

# Implications for Malta of the report of the European Union High-Level Group of Experts on Literacy

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# Our vision for a literate Europe

- All citizens of Europe shall be literate, so as to achieve their aspirations as individuals, family members, workers and citizens.
- Radically improved literacy will boost innovation, prosperity and cohesion in society, as well as the wellbeing, social participation and employability of all citizens.
- EU Member States will view it as their legal obligation to provide all the support necessary to realise our vision, and this support will include all ages.

# How do we achieve that vision?

Prerequisites:

- Physiological
- Social
- Linguistic
- Educational
- Governmental

# Physiological (1)

## Prerequisites

- Normal brain function
- Adequate intelligence

## Implications

- Avoid 'snake oil', e.g. movement programmes & medical 'solutions'
- Almost every child has enough IQ (p.30)
- Assistive technologies

# Physiological (2)

## Prerequisites

- Normal or corrected-to-normal hearing and sight

## Implications

- Testing at correct ages
- Adaptations

# Social

## Prerequisites

- A supportive, and supported, family
- A supportive community

## Implications

- Family literacy, e.g. PEFaL
- Effective & free preschool/ECEC provision; cf. p.58, 1999 survey in Malta, EPPE in England

# Linguistic (1)

## Prerequisite

- Command of at least one language (or Sign), in particular a broad vocabulary

## Implications

- Every child to enter school speaking the language of the school – cf. pp.24-25
- Early and effective support for children with speech, language and communication needs (pp.60-61)

# Linguistic (2)

## Prerequisite

- Sufficient access to printed material in a language(s) which they speak natively or have learnt

## Implication

- Book-gifting programmes – cf. Bookstart & pp.40-42
- Recently-arrived languages?

# Educational (1)

## Prerequisite

- Effective initial teaching, suited to phonological & grammatical character & orthography of language(s) of instruction

## Implication

- Systematic synthetic phonics within a rich & broad language & literacy curriculum, for Maltese **AND ENGLISH**

# Educational (2)

## Prerequisite

- A rationally organised, hierarchical and progressive curriculum

## Implications

- Ignore England
- Look at Ireland & pp.42-43
- Build enjoyment

# Educational (3)

## Prerequisite

- Effective early intervention

## Implications

- Interventions, not labelling (e.g. dyslexia)
- Aim for at least double normal progress
- Intervene as early as possible – the ‘late developer’ is a myth
- Boost literacy before transfer to secondary – cf. West Dunbartonshire

# Educational (4)

## Prerequisite

- Effective later interventions

## Implications

- Literacy across the curriculum (pp.73-74)
- Programmes for disaffected teenagers, including young and adult offenders (pp.78-82)
- Adult literacy – but expect delayed benefits

# Educational (5)

## Prerequisite

- High-quality teaching; cf. McKinsey reports

## Implications

- Training to be research-based
- Including identification, diagnosis & treatment of reading & writing difficulties

# Educational (6)

## Prerequisite

- High-quality teachers

## Implications

- Recruit best graduates (p.44)
- All teachers to be qualified to Master's?
- Licence to teach, & compulsory renewal?
- Higher status, including salaries

# Governmental (1)

## Prerequisite

- Act visibly now

## Implications

- Mount literacy promotion campaigns
- Set up libraries in unexpected places
- Change the mindset on dyslexia so everyone knows their commitment is essential (pp.45-46)

# Governmental (2)

## Prerequisite

- Reduce the gaps – see pp.46-50

## Implications

- Socio-economic, = reduce inequality
- Migrant – all can contribute
- Gender – diversify reading material
- Digital, = ensure access & effective use

# Governmental (3)

- Establish a system to monitor literacy levels of adults (pp.78, 81)
- Communicate widely about the need for adult literacy development
- Strengthen the profession of adult literacy teachers
- Ensure broad and varied access to learning opportunities of sufficient length to make a difference (p.81)

# Also ...

- Set national & international targets & monitor progress – cf. pp.36, 43
- Maintain adults' skills
- Develop workplace programmes (pp.82-84)
- Sustain programmes across years & political timetables (p.32)
- Institute awards & award schemes
- Abolish secondary selection

All in all ...

Take seriously all  
the  
recommendations  
on pp.87-101!

**Grazzi hafna!**