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Inclusion and success for all children: A whole-school approach

Ingrid Freeman & Jane Kelly [1]

ABSTRACT

Reading to Learn (R2L) has become the vehicle for a whole-school approach to literacy at Kenmore State School since 2014. During this time many lessons have been learned about the nature of literacy and the conditions under which it can flourish. The purpose of this chapter is to record how our attempts to teach through reading have brought into sharper focus our understandings of contemporary issues for education, both in equity and efficacy. It is also the story of the way R2L's unique approach to differentiation has consolidated a common ethos and success for all our students, including students with disability and students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EALD). The significance of R2L in supporting inclusion and success for all cannot be overstated. Finally, our aim is to share some of the implementation strategies and on-site professional development processes we have put in place to support depth of practice in R2L and, we would argue, education in general.

CONTEXT – KENMORE STATE SCHOOL

In 2020, Kenmore State School, like most schools, has a diverse community to support (Table 2.1).

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Table 2.1. Population data for Kenmore State School

Location	Brisbane Metropolitan Region, Queensland, Australia
Year levels	Prep to Year 6 (Aged 4.5–11)
Enrolment	410
Indigenous enrolment percentage	0.3%
Students with verified disability enrolment percentage	7.8%
Students with English as a Second Language or Dialect enrolment percentage	31%
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage[2] (ACARA, 2016)	92%

While our particular circumstances are unique, they are not remarkable. All schools work hard to attend to the broad range and diverse needs of our students. What might be a little different is the degree of confidence we have in our ability to respond effectively and increase our capacity to meet educational challenges. This is in great part due to what we have learned through implementing R2L in our school.

THE SHORT HISTORY OF IMPLEMENTATION

Before 2014, Kenmore State School was a small school where enrolment numbers were falling. Although the school's Special Education Program had a good reputation, this was in some ways working against creating a diverse and inclusive community as many local families with children with no special needs chose schools outside the catchment area. At the same time, the national testing program in literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) had begun in 2008; and, while our educational systems and institutions were still unsophisticated in interpreting the data, schools were asked to show measurable improvement. Kenmore, like all Queensland schools, was being encouraged to lift the 'tail' of low literacy and accelerate the 'upper two bands' of high achievers. Our search for a way to do both cohesively brought us to R2L.

In 2014, the school hosted an 8-day vacation professional development course for a group of local schools, but, internally, targeted training for our own early years and Special Education Program (SEP) teachers. For the first two years, R2L training provided focus for the professional development within the school. Teachers experimented in their own classrooms, running R2L pedagogy alongside other programs and familiar routines. Even though implementation worked at a fairly personal level at this time, there was enough evidence of early success to extend the training to all year levels and put in some structures to support whole-school implementation.

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In 2015, the first school-wide processes for on-site and continuous professional development were instituted to support teachers following their initial training. Regular planning days focussed on English curriculum development through an R2L lens. Assessment knowledge and skill was developed through regular guided marking against R2L criteria and tracking of the data gathered. These practices created a more consistent approach to curriculum and pedagogy in classrooms, as well as developing an assessment culture.

In 2016, a more formalised teacher-feedback process through pedagogical instructional rounds was introduced. While some feedback had been provided earlier through consultants, the leadership team and a local R2L network, the instructional rounds process gave teachers more opportunities to see colleagues at work and reflect on teaching practice at a whole-school level.

For the past three years, these three processes for supporting on-site professional development of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy have provided the rhythm of the work of the school. New classroom teachers and more of our specialist staff continue to be trained by David Rose each year as we host a program also made available to local schools.

On-site, our new teachers are apprenticed into the culture of the school and the R2L methodology through regular planning days, instructional rounds and staff meetings devoted to formative evaluation and analysis.

At the end of 2018, the review of the school by the Education Queensland School Improvement Unit reported:

> Teachers are respected by students and parents as caring professionals who are receptive to communicating regarding student learning and issues affecting that learning. Teachers, teacher aides and school leaders have a strong sense of purpose nurtured in a positive and proactive environment. Parents, students and teachers describe the relationship between members of the school community as caring and respectful. A distinct sense of embracement of multicultural inclusion and diversity exists throughout the school.
>
> Teachers are experts in the Reading to Learn (R2L) approach and confidently apply these strategies within their classrooms. Teacher anecdotes regarding student progress, student bookwork and school data attest to the success of the processes utilised by teachers to differentiate for students.

