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Teacher Education on Dyslexia: An Analysis of Policy and Practice in Australia and England

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Increasing moves towards inclusive education have meant that children with learning difficulties are almost exclusively educated in mainstream schools. Based on prevalence estimates from a variety of sources, it is likely that up to 20% of the population of Australia lives with dyslexia of some severity. Thus, every teacher is highly likely to have more than one student with dyslexia in her or his class. Teachers are at the forefront of supporting students with dyslexia: they are expected to identify students who are struggling with literacy, differentiate their teaching approaches to cater for each child's needs and ensure that the emotional wellbeing of students is attended to. It is therefore imperative that teachers are adequately trained, particularly during initial teacher education, in understanding dyslexia and in how best to support students' needs. Australia has always been guided by education approaches in England. It is worth considering whether Australia could learn from teacher education on dyslexia there. This paper, which addresses the matter above, is in three parts. Firstly, it outlines the definitions and prevalence of dyslexia. Secondly, it details current policies and practices in teacher education on dyslexia in Australia and England. Thirdly, it considers those features of teacher education on dyslexia in England which could be emulated usefully by Australia.

Definitions and prevalence of dyslexia

Despite first officially being described in 1896 in the British Medical Journal by an English doctor (Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, 2017), astoundingly today a "single, universal definition

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of dyslexia does not exist" (Washburn et al, 2014, p1). Taking into account the key features described by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) (2019) and several researchers, a composite definition of dyslexia is proposed as follows (Rose, 2009, p10):

> Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction… Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities…It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points… Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge… A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well founded [sic] intervention.

Regardless of the debates around definition, "[d]yslexia can no longer be dismissed as lacking in reliable scientific evidence" (Bell, 2013, p105). "[A] complex causal chain from biology, to cognition to behaviour" is the view that Knight (2018, p209) takes, while Bell et al (2011) have previously cautioned that "the interplay of biology, cognition and behaviour in developmental dyslexia continues to be a matter of debate" (p175), yet affirm that "the link between cognitive processing and literacy is becoming clearer" (p175).

The term 'dyslexia' "is commonly used by Australian educators, policy-makers, support organisation [sic] and parents" (Serry & Hammond, 2015, p143). The Australia Dyslexia Association (2018) notes that in Australia "the term SLD (Specific/Significant Learning Difficulty/Disability) or LD (Learning Difficulty) are still commonly being used interchangeably and as an umbrella term for a variety of difficulties which may or may not be dyslexia". For the purposes of this analysis, as far as possible the focus is on literature and policies regarding dyslexia specifically, since specificity is

important in both knowledge and supportive approaches (Bell, 2013).

The figure given for the prevalence of dyslexia in the general population, including Australia, varies depending on the source. The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) estimates that "15-20% of the population has a language-based learning disability" (IDA, 2019). In Western Australia, the Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation (2014) estimates that "at least 20% of students currently enrolled in Western Australian schools are at risk of failing to meet an appropriate level of educational attainment as a result of learning difficulties". The Australian Dyslexia Association offers a conservative estimate that 10% of the Australian population are affected by dyslexia, but then goes on to state that "dyslexia affects 1 in 5 [20%] when including the continuum of mild to severe dyslexia" (ADA, 2018). Taking into account a class size of between 20-30 students, a teacher will have between one and five students with dyslexia in her or his class (Knight, 2018).

Current policies and practices in Australia

Australian education is currently premised on inclusion. Inclusive education policies have been used in an attempt to "remove distinctions between special and regular education in order to provide education for all children in inclusive settings" (Carrington et al, 2016, p140). In the past, students with learning difficulties were often taught by specialist teachers who had studied special education courses at postgraduate level (Rohl & Greaves, 2005). With the introduction of inclusive education, "both the Australian federal and state governments kept the field of learning difficulties/disabilities outside special education" (Elkins, 2017, p393) and thus the responsibility falls on classroom teachers and schools to support students with difficulties (Serry & Hammond, 2015).

