Reviewing the Literacy Strategy in State Schools

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Literacy for All Seminar
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Background and Context in the State Sector (1)

- A lot of good practice and inspired action
- Inefficient coordination
  - between in-school providers
  - with and between external service providers
  - with third-party providers
  - with parents
- Overlapping service (4 service providers)
- Action not data or outcomes driven
- Insufficient ownership by class teacher and school
- Lack of clarity in quality of school leadership required to drive sustained change leading to significant improvement
The Great Literacy Attainment Debate...
Background and Context in the State Sector (2)

- National Literacy Surveys implementation history showed that many state schools needed to upskill internal capacity to address literacy needs strategically.
The Twin Challenges

- Improving Literacy attainment

- Fostering sustainable school improvement processes

- How to ensure improvement in literacy attainment not as a function of central direction, which does not lead to sustainable school uptake, but as a function of and a vehicle to effective and ongoing school development processes
Why this Approach?

- In the spirit of the College Reforms, the key Change Driver was the upskilling of school development processes buttressed by external technical support and review.
- This implied that the data generated would be used to empower these processes, NOT to force change through a market-based model of crude comparison and selection.
- Not only to provide the fishing rod, but to ensure that the user is ready, willing and able to use the fishing rod effectively.
Way forward  *(Presentation to HoS Feb 2011)*

We need to ensure that our primary schools
- Understand that the onus of attainment, not only of the process leading to it, will rest on them
- Have expectations for improvement
- can develop targets and action plans accordingly
- Are accountable for their fulfillment
- Are shielded from counterproductive pressure
- Have *the enabling framework* to respond to results and ensure learners’ entitlement
Enabling Framework

- Training
- Curriculum structures
- Resources
- Technical support
- Data
- School development processes
National Strategy for 2010–11

- Reliable data
- Stabilizing B.S. Sec provision
- Entrenching the Checklists
- Developing Resources
- Literacy attainment entitlement
- Empowering Teachers
- Empowering Heads
Teachers to use the Checklists for
  ◦ Diagnostic
  ◦ Referral
  ◦ Assessment purposes

Support service provision tied to checklist assessment

At the end of Year 3, learners still at risk of insufficient literacy mastery need to be prioritised so as to ‘ensure’ mastery in Year 4
## Literacy Action Plan Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School-based Provision</th>
<th>Community-based Provision</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Identification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
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</tbody>
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Action Plans

- Statutory Action Plans
  - Focus on Year 4 BS learners identified by end of Term 2

- School-Initiated Action Plans
  - May include both short and medium term actions from all parts of the Framework
  - But DOES NOT replace Mandatory Action Plans
## Review of 2011 and 2012 SAPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfactory</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory – fine-tune re teacher involvement</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory – fine-tune re expected outcomes</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires review</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Data in Schools’ Hands

- Number of learners with checklist per year group
- Improvement of learners with checklist
- Number of learners in compl. Education
- Comparison over the scholastic years
- National yearly survey of literacy mastery in Maltese and English at end Yr 2/start of Yr 3. In 2011 it covered 30% of cohort. As from 2012 it covered 10% of cohort.
- PIRLS data
% Increase in Ckl Learners

Colleges

2010-11
2011-12
% Improvement of Ckl Learners

Colleges: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10

2010-11
2011-12
Process of Simplification and Devolution

- Checklist assessment procedure has been reduced by more than half
- Structured teacher handing over process to avoid duplicating assessment
- Literacy Strategy Handbook to be issued, but as draft as part of consultation process
- Development of College–based Literacy Teams to ensure support, implementation and improvement
- Entrenching literacy strategy in school SDPs
- DQSE to take more of a QA role, whilst retaining Strategy leadership and support with a view to devolve to the Colleges.
Strategic choices

Up to now:

- Focus was only literacy strategy
- Focus was only on day school provision
- Focus was only on the state sector

N.B. The Benchmark Effect in the Non-State Sector

- We need to build on this positive experience for a truly national strategy that foregrounds the entitlement of all learners of all ages, in all spheres of life.