2011; Timperley, 2011). This requires supporting the pedagogical and content knowledge of teachers alongside the needs of students and the school community, responding to the socioeconomic, linguistic, cultural and learning diversity with their community. High quality professional learning includes opportunities for reflection, collaboration and rich, sustained professional dialogue focused on student learning (Anthony and Walshaw, 2010; Sullivan 2011; Timperley, 2011). Quality professional learning is timely, relevant to teachers and students, evidence-based and models best practice.

Instructional Leaders carefully design, implement and evaluate professional learning opportunities intended to support teachers in making decisions about which pedagogies and practices to employ and when to employ them. They use a range of approaches including formal professional learning sessions, coaching, reflecting, mentoring and in-class support, consistently modelling best practice.

‘Professional learning will be most effective when it is relevant, collaborative and future focused, and when it supports teachers to reflect on, question and consciously improve their practice. These characteristics of effective professional learning should be considered when designing, selecting, reflecting on or evaluating professional learning.’ (The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2102, p.4).

High quality professional learning is enhanced by strong, collaborative professional relationships built upon trust.

Effective data collection, analysis and use

The quality of data impacts the quality of decision making (Goss, Hunter, Romanes and Parsonage, 2015). Instructional Leaders use effective data sources to focus strategically on student and teacher need. They develop and implement effective practices to systematically collect, analyse and monitor student progress in order to support and enable quality teaching practices using all levels of tiered intervention.

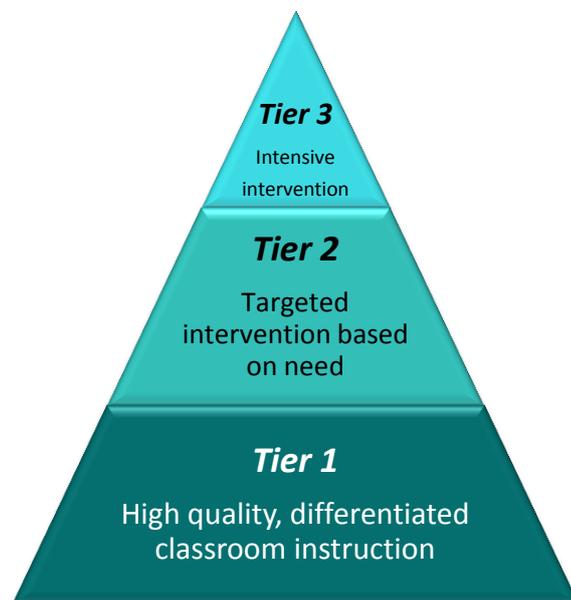
Effective data use involves identifying individual and collective need and recognising when interventions have been impactful and when additional support is required.

Data collection and analysis should be purposeful, frequent, valid and efficient, supporting teachers to make informed decisions around targeted intervention and differentiated instruction (Goss, Hunter, Romanes and Parsonage, 2015). Frequent conversations about a vast array of data sources support responsive teaching.

Differentiated teaching and targeted interventions

Tiered intervention presents a means of delivering tailored learning support for students in literacy and numeracy. Research has shown that a tiered approach that involves quality evidence-based learning, regular meaningful monitoring and assessment of learning, and the implementation of targeted interventions has a positive impact on learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy (O'Connor, Harty & Fulmer 2005; Hughes & Dexter 2011).

Tiered interventions are designed to progressively adjust the intensity and nature of support according to how students respond to interventions. Student progress is closely monitored every 5 weeks at each tier of intervention to determine the need for progressively intense instruction.



Tier 1

Tier 1 intervention is provided through high quality, differentiated classroom learning opportunities that engage and support all learners. A key component of differentiated learning, Tier 1 interventions:

- Are designed in response to high quality data about the needs and interests of students
- Make use of on-going formative assessment tools and strategies used to capture relevant information about learning needs and progress. This allows teachers to make informed decisions about how to differentiate learning and develop the necessary skills, knowledge and capabilities required for literacy and numeracy learning
- Are carefully designed to engage students
- Require a deep knowledge of the necessary skills and understanding required to support student learning
- Require a repertoire of teaching strategies and approaches used flexibly to support student learning and achievement
- Require supportive learning-focussed relationships.