Curriculum, assessment and pedagogy 'talk' to each other in real and dynamic ways in our school, as Figure 2.1 shows. This is why our school has grown in literacy achievement, student numbers, educational depth, cohesive mission and confidence.

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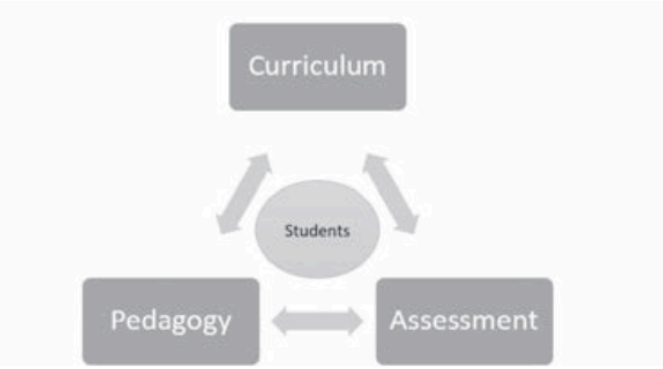

Figure 2.1. Alignment of Curriculum Pedagogy and Assessment

DEVELOPMENT OF THE KENMORE APPROACH TO ON-SITE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN R2L

Six years of work supports the following assertion: if you are proposing whole-school implementation, a long-term, multi-faceted and flexible commitment is necessary because it is a deep systemic and cultural change that is being attempted. Change requires consistent, practical and iterative tending; it needs room to move and generous resourcing; and it demands measurable and generative outcomes to ensure participants value it enough to persist.

In our experience, R2L has provided the tools to pull curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into closer alignment, so that teachers can see more precisely the impact of their pedagogical choices on student achievement, as shown in Figure 2.2. Our challenge was to provide and refine whole-school processes that would encourage a shared depth of knowledge and support precision through alignment.

GROWING UNDERSTANDINGS OF CURRICULUM

As we worked together, over time, out of our experience we distilled these 'big ideas':

- Regular collaborative planning is essential for building shared knowledge.
- Curriculum/assessment alignment is the first and most important task.
- Continuity planning across year levels drives aspiration.
- Genre analysis can de-clutter and deepen curriculum.
- Shared detailed communication around differentiation has potential as an inclusion game-changer.

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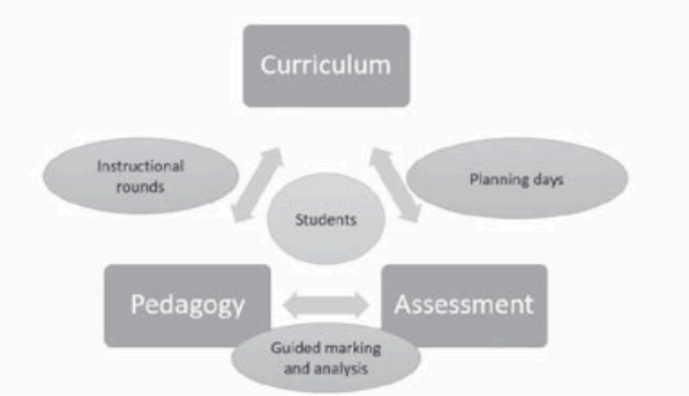

Figure 2.2. Scheduled school-wide processes to co-ordinate and refine the alignment of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment

- Iterative school processes are the best platforms for on-site professional learning and teacher induction.

This is how the big ideas play out in our school. The English curriculum, analysed through the lens of R2L, is currently supported in our school by one day per term of collaborative year-level planning. The aim of these planning days has changed over time. Initially, the focus was to re-structure state-developed units of work to accommodate R2L methodology. This, in the main, involved modifying assessment tasks which had complicated generic structures, and improving alignment to the curriculum texts being read. As teachers' knowledge and confidence in text analysis grew, better text selection and assessment design was possible. Adjustment to the state-developed curriculum/assessment program naturally led to renewed analysis of the national *Australian Curriculum: English*, to refine and balance the choices made in adjusting the state-provided models.

