



# New Chapter

## A Newsletter from the DOBCEL Structured Literacy Project

*I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them. (Ezekiel 11:19)*

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To access the DSLP Website

CLICK HERE



The past few weeks have been incredibly exciting for the DOBCEL Structured Literacy Team. We have had the opportunity to connect with our own Catholic Education Team Leaders and our DOBCEL Learning & Teaching Consultative Committee, as well as our colleagues in the Tasmania, Canberra-Goulburn and Sandhurst dioceses. The work being undertaken by the DSLP schools is being widely recognised and affirmed, which is a credit to the many hard-working educators who are putting theory into practice under increasingly challenging conditions.

It is so heartening and inspiring to see the huge groundswell of change happening in schools, sectors and systems around the country in response to the Grattan Report, 'The Reading Guarantee'. More than ever before, educators are accessing high-quality, independent research and evidence. Perhaps more importantly, they also have the wisdom to interpret research with discernment and informed judgement. I'm reminded of this quote by Dr Reid Lyon:

**"When you're working on something that's so critical to a life - a child's life - belief systems don't cut it. Evidence cuts it."**

Another cause for celebration, is that we have recently had an incredible increase in support from our partners at LaTrobe University, which we'll be announcing in more detail once things are formalised. We are currently working to ensure that this support is of timely and practical benefit to our schools, so please watch this space.

As we're already half way through Term Two, planning for 2025 (and beyond) has already begun. We look forward to sharing an updated and expanded Primary Literacy strategy with you as early as possible in Term Three and will, as always, be ready to support schools with their strategic planning around ongoing Literacy improvement.

Holly had a wonderful time at the Science of Learning summit in Hobart recently. I'm sure you'll enjoy reading her reflections on this learning (shared below). Next week, Breeana, Rebecca and I will be attending Emily Hanford, Pamela Snow, Tanya Serry and Lorraine Hammond's presentation *The Why, the What and the How of Evidence-Based Reading Instruction* in Sydney. No doubt this will be a extraordinary learning event, so we will be sure to report back. If you haven't yet listened to Emily Hanford's *Sold a Story* podcast, please consider doing so. The episodes are short, compelling and acutely relevant to our context.

As always, please keep a close eye on the calendar (available through the website) and feel free to contact me or any member of the DSLP team for support, or to share any suggestions, questions or challenges you may have. I can be reached at [erutherford@ceob.edu.au](mailto:erutherford@ceob.edu.au) or 0419 479 264.

Best wishes,

*Emma*

On behalf of the DSLP Team: Joe, Breeana, Holly, Rebecca, Julie, Shay, Samantha, Jacqui, Sarah & Helen



# Teaching Matters: The Science of Learning Summit 2024

Holly Southwell: Online Learning Modules & Science of Learning - [hsouthwell@dobcel.catholic.edu.au](mailto:hsouthwell@dobcel.catholic.edu.au)

On the 24th March, I attended the Teaching Matters – Science of Learning National Summit in Hobart. Over two days, I listened to leading experts from around the world passionately sharing their valuable knowledge and expertise. Here are my highlights from the Summit:

Pam Snow, Professor of Cognitive Psychology at La Trobe University, applied a public health lens to literacy success and the imperative for all schools to be teaching reading in ways that optimise the life chances of all students, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, disability or English-learner status. Pam explained the correlation between poor reading ability and life span issues such as mental health difficulties, un/under-employment, unstable housing, exposure to violence, contact with the criminal justice system and reduced life-expectancy.

Ross Fox, Director of Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, outlined the 2 Bold Goals of their Catalyst Project.

1. Every student is a competent reader
2. High Impact Teaching Practice is visible in every classroom.

He also shared the 8 Big Ideas of Catalyst:

- School is where we learn biologically secondary information.
- Learning is a change in long-term memory.
- Teaching is a profession that should be informed by the evidence.
- Knowledge matters – it's what we think with.
- The most effective way to teach knowledge is to teach explicitly.
- High quality whole class instruction will help all students learn.
- Reading is essential for students to acquire knowledge.
- Curriculum should be ambitious, coherent, sequential and cumulative.

Ross said two things that really resonated with me. The first was that we need to treat every student's time with 'desperate efficiency'. The second was that the biggest barrier to teacher improvement is when educators say 'We're already doing that' and dismiss the opportunity for new learning, further improvement or refined practice.

