

# From the President

## Lorraine Hammond

In recent times, I have heard a number of references to the impact of individuals on change. They often refer to water: “individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean” and “the fall of dropping water wears away the stone.” Perhaps it’s time to take stock of the reach we are collectively having in promoting evidence-based practice.

In 2019, LDA hosted Dr David Kilpatrick in five Australian states to a total audience of about 1300 participants. David is a conduit of research that can be difficult for teachers to access and which he excels at making understandable. In his talks he explained the importance of ‘sight words’ as a goal, not a strategy and made explicit the precursor skills required to learn to read and how best to teach them.

At the same time Emily Hanford, a senior education correspondent for APM Reports and producer of the audio documentary “*Hard Words: Why Aren’t Kids Being Taught to Read?*” released “*At a Loss for Words: How a flawed idea is teaching millions of kids to be poor readers*”. Emily, who is a member of DDOLL, drew attention to the challenge for teachers whose pre-service training has left them ill-equipped to teach reading. Her easily accessible and engaging podcasts have found their way into many inboxes and raised awareness amongst educators and the wider community about the need to prepare teachers who understand the science of reading.

Last year, *Sharing Successful Practice* conferences took place in Melbourne and Sydney. Hosted by schools who privilege high impact instruction, these low cost events, held during school holidays, were attended by over 500 teachers and featured sessions by researchers, academics,

school administrators and teachers who volunteered their time to share their knowledge and expertise in effective instruction. So far, *Sharing Successful Practice* conferences will go ahead in Perth, Melbourne and Geelong.

### Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.

Finally, Emeritus Professor of Cognitive Science, Max Coltheart reminded those of us who subscribe to *Developmental Disorders of Language and Literacy* (DDOLL) about growth in membership to this online forum. When it began in 2003, DDOLL had 132 members. As of October 2019, it has 1102. The aim of the DDOLL group is to disseminate information about the investigation and treatment of developmental disorders of language and literacy that uses sound scientific methodology and evidence-based research. Members include teachers, parents, practitioners concerned with children’s reading difficulties, reading scientists and others. There are members in the UK, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, USA and elsewhere, as well as Australia and many are researchers who willingly explain their work. To subscribe to DDOLL contact: [max.coltheart@mq.edu.au](mailto:max.coltheart@mq.edu.au).

There is no shortage of evidence-based practice to teach reading, but we need a better marketing campaign. There are so many ways for teachers and those who work with students with literacy based learning difficulties to engage with this research. Please send a link to a colleague and be that drop in the ocean.

LDA’s President, Dr Lorraine Hammond AM, is an Associate Professor at the School of Education at Edith Cowan University. Lorraine



divides her time between research projects on high impact instruction, teaching pre and inservice teachers, supervising higher degree students and writing and delivering professional learning for The Kimberley Schools Project. Lorraine is the Chair, Deputy Chair and Board Member of three high performing schools in WA. Lorraine has been a member of LDA Council since 2010 and has previously served as President and Vice-President.

Emily Hanford’s podcasts are available from: <https://www.apmreports.org/story/2018/09/10/hard-words-why-american-kids-arent-being-taught-to-read>;

<https://www.apmreports.org/story/2018/10/08/what-to-do-if-your-childs-school-isnt-teaching-reading-right>; and

<https://www.npr.org/2019/01/02/67722959/why-millions-of-kids-cant-read-and-what-better-teaching-can-do-about-it>