One particularly useful decision was to plan the English program so that all year levels were studying the same genre family at the same time. The *AC: English* calls for students to study imaginative, informative and persuasive texts. By scheduling units for each text type concurrently for Years 1–6, professional development delivered through staff meetings or on student-free days can be genre-specific and timely for all teachers, and can build to a more detailed and relevant continuum of learning for students. This process has extended and deepened teacher knowledge of text and curriculum. There is a growing appreciation that previous assumptions about 'student capability' and 'year level appropriateness of curriculum' arose out of traditional pedagogies that gave students opportunities to practise, but did not fundamentally change, the literacy understanding and skills they brought with them to school.

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R2L text analysis gave the school's re-engagement with the national curriculum documents greater purpose and rigour. While the *AC: English* had a functional model of language as one of its informing frames, some historical approaches to implementation have fragmented this. Teachers can see the 30–40 content descriptors for each year level as independent skills to be clustered by mode or topic, and to be planned for and taught in isolation. While not a practice encouraged by the *AC: English*, some of these heritage practices maintain their hold on school routines. This accounts for (or at least allows) the traditional practice of separate activity strands or implementation of commercial programs within the English/Literacy curriculum; reading, writing, spelling, grammar, handwriting, phonics, literature, critical literacy, etc. The integration of all these strands into our current R2L program at Kenmore took time and diplomacy. Teachers were encouraged, at first, to continue with some discrete programs alongside the school-developed R2L units until such time as they were confident that they were achieving better student progress through R2L. Spelling, as a discrete program, held out the longest, but the year the R2L approach to spelling was fully adopted, the school's national testing data in spelling improved.

Our current curriculum work is building shared teacher knowledge of the way the *AC:English* content descriptors cluster meaningfully in specific texts (Table 2.2). Using the R2L criteria frame as a guide, we cluster the content descriptors to see what can be profitably learned through reading and re-writing the studied text. In the example below, where students study and write a new chapter for Roald Dahl's *The Twits*, just over half of the curriculum objectives for Year 4 can be addressed in the one unit.

But this is not an exercise in 'ticking off' objectives. By seeing the content descriptors in this format, teachers can more easily identify how the need to create tension drives the phasing, conjunction and grammar within the text. The specific characterisations in Dahl's text are produced through tenor choices in lexis and appraisal, dialogue and illustration. This clustering produces depth in text analysis that can be conveyed to students; and likewise, by using a consistent metalanguage when comparing with future texts studied, can help students discover and use intellectual tools for literary analysis themselves.

As such, R2L has provided a platform for de-cluttering the curriculum, allowing for both greater depth and the amount of repetition required to promote mastery. In this way, just as teachers are discovering that students can do more than they had expected, teachers also have more to offer.

This is not to say that our curriculum work is over. We understand more fully now that curriculum work must be iterative to allow for the fact that teachers are learners too, and their understandings develop at different rates and in different directions. There is always more to learn. The focus for the work changes in response to capacity and need. Our school has a long-standing commitment to inclusion, so

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Table 2.2. Curriculum descriptors clustered by R2L criteria for specific text studied