Research shows that student engagement supports student learning outcomes and wellbeing (Munns and Sawyer, 2013). Engagement is a multidimensional concept that involves the coming together of high cognitive challenge ('thinking hard'), high affective ('feeling good') and behavioural ('this learning matters to me') responses (Munns and Sawyer, 2013; Attard 2014).

Tier 2

Tier 2 interventions provide timely support through high quality, small group or individual instruction for students with a particular learning need. Tier 2 interventions are designed when evidence demonstrates that Tier 1 instruction has not had a significant enough impact on student learning.

Tier 2 interventions require:

- Robust, effective assessment tools and strategies that expose student thinking and are used to determine the specific needs of students and the impact of interventions
- A deep knowledge of the underlying key steps and progressions students need to develop in order to move their learning forward
- A repertoire of strategies that can be used to support student learning
- Fluid, flexible grouping based on common need
- Specific, short-term instruction tightly connected to student need.

Intervention may be provided by the class teacher or specialist teachers within the class setting. '...Targeted teaching is not a prescribed process; schools and teachers need to appropriate it to their circumstances and capabilities.' (Siemon, 2016, pp. 75-76).

Tier 3

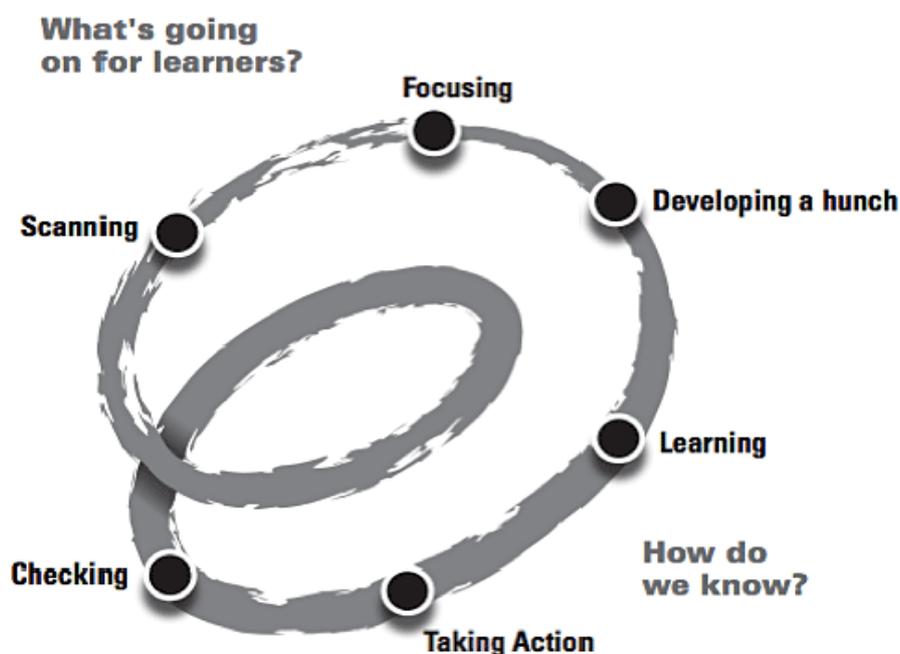
Tier 3 interventions provide more intensive, longer term support through specialist assessment and teaching for individual students after evidence shows that Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions have not had a significant enough impact on student learning. Students who require Tier 3 interventions have complex literacy and numeracy needs, documented using individual learning plans.

Developing cultures of inquiry

Using a framework for collaborative inquiry supports Instructional Leaders focus on student learning and move through on-going cycles of investigation, enhancing teaching practices for the betterment of student learning (Timperley, Kaiser and Halbert, 2014). Systematically creating the conditions where curiosity is encouraged, developed and sustained supports schools to focus on student learning as their core business. A number of frameworks exist that support Instructional Leaders in developing collaborative inquiry.

