Literacy Assessment & The Literacy Hour in England.

The 9th Annual Roundtable: ASSESSING ASSESSMENT

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Consider the relationship between national/international assessment and specific education policy

Introduction to UK primary literacy policy as it is now practiced in schools
The National Literacy Strategy

- Prof Bob Slavin commented that it reminded him of Kennedy's 1962 ambition to get a man on the moon by the end of the decade...
- ...only harder

- 80% of 11 year olds would reach the expected level of attainment (level 4 English) by 2002. Blunkett, 1999.
Later...2004 targets:
- 85% of 11yr olds at level 4 in English & Maths
- 35% at advanced level 5

Targets sustained til 2006 in “Delivering Results” paper
Factors leading to the NLS revolution

- Brooks (1998) study – primary reading rates static since 1948

- HMS school inspections reported that direct teaching of reading/literacy skills in classrooms was rare. (Woodhead, 1996)

- New Labour – formation of the literacy taskforce and National Literacy Strategy (NLS), prior to election to government in 1998

- Beard (1999) NLS Review of research & other related evidence
Assessment

- National
  - 1995 48% of 11 yrs olds at expected level (DfES, 1996)
  - 1998 61% met the target

- International
  - UK middle to bottom ranked
  - 1991 OECD adult literacy survey – less than 3% performing at highest literacy levels

+ economic rationalist perspectives = poor economic forecast
**Figure 1.3** – National literacy level 5, all scales, percentage of adult population age 16 to 65, all nations: 1994-1996


Reading Wars

- *Reading wars* (Goodman, 1998)
  - Whole language V’s phonics
    - Reading recovery
    - Led to LIFT model (Hurry, Silva, Riley, 1999)

- Gone but not forgotten??
  - SMH Page 1 yesterday
    - 26 of Aust’s leading literacy teachers wrote to Nelson telling him that “the whole language approach” was ineffective and many children were at risk of failing to learn to read
National Literacy Strategy

- Scale –
  - 18,500 gov Primary schools
  - 38,879 Key Stage 1 classrooms

- Assessment
  - NATs (yrs 3 and 5)
  - Tests – v.similar to BSTs
  - Tasks – teacher assessment

Literacy teaching
Policy strategy
Literacy assessment
The Literacy Hour

- September 1998
- NLS Framework for Teaching
- Pedagogy & Curriculum

10 minutes
PLENARY REVIEW OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

15 minutes
COMMUNICATING LESSON OBJECTIVES

20 minutes
READING, WRITING, WORD OR SENTENCE WORK INDIVIDUAL

15 minutes
FOCUSED WORD OR SENTENCE WORK GROUP
Websites

- NLS

- The literacy Hour
International perspectives

- What is good practice in developing early literacy?
  - US 1990 M Jaeger-Adam’s review
  - UK 1999 Roger Beard’s review
  - NZ 1998 Expert Panel review
    - Soler, 2002; Miller 2001

- Calls for Systematic Review
NLS

- Too prescriptive
  - Not prescriptive enough (Jolliffe, 2003)
- Delivered within system of inspection
- Approaches extended to mathematics and to secondary education
- Supplemented with Early Literacy Support (ELS) and SEN support
- Overly ambitious????
## How’d they go??

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Science attainment at Level 4 or above</th>
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