R2L criteria	*AC:English* – Year 4 Content descriptors
Genre	Make connections between the ways different authors may represent similar storylines, ideas and relationships (ACELT1602) Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features of literary texts (ACELT1604) Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view (ACELT1603) Identify characteristic features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text (ACELY1690)
Staging	Create literary texts by developing storylines, characters and settings (ACELT1794)
Phasing	Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension (ACELT1605)
Field	Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts (ACELY1692) Understand that the meaning of sentences can be enriched through the use of noun groups/phrases and verb groups/phrases and prepositional phrases (ACELA1493)
Tenor	Investigate how quoted (direct) and reported (indirect) speech work in different types of text (ACELA1494)
Mode	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts containing key information and supporting details for a widening range of audiences, demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features (ACELY1694)
Lexis	Understand, interpret and experiment with a range of devices and deliberate word play in poetry and other literary texts, for example nonsense words, spoonerisms, neologisms and puns (ACELT1606)
Appraisal	Understand differences between the language of opinion and feeling and the language of factual reporting or recording (ACELA1489)
Conjunction	Understand how texts are made cohesive through the use of linking devices including pronoun reference and text connectives (ACELA1491)
Reference	Understand how texts are made cohesive through the use of linking devices including pronoun reference and text connectives (ACELA1491)
Grammar	Understand how adverb groups/phrases and prepositional phrases work in different ways to provide circumstantial details about an activity (ACELA1495)
Spelling	Understand how to use knowledge of letter patterns including double letters, spelling generalisations, morphemic word families, common prefixes and suffixes and word origins to spell more complex words (ACELA1779) Read and write a large core of high frequency words including homophones and know how to use context to identify correct spelling (ACELA1780)
Punctuation	Recognise how quotation marks are used in texts to signal dialogue, titles and quoted (direct) speech (ACELA1492)
Presentation	Write using clearly-formed joined letters, and develop increased fluency and automaticity (ACELY1696) Use a range of software including word processing programs to construct, edit and publish written text, and select, edit and place visual, print and audio elements (ACELY1697) Explore the effect of choices when framing an image, placement of elements in the image, and salience on composition of still and moving images in a range of types of texts (ACELA1496)

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Table 2.3. Consistent text and lesson study routines

Prepare and read – whole text: foreground assessment and goals		
Daily routine	Prepare and Read (part text)	10–20 minutes
	Detailed Reading	10–20 minutes
	Sentence Making	10 minutes
	Spelling	5–10 minutes
	Sentence Writing	5–10 minutes
	Joint and *Individual Rewriting*	20 minutes
Prepare and write – whole text: *Joint* and *Individual Construction*		

currently the building of shared curriculum knowledge is focussed on strategic experimentation with EALD, high achievement and special education programs. This experimentation is in its infancy, but there are some signs that deeper shared curriculum knowledge is leading to better shared classroom practice between teachers, support teachers, students and aides, leading to enhanced inclusion.

Our school is also growing, so another focus is apprenticing new staff into a significantly different approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Collaboratively developed and shared curriculum resources at program, unit, lesson and detailed reading/re-writing levels are a start. The approach to R2L implementation taken at Kenmore means that there is a consistent pattern to the study of a text and a consistent R2L routine in the delivery of most lessons, working from *Preparing for Reading* through to *Independent Rewriting* (Table 2.3).

This routine, and the curriculum resources developed to scaffold delivery, are the stepping-off point for new teachers. However, to truly understand planning you need to take part in it yourself, so we envisage that the collaborative planning days provided each term will continue to refine and refresh curriculum indefinitely.

GROWING UNDERSTANDINGS OF PEDAGOGY

At the same time, our experience has revealed to us these 'big ideas' about pedagogy:

- Pedagogical change requires on-going strategic commitment.
- Teachers need space and support to learn something new.
- Routines provide benefits for staff and students in work quality and well-being.
- Using a text-based pedagogy has advantages in making curriculum and standards more explicit.
- Explicit curriculum and standards allow for more collaboration and innovation within the teams of people supporting inclusion.

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- Routined student work producing visible learning allows teachers to make more precise responses to formative evaluations.

The on-site professional development of R2L pedagogy has likewise changed focus over time, but it is a consistent part of the school's processes. After new staff complete initial training, Kenmore now uses an *Instructional Rounds* process to provide feedback and maintain collegial discussion about the purpose and effectiveness of the pedagogical moves within R2L. Figure 2.3 shows the structure of our process for implementing the *Instructional Rounds*[3] professional learning process.

Each term, a focus for feedback is chosen to frame observations of teaching practice, either by the leadership team or by teaching peers. In the early years of implementation, the feedback process was to refine understandings and application of the steps learned through training. Some teachers find the pedagogical moves they have been taught easier to adopt than others. All interpret them through the prism of their own experience and values.

Conventional wisdom says we all teach how we ourselves have been taught, and when push comes to shove, we revert to earliest habits. So one of the guiding principles at Kenmore has been to manage the stress and workload of teachers, while increasing the opportunities for teachers to learn from and support each other in using R2L.