Dr Gerard Gaskin, Executive Director of Catholic Education Tasmania, presented the essential elements of explicit and direct instruction, or as he called them, 'Fair Dinkum Teaching'.

1. Clearing headspace for learning
2. Frequent checkbacks on learning
3. Practising new stuff in new ways
4. Turning new stuff into memories

Both Ross Fox and Gerard Gaskin presented the audience with very impressive data from their schools, showing a huge improvement since their transition to evidence-based practice.

Dr Jenny Donovan, CEO of the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO), began her presentation by explaining that equity gaps in schools are getting worse and that teachers need to understand the science of learning. To combat the mixed messages and conflicting professional learning offered to schools, AERO is trying to be consistent with the information provided to teachers. They have amazing resources available on their website related to explicit instruction, engagement, behaviour and wellbeing. Jenny stated that when we understand the science of learning and we are doing the right thing, we have a duty to challenge those who are not yet doing the same.

[Access the AERO site here.](#)

Dr Nathaniel Swain, Teacher, Instructional Coach, Researcher and Writer, gave us a sneak peek at his upcoming book 'Harnessing the Science of Learning: Success stories to kickstart your school improvement'. He outlined a number of 'mindshifts' he believes teachers need to make to improve their teaching.

1. Put student learning at the heart of teaching
2. Make effective and engaging teaching the norm
3. Plan curriculum that is coherent, knowledge-rich and includes regular review
4. Teach at the whole-class level responsively
5. Make it easy for your students to participate
6. Invest in your professional knowledge

I could have listened to Jan Hasbrouck, leading researcher, educational consultant and author, speak all day. She was such an engaging presenter and has a wealth of knowledge. She spoke about how reading fluency is essential for both comprehension and motivation. She clearly explained that accuracy and rate contribute to comprehension, whereas expression is an outcome of comprehension. In other words, you need to know what you're reading about to be able to use suitable expression.

I asked Jan what her thoughts were on Paired Fluency and she stated that it is a highly effective strategy. I asked if the texts we give students in the Paired Fluency session should be easy to decode or challenging, as we have read some conflicting information on this recently. Jan said that when students are paired with peers, the texts should be easy as they are just practising their fluency. When they are working on their fluency with teacher support and with the whole class, the text can be challenging as scaffolding is provided and errors can be corrected on the spot.

It was an exciting and enlightening experience attending the summit and if you have the opportunity to attend in 2025, I highly recommend it!



# DIBELS Workshops & Resourcing

The DOBCEL Structured Literacy Project has now developed a suite of online DIBELS recordings to support DIBELS Professional Learning and administration in DOBCEL Schools.

The suite contains:

Workshop 1 (Part 1): The What, The Why and The How of DIBELS (40 mins)

- The Principal Uses of DIBELS
- Administration Fidelity & Approved Accommodations
- Administration Timelines
- Benchmark Goals & Rapidly Progressing Achievement Scales
- DIBELS & the Five Pillars of Reading
- Scoring Conventions

Workshop 1 (Part 2): The Subtests (Between 10 and 25 mins per subtest, all recorded individually for flexible use)

- Administration Procedures
- Administration Practises with Mock Student Scripts
- Moderated Scoring Opportunities

Workshop 2: The DOBCEL DIBELS Data Tool (35 mins)

- Baselining Data Terms
- Data Entry
- Composite Scores, Percentiles & Normative Descriptors
- Effect Sizes (Cohort and Student)
- DIBELS Dashboard

Workshop 3: We've got the Data. Now What? Responding with Instruction and Intervention.

- RTI in a Structured Literacy Methodology
- Data Informed Decision Making
- Priority Sub Skills for intervention
- Instruction and Intervention planning
- Progress Monitoring
- Supported Decision Making: Intervention Prescriptions

Level 1 Structured Literacy schools will access these resources as part of their Online Module schedule in Term Three (further information below). All other schools are able to access these recordings at any time to support staff learning.

Access to these workshops can be found by navigating through the following path:

[www.dobcel.com](http://www.dobcel.com) – Resources – DIBELS – DOBCEL DIBELS Workshops – Online Modules:

Asynchronous Delivery

DIBELS Face to Face Workshop Availability: The availability of these digital resources at all times means that the original scheduled workshops for 2024 have been altered. You can find the workshop dates on [this document](#), which is also available via the site listed above. Registration links will be available in the coming weeks.

