ACT Government
Education and Training

Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties

FEBRUARY 2015

END OF PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

Contents

Implementation Progress Report and Next Steps Update: Executive Summary

Background

The Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties was an advisory body established in 2012, to provide the Minister for Education and Training with recommendations for classroom level intervention and support of children and young people in ACT government schools with learning difficulties. The Final Report from the Taskforce was presented to the Minister for Education and Training in July 2013. The report identified 14 strategies under the three key recommendations: A Consistent Systemic Approach, Building Staff Capacity and Building Partnerships with Families. The recommendations outline strategies for supporting students with learning difficulties who may be present in any P-12 classroom, and builds on the already high standard of professional practice in ACT public schools.

A four member project team implemented the recommendations over the 2014 school year.

Key achievements

A summary of the Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties project outputs achieved over 2014 include:

- **Professional Learning for schools**: The delivery of 26 workshop sessions and 13 phases of professional learning for 1118 teachers, learning support assistants and principals across 75 ACT public schools.

- **Workshops for parents/carers:** The delivery of 4 workshop phases with 7 sessions for 143 parents/carers and families.

- The total participation in staff professional learning and parent/carer workshops was 1261.

- **Response to Intervention (RTI) Pilot Study:** The RTI pilot study at Taylor and Theodore primary schools and final report with findings and analysis of data is complete. In addition, Namadgi School continued to embed the RTI framework over 2013/14.

- See Attachment 1 page 16 Final Report: Response to Intervention (RTI) Pilot Study.

- School capacity has been built through school representative teachers with specialist training in learning difficulties. They continue to build capacity by providing ongoing support in their schools. These teachers are supported by school psychologists and field literacy and numeracy teams. The ACT Education and Training (ACTETD) Digital Backpack Learning Difficulties LIFE page supports representative teachers in the development of school professional learning communities and delivery of professional learning in schools to support students with learning difficulties.

- **Online resources:** A comprehensive online resource to support staff has been developed and includes video presentations, templates, handouts and training videos to compliment the professional learning package that has been delivered. This is located on the ACTETD Digital Backpack Learning Difficulties LIFE page.

- **Final Survey Data analysis:** A summary of findings and analysis from the final teacher online survey used to support 2015 transition planning.

- See Attachment 2 page 53 The Learning Difficulties Final Report- Online Survey Data.

- **Gifted and Talented Students Policy:** Through the Directorate contract with Gateways Education, workshops and information sessions have been delivered to staff to support the 'Dual Exceptionality' component of the Gifted and Talented Students Policy.

- The 2015/16 Learning Difficulties Transition Plan has been developed to ensure sustainability of the 2014 project achievements.

- See Attachment 3 page 70 The Learning Difficulties Transition 2015/16 Plan.

Next Steps

- The Learning Difficulties website page on the Directorate website will be launched.

- The Learning Difficulties Teacher Online Resource will be available on the Digital Backpack Learning Difficulties LIFE page.

- The 2015/16 Learning Difficulties Transition Plan will be implemented.

- For 2015, a temporary School Leader C position will be created using funds from the MSSD National Partnership Agreement to finalise the recommendations of the Taskforce report.

2015 Key Priorities

See **Attachment 3 page 70** The Learning Difficulties Transition 2015/16 Plan.

In addition to the next steps listed above, the 2015 focus for learning difficulties is derived from data collected from online surveys and feedback from stakeholders; teachers, school leadership teams, parents/carers, learning support assistants, external presenters, paraprofessionals, community members and associations.

This will include:

- **Professional Learning Communities** (PLC's)- network sessions for representative teachers and executive staff with a focus on the wider range of learning difficulties, school leadership and change.

- **Parent/Carer Workshops**- focus on parent/carer workshops delivered through a school network model.

- **Resources**- maintain the Learning Difficulties LIFE page, Learning Difficulties Teacher Online resource and Directorate Learning Difficulties website page.

- **Sustainability**- build school staff capacity through:

    o Development of professional learning communities (PLC's)

    o Response to Intervention (RTI) support

    o Increased capacity of Network Student Engagement Teams (NSET) to support staff

    o Continued links with agencies, external stakeholders and other therapists, and

    o Learning Difficulties policy development.

Recommendations-2014 progress update and 2015/16 transition plan

Note: A status ranking of 'Complete' indicates the key deliverable has been met as projected in the Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties Project Charter developed December 2013.

Recommendation 1: A consistent systemic approach to maximise specific learning outcomes of students with Learning Difficulties

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 plan
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 1. Development of protocols that include identifying, supporting and making adjustments for students with learning difficulties.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will develop processes to articulate the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for identifying, supporting and making reasonable adjustments for students with learning difficulties.	**Status: Ongoing** The Learning Difficulties Teacher Online Resource is in the production phase and has been developed as a resource for teachers in identifying, supporting and making adjustments for students with learning difficulties. The resource includes a series of fact sheets and will be available to staff on the Directorate Digital Backpack Online Learning Difficulties LIFE page and the Directorates intranet INDEX site.	The anticipated availability for staff on the LIFE page and Directorates intranet INDEX site is scheduled for mid term 2 2015. The 2015 Learning Difficulties School Leader C Project Officer will work with the SLB Learning Difficulties Project Leader and ETD media to maintain and update the resource.

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 plan
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 2. Addition of endorsed evidenced based approaches to the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2009-2013 to support the needs of students with learning difficulties.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will investigate evidence-based approaches to supporting the needs of students with learning difficulties and develop a mechanism for endorsing such approaches.	**Status: Complete** • The ACT Education and Training Directorate (ACTETD) Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2009 – 2013 has been superseded by the ACTETD Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017. The priorities, strategies and targets within the previous Strategy have been deliberatively elevated to ensure literacy and numeracy is highlighted as core business and is reflected in the priorities, strategies and indicators in the Strategic Plan for all Directorate staff.	The Education Capital: Leading the Nation 2015 Action plan will continue to support quality learning with a strategic priority focusing on reducing the proportion of students who are at or below the minimum standard in reading and numeracy.
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 3. Focus on learning difficulties and diversity in learning to be included as a key component in the Directorate's leadership program from 2014.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will include a focus on learning difficulties and diversity in future leadership programs from 2014.	**Status: Complete** • Over 2014 the Directorate has communicated the importance of the Taskforce recommendations to school leaders through identifying it as a priority in the Education Capital: Leading the Nation 2014-2017 Strategic Plan (High Expectations, High Performance domain). It continues to be a priority in the building of staff capacity in the Education Capital: Leading the Nation 2015 Action plan.	The Learning Difficulties Transition Plan includes a range of opportunities for continued professional learning conversations through Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) for principals and leadership teams across all networks.

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 plan
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 4. Inclusion of how to meet the needs of twice exceptional students in the Directorate's Gifted and Talented Policy.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate has commenced the review of the Gifted and Talented Policy and will include provision for twice exceptional students.	**Status: Complete** ● The Directorate's Gifted and Talented Student policy was launched in February 2014. The policy and supporting documentation included advice and information about students who are 'twice exceptional' or have 'dual exceptionality'. ● A fact sheet for parents on dual exceptionality formed part of the series of parental guides that support the policy and is available on the Directorate website. ● On 25 August 2014 Gateways Education, highly respected leaders in gifted and talented education, presented the first of a series of 12 professional learning workshops to support the implementation of the new Gifted and Talented Students Policy in ACT public schools. 77 ACT public school Executives and Gifted and Talented Liaison Officers (GATLOs) attended this first workshop, designed specifically to meet their needs. It covered the introduction and implementation of the Policy in schools, the evaluation of current school based programs, and best practice and research for working with gifted learners. Twice exceptional students will be discussed in upcoming workshops over the next three years	Gateways Education will continue to deliver professional learning workshops to support schools over 2015 -2017.

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 plan
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 5. That the Directorate investigates models similar to Response to Intervention (RTI) Models and what support would be needed to implement them within ACT government schools.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate is currently investigating models similar to and including the Response to Intervention Model and will assess the appropriateness of such models in the ACT context including the identification of the support required for implementation.	**Status: Complete** ● The 10 week RTI pilot study at Taylor and Theodore Primary Schools is complete. ● See **Attachment 1 page 16** Final Report: Response to Intervention (RTI) Pilot Study. ● Based on the success of the pilot study Taylor and Theodore Primary schools can continue to embed the RTI framework. ● Over 2015, Namadgi School will also continue to embed the Response to Intervention framework across the school.	The Transition Plan provides advice for schools in the implementation of the RTI model with support from the 2015 School Leader C Learning Difficulties Project Officer. Extensive resources to support schools in implementing RTI are available and will continue to be updated on the Directorate Digital Backpack Online Learning Difficulties LIFE page. In 2015, the Therapy Assistants Program will operate across 4 Tuggeranong primary schools using the RTI framework as part of the service delivery model. For more details see Strategy 13 page 14.

Recommendation 2: Building staff capacity to meet the needs of students with Learning Difficulties

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 Transition

Taskforce Recommendations
 	
Strategy 6. A comprehensive professional learning pathway with increasing levels of specialist knowledge to support a consistent systematic approach to learning difficulties.
 	
Directorate's Response
 	
The Directorate will identify professional learning strategies and pathways to strengthen a consistent and systematic approach to supporting students with learning difficulties.
	Status: Complete
	
	● Professional Learning
	
	A comprehensive professional learning package for teachers in understanding learning difficulties has been successfully delivered over 2014. This includes:
	
	    ○ Professional Learning for schools: The delivery of 26 workshop sessions and 13 phases of professional learning for 1118 teachers*, learning support assistants and principals across 75 ACT public schools.
	
	    ○ *The 1118 teachers who attended consist of a combination of those who either attended all the workshops or attended selected workshops*.
	
	● Workshops for parents/carers: The delivery of 4 workshop phases with 7 sessions for 143 parents/carers and families.
	
	● The total participation in staff professional learning and parent/carer workshops was 1261.
	
	● School capacity has been built through school representative teachers with specialist training in learning difficulties. They continue to build capacity by providing ongoing support in their schools. These teachers are supported by school psychologists and field literacy and numeracy teams. The ACT Education and Training (ACTETD) Digital Backpack Learning Difficulties LIFE page supports representative teachers in the development of school professional learning communities and delivery of professional learning in schools to support students with
		Professional learning through PLC's will continue to embed and build capacity of current and new representative teachers as recommended in the Taskforce targets. See *Learning Difficulties Transition Plan 2015/16* page 70.
		