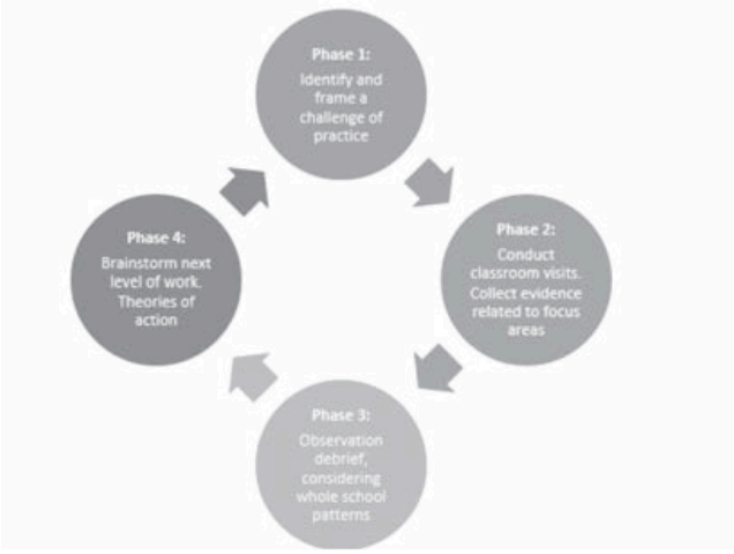

Figure 2.3. Process adapted from: *Instructional Rounds in Education* (City et al., 2009)

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One initiative to support teacher learning has been an increase in specialisation within the school. Most primary schools in Australia plan for and deliver eight curriculum areas to their students. Most schools access specialist teachers for Physical Education, Languages and Music. Over time, the infrastructure of Kenmore has been adjusted to add specialist teaching of The Arts and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). What this has meant, in effect, is that the classroom teachers have had increased time and opportunity to become more specialised in the teaching of English. The time gained by the classroom teachers is used for planning and delivering small-group and individual intervention and enhancement activities, supported by greater analysis of a range of formative assessment data sources – of which the R2L monitoring of writing is the most significant. These interventions can be delivered in class, or supplement the whole-class instruction.

The most obvious impact of R2L as you move around the school, however, is the consistency of pedagogical routines used in classrooms. Early experiments in R2L across other local schools had pointed out an effectiveness gain achieved by moving through most of the stages of the pedagogy in quick succession within the one lesson, rather than implementing across a series of lessons over time. Consequently, the resources developed at Kenmore support teachers to deliver a daily lesson for English that is highly predictable in design and, therefore, quite unusual in the Australian context. While primary school teachers have been used to routines in classrooms around aspects of their program (guided reading, spelling or phonics drills), the routines have largely been self or school-selected and lesson design itself has always been very individualised. For some teachers, this variety has been a key element in their perception of what motivates or engages students, and even a key strategy for behaviour management, so it took a while for us to register the benefits of this 'routined' pedagogy, first for students and then for teachers.

The reason we chose R2L as the platform for pedagogical change and improved literacy was the promise that all students could engage and be supported in whole-class learning. But it would be fair to say that we did not really understand the impact the routines would have on student learning and wellbeing. Initially, many teachers had fears that the high level of repetition would be monotonous for students and that behaviour problems would result. However, quite the opposite was true, and a calm contentment began to characterise classroom atmosphere. It appeared that knowing what to do and being sure of success was more important to student wellbeing and engagement than perceived variety of activity.

Indeed, once children had been trained in the processes and were sure of expectations, their ability to concentrate and work productively for extended periods of time improved. Even very young children developed a pride and work-focus in rather endearing ways. It perhaps should not have surprised us to see how this worked. A considerable amount of research and subsequent professional development has

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highlighted the importance of students understanding what it is they are learning, why they are learning it and how their work will be judged. The R2L pedagogy of supported reading and re-writing of texts achieves this in simple as well as subtle ways. In a very concrete form, students know that the purpose of every lesson is to learn how to read and write the text studied and understand its content. They, as well as their teacher, can easily see how well they are doing by comparing their re-written text with the original exemplar. As they are scaffolded at every stage, there is no fear of failure, just opportunities to improve and become more consistent.

We believe this is one reason for our success with EALD students. We have been amazed and delighted by the progress of students without an English-speaking background. It is clear that the highly-visible, explicit pedagogy and literacy/language expectations have promoted student self-determination. In one class where the teacher had been supplying translations of key terms for EALD students, she was thrilled when a new student looked up, thanked her, but said they were not needed any more. This ability to monitor progress against a tangible goal is useful for all students, but particularly so for our EALD learners.

