



There and Back Again: Tracing the Shift from Balanced Literacy to Structured Literacy in New Zealand

Faculty Development Leave

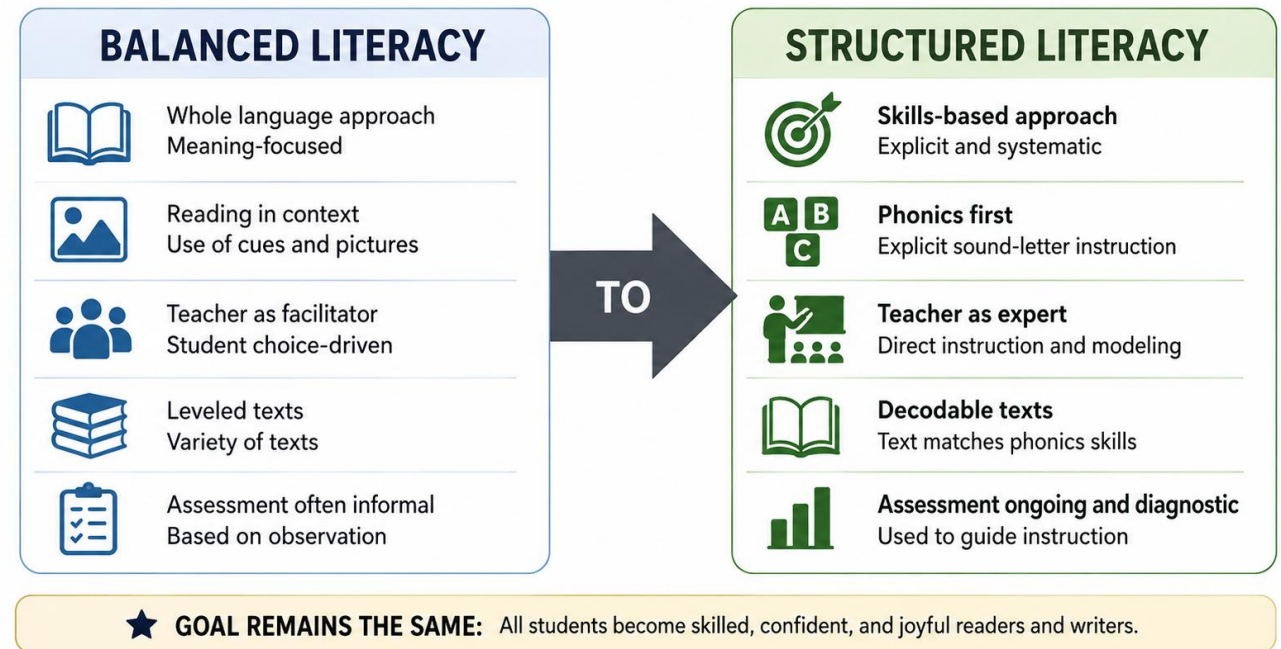
Dr. Bethanie Pletcher

Professor of Literacy Education

A Shift from Balanced Literacy to Structured Literacy Education

- I investigated how the country—once among the highest-ranked in the world for literacy education—is navigating the shift from a balanced literacy approach to a structured literacy model
- Like here in the US, the government is enforcing a phonics-forward model of teaching children to read and outlawing methods that created lifelong readers, not just lifelong decoders of print

THE SHIFT IN LITERACY INSTRUCTION



Meeting with the Literacy Education Community

- I presented my research at the UofA to faculty members and doctoral students
- I met with literacy professors, professional development providers, members of the New Zealand Literacy Association, and children's book publishers
- Dame Wendy Pye, a leading global publisher and founder of Sunshine Books
- Rachel Walker and Sarah Ensor, owners of Flying Start Books



Waipapa
Taumata Rau
University
of Auckland



The Te Puna Reo Pohewa | Marie Clay Research Centre invites you to a seminar with

Bethanie Pletcher

Interactive Writing: The Missing Link in Primary School Classrooms

17 February
1-2 pm
B201-341

Light refreshments provided
RSVP through the QR code



QR
CODE
TBC

Abstract

Interactive writing is an instructional strategy in which the teacher and children "share the pen" to construct a collaboratively composed text. Information from three articles will be shared that support the use of interactive writing in early classrooms. The first article explains how interactive writing was implemented in two prekindergarten classrooms and how teachers might use this strategy in their own settings. In the second article, our study explored prekindergarten teachers' perceptions of interactive writing and the professional supports provided for its implementation. The third article reports a study of interactive writing implementation in a first-grade classroom and its effects on children's foundational literacy knowledge. Taken together, the three studies underscore the importance of integrating writing into literacy instruction and highlights the role of ongoing teacher support in fostering effective writing pedagogy in early childhood educational settings.

Presenter details

Bethanie Pletcher is a Professor of Literacy Education in the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Learning Sciences at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Her research focuses on literacy coaching; the design and implementation of reading clinics on university and elementary school campuses; and instructional supports for young children experiencing reading and writing difficulties. Dr. Pletcher has authored more than 65 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, regularly presents at national and international conferences, and served two terms as an editor of the national journal *Literacy Research and Instruction*. She is a two-time recipient of the Texas A&M System Chancellor's Academy for Teacher Educators Award and was most recently honoured with her second Jack Cassidy Distinguished Literacy Service Award. Prior to her faculty appointment, Dr. Pletcher spent 12 years as a Reading Recovery® teacher, reading specialist, and classroom teacher in public schools.

To Pōtahi Mātauranga | Faculty of Arts and Education



Classroom Observations

- I visited both inner-city and rural schools, where I observed reading and writing instruction in Years 1, 2, 3, and 6 classrooms
- I saw similar things as I've seen in classrooms here – lengthy phonics lessons and no books in the classrooms – just short passages for children to read





The Beauty of Aotearoa New Zealand

- Along the way, I immersed herself in New Zealand's beauty—visiting a Māori cultural center to see mud geysers and haka performances, exploring Hobbit holes from *The Lord of the Rings* film set, spelunking in glowworm caves, and hiking through mountains, along rivers, around lakes, and across beaches

Dissemination

- Since returning, I have been compiling my notes and am working on several articles examining the shift in English-speaking countries—from literacy instruction focused on making meaning from authentic texts to approaches that are more phonics-forward and rely primarily on decodable texts
- Two of these pieces have been invited by the *New Zealand Literacy Forum* journal
- I have forged many connections and will continue to collaborate