		The key focus will be on the development of PLC network sessions for representative teachers and school executive staff, focussing on the wider range of learning difficulties, school leadership and change.
		
		The 2015 Learning Difficulties School Leader C Project Officer will work with the SLB Learning Difficulties Project Leader and ETD media to maintain and update the resource.
		
		Representative teachers continue to use the LIFE page Learning Difficulties online resources to build capacity in schools and share in PLC's.

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 Transition
	learning difficulties. ● Digital Backpack page Learning Difficulties online resource for staff A professional learning community resource on Learning Difficulties is located on the Directorate Digital Backpack Online LIFE page and continues to provide staff across the Directorate a place to share teaching and learning interventions and evidence-based resources for students with learning difficulties. The page reflects the professional learning package that has been delivered and includes digitally captured teaching practices and discussions, resources, presentation videos and PowerPoint's, handouts, links and supports. It also includes a series of training videos on RTI and in teacher assessment tools, developed by the Directorate. This suite of innovative resources has enabled access to high quality resources which has been used for capacity building in schools.	
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 7. Targets for completion of training to ensure that a pathway of expertise is established to embed knowledge in all sectors and across leadership.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will develop targets for participation in training in the area of learning difficulties across the system with initial targets to be identified for primary, high school and college	**Status: Complete** ● The professional learning package has set targets for completion where data will be collected to monitor attendance, participation and the quality and value of the professional learning workshops. See **Attachment 2 page 53** The Learning Difficulties Final Report- Online Survey Data. **Total participants for 2014 professional learning were 1118* teachers, learning support assistants and principals across 75 ACT public schools.** *The 1118 teachers who attended consist of a combination of those who	The 2015 School Leader C Learning Difficulties Project Officer to maintain and update the database of Learning Difficulties representative teachers/schools across the system. Delivery of an induction workshop for new representative teachers and central office NSET teams. Delivery of Network PLC workshop sessions with Principals as hosts.

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 Transition
settings.	either attended all the workshops or attended selected workshops. **Agreed Targets** • By end 2016 all schools will have at least one teacher trained in building the capacity of school staff to support students with a learning difficulty. • By end 2018 these teachers will have delivered annual training on learning difficulties to classroom teachers in schools. • By end 2018 all school leaders will have participated in annual professional learning on learning difficulties.	Delivery of PLC Network sessions in cohorts (K-2, 3-6, High School, College), tailored to suit the needs of each setting. Professional learning content identified from 2014 survey feedback: i.e. dyscalculia, dysgraphia, working memory etc. Facilitate teleconferences with experts in the field. Seek TQI accreditation for 2015 Network PLC sessions for teacher professional learning. Development of a Learning Difficulties Policy to ensure agreed targets are met. Use 2015 survey feedback to inform future planning in leading and improving teaching practice.

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 Transition
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 8. Each School Network to be supported by officers with specialist skills in learning difficulties.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will further strengthen the specialist expertise to support students including those with learning difficulties and will establish processes for access to network support.	**Status: Complete** • Staff capacity has been built across schools by teachers and staff that have attended the professional learning phases. These trained teachers have had the opportunity to provide professional learning in their schools through accessing the resource kit 'Understanding Learning Difficulties: A Practical Guide' and the Directorate Online LIFE page in Learning Difficulties. This has been a valuable resource in building staff capacity and in building a community of learners. This has been evident through data collected from the *Learning Difficulties Final Report- Online Survey Data* (Attachment 2 page 53). • School psychologists, literacy and numeracy officers, disability education staff and student wellbeing staff continue to provide additional support to school staff and across networks through the service delivery model of the Network Student Engagement Teams (NSET).	Learning Difficulties Induction workshop to be delivered early 2015 to new representative teachers and staff in central office NSET teams. PLC Network sessions delivered in cohorts (K-2, 3-6, High School, College) and tailored to suit the needs of each setting. Professional learning content identified from 2014 survey data and feedback: i.e. dyscalculia, dysgraphia, working memory etc. Facilitate teleconferences with learning difficulties experts in the field.
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 9. Systemic professional learning for Learning Support Assistants (LSA's) working in the area of learning difficulties.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will identify and provide appropriate professional learning opportunities for learning support assistants in the area of learning difficulties.	**Status: Complete** • 85 LSA's have attended professional learning workshops from 34 schools. • Learning Support Assistants (LSA's) have access to handouts and presentation resources from the Directorate Learning Difficulties Online LIFE page professional learning resources.	The 2015 Learning Difficulties School Leader C Project Officer will work with the SLB Learning Difficulties Project Leader and ETD media to maintain and update the resource to support LSA's working in the area of learning difficulties.

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 Transition
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 10. Clarification of the role of Learning Support Assistants working in the area of learning difficulties.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will clarify the roles and responsibilities of school staff in providing support for students with learning difficulties.	**Status: Ongoing** • The Learning Difficulties project team has provided advice to the Directorates Human Resources project team with input to the current review of mainstream class learning support assistant duty statements. • This review forms part of the re-evaluation of learning support assistant duty statements under the ACT Public Service Administrative and Related Classifications Enterprise Agreement 2013-2017, Clause T21. • The review is expected to be completed around mid 2015.	The Directorate will inform schools of the review outcome once completed. Representative teachers will be informed of any relevant changes to LSA duty statements.
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 11. Investigate and determine a system wide approach to assessment of students with learning difficulties.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will investigate leading practice options for assessment of students with learning difficulties to develop a system wide approach.	**Status: Complete** • The Learning Difficulties Online LIFE page RTI suite of assessments package provides school staff access to a consistent, system wide set of assessments to help identify students with possible learning difficulties. • The Directorate School Psychologists Learning Difficulties Good Practice Guide has been updated and is also available on the LIFE page.	The 2015 Learning Difficulties School Leader C Project Officer will work with the SLB Learning Difficulties Project Leader and ETD media to maintain and update the resource with updated evidence based assessment tools to support students with learning difficulties.

Recommendation 3: Partnerships with families

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 plan
Taskforce Recommendation **Strategy 12. The Directorate to develop multiple communication mechanisms to support families of students with learning difficulties.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will develop a range of communication mechanisms that support families of students and schools meeting the needs of students with learning difficulties.	**Status: Ongoing** **Directorate Learning Difficulties Website Page** • Community access to the Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties Final Report, update reports and background information is currently available on the Directorate website. [Directorate Learning Difficulties Website Page](#) The Directorate Learning Difficulties website page for parents/carers is currently in the production phase with the anticipated launch date mid Term 1 2015.	The Directorate Learning Difficulties website page is to be launched by mid term 1 2015. It is anticipated this will be announced by the Minister for Education and Training and communicated to schools, external agencies such as the ACT P & C Association and SPELD ACT.
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 13. The Directorate to investigate enhancement of partnerships with therapists and other professionals working with teachers, parents, carers and directly with students.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will build on and enhance the current partnerships that support students with learning difficulties particularly those across ACT Health and the Community Services Directorates.	**Status: Ongoing** • The implementation of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is leading to changes in the provision of therapy supports for children and young people with developmental delays and disabilities resident in the ACT. Individualised therapeutic supports for children and young people eligible to access the NDIS, will move to the non-government sector by December 2016. Assessment and referral services and supports for children under 6 not eligible for the NDIS will be provided by the new Child Development Service. Therapist support for teachers to assist them to make adjustments to enable students with a disability to access and participate in their education program will remain the responsibility of the ACT Government. Partnerships are beginning to develop such as the Therapy Assistants Program.	NDIS implementation continues in 2015/16. The SLC Project Manager will continue to develop partnership opportunities. For example: The *Therapy Assistants Program*, managed by Therapy ACT and funded by the Community Services Directorate, consists of a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, and allied health assistants. Therapists work with teachers to identify students with developmental concerns and develop

Strategy	2014 Status	2015/16 plan
		interventions to be undertaken in the school setting. The program links to the Response to Intervention framework to identify student need and to assess and develop appropriate interventions at all 3 RTI tiers.
Taskforce Recommendations **Strategy 14. Promote the provision for adjustment to assessment tools (Board of Senior Secondary Studies, Australian Scaling test, NAPLAN) to parents, carers, students and staff.** **Directorate's Response** The Directorate will promote the availability and nature of provision for adjustment to assessment tools for students with learning difficulties to parents, carers, students and staff.	**Status: Complete** The Learning Difficulties Teacher Online Resource (see Strategy 1) includes information for staff regarding processes for adjustments for students with learning difficulties in NAPLAN and the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) assessments.	The School Leader C Learning Difficulties Project Officer will manage and maintain the Learning Difficulties Digital Backpack Online LIFE page resource which includes processes for assessment adjustments for students with learning difficulties.

Attachment 1 - Final Report: Response to Intervention (RTI) Pilot Study 2014

End of project report

December 2014

Project: ACT Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties

Response to Intervention (RTI) Pilot Studies 2014

Project Officer: Nadia M Butler, PhD

Team Members: David Bromhead, Iain Barr, Julie Ireland, Stella Scheele

Project Sponsor: Beth Mitchell, Director

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander, Education and Student Engagement

Executive Summary

A recommendation from the Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties Final Report (June 2013), was to investigate models to support students with learning difficulties using a framework such as Response to Intervention (RTI).

In Term 2, 2014 Theodore Primary School and Taylor Primary School, joined the Response to Intervention (RTI) Pilot Schools project. The focus of the project was to investigate the application of the RTI framework to improve reading rates for early primary school years.

The RTI framework consists of universal screening three times a year, progress monitoring fortnightly or monthly, data-based decision making and multiple levels of instruction. Within this framework, schools may decide evidence-based assessments and interventions to use.

The pre-assessment data compared to the post-assessment data showed overall reading improvements for all cohorts involved in both schools. One school supplemented their Tier 1 instruction with explicit reading instruction in the "Big 5" (phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, reading vocabulary, and reading comprehension) to support all students and showed greater gains on pre versus post assessment reading data than the other school. The schools also noted other learnings from the project. As a result of the many benefits witnessed from the RTI pilot, both schools are committed to continuing use of the RTI framework over the next four years to support the students in their schools.