Likewise, this has aided inclusion and academic progress for students with disability. Our ongoing efforts to make inclusion both a viable and vibrant component of school life have changed over time but have been greatly enhanced by consistent R2L practices in classrooms. The period of time students with disability are learning with their age-level peers has increased and, clearly, will continue to increase. The interaction is mutually beneficial on a human level and educationally. We are discovering new and better ways to support students where they require extra help and, more importantly, when to step back or enlist the support of their peers. Academically, the clear focus of the curriculum and the consistency of the pedagogy makes room for the level of repetition and practice that allows for mastery of skills. In this way, we have seen literacy growth well beyond what had previously been achieved for our students with disability. At the present time we are balancing engagement with the class text and peers and using R2L intensive strategies to make focussed and intensive teaching decisions aligned to the students' Individualised Curriculum Plans. Our aim is not to limit expectations about what can be achieved, while providing appropriate time with text to develop literacy skill. The team of people involved in this enterprise need deep and shared knowledge to be effective. R2L and our school processes for integrating curriculum, pedagogy and assessment have effectively created an action-learning approach to education for us as a staff.

During the recent COVID19 learning@home period, we developed lesson booklets that mimicked as closely as possible our classroom practices for students. The plan was to make use of students' independent management of learning skills and maintain, for them, the comfort of familiar routines. It was observed that a number of our students with learning support needs and disability had flourished

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while using the booklets. A number of staff are now investigating how and why that worked; whether it was about the increased individualised attention or if the extra visual scaffolding made concentration and completion easier for students who, for various reasons, have interruptions to their focus at school. If it proves successful, we will add it to our repertoire of ways to implement R2L.

Clearly, this patterned routine to pedagogy has not just been a benefit to students. While adopting R2L pedagogy can be challenging for teachers, once learned, it provides a freedom that can be exploited in other ways. Where teachers do not have a consistent, patterned pedagogy, they spend a considerable amount of their time designing, creating, sourcing, balancing resources and activities for individual lessons which may never be used again. More particularly and significantly, the work produced by students from these lessons may never be analysed in enough depth for their teachers to accurately evaluate the quality of the learning taking place and then design better, more effective lessons in response. Because the activities and resources in a R2L lesson are so well known, the focus of the teacher's time can be on the curriculum objectives of the lesson/text, and how students are responding to the instruction and the content. Each step in the R2L pedagogy prepares the student for the next, and, in turn, the way students complete each activity gives the teacher immediate feedback on the effectiveness of the teaching. As students have daily patterned practice in reading, talking, spelling, handwriting, using grammar and text construction skills, teachers have incremental evidence of growth in student literacy and therefore, better information about where and how to intervene.

But it is what teachers do with this extra time, information and clarity that is important. Some of our teachers have used it to deepen knowledge and skill in curriculum and text analysis. Others have used it to enhance classroom management and inclusion practices. What individual teachers learn is of great benefit to their students, but also contributes to our shared understanding and ethos.

GROWING UNDERSTANDINGS OF ASSESSMENT

And, finally, here are the 'big ideas' which have been generated in the area of assessment:

- A rigorous and consistent platform for formative evaluation is necessary to drive improvement in pedagogy and student results.
- Teachers need to be able to see how a change in their pedagogy improves student performance – the direct link between R2L's 14 criteria and the steps of the pedagogy makes this possible on a daily basis.
- Shifting teacher focus from curriculum inputs to assessment outputs changes teacher understanding of pedagogy fundamentally.

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- Increased awareness of the impact of pedagogy on student achievement, and the unintended impact of some traditional methodologies, inspires in most teachers a greater passion for equity and inclusion.

Staff meetings are used each term to host the assessment and moderation practices of our school and support purposeful connections between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. R2L has been crucial to the refinement of this work. It has provided Kenmore with a more stable platform for a more rigorous approach to formative evaluation than was previously possible.