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008), which underpins the Australian Curriculum, enshrines among others, the following goals with

relevance to dyslexia: "Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence…all Australian governments and all school sectors must: …promote personalised learning that aims to fulfil the diverse capabilities of each young Australian" (p7) and, in part, "Goal 2: All young Australians become: successful learners" (p8).

The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011, p2) "are a public statement of what constitutes *teacher* quality. They define the work of *teachers* and make explicit elements of high-quality, effective *teaching* in 21st century schools that will improve educational outcomes for students." The standards' descriptors include: "[d]ifferentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities…[s]trategies to support full participation of students with disability" (p9) and "[identify] strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities" (p14) (AITSL, 2011).

The Dyslexia Working Party (Bond et al, 2010) recommended that the government recognise dyslexia as a disability "at both State and Commonwealth level…under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*" (p10). They also recommended that dyslexia "should be included under the special needs section of the Education Acts *in each of the states* [my italics]" as it is in New South Wales, so that "additional disability funding becomes available" (Bond et al, 2010, p10). The government (Australian Government, not dated) confirmed that dyslexia is recognised as a disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. As for inclusion in all the states' Education Acts, the government (Australian Government, not dated) responded that "[a]mendment of the relevant Education Acts in each state and territory jurisdiction is a matter for consideration by the state and territory governments" (p2). Thus, funding is not made available to support students with dyslexia, except in New South Wales. Unfortunately, therefore, recognition in law does not necessarily translate into tangible benefits for students with dyslexia.

"In mainstream schools there is support available for students with disabilities to ensure that all students can participate in education…In Victorian schools [for example], students with disabilities are supported through the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD), which provides schools with additional resources" (Skues & Cunningham, 2011, p170) – unfortunately, students in Victoria who have *learning* disabilities do not receive funding as they are not included in the PSD (Skues & Cunningham, 2011). "New South Wales is the only Australian state that recognises dyslexia in their Education Act (Educational Support for Dyslexic Children Bill, 2007)" (Serry & Hammond, 2015, p145), however, students with dyslexia were not being funded at the time of Skues & Cunningham's review. Since there is no funding, there are not additional resources provided, meaning teachers are the frontline in providing support for students with dyslexia.

The requirements of and expectations on teachers in mainstream schools to cater for the specific learning needs of students with dyslexia means that it is essential that they are thoroughly trained to meet these challenges. Unfortunately, according to the extremely limited research available, teachers in Australia are insufficiently equipped to support students with dyslexia.

"50% of the 34 teacher training programs in Australia devoted less than 5% of the curriculum to teaching about reading" (Bond et al, 2010, p4). One can extrapolate from this percentage to reflect on how little time in these courses was spent on making trainee teachers aware of learning disabilities related to reading, including dyslexia. Furthermore, "60% of senior teachers considered the majority of beginning teachers were not equipped to teach children to read." (Bond et al, 2010, p4). Rohl & Greaves (2005) support this: "Beginning teachers appear to be least well prepared to teach literacy to those students who find it hardest to learn" (p7).

The IDA noted in 2013 (p40): "Australia is the third largest English speaking [sic] country in the world; yet, it still lags behind the United Kingdom and United States in the identification and educational treatment of dyslexia". Historically, Australian

education has looked to the UK and USA for guidance, innovation and best practice in education. Since policies and practices vary between states in the USA, it seems practical to consider teacher education on dyslexia in the UK, specifically England (on which most research has been carried out). Consideration can then be given to whether Australia could usefully adopt any of the policies or approaches used in England to train teachers better to support students with dyslexia.

Current policies and practices in England

In the UK, the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act* (SENDA, 2001), the *Equality Act of 2010* (2010) and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* (2004), protect students with dyslexia and also recognise that dyslexia is a specific learning disability (Washburn et al, 2014). Due to inclusive education, the government expects that the needs of students with dyslexia and other special education needs and disabilities (SEND) will be provided for in mainstream education; teachers in mainstream classrooms in England are thus regarded by the Department for Education as being central to providing support for these students (Ross, 2017).