Future recommendations include supporting interested school staff with the following areas through a continued SLC Learning Difficulties Project Officer position:

- RTI and numeracy
- RTI and secondary schools
- Review of research-based assessments and interventions
- Support professional learning communities who are implementing RTI in their schools
- Lead workshops for School Psychologists and Learning Difficulty Representative Teachers in RTI.

Background

The Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties was an advisory body established in 2012, to provide the Minister for Education and Training with recommendations for classroom level intervention and support of children and young people in ACT public schools with learning difficulties. Part of the recommendations from the Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties Final Report tabled in June 2013, was to investigate models to support students with learning difficulties using a framework such as Response to Intervention (RTI).

Refer to final report: [Learning Difficulties Final Report](http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/483819/taskforce-learning-difficultiesFAweb.pdf)

http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/483819/taskforce-learning-difficultiesFAweb.pdf

Aim

This pilot study aimed to support schools implement the RTI framework given limited school-based resources by:

- Providing an understanding of the RTI framework

- Providing advice on and support to access explicit and systematic reading resources for students in need at the Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels that have a strong evidence base.

- Supporting school executive teams and school psychologists to make streamlined decisions based on data from all students in the school.

- Evaluating the impact on student literacy levels after the implementation of the RTI Framework.

What is 'Response to Intervention' (RTI)

RTI is a framework that is used to identify and support students who are below benchmark in literacy and/or numeracy. These students may or may not have a diagnosed specific learning disorder.

*"Response to Intervention is a framework for providing comprehensive support to students and is not an instructional practice. RTI is a prevention oriented approach to linking assessment and instruction that can inform educators' decisions about how best to teach their students. A goal of RTI is to minimize the risk for long-term negative learning outcomes by responding quickly and efficiently to documented learning or behavioural problems and ensuring appropriate identification of students with disabilities "*National Center on Response to Intervention, (2010).

According to the National Center on Response to Intervention (2010), response to intervention involves universal screening [e.g., DIBELS, PM Benchmark, PIPS, etc.], progress monitoring [e.g., curriculum-based measures], multiple-levels of instruction and data-based decision making. RTI is a framework for providing comprehensive support to students. This is not prescriptive instructional practice but a preventative approach to linking assessment to evidence-based programs. RTI can be used to identify students at risk for literacy and numeracy failure as well as students with disabilities. Additionally, data is used to inform decisions at the school, year or classroom level.

There are many different variations for implementation of the RTI framework in terms of types of evidence-based interventions and assessments used. Generally, the multi-level instruction or Tiered system (see Figure 1) involves increasing intensity and explicit instruction as one transitions through the Tiers. For example:

Tier 1 emphasizes research and/or evidence based classroom instruction for all students. All students in Tier 1 receive a quick universal assessment three times per year to indicate if students are progressing appropriately or if students are falling below the benchmark. Teachers and executive-teams then problem-solve (see Figure 2) with consideration of teacher observations and a broader range of data, and develop a Tier 2 plan if needed. Problem solving questions may involve:

1. Where are the general strengths?

2. Where are the areas of need?

    a. What is the problem?

    b. Why is it occurring?

    c. What are we going to do about it?

    d. How will we know whether it is working?

    e. When will we meet back to discuss progress?

Tier 2 instruction is more explicit than Tier 1 and is targeted at areas of need and conducted daily in a smaller group setting. Progress monitoring at this stage may occur once a month, twice a month or weekly. Evidence-based assessments are provided to guide instruction and document progress. The team meets again to review progress and continue the problem-solving approach. If there was no response to intervention with Tier 1 and Tier 2 support, an additional Tier 3 plan is developed.

Tier 3 instruction involves more intense intervention (1 to 1) and more explicit instruction. Progress monitoring in this Tier typically occurs weekly and the team reconvenes more regularly to review progress. Following a team discussion of the Tier 3 data, part of the problem-solving may involve a referral to the school psychologist for review and consideration of a psycho-educational evaluation to help clarify areas of strength and need which inform refinement of intervention.

Response to Intervention Model

Tier 3 - intensive monitoring, data collection and 1-to-1 intervention

Tier 2 - increased monitoring, data collection and small group intervention

Tier 1 - universal monitoring & research-based classroom instruction

(Adapted from learnnc.org)

Problem Solving Approach

Step 1: Problem Identification - What's the problem?

Step 2: Problem Analysis - Why is it occurring?

Step 3: Intervention Design - What are we going to do about it?

Step 4: Response to Intervention - Is it working?

Step 5: Determine Next Steps

 (Adapted from ccsd.net/parents/response-instruction)

Pilot study – Theodore and Taylor Primary Schools

(see timeline Appendix A)

Steps to Support Pilot Schools

- In Term 2, 2014 Theodore Primary School and Taylor Primary School, both in the Tuggeranong Network, were chosen as RTI Pilot Schools through an expression of interest and provided with support from the RTI Project Officer and a Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties Team Leader.

- Guidelines and timeline were agreed upon by both schools.

- The RTI Project Officer met with LD Representative Teacher and School Psychologist regularly to discuss implementation, address questions and analyse data.

- The schools were trained on a tool used for universal screening and additional reading assessment tools.

- The pilot schools received CRS relief days to visit other schools implementing the RTI framework (Palmerston Primary School and Namadgi School).

- Each school received training in MiniLit and the Reading Tutor Program for four staff members and a kit for each program. They also gained CRS relief days to cover training.

Changes made to instruction

- Schools were provided training on the RTI framework and given options and support to use whatever instructional strategies/programs they wanted.

- A small group of teachers and executive teams from both pilot schools received training in MultiLit in order to support more explicit and systematic reading instruction to students in need. The MultiLit Programs chosen were MiniLit aimed at struggling Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 students and The Reading Tutor Program aimed at struggling Year 2+. One program is suitable for small groups, where as the other is 1-to-1. One of the schools sought out additional training on PreLit aimed at providing Preschool and Kindergarten students pre-literacy skills in Tier 1 instruction.

- In Term 3, 2014 the schools began to implement changes to Tier 1 reading instruction and trial small group Tier 2 explicit reading instruction to a small number of students in need. Slowly over Term 3, more groups were provided Tier 2 support and PreLit was introduced as a Tier 1 for Kindergarten student in one school.

Theodore Primary School targeted Years 1 through Year 4 with the following changes/additions:

- Year 1 and Year 2

    - Tier 1 – shift in pedagogy away from Walker Learning, with a continuation of whole-language using teaching materials by David Hornsby. This instruction also includes teaching phonemic awareness and phonics within rich text.

    - Tier 2 - MiniLit

- Year 3

    - Tier 2 – MiniLit

- Year 4 (a few students)

    - Tier 2 – Reading Tutor Program

Taylor Primary School intervened with Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 with the following changes/additions:

Kindergarten

- Tier 1 – PreLit and Florida Center for Reading Research (fcrr.org) student centre activities on the "Big 5" (phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) to supplement differentiation for remediation and extension.

Year 1 and Year 2

- Tier 1 – At the beginning of the school year, moved from Walker Learning and changed to a balanced literacy approach. Supplemented differentiation with Florida Center for Reading Research (fcrr.org) student centre activities on the "Big 5".

- Tier 2 – MiniLit (While this was occurring, the classroom teacher worked with the remaining students on extension work.)

Assessment of the Pilot

Quantitative Data

- The schools agreed on a universal screening tool to assess reading (The Dynamic Indicators of Early Basic Literacy Skills – DIBELS Next) and were trained on administration. Videos were created to assist with training, along with the provision of free materials. These training resources are available on the ETD Digital Backpack Learning Difficulties Life page for all school staff to access.

- Pre-assessment occurred between weeks 7 & 8 in Term 2 with administration of the DIBELS Next. During week 10, Term 2 the schools discussed the results of the data (see Appendix B for graphs) and implications for trialling the RTI framework over one term.

- Post-assessment occurred early in Term 4 using the DIBELS Next at both schools (see Appendix B).

- Graphing templates to assist with DIBELS data were created and uploaded to the ETD Digital Backpack Learning Difficulties Life page for school staff to access. It was noted that when the data is presented in pie charts it provides a clearer picture of what is happening (strengths/weaknesses) and what areas need to be supported differently (refer to p. 14 "Outline of DIBELS Reading Assessment" for more information).

DIBELS data findings:

Theodore Primary School

- Kindergarten had 11% more students reading "on grade-level" (pre-literacy skills such as phonological awareness and letter-sound correspondence). Students with pre-literacy skills falling "far below" grade level reduced by 22%.

- Year 1 had an increase by 10% for students reading "on grade-level" (phonics, reading fluency and reading comprehension). Students falling the "far below" reading benchmark reduced by 17%.

- Year 2 universal assessment showed limited growth according to the Year 2 assessment (reading fluency and reading comprehension). Due to the extremely low literacy levels of the students identified in Year 2, a decision was made to target phonics, a basic building block to literacy from Year 1. These students showed major gains in decoding and sight-word skills according to the MiniLit weekly assessments and rapid movement through sequential lesson plans.

Taylor Primary School

- Kindergarten had an increase of 40% for students reading "on grade-level" (pre-literacy skills such as phonological awareness and letter-sound correspondence). Students with pre-literacy skills falling "far below" grade level reduced by 36%.

- Year 1 had an increase by 13% for students reading "on grade-level" (phonics, reading fluency and reading comprehension). Students falling the "far below" reading benchmark reduced by 22%. It was noted that students in their Learning Support Centre (LSC) showed literacy gains, which was not expected.

- Year 2 showed limited growth according to the Year 2 assessment (reading fluency and reading comprehension). Due to the extremely low literacy levels of the students identified in Year 2, a decision was made to target phonics, a basic building block to literacy from Year 1. The DIBELS Year 1 progress monitoring assessment for phonics showed major gains for these students as well as MiniLit weekly assessments.

Qualitative Data

Both pilot schools reported a number of successful stories within their RTI groups.

Findings:

Theodore Primary School

- Teachers and parents feel more "hope" after seeing students identified and supported in a systematic manner.