Each term, teachers are supported to mark student writing using the 14 criteria and the modelled standards in the R2L materials (Rose, 2020, *Booklet 3, Assessing writing*) and then analyse the class data to refine curriculum, pedagogy and assessment design. At first, it is typical for teachers to see the data purely in terms of student strengths and weaknesses. This perception is useful enough, because, uniquely, there is a clear and workable link between the pattern of information drawn against the 14 criteria used and the steps in the R2L pedagogy that can be used to address the issue. It is not an exaggeration to say that very little data at the disposal of teachers has such a direct relationship to a set of pedagogies needed to effect change in the results. Certainly, none can be accessed in such a timely manner that it will allow teachers to track the impact of their efforts from term to term and even lesson to lesson. At our school, it has meant that teachers' assessment knowledge and skill has increased, and this has resulted in more precise and effective differentiation and feedback. Sometimes you only know how far you have come by looking back at distance travelled. Today, our earlier understandings of differentiation seem very unsophisticated. Now we understand that differentiation without a reliable means of measuring the impact of the intervention is just wishful thinking.

Seeing student work improve towards tangible standards is very motivating for teachers. In Australia, while there is an acceptance of a standards-based approach, our national curriculum documents have achievement standards and demonstration portfolios of work that are broadly described. Our national collection of data for Years 3 and 5 literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) uses mainly standardised-testing protocols with the exception of the Writing Test, which is marked by trained panels against standards and marking guides. The text-based exemplars and consistently described literacy standards provided within R2L give us an extra layer of precision which helps to drive measurable improvement.

This is not to say that the national collection of data has not been useful to us. On the contrary, the data drawn from the NAPLAN measures help triangulate against our internal R2L marking. This process has demonstrated that the achievement growth mapped by teachers (essentially self-reporting against R2L scales) has validity on a wider scale, as our NAPLAN results in literacy have also indicated a significant upward trend over the same period. It is, however, the formative and

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generative R2L data that drives the co-ordination and refinement of English curriculum and pedagogy at our school.

Over time, our teachers usually come to see that the quality of student work directly reflects the quality of the curriculum and pedagogy offered. This is a game changer for most teachers. All of us have learned, in deeper ways than first imagined, that all students can learn, and learn well, given the right conditions. Clearly, then, the traditional attitudes and structures of education have worked against many children in the past.

What this realisation often means for teachers is a re-doubling of efforts to manage their practice to factor out impediments to learning. But the realisation does not mean that teacher practice changes overnight or forever more. Understanding grows slowly, often hampered by expectations, habits and values that we do not even know we have. But if you accept that context is everything in student learning, you have to accept the same for teachers, too. For the leadership team, this means continued efforts to lead the thoughtful and useful analysis of data, and support the enhanced implementation of curriculum through R2L.

As part of our professional development program, and in line with systemic expectations, we participate in cross-school moderation of student work in English. At these meetings, teachers from a number of local schools present examples of student work and discuss grading. This reaffirmed our belief that our 'alternative' approach is promoting student achievement. Additionally, the growth in confidence of our teachers at these meetings, articulating understandings of the deep relationships between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, has been confirmation that the school's implementation of R2L and on-site professional development approach is heading in the right direction.

FINAL THOUGHTS: R2L AS AN APPROACH TO DIFFERENTIATION THAT FOSTERS INCLUSION

The learnings at Kenmore over the past six years have all confirmed that a deeper and more detailed alignment of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment is necessary to make differentiation and inclusion effective. Reading to Learn has been our platform for achieving what we have to date and will be our framework for digging deeper in the future.

We have demonstrated to ourselves that it is the speed at which we ask students to move through the curriculum that is the greatest impediment to developing learning and literacy skills. Curriculum needs to be of a size to allow mastery, but not limit the potential of the broadest range of students. R2L's approach of teaching

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through texts helps to do this. It takes knowledge, skill and an amount of discipline to choose texts that not only instantiate the curriculum fully but are small enough to be examined in detail through the steps of the R2L pedagogy. We are getting better at programming vertically across year levels, as the benefits are obvious. Crucially, it means all students in a class are being scaffolded towards the same curriculum, not provided with a plethora of different programs pitched at different levels. Learning support and curriculum extension are, likewise, available to all students through the staging of the pedagogy. We do not need to make assumptions about student 'ability' that ultimately serve to limit their curriculum options. Equally important is the impact of having a visible, overt curriculum in the form of texts. The impact of this on student learning and ability to monitor progress was mentioned earlier, but the value for teachers is equally impressive. The challenge is not in providing a range of curriculum offerings, but in bringing all students to deeper understandings of the one curriculum, exemplified through the text studied. This is a unique approach to differentiation which has benefits for teacher knowledge, equitable student access to curriculum and the development of an inclusive ethos in the classroom.