Knight (2018, p210) notes that the Department for Education's *National Teaching Standards* framework "states that teachers must 'have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs […] and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them'". Moreover, "[t]eachers have a duty to identify any barriers to a child's learning under the SEN [special education needs] Code of Practice" in place since 2001 (Gibson & Kendall, 2010, p192). Teachers are not required to diagnose dyslexia, but since they should be able to "identify those that could be at risk and to intervene appropriately", they must have a clear understanding of the underlying difficulties causing dyslexia (Knight, 2018, p209).

Despite the legal protection afforded to dyslexic students in the UK – and the expectations of the Department for Education – research

shows that teachers in England are not adequately trained to meet the needs of their SEND students. For example, Knight (2018, p214) notes that "[t]he majority of teachers (71.8%) said that dyslexia was 'not covered well at all' on their initial teacher training course." One would hope that, at least, the teacher education delivered would be up-to-date and evidence-based. Yet "those who had been teaching from NQT [newly qualified teacher status] to 5 years were significantly less likely to use a cognitive descriptor"; that is, despite their recent education, these new teachers were not well informed about the *underlying* issues causing dyslexia – they focused on visible behavioural descriptors (Knight, 2018, p214). A large- scale survey of teachers in England and in Wales found that, generally, they "lacked the knowledge of the biological (i.e., neurological) and cognitive (i.e., processing) aspects of dyslexia" (Knight, 2018, p217). Bell (2013) encountered similar problems in a study: "Many participants, who were all serving practitioners, had little or no knowledge of either recent research on dyslexia or an understanding of its underlying difficulties" (p108).

Gwernan-Jones & Burden (2010, p80) found that even among those teachers in England who feel confident in supporting students with dyslexia "the vast majority desire more training about dyslexia, particularly with regard to effective intervention and support strategies". These authors also found that few newly qualified teachers were clear on the specifics of helping dyslexic students, even though they had positive attitudes towards these students.

An important review of research on dyslexia was undertaken by Sir Jim Rose (and a panel of experts) and published in 2009 as *Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties* (known informally as 'the Rose report'). Although he found "much good provision which is meeting children's needs and is highly commended by parents" (Rose, 2009, p2), the 217-page report contained many specific suggestions for improvement of provision for students with dyslexia in England.

Rose (2009, p1) recommended that "high quality interventions for children with literacy and dyslexic difficulties" be developed and

put in place, acknowledging that this would require "well trained, knowledgeable teachers" (p1). He recommended that the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) would need to commission short courses for teachers to equip them in this regard. Rose further suggested that the DCSF make funding available for some teachers to be trained as specialists in teaching students with dyslexia, with the idea that schools could partner together to share this teacher expertise (Rose, 2009).

The role of local authorities was also highlighted in the report. A survey found that three quarters had already prepared a written policy on dyslexia (or were doing so) and were guiding schools on being dyslexia friendly. Nearly all authorities made provision of education on dyslexia a priority: for SENCOs (Special Educational Needs Coordinators), regarding interventions for dyslexic students, through to training for whole schools to raise awareness (Rose, 2009). Just under one fifth of the authorities had secured a BDA Quality Mark for dyslexia friendly services and a further quarter were in the process of doing this (Rose, 2009).

Rose (2009) went on to describe dyslexia friendly schools, which are accredited by the British Dyslexia Foundation (BDA), who work with local authorities to help schools achieve this status. Accreditation – and the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark – is only given to schools that meet quality standards via auditing and can also provide proof that their provision of excellent education for dyslexic students has been recognised by the public (BDA, 2017). As part of achieving a successful audit, schools who wish to be recognised as being dyslexia friendly are required to prove that "teachers have received appropriate training [on dyslexia]" (BDA, 2017, p7), that they have "a plan for on-going in-service development" (p21) and "that training is to be updated through in-service development"(p44) in future. In addition, at least one teacher must have diploma-level expertise in teaching and supporting students with dyslexia (BDA, 2017, p21). Evidence of teacher education is collected in a number of ways, including through interviews with staff and checking of staff CVs (BDA, 2017, p45).