- Teacher reported students are more engaged in learning.

- Less time is being spent on behaviour management.

- Attendance rates have increased.

- Implementation of the RTI framework is making the teacher and school psychologist role much easier. The framework identifies students in need early and through data-based decision making helps educators to support students more appropriately.

Taylor Primary School

- In the Kindy cohort, support was provided by supplementing Tier 1 instruction and only 1 student did not show growth. This student just obtained a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- In Year 1, the 1 student who did not show growth previously had poor attendance and was involved with Care and Protection. At present, this student is happier to come to school and engage with learning materials that are at that student's level.

- The teachers are on board with the RTI framework because they can see change and feel supported.

- RTI makes it easier for teachers in the LSC who also observed reading growth for their students.

School Psychologist Role

- The RTI framework has filtered the types of cases going to Special Needs so that only students with significant learning difficulties are being referred to the School Psychologists. Rather than the School Psychologist being the first port of call for all students in need, students are provided intense and systematic support first and if they do not make progress then they are referred.

- Referral rates have reduced dramatically and the types of cases that are being addressed have rich information about how the students have been responding to evidence-based interventions.

- School psychologists approach assessment differently when the RTI framework is used. The school psychologist is part of a team working to uncover what skills the student is missing and may start assessment processes with screening tools such as the YARC to guide instruction rather than reaching immediately for the IQ assessment to answer the question "Does the student qualify for disability support?"

Digital capture of the journey

- Video-taping occurred during the term to capture school leaders' impressions of RTI, what they have changed in their school due to the pilot and how they made it work for their school given limited resources and time. The completed videotape was referenced at the Learning Difficulties Conference September 24, 2014, workshops delivered during Term 4, 2014 and is available on the ETD Digital Backpack Learning Difficulties Life page for school staff to access.

Survey Monkey

School staff participating in the RTI pilot were asked to complete a pre and post questionnaire via survey monkey (see Appendix C). The pre-assessment was completed by 27 school staff and the post-assessment was completed by 21 staff. Staff consisted of the principal, deputy principal, executive teacher, school psychologist, literacy field officer, classroom teachers, indigenous education officer, learning assistance teacher and EALD teacher.

The survey found increases in school staff knowledge and skills related to the implementation of the RTI framework were measured. Additionally, confidence significantly improved in meeting the needs of students using the RTI framework through this 10-week pilot study.

Reflections on RTI Journey

The Namadgi School was included in some of the conversations regarding the RTI process as they had started sharing knowledge with their staff in 2013, and implementing their own trial since the beginning of 2014.

A Professional Learning Community meeting for the executive teams from Theodore, Taylor and Namadgi was scheduled in Term 4, week 7 to review the end of year data and discuss transition steps to be taken for next year.

The following points were noted by the pilot schools and Namadgi:

- This is a framework for intervention and is a process.

- Schools and teachers choose their own evidence-based programs and the school psychologist is included every step of the way.

- Through the RTI process teachers have had a lift in their professional knowledge. Teachers are now more aware and interventions are now more targeted. This has empowered teachers.

- The implementation of RTI has created a culture change in the school.

- When analysing the data, we need to look for the growth that is least resourced. Then we can maximise future resourcing by replicating what is creating the growth.

- RTI is about teacher choice and looking at the data. Everyone has the option to do it a bit differently in terms of what evidence-based interventions and assessments they choose.

SWOT analysis

The recommendation from the Scoping Project (2013) was a pilot study, and this current study is full-filling that recommendation. Below is a comparison of the SWOT analysis from 2013 to 2014 to document school executive staff views regarding the RTI framework.

Scoping Project (2013) – Executive teams from schools in all four networks received an overview of RTI and was asked to complete a SWOT analysis to document their views on implementation in the ACT ETD.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Yields better literacy and numeracy outcomes - Reduces student disengagement - Closes the Gap - Early identification and early intervention from potentially Preschool - Identification of existing and transfer students who may have a range of needs and strengths - Targets teaching - Increases the ease and frequency of objective data conversations - Yields better decision making with more whole-school frequent data versus limitations of annual data	- Time, resource, staff and management intensive - Need flexibility and money to implement with fidelity - Teachers may teach to the test which may lead to curriculum narrowing - Takes a lot of planning to schedule interventions (Tier 2 and Tier 3) into the day with the Australian Curriculum - Universal data could be used to compare schools and released for community knowledge. This could affect enrolment numbers. - Concern with adding to the current data collection load having negative effects on students. - Would require consideration of the social/emotional needs of the child in parallel

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Improves and targets interventions based on the data - Enhances assistance schools provide to students in need	to the explicit literacy and numeracy instruction. It may clash with current programs and philosophy used in specific schools.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
- Use of the data may improve teaching standards and learning outcomes for all students - Matches current school priorities and extends - Improves early identification & identification of students in need (Tier 2, Tier 3, Special Needs, Disability) - Use of the data through the years improves problem solving discussions and links to Special Needs - Focuses the work of teachers and support staff (executive teams, School Psychologists, LSAs) & improves communication - Teachers feel better supported	- Logistics - Resourcing - Staffing - Finding time for Tier 2 & Tier 3 - Technology support for data-based decision making - Cost of training teachers - Finding time to train staff - Implementing with fidelity - Changing mind sets & gaining teacher buy in - Size of need of school - Assessment will pose a large disruption to school and student learning - Poor attendance of staff and/or students, which has an impact on fidelity

Pilot Project (2014) – After implementing RTI, pilot schools and Namadgi School were asked to complete a SWOT analysis to document their views.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Evidence-based - Data-tracking - Provides hope - Target funding - Appropriate use of resources - Provides differentiation - Creates a culture change - Feel like it works and can see results	- Money (resourcing) - Time involvement - Flow on consequences (impact on other exec staff) - Expectations of data deadlines - Logistics - One piece of the puzzle

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
- Student growth - Target student needs - Present data to staff - Increase universal consistent approach - More detailed info for school psych - Support staff involved at a higher level	- Cost - Time commitments - Staffing absence/turn-over - Change of leadership - Initial universal screening (expectations on classroom teachers)

Comparison of the two SWOT analyses reveal a reduction in perceived weaknesses after implementing the trial. Concerns regarding teachers teaching to the tests, and students being burdened with additional assessment have no longer been listed as weaknesses. The weakness suggested in 2013 "It may clash with current programs and philosophy used in specific schools" is not an actual weakness for the framework due to the fact that the framework does not recommend programs or philosophies, it just asks that school to consider the data gathered to measure effectiveness of whatever is used in the different tiers of instruction.

After a 10-week trial, the pilot schools for 2014 listed money, time and flow on consequences for staff as continued perceived weaknesses. It is noted the aim of implementing the RTI framework is to significantly reduce the number of students requiring intense intervention and improve student outcomes. It is expected that over time the money, time and flow on consequences would be reduced considerably. Additionally, use of the RTI framework and the data-based decision making will help schools prioritise their current needs and perhaps better plan for future budgets, class schedules and staffing to reduce strain.

Overall, information gathered from the 2014 SWOT analysis contributes to the continued conversation and trials of the RTI framework in ACT ETD schools.

Building Capacity across the system - Meetings/Workshops/Resources

- Early during Term 3, the principals from Theodore and Taylor, including Namadgi School, met together as a Professional Learning Community to discuss the DIBELS universal data and how they were planning to meet the needs of struggling students

- A presentation was delivered at the Tuggeranong Network Principals' Meeting (Simon Smith (Taylor PS), Matthew Holdway (Theodore PS), Charlie Morrice (Namadgi School) and Nadia Butler) during Term 3. This was an opportunity for other schools in the network to hear the journey thus far and potentially create Professional Learning Communities.

- The Learning Difficulties Conference (2014) showcased the pilot schools and RTI resources (on the Digital Backpack in the RTI Resource Suite) were shared such as:

- Flow chart: Teacher and School Psychologist Pathway

- Parent/Carer Communication Pathway

  - RTI annual implementation timeline

  - Videos from pilot schools with RTI introduction, multi-level instruction, challenges/solutions, data conversations and classroom examples.

  - Reading assessment factsheets

  - Reading assessment training videos

  - DIBELS 6th Ed web link, factsheet, training videos and data template for graphing

  - Suggested evidence-based reading interventions

- In order to better support ACT ETD schools interested in implementing RTI during the 2015 school year, a number of steps were taken during the pilot project (see Appendix D).

Outline of DIBELS Reading Assessment

- The DIBELS was created by the University of Oregon as a quick evidence-based screening tool for basic skills in literacy. It supports school staff in understanding student progress in key literacy areas found to be linked to successful reading outcomes. Measures for Kindergarten include phonological awareness, letter naming and letter-sound correspondence. Year 1 relies more heavily on letter-sound correspondence (phonics) and oral reading fluency. Year 2 through Year 6 place emphasis on oral reading fluency and measures of reading comprehension are also available.

- The DIBELS offers both universal assessments and progress monitoring assessments. The universal assessments are administered at beginning, middle and end of year and measure key readings skills for each year group. Following data-based decision making, a teacher or team may decide reading intervention in a particular skill is required. The skill could be for the corresponding year level or an earlier year level. The teacher could then use the DIBELS progress monitoring assessment to measure progress from week to week. For instance, if a Year 3 student fell in the "Far-Below Benchmark" range on the universal assessment and was found to need Year 1 phonics instruction, then the Year 1 progress monitoring assessment for nonsense word fluency could be used. (There are 20 forms for each progress monitoring measure.)

- The DIBELS website offers data graphing systems at the cost of $1 per student for the year. Graphs include a variety of visual representations (pie charts, box and whiskers, individual data, class data, year-level data, school-wide data) to guide data-based decision making. For purposes of this pilot and the mini-research, the

DIBELS data graphing system was not purchased, but an in-house data template with pie charts was created.

DIBELS correlation with commonly used ACT ETD assessments

A DIBELS correlation study was completed (see Attachment D). This study found the DIBELS universal screening tool to be highly correlated with the PIPS, NAPLAN and PM Benchmark indicating this to be an appropriate tool to use when identifying struggling readers. This would lend schools with a quick tool to use with <u>all</u> students in the school to screen for children falling below benchmark and in need of additional reading support.