The R2L pedagogy is the means through which students are supported to deeper understandings and greater levels of proficiency than they would manage independently. The underpinning R2L cycle of Prepare–Task–Elaborate[4] means that differentiation is attended to, meeting the needs of all students, within the flow of activities provided to all. Importantly, the activities are such that all students can participate in them, and find challenge in them, at the same time. One of the joys of visiting a classroom at Kenmore during an English lesson is to see the whole class working in concert and with focus. You have to look very closely to identify who has a disability, who is in the early days of learning English and who is the most adept and creative writer. This creates a sense of calm and purposeful community which is very supportive of inclusion. While these differences are invisible to the casual observer, the teacher is able to see the different needs of students with great clarity and make small but significant adjustments to activities, lessons and units of work to provide students with the time and repetition to build mastery. Teachers must learn and deploy a raft of skills in formative evaluation and pedagogical response to make this work unobtrusive. In doing so, our teachers have been in the process of shifting the focus from inputs to outputs. This is necessary for any genuine student-centred approach which places the emphasis on learning, but R2L does it in a way that increases teachers' knowledge and skill without exhausting them. The repetition and approach to mastery in R2L pedagogy is as useful to the teachers as it is to the students. In teaching this way you learn more about the students and your own craft. This approach to differentiation responds to difference (in teachers and students) without exacerbating it, and this fosters inclusion and excellence in teaching and learning.

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Most approaches to differentiation seem to place an emphasis on varying inputs and not on the means by which teachers diagnose the need for the variation nor the measure of the success of the intervention. We certainly have more resources at our disposal to design disparate curriculum, activities and resources than we have to accurately measure progress over time. In Queensland, the major process for determining the quality of student work has been social moderation: peer discussion matching student work to criteria. This process has the advantage of being flexible enough to respond to social expectation and growth in teacher knowledge, but it requires significant investment in time and expertise to build shared expectations within schools, and across schools. Nationally, the NAPLAN standardised testing assesses individuals more against cohort performance than clearly defined standards in literacy. It is our contention that detailed performance standards-based assessment continua should be more widely used in Australia, as we have seen what it has achieved for us through the R2L program. For us, the knowledge contained in the R2L progressions helps us to build a more detailed picture of progress that co-ordinates teacher work to the benefit of students. We have been working to give 'flesh' to these statements through examples of student work and the choice of texts for study.

Ultimately, these texts provide students with an aspirational standard to work towards and teachers with a stable measure against which to measure student progress. The measurement of student work against a clearly defined standard, even while describing marked differences in student performance, is not anti-inclusion. It delivers the information to make differentiation effective. It celebrates the achievement of all students, but particularly the acceleration in learning for groups of children often perceived at an educational disadvantage. It provides the focus and impetus for genuine collaboration between teachers and students. The goal becomes progress and excellence for all students, and it is a goal that can be pursued collaboratively and over time.

Differentiation and inclusion are not contradictory aims, but they have potential to work against each other in their implementation and, subsequently, place great pressure on schools and teachers. At Kenmore State School, Reading to Learn has provided us with the knowledge and skills to make both viable, valued and embedded in the way we work. As such, there isn't an end point in our learning or implementation, just the promise of good things to come.

NOTES

1 Permission to publish granted by the Queensland Department of Education, Australia, October 2021, https://education.qld.gov.au/

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2 The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) was created by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to provide an indication of the socio-educational backgrounds of students. It is used to enable fair comparisons between schools with similar student populations on the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test achievement in schools across Australia.
3 *Instructional Rounds* (City et al., 2009) is a professional learning process with a set of protocols for teachers to observe classrooms with the aim of improving a school wide problem of practice.
4 See Rose, Chapter 1, this volume for an explanation of the R2L interaction cycle.

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