

# Bulletin



**In the spotlight:  
Tier 2 intervention and differentiation**

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(As at March 2023)

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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

The Bulletin is published three times a year. For information about submitting articles, and for requests to reprint articles, please contact the Editor: [bulletin.editor@ldaustralia.org](mailto:bulletin.editor@ldaustralia.org).

The Bulletin is designed by Andrew Faith ([www.littledesign.studio](http://www.littledesign.studio)) and printed by DTS Communicate.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of, or endorsed by, Learning Difficulties Australia.

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# In this issue of the Bulletin...

## Julie Scali, Editor, LDA Bulletin

I am delighted to share with you our Spotlight on Tier 2 intervention and Differentiation edition of the Bulletin. This edition focuses specifically on the common reading difficulties students experience, as well as considerations and recommendations for small group intervention in the primary and secondary context, in both literacy and numeracy.

Tier 2 and tier 3 intervention (sometimes referred to as Wave 2 and Wave 3), whilst essential for closing learning gaps for students, it is widely misunderstood in terms of what it is, how it looks, and when it should take place. This misunderstanding also applies to differentiation. Recently, we lost an icon of education- Dr Jim Rose- who has paved the way for so much of what we know about evidence-based practice in literacy. His most prominent work was that of the 'Rose Review', a United Kingdom national inquiry into early literacy teaching in 2006. It is not surprising that his work is one we refer to here to explain the nuances of intervention and differentiation, their similarities, and differences. Rose cites:

*First Teaching, sometimes also referred to as 'Wave 1' teaching, is that teaching which is provided for all children as part of the school's entitlement curriculum. It is usually delivered by children's regular teacher or teachers. Although normally delivered with a whole class, first teaching may well involve differentiation and a variety of approaches, including whole-class teaching, guided group work,*

*independent activity and individual support where appropriate. It can also include in-class support from, for example, a teaching assistant, where this is part of the school's regular provision. This is distinct from any additional teaching which is provided for selected children only in order to meet particular learning needs or support catch up. This can be for groups of varying sizes and/or individuals and is sometimes called 'Wave 2' and 'Wave 3' intervention. It is often delivered by an additional teacher or teachers, or by a regular teacher outside standard teaching time. Such additional support should always supplement, never replace, first teaching.*

Rose Report, p195.

Our feature piece of this edition is 'Common reading problems and how to help children who have them' by Louise Spear-Swerling. This article outlines the three common reading difficulty profiles through case studies and recommendations for assessment and intervention. Spear-Swerling explains how recognising these three profiles can provide a valuable starting point for planning reading instruction and intervention.

The second piece is a supplemental guide for schools in how to embed small group intervention in schools entitled 'How to embed small group tuition in schools: A guide for school leaders'. It is written by Julie Sonnemann, Jordana Hunter and Anika Stobart from the Grattan Institute. Following on from this supplemental guide, Dawn Grant-Skiba outlines considerations for Tier 2 intervention in a secondary context.

Of equal interest but in the primary setting, Greg Clement outlines how as a Principal of a Victorian school, he led successful change in literacy through a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model. Also in this Bulletin, we explore the topic of differentiation. Often incorrectly used interchangeably with intervention,

differentiation is what needs to happen in every classroom at the whole class level. Peter Westwood outlines recommendations and challenges for differentiation in mathematics.



To wrap-up, this edition also includes a book review entitled 'Structured literacy interventions: Teaching Students with Reading Difficulties, Grades K-6' edited by Louise Spear-Swerling. Spear-Swerling provides practical guidance and recommendations for teachers in how to identify the three reading difficulty profiles in students and how to provide intervention in all aspects of literacy, including writing. She has curated an exceptional series of chapters written by well-respected educators, including a chapter on spelling interventions by Louisa Moats. It is an excellent read for teachers and learning support specialists.

To all educators in Australia, I would like to wish you all a well-deserved first term break. Happy reading!

### Reference

Rose, J. (2009). *Independent review of the primary curriculum: Final report*. Department for Children Schools and Families: United Kingdom.

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*Julie Scali is the Director of Literacy Impact, specialising in structured literacy and Response to Intervention. A former deputy principal in Australia, she now works with principals, school leaders and teachers with consultancy, professional learning and online modules to embed schoolwide evidence-based literacy approaches.*