Issues Uncovered by RTI Pilot Study & Supporting Workshops

- The pilot schools noted planning to implement RTI the year prior is an integral step for success. Implementation of a pilot program during Term 3, after school year budgeting and timetables were in place was a challenge. Time constraints and resourcing to implement Tier 2 and Tier 3 support were considered issues for this pilot study.

- During workshops delivered to executive teams and school psychologists in Term 4 2014, interest about the following was noted:

    - Keeping the RTI message focused on the framework and not getting stuck on actual reading pedagogy or programs.

    - Implementing RTI and maths

    - Implementing RTI and secondary

    - Implementing RTI and behaviour

    - Research-based assessments and interventions

    - Who to seek support from in Central Office to help guide schools in best practice and brain-storm ways to implement the RTI framework based on current need

    - How to connect with other professional implementing RTI in their schools

Recommendations

Based on the information collected and discussion section of this report, the following recommendations are made for consideration.

Further Conversations

- Research shows Tier 1 instruction has the biggest impact on student performance and improved outcomes (links to quality teaching and national teaching standards). Further conversations on supporting improved Tier 1 instruction for all students needs to be considered as a priority for ACT ETD schools.

- In continuation of responding to student needs (under-performing to over-performing), further pilots, research and professional learning around RTI would be of great support to interested ACT ETD schools.

- On-going relationships with other states such as Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales will help to further knowledge and skills in the area of RTI.

Project Officer

- A SLC Learning Difficulties Project Officer is recommended to guide schools in implementing RTI framework.

  - The officer would be used to provide consultation to:

    - schools interested in implementing RTI in their school to support numeracy and writing

    - interested high-school and college settings to implement RTI effectively

Sustainability

By up-skilling school staff and sharing information, RTI is more likely to be embedded in regular practice for interested schools.

- Schools who have implemented some form of RTI or who are exploring RTI at their school should be given a forum to share information regularly and learn from one another.

  - The Digital Backpack is a good place to post what schools are doing.

  - At the end of each Semester schools could be invited to a fair-style forum at CTL to showcase their work, data and tell their story.

  - School Psychologists would benefit from on-going support to improve knowledge and skills related to learning difficulties, specific learning disorders, RTI and improving assessment practice through support from the SLC Learning Difficulties Project Officer and sharing resources.

  - School Psychologists interested in RTI and the Learning Difficulties Representatives should be allowed to come together on a monthly basis to learn best practice and share with one another. The agenda could be organised by the SLC Learning Difficulties Project Officer.

- ○ For schools interested in improving their reading assessment tools (RTI implementation or not), a 2-hr training once a term could be offered to all staff on PLEC.

Transition to 2015

It is hoped other schools will be able to add value to their existing plans to support students with learning difficulties and build a community of practice through these pilot school studies.

Recommendation	Action 2015
RTI and numeracy	• Trial RTI pilot with focus in maths in primary school
RTI and secondary	• Trial RTI pilot in multiple secondary settings
Review of research-based assessments and interventions	• Review potential assessments and interventions • List this information linked to Tiers and specific skill areas • Publish list on digital backpack
Support professional learning communities who are implementing RTI in their schools	• Offer forums where schools can meet, share information and learn from each other
Lead workshops for School Psychologists interested in RTI and Learning Difficulty Representative teachers	• Offer monthly meetings for evidence-based information to be shared and collaboration amongst professionals
DIBELS 2-hr training session offered to all staff on PLEC once a term.	• Advertise DIBELS 2-hr training session on PLEC once a term. • Develop 2-hr training on DIBELS. • Identify a person to deliver the DIBELS training 1/term. • Deliver the training 1/term.

Conclusion

Although this was a 10-week pilot study on the effects of the Response to Intervention framework on two primary schools, a rich source of information was collected to support the continued use of the framework in ACT EDT schools. Theodore Primary School and Taylor Primary School used the RTI process to address reading difficulties for students in Kindergarten through Year 3. The schools implemented the RTI framework with fidelity and used their own chosen teaching techniques and assessments (guided by the Project Officer). Both schools documented overall response to intervention in the area of reading and many positive side-effects were noted as a result of implementing the RTI process to make change.

Year 2 reading data (DIBELS) for both schools illustrates how falling behind compounds the student level of need. Missed reading building blocks exponentially accumulate and remediation requires more intensity and frequency to address those missing building blocks.

For schools in need or schools who are interested in improving their approach for supporting students with learning difficulties, Response to Intervention has been found to be an appropriate way to increase student outcomes.

Appendix A. RTI Pilot Study Implementation Plan

Plan phase

Activity/Milestone	Accountability	Completed By
Develop Project Charter	Project Officer with Project Manager	Term 3, week 5 (2014)
Discuss and test charter with stakeholders	Project Officer	N/A
Project Charter Approved	N/A	N/A

Execute phase

Activity/Milestone	Accountability	Completed By
Term 2, Week 5 • Sign guidelines and 10-week pilot agreement • Designate day/time to meet regularly with schools and RTI Project Officer • Inventory of current interventions & assessments used at pilot schools • Agree on a universal screening tool for target group	Project Officer	Term 2, Week 5
Term 2, Week 7 • Pre-test: universal screening tool to all students in target group • Pre-implementation taped interview with principals • Pre-implementation survey monkey	Project Officer	Term 2, Week 8

Activity/Milestone	Accountability	Completed By
Term 2, Week 8 - Review data - Develop groups for intervention based on needs - Identify intervention - Assign staff/time/location for intervention	Project Officer	Term 2, Week 10
Term 2, Week 9 - Training on intervention programs (MiniLit, Reading Tutor Program)	Project Team to organise	Term 2, Week 9
Term 3, Weeks 1 to week 9 - Schools implement interventions	Project Officer	Term 3, Week 2 to end of Term 4
Term 3, Weeks 5-6 - Video taping	Project Officer	Term 3, Weeks 5-6
Term 4, Weeks 4 & 5 - Post-test: universal screening tool to all students in target group - Post-implementation survey monkey	Project Officer	Term 4, Week 4

Activity/Milestone	Accountability	Completed By
Term 4, Week 6 ● Post universal data to the RTI Project Officer ● Meeting with pilot school exec teams to discuss progress and brain-storm next steps ● Develop school transition plan ● Develop project transition plan	Project Officer	Term 4, Week 7
Term 4, Week 7 ● Final report (draft) to Project Manager	Project Officer	Term 4, Week 8
Term 4, Week 9 ● Finalise project final report ● RTI Project Officer to provide feedback to stakeholders and discuss recommendations with Project Manager and Sponsor to inform future planning.	Project Officer	Term 4, Week 10
Term 4, Week 9 ● Finalise Transition Plan for schools to continue to embed the RTI framework	Project Manager in conjunction with pilot schools	Term 4, Week 10
End of Term 4, 2014 ● All Project Outputs Delivered to agreed performance standards	N/A	Term 4, Week 10

Evaluate phase

Activity/Milestone	Accountability	Completed By
End of Term 4, 2014 Advise stakeholders of project closure and End of Project Report/Recommendations	All Stakeholders	Term 4, Week 10

Appendix B. Theodore and Taylor Pre/Post Reading Data

Theodore Primary School Pre/Post Data

Pre - DIBELS Total - Kindergarten	**Pre - DIBELS Total - Year 1**	**Pre - DIBELS Total - Year 2**	**Pre - DIBELS Total - Year 3**
Tier 1: 8.27%	Tier 1: 15.44%	Tier 1: 24.54%	Tier 1: 19.61%
Tier 2: 5.17%	Tier 2: 3.9%	Tier 2: 6.13%	Tier 2: 1.3%
Tier 3: 17.56%	Tier 3: 16.47%	Tier 3: 15.33%	Tier 3: 11.36%
Post - DIBELS Total - Kindergarten	**Post - DIBELS Total - Year 1**	**Post - DIBELS Total - Year 2**	**Post - DIBELS Total - Year 3**
Tier 1: 12.38%	Tier 1: 18.55%	Tier1: 24.53%	Tier1: 23.72%
Tier 2: 9.28%	Tier 2: 5.15%	Tier 2: 8.18%	Tier 2: 0%
Tier3: 11.34%	Tier 3: 10.30%	Tier 3: 13.29%	Tier 3: 9.28%

Taylor Primary School Pre/Post Data

Pre - DIBELS Total - Kindergarten	**Pre - DIBELS Total - Year 1**	**Pre- DIBELS Total - Year 2**	**Pre- DIBELS Total - Year 3**
Tier 1: 7.24%	Tier 1: 11.48%	Tier 1: 10.44%	Tier 1:
Tier 2: 5.17%	Tier 2: 3.13%	Tier 2: 1.4%	Tier 2:
Tier 3: 17.59%	Tier 3: 9.39%	Tier 3: 12.52%	Tier 3:
Post - DIBELS Total - Kindergarten	**Post - DIBELS Total - Year 1**	**Post - DIBELS Total - Year 2**	**Post - DIBELS Total - Year 3**
Tier 1: 19.64%	Tier 1: 14.61%	Tier1: 11.44%	Tier1:
Tier 2: 4.13%	Tier 2: 5.22%	Tier 2: 3.12%	Tier 2:
Tier3: 7.23%	Tier 3: 4.17%	Tier 3: 11.44%	Tier 3:

Appendix C. Survey Monkey Pre/Post Data

Pre: How would you rate your skills in assessing the needs of students within the RTI framework in the context of your work?

Low level/few skills: 16%   Good skills: 44%

Some Skills: 32%   Expert level/wide range of related skills: 8%

Post: How would you rate your skills in assessing the needs of students within the RTI framework in the context of your work?

Low level/few skills: 5%   Good skills: 56%

Some Skills: 28%   Expert level/wide range of related skills: 11%

Pre: How would you rate your skill in selecting and using appropriate interventions with a student in the RTI framework?

Low level/few skills: 24%   Good skills: 32%

Some Skills: 40%   Expert level/wide range of related skills: 4%

Post: How would you rate your skill in selecting and using appropriate interventions with a student in the RTI framework?

Low level/few skills: 5%   Good skills: 56%

Some Skills: 33%   Expert level/wide range of related skills: 6%

Pre: How would you rate your confidence in meeting the needs of students using the RTI framework?