If you have further questions about these resources, please contact Breeana Wade at [bwade@dobcel.catholic.edu.au](mailto:bwade@dobcel.catholic.edu.au)

# An Update to the Online Modules for Term 3 & 4 – Level 1A Only

Thank you for your attendance and enthusiasm at our recent DIBELS Level 1A workshops. It was a pleasure to work so closely with you all and to spend some time in such beautiful (cool) parts of the diocese!

The SL team has been reflecting on a number of conversations we had with you during the workshops. The following were raised with us as identified challenges or points of consideration for you in your school contexts:

- The EBA's implications: How do you run these workshops in your own schools when your meeting times are so tight?
- How do you conduct the workshops before October (LaTrobe's first data collection period) when you have a full schedule of online modules for the remainder of the year?
- How do you correct staff misconceptions or problems of practice in DIBELS administration that have been identified if you can't find time in your schedule to run the workshops? How can you trust the data if you know there are varying degrees of fidelity to the administration protocols?
- How do you communicate the changes that have been made to the suite by the University of Oregon to your staff without the time to do so?

We sympathised wholeheartedly with your challenges and shared your questions about fidelity when collecting such a wide sample of data across many school sites, when we knew it would be a challenge to have all staff complete the updated workshops that would ensure that fidelity.

We have, then, made a decision regarding online module delivery that we hope will adequately support you to conduct the workshops in your schools before the requirement to collect your first DIBELS data set for LaTrobe in October.

Term Three and Four Structured Literacy Staff Meetings will now look as follows:

TERM THREE		
Meeting	WAS	IS NOW
1	Semantics	Semantics
2	Daily Review	DIBELS Workshops: Workshop 1: The What, The Why & The How of DIBELS, <b>PLUS</b> Workshop 1 (Part 2): The Subtests (LNF & PSF)
3	Paired Fluency	DIBELS Workshops: Workshop 1 (Part 2): The Subtests - NWF, WRF, ORF, Maze
4	Whole Staff Follow Up VC (September 18th)	DIBELS Workshop 2: Data Tool
TERM FOUR		
Meeting	WAS	IS NOW
1	Comprehension	Daily Review
2	Cognitive Load Theory	Paired Fluency
3	Whole Staff Follow Up: Comprehension & Cognitive Load (December 4th)	Whole Staff Follow Up: Semantics, Daily Review & Paired Fluency (December 4th)

You will note that we have removed the comprehension and Cognitive Load Theory modules from Term Four, but we will ensure that these are placed within the content of the next closure day.

Please note, all Level 1A schools must undertake these workshops, regardless of where they are on their DIBELS journey. This decision means that all Level 1A staff will be exposed to the newest, most up to date DIBELS workshops that we have, without you trying to manufacture the time to deliver them. There will be no follow up quiz or staff meeting for these workshops, as they will take the full allocation of the meeting. A reminder that all DIBELS workshops can now be found by following this pathway:

1. [www.dobcel.com](http://www.dobcel.com)

2. Resources

3. DIBELS

4. DOBCEL DIBELS Workshops

5. Online Modules – asynchronous delivery

You will need to ensure that you print the practise pages for all participants so that they are able to practise the scoring along with the recording.

We hope this provides some time relief to you all. Please do not hesitate to contact the team if you have any questions.

# Connecting Literacy & Student Wellbeing

This term we have commenced an important process of collaboration with our colleagues in Student Wellbeing. We are partnering to investigate, articulate and address the connections and causations between Literacy attainment and Wellbeing. We began this work by considering Steve Dykstra's quote that you see to the right, and we reflected on these prompts:

*Almost all primary educators are people who learnt to read and write easily and found the experience enjoyable, so it is extremely difficult for most of us to imagine and relate to the experience of not being able to read and write as well as our peers.*

*Take a moment to imagine having to go to a job every day that you can not do. And this job doesn't stay the same. It actually gets harder every day!*

*Leaving the job for another isn't an option. You have to keep failing at it, publicly, in front of all your friends for at least ten years.*

*What impact would this have on your wellbeing? Your motivation? Your health? Your social interactions? Your attitude? Your self esteem?*