Apart from teachers undergoing the required education on dyslexia, "[b]ecoming a dyslexia friendly school *requires a review of the implementation of major whole school policies* [my italics], focusing upon teaching and learning, monitoring and assessment, differentiation and inclusion across the range of ability and need" (BDA, 2017, p4). Providing evidence of teacher education is only one part of the audit process, but a crucial one, since the BDA (2017, p5) believes that "teaching staff…are key to the success of students overcoming their difficulties".

In 2005, Norwich et al published a study of dyslexia friendly schools in England which found that the quality of what was in place in different LEAs (local education authorities) varied. At that time, they found one school deemed "exemplary" (p160) in its approach and noted that this was as a result of "the commitment of the head teacher, the central role of professional knowledge and skills, and partnership with those in the LEA, especially the educational psychology service" (p160). This comes as no surprise since the BDA's (2017) dyslexia friendly school policy includes the role of school leadership (as noted by Firth et al, 2013).

The Rose report (2009) also made recommendations about initial teacher education. Annex 1 of the report is of particular note in this regard, where he outlined the then *Current Teacher Training Developments* in which the DCSF works with the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). He recommended that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers offer the specialist units in ITT for primary undergraduate courses which had been launched in June 2008, "with £500,000 funding to aid dissemination" (p129) including a unit entitled *Learning and Teaching for dyslexic pupils*. He noted that "[s]imilar units for secondary undergraduate courses and for post graduate teacher training (PGCE) courses [would] be rolled out in September 2009" (Rose, 2009, p129) and suggested that student teachers should be given opportunities to work in special schools or other specialist teaching environments, as well as in school literacy programmes, so they could learn from "experienced teachers who are successfully tackling children's literacy difficulties" (p24).

Apart from the Rose report, more recently the Department for Education (DfE) conducted a consultation process (December 2017) regarding increased rigour in attaining Qualified Teacher Status, to which they then responded (May 2018). In addition, the Department for Education (DfE) produced a White Paper on educational excellence in 2016 which set out their plans for the following five years. *A Framework of Core Content for Initial Teacher Training (ITT)* was also published that year – it was developed by an independent group of experts chaired by Stephen Munday CBE. Finally, in February this year, a Parliamentary Briefing Paper on Initial Teacher Training was published (Foster, 2019).

Evidence-based knowledge of dyslexia for teachers is a theme of the DfE White Paper (2016) as well as conclusions drawn by researchers studying teachers and their education in the UK. Besides stated aims to improve Initial Teacher Training, the DfE (2016, p102) committed to investing in "supporting professionals in schools…by ensuring that they have access to training and support on…dyslexia" and to "improv[ing] our evidence base". Knight (2018, p210) makes it clear that she believes it is "vital that teachers have a good understanding of…the evidence-based interventions which support students with dyslexia". Washburn et al (2014, p14) concur that there is "a need for PSTs [pre-service teachers] to receive the most recent, accurate, and evidence-based information about…dyslexia". Evidence-based teacher education is also "essential to combat misconceptions" (Knight, 2018, p207). "When common misconceptions about dyslexia are perpetuated, appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia may become distorted"; for example, a common misconception is that dyslexia involves difficulty with visual perception (Washburn et al, 2014, p14).

Another recurring theme in the literature is CPD (continuing professional development) regarding dyslexia. The results of the study by Knight (2018) mentioned above, showed that additional education for teachers "can have a significant positive effect" (p217), therefore she suggests that CPD on dyslexia be increased.