Low level/few skills: 13%   Good skills: 61%

Some Skills: 22%   Expert level/wide range of related skills: 4%

Post: How would you rate your confidence in meeting the needs of students using the RTI framework?

Low level/few skills: 5%   Good skills: 50%

Some Skills: 17%   Expert level/wide range of related skills: 28%

Appendix D. Steps to support ACT ETD schools

- Term 4, 2014

- Week 1 – Met with Network Leaders to describe RTI Pilot and resources available to support schools in 2015.

- Week 1 - Met with Deputy Network Leaders to explain RTI framework and resources available on Life page to support school staff.

- Weeks 3 & 4 – Invited executive teams from schools in network clusters to:

  - explain RTI framework

  - explain resources available on Digital Backpack to support school staff

  - generate interest in collecting universal data end of year 2014 to guide priorities for 2015

  - in PLCs, brainstorm how schools could meet the needs of their students in the coming year with existing resources

- Week 6 – All School Psychologists received a workshop on RTI and how it links to students with learning difficulties and the diagnosis of Specific Learning Disorders. The School Psychologist Good Practice Guide: Learning Difficulties document was updated and used to guide this presentation. This Good Practice Guide includes the Flow chart: Teacher and School Psychologist Pathway

Consultation with interested schools during project:

- Dickson College
- Hawker College
- Kingsford Smith School

- Mt Rogers Primary School
- Weetangera Primary School

Note: the following schools were not involved with in this project, and state they are implementing or trialling RTI:

- Namadgi School
- Palmerston School
- Amaroo School

- Red Hill School
- Fraser Primary School

Appendix E. DIBELS Correlation Study

ACT Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties

Response to Intervention (RTI) Pilot Studies 2014

How does the USA reading assessment, DIBELS, correlate with AUS reading assessments currently being used in the ACT to identify students at-risk of reading difficulty?

Introduction

A correlation study was conducted to see if there was a relationship between the DIBELS and existing ACT assessments (PIPS, NAPLAN and PM Benchmark).

Description of this study

Data from a primary school in the Tuggeranong Network was used to conduct a statistical analysis. The data included information from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Results:

Data from the DIBELS Composite score was found to be significantly correlated with the PIPS Reading (Beginning of Year & End of Year T score), PM Benchmark, NAPLAN Year 3 Reading Bands and NAPLAN Year 5 Reading Bands.

Limitations of Pilot Study

The small sample (221 students) used for this pilot study was from a school with 56% of students between Kindergarten and Year 6 reading below grade-level (according to DIBELS and NAPLAN results). The DIBELS is a comparable instrument to the PIPS Reading, PM Benchmark, and NAPLAN Reading for students operating below grade-level.

Recommendations

Future research including schools with more of a normal distribution of students with reading difficulties to above-average readers is recommended. Additionally, if schools wish to use the DIBELS to predict NAPLAN scores, further longitudinal data (4-5yrs) needs to be completed.

Conclusion

According to this study, the DIBELS statistically correlates with current ACT ETD assessments (PIPS, NAPLAN and PM Benchmark). This means that the DIBELS can be used with confidence as a universal-screening tool to identify students performing below grade-level.

For DIBELS Next free assessment materials go to dibels.org/dibelsnext.html

Attachment 2: Learning Difficulties Final Report- Online Survey Data

Learning Difficulties Final Report- Online Survey Data

Purpose

The Learning Difficulties Project Team developed a final online survey for teachers after the Learning Difficulties Conference held 24 September 2014. The purpose of the survey was to explore participant's experience of the Learning Difficulties professional learning package, seek comment on other project outputs such as resources and community engagement and to seek feedback on ideas for future directions and processes for improvement.

Summary of key findings

Of the 44 respondents, which were 55% of all attendees at the Learning Difficulties Conference, the following key findings were:

Respondents

- Over half of survey respondents were from primary schools and were executive teachers in schools.

   Building Staff Capacity

- The combined good/excellent knowledge of learning difficulties of staff prior to the delivery of the professional learning courses totalled 19 responses and after delivery totalled 43. This is an increase of 126 % of good/excellent knowledge obtained by teachers in learning difficulties.

- The professional learning courses provided a consistent positive response from teachers in the areas of; increasing awareness of students with learning difficulties, knowledge in selecting most appropriate interventions and innovative approaches to using alternative technologies to engage students- which was an average of 44.7%. However, increased changes to staff culture in understanding learning difficulties was 12.9% lower than the other measures, indicating that time is needed to embed systemic change.

- The most beneficial professional learning courses for teachers were:

     o   Phase 1: Understanding Learning Difficulties (ETD School Psychologists)

     o   Phase 2: Intervention Strategies to Support Students with Learning Difficulties (Karen Starkiss- Dyselxia expert)

     o   Phase 4: Using Inclusive Technologies Tools for Students with Learning Difficulties (Spectronics)

- Just under half of all respondents (21%) thought all 13 phases of professional learning courses delivered were beneficial/useful.

- Teachers responded that the professional learning and resources provided have been of good or excellent value in their school setting in the areas of; developing a consistent systematic approach to learning difficulties (65%) and in building capacity of staff in the area of learning difficulties (79%). Partnerships with families in supporting students with learning difficulties were not as well supported at 39%, but were still seen of some value (48%).

Online Resources

- 54% of teachers considered the Learning Difficulties LIFE page online resource useful for building a community of practice, sharing and connecting with other representative teachers and a valuable resource for professional development. Most teachers felt that the most valuable aspect was the video presentations that could be used to build staff capacity.

- Through using the LIFE page resources, 78% of teachers state that they have or would share/ connect with other schools to access information about what they are doing in their school or networks and across the system in learning difficulties.

- Other training

- Teachers felt that for the parent/carers that attended the workshops the response was positive. Communicating future workshops for parents/carers may require a more detailed communication strategy.

- Teachers felt that for the LSA's who attended the training workshops, they gained valuable skills and welcomed the opportunity to attend. Some schools did not wish to send LSA's to the training.

Feedback

- Constructive feedback received from teachers has been considered for inclusion in the 2015/16 Learning Difficulties Transition Plan.

Survey Questions and Responses

What school setting do you work in?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Preschool	0.0%	0
Primary	59.1%	26
Secondary	20.5%	9
College	6.8%	3
P-10	9.1%	4
Specialist School	4.5%	2

Comment: Over half of survey respondents were from primary schools.

Knowledge of learning difficulties - pre and post professional learning

Answer Options	No knowledge	Little knowledge	Some knowledge	Good knowledge	Excellent knowledge	Response Count
What was your level of knowledge around Learning Difficulties before beginning the professional learning phases?	0	4	21	17	2	44
How would you rate your knowledge now?	0	0	1	26	17	44

Comment: The combined good and excellent knowledge of staff prior to delivery of the professional learning courses was 19 and after delivery was 43.

What is your current role in your school?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Teacher	38.6%	17
Executive Teacher	50.0%	22
Deputy Principal	11.4%	5
Principal	0.0%	0

Did the Learning Difficulties professional learning phases and resources increase:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
awareness of students with learning difficulties	47.7%	21
knowledge in selecting most appropriate interventions	43.2%	19
change in staff culture towards understanding learning difficulties	31.8%	14
innovative approaches to using alternative technologies to engage students	43.2%	19
All of them	45.5%	20

Comment: The professional learning courses provided a consistent response from participants in increasing awareness of students with learning difficulties, knowledge in selecting most appropriate interventions and innovative approaches to using alternative technologies to engage students (average of 44.7%). Increased changes to staff culture in understanding learning difficulties was 12.9% lower, indicating that time is needed to embed systemic change.

Of the professional learning phases delivered, which ones provided the most benefit to your role as the representative teacher?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Phase 1: Understanding Learning Difficulties	44.2%	19
Phase 2: Intervention Strategies to support students with learning difficulties	46.5%	20
Phase 3: Evidence Based Studies SPELD ACT & University of Canberra	16.3%	7
Phase 4: Using Inclusive Technologies tools for students with learning difficulties	46.5%	20
Phase 5: Supporting Schools with their implementation plan	9.3%	4
Phase 6: Learning difficulties strategies - team or whole school approach (DSA practical guide)	20.9%	9
Phase 11: Early Childhood – Primary: Using inclusive technologies to support students in early years with learning difficulties	11.6%	5
Phase 12: Teacher Assessment Tools & Building a Community of Practice (CoP) for Learning Difficulties	14.0%	6
Phase 13: Learning Difficulties Conference 2014	27.9%	12
All of them	20.9%	9

Comment: The most beneficial professional learning courses were:

Phase 1: Understanding Learning Difficulties (ETD School Psychologists)

Phase 2: Intervention Strategies to support students with learning difficulties (Karen Starkiss)

Phase 4: Using Inclusive Technologies tools for students with learning difficulties (Spectronics)

Just under half of respondents thought all the professional learning courses were beneficial.

Some online comments from participants

"The Spectronics session was a particular standout, and the other workshops together have supported and developed my understanding of learning difficulties, particularly around dyslexia. I notice that now at the end of the year I think differently than at the beginning of the year - not so much a change in my approach, as I feel I have a sound understanding already around literacy learning, but a deeper and more specific understanding around phonological awareness and need for compensation as well as remediation for older children. It has also helped me feel more confident to be 'pushy', or 'politely pro-active' on behalf of these children and work to ensure that they can be included equitably in class learning. (This was one of the reasons why the Spectronics session was particularly useful, as we have iPads that can be used to help include all students)."

"Each phase compliments and builds on knowledge needed. They were all important and have impacted on my practice and continue to be the driver for a change of culture and process at our school."

"Excellent input, thank you for all the great work in PL provision. The growth in all participants' knowledge and skills very evident in presentations at LD conference."

"I only attended two PDs and they were fantastically practical and inspiring."

"Absolutely incredible suite of professional learning. Very professionally organised and aimed to develop knowledge sequentially. I especially appreciate the online resources and the wonderful approachability and support of the LD team. "

Has the parent workshops provided additional support for your community in learning difficulties?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	48.6%	17
No	51.4%	18

Comment: Teachers felt that for those parent/carers that attended the workshops the response was positive. Communicating future workshops for parents/carers may require a more detailed communication strategy.