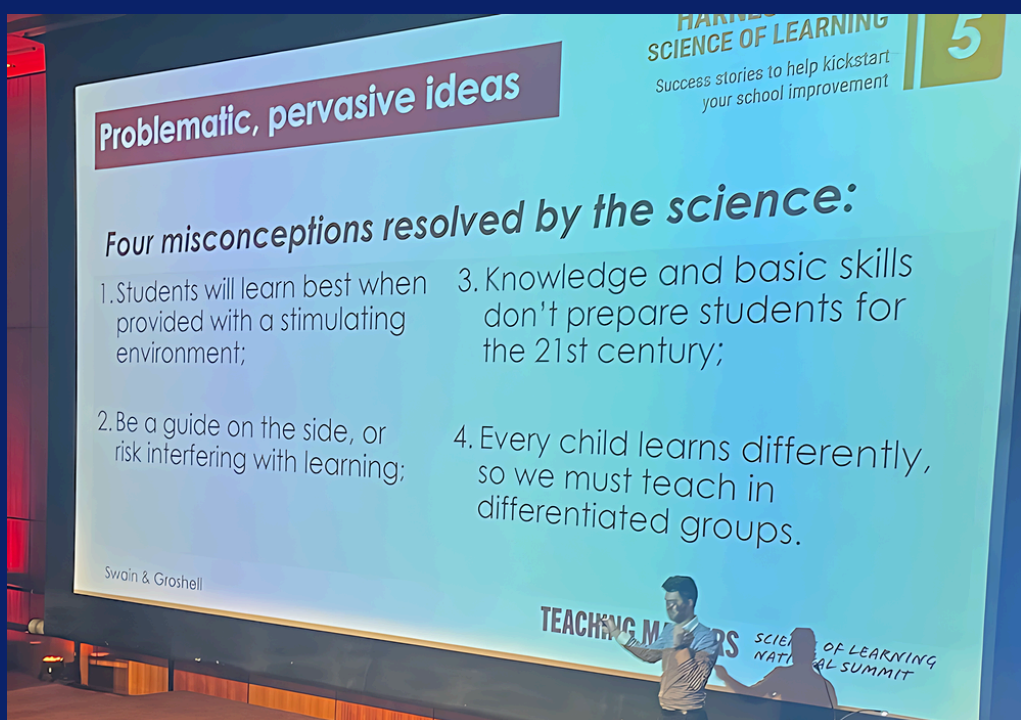
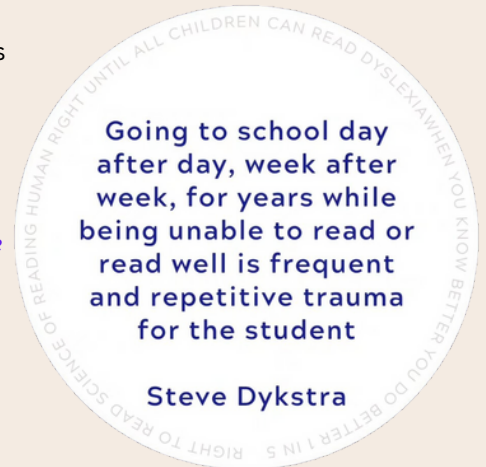
We then looked at Prof. Pamela Snow's findings about the life-long impact of low literacy attainment, including such effects as:

- Mental health difficulties
- Substance misuse
- Un/under employment
- Unstable housing
- Intergenerational transmission of low attainment
- Exposure to violence
- Contact with criminal justice system
- Reduced life expectancy

We began to discuss the interesting conundrum: Does the ability to read and write contribute to increased wellbeing, or does wellbeing contribute to the ability to read and write? What implications does this have for educators? How might we support schools to recognise the connections between literacy and wellbeing? Why is it important to do so?

This inspiring TED Talk - [Literacy is the Answer](#) - by John Trischitti helped shape our responses (and cheered us up!). The video goes for about ten minutes and may be a good one to share at a staff meeting or in your online newsletters.

We will keep you updated on this collaboration and look forward to learning more alongside our friends in the Learning Diversity team. If you have any thoughts, questions, insights or resources to contribute to this discussion, we would love to hear from you.



Dr Nathaniel Swain  
at the Science of Learning Summit  
debunking some pervasive  
misconceptions about learning.