She also notes that "training should be provided at regular intervals during a teacher's career to ensure that they are aware of the most up- to- date information and research on dyslexia" (Knight, 2018, p217). The UK Government (2017) outlined specific proposals for CPD, including a national framework of CPD for teachers who are in the early stages of their careers, and stated the aim of ensuring "that a culture of CPD is embedded during these first few years and continues throughout a teacher's career" (p16). Rose (2009) in fact described an Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) comprising "on-line, special educational needs, training materials for serving teachers…The first round focussed on communication difficulties, including dyslexia, and has been rolled out to schools through local authorities over [2008]" (p82). It is encouraging that new ways to support teacher learning about dyslexia have been developed.

When the UK Government published its response (2018) to its consultation on teacher education, it extended the statutory induction period for newly qualified teachers from one year to two years to allow them additional time to gain knowledge. It also brought in an Early Career Framework (ECF) to guide schools in supporting new teachers during their induction time (UK Government, 2018, p8) and noted that, during the consultation phase, support had been strong for including proposed areas, one of which was "Supporting pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND)" (UK Government, 2017, p16).

Interestingly, at the consultation stage, the government proposed exploring whether units in the ECF could "offer Masters level credits, to build on the Masters credits that some teachers will have gained through their Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)" (UK Government, 2017, p18) and thus lay a base for more teachers to study further after qualifying. When publishing its response, the government did acknowledge respondents who "supported exploring the potential to build in Masters credits" (UK Government, 2018, p23); however, it was not mentioned in the outline of the next steps the government would take as a result of the consultation-response process, or in the UK Parliament Briefing Paper on Initial Teacher Training published in February this year

(Foster, 2019). It appears that this idea has been shelved without further mention.

In the recently published UK Parliament Briefing Paper (Foster, 2019) in the section 'Teacher training routes', figures are given showing that "the general trend has been an increasing proportion of trainees entering school-led routes" (p7): for the 2018-2019 academic year, "53%" of entrants to postgraduate Initial Teacher Training (ITT) enrolled on school-led education (p7). Foster (2019) notes that recent governments' policies have encouraged school-led ITT. Although the implications of this for increasing teacher knowledge and skills in supporting students with learning difficulties are not discussed, it seems reasonable to suggest that those undertaking ITT in schools will have greater exposure to learning disabilities, including dyslexia, and opportunities to learn from experienced teachers in action in classrooms.

Features of teacher education on dyslexia in England which could be emulated usefully by Australia

Consideration can now be given to whether features of education policy and practice regarding dyslexia support in England can be emulated usefully by Australia. Despite – or perhaps because of – the similarity of problematic aspects in the two countries' mainstream education systems, the recommendations from the Rose report (2009), the UK Government's consultation and response regarding qualified teacher status (UK Government, 2017; 2018) and the UK Parliament Briefing Paper on Initial Teacher Training (Foster, 2019) provide guidance for Australia. Firstly, it is important to ensure that better initial teacher education on dyslexia is put in place. Secondly, supporting an increase in dyslexia friendly schools would be effective since the requirements for dyslexia friendly status include well-trained teachers and ongoing updating of teacher education; schools with this status work together with the national dyslexia association as well as local authorities to ensure their teachers are well trained.

In spite of the now longstanding official requirements for teachers to support students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia in mainstream classrooms – and available evidence regarding effective teaching approaches for these students (Skues & Cunningham, 2011) – in 2011 "Australian teachers receive[d] little or no formal training about LDs [learning disabilities]", according to Skues & Cunningham (2011, p171). It appears teachers are still not receiving adequate education regarding dyslexia: as mentioned, Knight (2018) found that "[t]he majority of teachers (71.8%) said that dyslexia was 'not covered well at all'" (p214) in their initial teaching education. Teacher training is therefore completely at odds with Standards 1.5 and 1.6 of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* which require teachers to "[d]ifferentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities" and use "[s]trategies to support full participation of students with disability" respectively (AITSL, 2011, p9).