Some online comments from participants

"We advertised the workshops a bit, but could have been more pro-active. If they are offered in future, we would look at ways to encourage parents to attend, as they are useful workshops."

"Even though it was advertised, I am not sure that parents from our community took up the opportunity to attend."

"We made the information available but did not hear of any responses."

"Very positive feedback."

Has the LSA workshops provided additional support for teachers in your school?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	69.4%	25
No	30.6%	11

Comment: Those LSA's who attended gained valuable skills from the workshops and welcomed the opportunity to attend. Some schools did not wish to send LSAs to the training.

Some online comments from participants

"These were the most helpful and productive workshops. The LSAs who participated said that it was the best PL that they had been on and they wanted more."

"The LSAs made great use of these workshops, all the LSAs at our school wanted to attend and even do follow up."

"LSA's were really excited about having the opportunity to take part in the PL."

"Only 1 LSA was able to attend, however she is using the skill and strategies with the children with whom she works and is having good success."

"The LSA's have welcomed the support and have been keen to adopt strategies, particularly inclusive technologies."

"We had 2 LSAs attend this workshop. One was confident before going and learnt a huge amount. She has implemented ways of using the iPad with students, leading teachers too. The other was "afraid" of IT but has become more confident as a result of the course. She now used an iPad with several students confidently."

"The executive team at my school decided not to send an LSA to the workshops."

Has the professional learning phases and resources influenced the following in your school setting:

Answer Options	Not at all	Little value	Some value	Good value	Excellent value	Response Count
a consistent systematic approach to learning difficulties	0	2	13	25	3	43
building capacity of staff in the area of learning difficulties	0	1	9	26	8	44
partnerships with families in supporting students with learning difficulties	2	3	21	15	2	43

Comment: Teachers responded that the professional learning and resources have been of good or excellent value in their school setting in the areas of:

developing a consistent systematic approach to learning difficulties (65%) and building capacity of staff in the area of learning difficulties (79%).

Partnerships with families in supporting students with learning difficulties were not as well supported at 39%, but were seen of some value (48%).

Some online comments from participants

"We constantly strive to notify and engage our parents and carers in ways to support student learning."

"Trying to engage all staff-this is taking time to create scaffolded assessment tasks."

"We are just beginning our journey and are reviewing current practises. Some pedagogical changes have already been made."

"While we do not have children with designated LD in our school, the resources and ideas fit all teaching situations including the situation at my current school."

"It has begun to change our approach. We are definitely on the journey but are in the early stages. I am looking forward to the next stage as we develop knowledge and culture in our school."

Do you have any feedback for the Taskforce implementation team regarding the professional learning phases and resources?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	38.1%	16
No	61.9%	26

Comment: Constructive feedback received from teachers has been considered for the 2015 Learning Difficulties Transition Plan.

Some online comments from participants

"It would be great to have more direct contact with the team - e.g. personal contact to each school to discuss how things are going. We feel that some things are going well at our school, and would be interested to talk about it to members to the team. Thank you!"

"I would have liked to see more about other SLD as well as Dyslexia."

"Excellent! Thank you for the valuable sessions."

"Having the sessions videotaped and up on the LIFE page was invaluable. Thank you."

"The team has put together an impressive array of resources and PL opportunities. Thank you."

"I found most sessions very relevant and useful for my own professional learning and to assist me in my current position as learning enrichment teacher."

"This has been great. I believe the taskforce has met its primary objective of seeding LD understanding, pedagogy and practice into all schools in the ACT."

"THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! You have worked tirelessly and many have reaped the rewards. We want to make a difference and you have made that possible."

Did you find the Learning Difficulties LIFE page

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
useful for building community of practice	15.9%	7
useful for sharing and connecting with other representative teachers	2.3%	1
a valuable source for professional development (videos)	27.3%	12
All of them	54.5%	24

Comment: 54% of respondents considered the LIFE page useful for building community of practice, sharing and connecting with other representative teachers and a valuable source for professional development. Most respondents felt that the most valuable aspect was the professional development videos that could be used to build staff capacity.

Some online comments from participants
"The Life page is excellent, and being able to access videos of the sessions after the PD is very valuable. The school videos of RTI examples are also excellent. This sort of online resourcing is a great way forward."

"Fabulous resource."

"Useful for myself as well as to share and provide support for staff."

Answer Options	Does the LD LIFE PAGE have potential to build a community of learners?	Do you like the idea having access to what other schools are doing across the system in Learning Difficulties?	Would you connect with a school if you thought their project could be useful in your school?	Response Count
Yes	9	11	21	41
No	1	0	1	2

Comment: Through using the LIFE page, 78% of respondents would have or would share/connect with other schools to access information about what they are doing in their school and across the system in learning difficulties.

Attachment 3 - Learning Difficulties Transition Plan 2015-16

Learning Difficulties Transition Plan 2015-16

Background

The Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties was an advisory body established in 2012, to provide the Minister for Education and Training with recommendations for classroom level intervention and support of children and young people in ACT government schools with learning difficulties. The Final Report from the Taskforce was presented to the Minister for Education and Training in July 2013.

A four member project team implemented the recommendations over the 2014 school year.

http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/483819/taskforce-learning-difficultiesFAweb.pdf

Alignment with the Directorate Strategic Plan 2014-17 Education Capital: Leading the Nation

INTENT: In the ACT every child, young person and adult will benefit from a high quality accessible education, childcare and training system.

INDICATORS: Reduce the proportion of students performing at or below the national minimum standard for reading and numeracy.

Increase the performance of all students in reading, mathematics and science.

Priorities

High Expectations, High Performance
*Students at the centre

Recommendations from the Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties to be implemented

Quality Learning
*Literacy, numeracy and science

Provide comprehensive literacy and numeracy support for students

Further strengthen teaching and leadership in literacy, numeracy and science

Inspirational Teaching and Leadership
*Quality teachers

Ensure teacher access to quality professional learning

Links to the Education Capital: Leading the Nation 2015 Action Plan

Priorities

High Expectations, High Performance
*Students at the centre

Build the capability of teachers to meet the needs of students, including gifted and talented students, students with learning difficulties and students with English as an Additional language.

Quality Learning
Literacy, numeracy and science

Deliver intensive reading interventions in the early years.

Provide advice to teachers, parents on literacy, numeracy and science.

Inspirational Teaching and Leadership
Quality teachers

Strengthen teacher effectiveness through coaching, mentoring and professional learning.

Supporting teaching and learning

Strengthen the capacity of School Networks to identify and share best practice.

Links to Australian National Teacher Standards

1. Know students and how they learn

1.2 Understand how students learn

1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities

2. Know the content and how to teach it

2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area

2.2 Content selection and organisation

2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting

2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies

2.6 Information and Communication Technology

3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

3.1 Establish challenging learning goals

3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs

3.3 Use teaching strategies

3.4 Select and use resources

3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs

4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

4.1 Support student participation

5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

5.1 Assess student learning

5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning

5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgments

5.4 Interpret student data

5.5 Report on student achievement

6. Engage in professional learning

6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice

6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning

Taskforce Final Report Recommendations

The Report identified 14 strategies under three key recommendations **(A* B* C*)**

A) A Consistent Systemic Approach*

1. Development of protocols (an online resource) that includes identifying, supporting and making adjustments for students with learning difficulties (LD).

2. The addition of endorsed evidenced based approaches to be included in the Directorate's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2009 – 2013 with specific reference to the needs of students with learning difficulties.

3. A focus on learning difficulties and diversity in learning to be a key component of the Directorate's leadership program from 2014.

4. Students who are twice exceptional are identified in the current Directorate's Gifted and Talented (G&T) Policy.

5. Investigation of Response to Intervention models for implementation within schools.

B) Building Staff Capacity*

6. The development of a comprehensive professional learning pathway with increasing levels of specialist knowledge that supports a consistent systematic approach to learning difficulties across the Directorate.

7. The professional learning pathway to include targets for completion of training.

8. Each School Network provided with scaffolding and support for teachers from specialist teachers with greater expertise and skills in learning difficulties.

9. Development of systemic professional learning for all Learning Support Assistants.

10. Clarification of the role of Learning Support Assistants.

11. Investigation of a system wide approach to the assessment of students with learning difficulties.

C) Building Partnerships with Families.*

12. Development of multiple communication mechanisms to support families of students with learning difficulties

13. Investigation of enhanced partnerships with therapists and other professionals working with teachers, parents and directly with students.

14. Provisions for adjustment to assessment tools for students to be communicated to parents and carers, students and staff.

Output 2014

1. Teacher Online resource- Digital Backpack LD LIFE page

2. Articulated in current ACTETD Strategic & Action Plans

3. 2014 Professional Learning (PL) focus

4. Learning + Teaching G&T Policy launched and Fact Sheet

5. RTI Pilot study in 2 schools

6. PL suite delivered to teachers across the system

7. Targets established- Feb report

8. NSET, Lit + Num officers, School Psychs support representative teachers in schools

9. PL suite delivered

10. Review of duty statements

11. LIFE page- RTI assessment resource suite

12. ETD LD Website page

13. NDIS model of support in development

14. LIFE page/teacher online resource /ETD website page

2014 Key Project Deliverables

- Twice exceptional students acknowledged in the Directorate's Gifted and Talented Policy.

- A pilot study in two primary schools in implementing the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework complete.

- Schools have an identified representative teacher who has undertaken the specialist training in the Learning Difficulties professional learning suite.

- Professional learning modules in learning difficulties developed and delivered for school leadership teams, learning support assistants and parents and carers.

- A system wide approach developed with resources developed to assess for a learning difficulty.

- An online teacher resource developed to support staff to reflect a consistent, systemic approach in supporting students with evidence based best practice in learning difficulties.

- A Learning Difficulties webpage developed to support families on the Directorate website.

- Partnerships with therapists (NDIS model of support).

The Way Forward - 2015/16

The 2015 focus for learning difficulties is derived from data collected from online surveys and feedback from stakeholders (teachers, school leadership teams, parents/carers, learning support assistants, external presenters, paraprofessionals, community members and associations. For some examples – see Attachment A page 80) regarding their future needs and in order to complete all of the Taskforce recommendations.

