

Bulletin



Special Issue:
Speech AND Print

LDA Council 2020-2021

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LDA MISSION

Learning Difficulties Australia is an association of teachers and other professionals dedicated to assisting students with learning difficulties through effective teaching practices based on scientific research, both in the classroom and through individualised instruction.

THE BULLETIN

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In this issue of the Bulletin...

Ros Neilson, Editor, LDA Bulletin

This issue of the LDA Bulletin begins and ends with what will be the final Bulletin submissions from several well-known LDA faces: President Lorraine Hammond, General Manager Michael Roberts, Secretary Sarah Asome and Consultant Convenor Olivia Connelly. We thank these hard-working individuals for all their contributions to LDA and to past LDA Bulletins, and we look forward to introducing new faces and new perspectives from LDA Council in the next issue of the Bulletin.

The overall theme of this issue of the Bulletin is 'Speech AND Print', and the focus is on early literacy instruction. The concepts of speech and print are at the heart of the alphabetic code – the code that maps the sounds in spoken words onto written symbols.

The discussion is introduced by linguist and researcher Anna Desjardins, who provides a historical perspective to the way speech and print have been approached in literacy instruction. Anna argues that speech and print are essentially two sides of the same coin.

Jan Wasowicz, well known to many Bulletin readers as the moderator and facilitator of the *SpellTalk* listserv, provides an extended argument in favour of a speech-to-print approach to literacy instruction. Jan provides (with due disclosure) a behind-the-scenes look at the planning that has gone into the *Spell Links* literacy program, providing a detailed explanation of the nuances of one speech-to-print approach. We hope that the systematic phonics instructors who do not regard their programs as essentially 'speech-to-print' in nature, will find her discussion thought-provoking.

A forum of four submissions follows, addressing the issue of the use of decodable readers as part of early literacy instruction. Roslyn Neilson introduces the topic by considering the available evidence in relation to the context in which decodable texts are being used. Sue Lloyd and Sarah Wernham, the co-creators of *Jolly Phonics*, provide comments on the use of decodable readers – comments that are based on their submission to the Draft Australian National Curriculum review in May 2021. Educator Jocelyn Seamer contributes some practical ideas about the efficient implementation of decodable readers. Finally, Emeritus Professor Timothy Shanahan discusses a very important point raised by the use of decodable readers and the challenge of teaching students a 'set for variability'.

The focus on early literacy instruction is put into a broader perspective by Wendy Moore's comprehensive review of, and commentary on, the important recent iteration of the Simple View of Reading – Hoover & Tunmer's (2020) publication, *The cognitive foundations of reading and its acquisition: A framework with applications connecting teaching and learning*.

We hope you enjoy reading the articles in this LDA Bulletin, and we invite you to join in with letters of comment to bulletin.editor@ldaustralia.org. Once again, thanks to the Bulletin Editorial team of Tom Nicholson and Molly de Lemos for their help in preparing this issue, and special thanks to the contributors.

Dr Roslyn Neilson
Editor, LDA Bulletin