Not rigid in its sequence, *the Spiral of Inquiry* (Timperley, Kaiser and Halbert, 2014) has six parts:

- *Scanning: What's going on for learners?* This question encourages teachers to focus on the experiences of learners as a whole and requires probing questions to be asked about the learning experiences, environment and individual needs of students.
- *Focusing : Where will concentrating our energies make the most difference?* This phase requires teachers to narrow their focus and concentrate on the most immediate need.
- *Developing a hunch: How are WE contributing to the situation?* This is where teachers consider the impact of their decisions in pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, relationships, etc. to consider the actions they can take to support student learning.
- *New learning: How and where will we learn more about what we do?* High quality professional learning is linked to identified student need and so in this phase, teachers and Instructional Leaders consider what new learning or refinement of ideas needs to occur to positively impact student outcomes.
- *Taking action: What can we do differently to make enough of a difference?* This is where ideas are put into action along with well-developed plans for determining whether interventions have been successful, to what degree and for whom.
- *Checking: Have we made 'enough' of a difference?*



(Timperley, Kaser and Halbert, 2014)

Building collaborative teams and practices

'Positive and respectful relationships across the school community underpin a productive learning environment, and support students' development of strong identities as learners' (New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, 2014, p.2).

A collaborative learning culture is identifiable in norms and practices that involve:

- *Teachers participating in frequent, on-going formal and informal conversations about pedagogy and teaching practice*
- *Teachers working together to research, plan and design effective teaching strategies and programs*
- *Teachers participating in professional dialogue to evaluate and modify teaching strategies and programs*
- *Teachers participating in regular classroom observation and feedback and can articulate how changes in their practice impact on student outcomes*
- *Having collective ownership of learning goals and outcomes, for both the individual and whole-school*
- *Teachers undertaking leadership roles that include initiating and leading professional discussions with colleagues to evaluate practice*
- *Seeing collaboration being prioritised by providing sufficient time.*

(AITSL, n.d., p.1)

Teachers genuinely working together, focused on learning, exceed the skills and capacities of any one individual (Leana, 2011). Collaborative practices aim to acknowledge the skills, knowledge and capabilities of all individuals for the betterment of the group (Heffernan, 2015). As Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue, building discourses of collaborative inquiry and communities of practice empowers educators to be discerning users of ideas and make more informed decisions about their work. It is through the process of sharing information and experiences with the team that members learn from each other and have an opportunity to develop professionally (Tuckman, 1965). Wenger (1998) described a similar development in the creation of communities of practice.

Organisational Management

In their contribution to the organisational management of schools, Instructional Leaders plan their work, in collaboration with the School Principal and the leadership team responsible for the early years of schooling. Planning the work of the instructional leaders involves identifying the resources invested and the activities undertaken and led by the Instructional Leader with particular school and community members to achieve specific short and long term outcomes for teacher and student learning.

The Instructional Leader's plan of work is a systematic and efficient mechanism that supports the direction of the school plan. It helps the Instructional Leader to clearly reflect the steps, strategies and actions that will be taken by the Instructional Leaders in response to the objectives, targets and milestones in the school plan. The work plan of the Instructional Leader is a 10-week working document, refreshed every 5 weeks in consultation with the leadership team. The work plans will ensure the actions and strategies by the instructional leader are supporting the achievement of stated targets. This document should support schools in their evaluation of the milestones in the school plan and contribute to the school leadership team's ongoing discussions with the Director, Public Schools NSW. .

Appendix 1

Assistant Principal/Deputy Principal, Instructional Leadership, Literacy and Numeracy Role Statement

Overview

The role is to build student and teacher capacity in both literacy and numeracy, by providing high quality differentiated professional learning and direct literacy and numeracy support, within a school or group of schools.

Statement of duties

In close collaboration with the school principal and the school executive the **Assistant Principal/Deputy Principal, Instructional Leadership, Literacy and Numeracy** will:

- Realign the school plan, to clearly describe the shared expectations and targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in the early years of schooling. This process will include the realignment of existing and new school resources to focus on evidence based strategies that build teacher capacity to achieve these outcomes.
- Build teacher capacity to identify the literacy and numeracy learning needs of students in the early years of schooling. Leading local decision making regarding the choice of tiered literacy and numeracy intervention strategies based on the analysis of student learning needs.
- Identify teacher professional learning needs and providing high quality professional learning and in-class support. Ensure teachers gain expertise and knowledge in differentiating instruction to improve student literacy and numeracy outcomes in the early years of schooling.
- Monitor the impact of practice and interventions on student literacy and numeracy learning in the early years of schooling.
- Support teacher use of the Literacy and Numeracy Continua (or the new Learning Progressions when available) as tools for reporting student progress, Kindergarten to Year 2, at 5 weekly intervals.
- Maintain Kindergarten, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 student level literacy and numeracy achievement data as well as any data required for the purposes of evaluation
- Lead school participation in all evaluation activities and report against agreed timelines.

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