2015 Key Priorities:

- Professional Learning Communities (PLC's)- network sessions for representative teachers and executive staff with a focus on the wider range of learning difficulties, school leadership and change

- Parent/Carer Workshops- focus on parent/carer workshops delivered through a school network model

- Resources- maintain Learning Difficulties LIFE page and transition to the new online learning environment (Google Apps for Education), Learning Difficulties Teacher Online resource and the Directorate Learning Difficulties website page

- Sustainability- build school staff capacity through:

- Development of professional learning communities (PLC's)

- Response to Intervention (RTI) support

- Increased capacity of NSET teams to support school staff

- Continued links with agencies, external stakeholders and other therapists, and

- Learning Difficulties Policy development

Staffing

- To support the implementation of these key priorities it is proposed that a temporary SLC position is created using funds from the MSSD National Partnership Agreement to finalise the recommendations of the Taskforce report.

- The major driver of the SLC role is to drive capacity so PLC's become self sustaining, in addressing the learning needs of students with learning difficulties.

- PLC's are seen as the major vehicle in improving teacher practice.

- Targets for completion of professional learning

- It should be noted that the agreed targets for professional learning approved by the Deputy Director General Education Strategy from the Learning Difficulties Progress Report October 2014 is as follows:

Learning Difficulties (LD) Transition Plan 2015/16

* By end 2016 all schools will have at least one teacher trained in building the capacity of school staff to support students with a learning difficulty.

* By end 2018 these teachers will have delivered annual training on specific learning difficulties to classroom teachers in schools.

* By end 2018 all school leaders will have participated in annual professional learning on specific learning difficulties.

Priority- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) *A *B	2015 Implementation and sustainability strategies	2016 Implementation and sustainability strategies
2014 Representative Teachers (on-going) • Continue to embed and build capacity of current representative teachers as recommended in the Taskforce targets.	• Update database of 2014 representative teachers and schools • Develop PLC workshop Network sessions with Principals hosting the events • Train representative teachers to deliver PLC's • PLC Network sessions delivered in cohorts (K-2, 3-6, High School, College) and tailored to suit the needs of each setting • Professional learning content identified from survey feedback: i.e. dyscalculia, dysgraphia, working memory etc. Facilitate teleconferences with LD experts in field.	Update database for 2016 PLCs continue and seek survey feedback for future planning in leading and improving teaching practice
Representative Teachers 2015 (New) • Develop and implement new representative teachers induction plan for 2015	• Update database of 2014 representative teachers and schools • Update 2015 database with new representative teachers • Induction workshop for new representative teachers • Induction workshop for Network Student Engagement Teams (NSET) -same as above • Workshop will focus on LD resources developed such as flow charts, practice guides and online resources and provide a consistent approach.	Representative teachers in January 2016 stand down provide workshop session in their school- present an overview to LD and the LIFE page resources 2015 NSET staff provide training for 2016 NSET staff

	• New representative teachers to join the current PLC's	
Leadership development through Principal focussed PLC's • to include principals, school leaders and representative teachers.	• PL focus on whole school leadership and change (keynote speaker such as Mandy Nayton- Clinical Director SPELD WA) • Response to Intervention (RTI) focus as a framework for change (Principals from Taylor and Theodore PS pilot studies as examples) • Facilitate a Principal PLC in Response to Intervention (RTI) • Principal study tour to see schools with best practice in LD and accessible learning environments in high schools/colleges. PLC developed to support focus and sustain.	-continue whole school leadership change through Principal PLC's
Parent/carer workshops • Network sessions	• Develop workshops for parent/carers- run in Networks with schools hosting with representative teachers as facilitators • Specific workshop focus to include key experts in a range of LDs i.e. dyscalculia, dysgraphia, working memory. • Links to Directorate LD website page Provide workshops for parent/carers in using and understanding the 'Understanding Learning Difficulties- Parent Practical Guide' by Mandy Nayton (DSF WA) when produced.	-continue in 2016 based on needs, feedback, resources

Priority- Resources *A *B	2015 Implementation and sustainability strategies	2016 Implementation and sustainability strategies
Teacher Online Resource and Learning Difficulties LIFE page - update and maintenance	-Continue with evidence based content updates -Maintenance of online resources and capturing teaching practices through video media -Collection and analysis of data to inform future directions and recommend future directions -Communicate availability of resources to representative teachers	Update as required over 2016 Representative teachers use resources to build capacity in schools
Directorate Learning Difficulties website page -update and maintenance	-Update as required over 2015 with research based supports for parents/carers -Communicate availability of resource to representative teachers in supporting parents -Ensure Parent Fact Sheets are up to date -Include new content from 2015 parent workshops to cover specific LD not covered in 2014, such as dyscalculia, dysgraphia. -Include link to 'Understanding Learning Difficulties- Parent Practical Guide' by Mandy Nayton when developed (for purchase)	Update as required over 2016

Priority - Sustainability *A *B *C	2015 Implementation and sustainability strategies	2016 Implementation and sustainability strategies
NSET training support capacity of NSET teams in LD	Develop training package /resources for NSET team and provide PL early Term 1 2015 (same workshop as new representative teachers)	2015 NSET's deliver training to 2016 NSET's and beyond
Response to Intervention (RTI) provide direct support to school executive and representative teachers	Representative teachers provide support to their school if implementing or considering RTI. Use the Representative Teacher/School Psychologist Flow Chart to identify appropriate interventions and pathways Build school psychologist capacity to support teacher capacity in RTI in their schools	School capacity developed with representative teachers/school psychologists
Professional Learning Communities Continue to embed and build capacity of current representative teachers as recommended in the Taskforce targets.	Build on the PLC's already developed across Networks Facilitate development of Principal PLC group and facilitate development of representative teacher PLC groups with focus on PLC's becoming self sustaining.	2014/15 Representative teachers continue to build capacity in their school
Pre-service teacher training in LD supporting University Canberra (UC) and Australian Catholic University (ACU)	Continue to work collaboratively with Rosemary Butt (UC) and Jill Burgess (ACU) to collaborate and work with the development of a training module for pre-service teachers using the DSF WA 'Understanding Learning Difficulties- Practical Guide' as the key resource and LD LIFE page resources. LD team to have input into ACU and UC course development (attend working groups).	UC and ACU have a Learning Difficulties module available to deliver in future courses

DSF Parent/Carer Practical Guide work collaboratively with DSF WA (SPELD WA) and Mandy Nayton- Clinical Director, to develop a Practical Guide for Parents/Carers Use the ACT P & C Association as a critical friend in the development of the resource.	Work with Mandy Nayton (SPELD WA) in developing the 'Understanding Learning Difficulties- Parent Practical Guide' with feedback from the ACT P& C Association Communicate availability of Parent Resource to representative teachers, NSET, Lit + Num officers, School Psychologists Add link for parents to Directorate Learning Difficulties webpage (for purchase) Representative teachers to provide workshops for parent/carers in using the parent resource Provide each school a copy of the Parent Practical Guide	Representative teachers use and promote as resource for parents in their schools
Policy Development in Learning Difficulties	Develop a policy to provide clear direction for schools in learning difficulties Develop communication strategy when developed	embed understanding of policy/guidelines across Directorate
School Psychologists provide professional learning	- Provide additional professional learning - Use School Psychologist Good Practice Guide to develop PL – identify what's required/look at gaps - Focus on the RTI Teacher/School Psychologist Flow Chart as reference	

Attachment A - Comments from school staff from final survey

- Literacy and numeracy workshops to build teacher capacity. More technology workshops. More support around RTI in schools.

- What has happened this year, although huge in itself, needs to be the beginning if change is to be continued and sustained. Information about assessment tools, how to use them etc., understanding learning difficulties and their prevalence e.g. 10% of Aust population is dyslexic, and where to next. Continue building professional connections and learning communities.

- Keeping it on the Agenda through Principals and Deputy Principals networks - this work is only just beginning, we need to ensure we build sustainable programs and practices.

- Succession planning to allow for staff who have completed this training and subsequently change schools or their role within a school 2. Some way to keep this learning present in our minds so that it doesn't get lost in the volume of other tasks we all undertake at school. 3. Point of contact in the department for advice on implementing this learning in our schools. 4. Some clarity from the department about what is expected from staff who have undertaken this training, particularly for those of us who are not Exec teachers

- Continued support for representative teachers - need to ensure that this support continues into 2015 and that this doesn't become an initiative for one year only.

- Continued support and training for representative teachers. Continued support and money given to schools to buy resources. ICT support in each school.

- Continue to build capacity through level 1 teachers. Include executive teachers, so that they can see the need so that they see the benefits in implementing these ideas.

- More PL on other types of SLD as identified in the original Task force report.

  Sustaining LD knowledge and skills with continued ETD team or project. Working at Principal level to influence whole school planning for identification of students at risk of LD, intervention and monitoring in tiered approach, also use of evidence based approaches / programs. Continued updating of LD resources for teachers on backpack. LD policy by ETD.

- Continue professional learning opportunities on current, research-based best practice for educators to assist in meeting the needs of students with learning difficulties.

- Need to continue to share latest evidence based programs/response to intervention methods so as to continue to meet needs of students with learning difficulties Need extra funds to assist with resourcing

- For the department to recommend specific Tier 2 and 3 interventions (reading resources and programs) for schools to use. This would promote a systematic approach

and ensure best practice.

- More focus on Numeracy

- There needs to continued publicity and awareness measures about this so that the learning that occurred this year is not forgotten. What happens when school experts move on, change roles or change schools?

- Implementing RTI model in the High School and College setting. Including most appropriate screening, assessment, how to timetable, strategies, whether to withdraw for remedial intensives or support teaching LD capacity in staff etc. or balanced approach.

- Continue with excellent PL for executive staff to feed back to their staff

- Perhaps we could offer to do a lecture in the final year units at UC and ACU? We need to try at least to get the message to our new graduates that they will have students in their classes who have LD

- Continue to offer online courses for teachers who find themselves with students with SLD in their classes. Possibly incorporate some of the SLD content presented into beginning teacher induction sessions with a view to encouraging teachers to enrol into online learning.