The education authorities in Australia should consider following the lead of their counterparts in England by "[e]ncouraging initial teacher training providers to build on their coverage of SEN [special educational needs] and disability by offering specialist units for primary undergraduate initial teacher training (ITT)" – including a unit on teaching dyslexic students (Rose, 2009, p129). In terms of broader coverage of learning disabilities such as dyslexia for all teachers undertaking ITT, "a framework of core course content for ITT" (Munday, 2016, p5) should be developed "underpinned by the [Teachers'] Standards…giving further clarity about effective preparation for excellent teaching under the rubric of each Standard" (p6) and setting out "the key knowledge, practice and behaviour that providers must ensure trainees are demonstrating"(p6). This would ensure more uniformity across teacher education programmes' content in Australia and adequate coverage of supporting those with learning disabilities and dyslexia. Serry & Hammond (2015) describe how in 2014 the then Australian Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne, "hosted two 'Policy Roundtables on Dyslexia'…to inform policy about how initial teacher education and ongoing professional learning can ensure that teachers in schools have access to up-to-date evidence and

information on how to support this student cohort" (p146). These authors also noted the then "Federal Government's intention to improve the quality of education for students with dyslexia" (Serry & Hammond, 2015, p146). With changes in government and different policies coming into focus, momentum might have been lost in the drive to support dyslexic students more effectively, but this would represent a suitable starting point to get these sorts of policies back on track.

Although the "model of dyslexia-friendly whole-school support is little known in Australia" (Firth et al, 2013, p117), it is worth attempting to encourage an increase in the number of dyslexia friendly schools here. Despite the International Dyslexia Association (2013, p40) stating in a column in a literacy journal that "In August, 2012, the ADA achieved the first ADA Dyslexia Friendly School in [Queensland], Australia, other states are following [sic]", specific details about dyslexia friendly schools appear to be sorely lacking in Australia, both in the literature and in the public domain. Even the Australian Dyslexia Association gives extremely limited information on its website about becoming an 'ADA Accredited School' (ADA, 2018):

> An ADA recognised (accredited) school is a school that is working on lifting the language and literacy standards in every classroom, whilst also applying suitable modification and adjustments where required. These schools are self-sufficient when it comes to looking after students with dyslexia. These schools have a focus on improving individual teacher training in each and every general classroom for ALL children.

A document titled *Helping People with Dyslexia: A National Agenda*, which was fully supported by the ADA, was produced by The Dyslexia Working Party (Bond et al, 2010) chaired by Max Coltheart. It outlined recommendations which included: establishing a national programme "for the development and accreditation of 'dyslexia friendly' schools" (Bond et al 2010, p12) and referred to the British Dyslexia Association's dyslexia friendly school requirements. It went on to propose a funding scheme to

assist schools with achieving dyslexia friendly status and suggested that "[s]chools already accredited as dyslexia-friendly could also apply to this scheme for funding to become consultants and PD [professional development] providers to other schools" (Bond et al, 2010, p12).

The Australian Government responded: "[t]here is currently no Australian Government funding available for the establishment of a national accreditation program for dyslexia-friendly schools" (Australian Government, 2012, p7). Perhaps this avenue could be explored again, using detailed analysis of the operation of the BDA's dyslexia friendly schools accreditation system, due to its success in England, and revising the current ADA Dyslexia Friendly School model.

It is worth noting that increasing the number of dyslexia friendly schools in Australia would provide benefits for all students, not just those with dyslexia. "Any classroom-based intervention made on behalf of dyslexic learners has the potential to enhance the learning of a majority of pupils" as it represents tailored responses to differences in learning (BDA, 2017, p8). Carrington et al (2016) support this view: in their study of teachers' experiences in inclusive schooling in the Australian context, they note that "evidence suggests that more positive attitudes for inclusive education influence teachers' pedagogy and practices to benefit both the children with disability as well as other children in the classroom" (p141).

Conclusion

Dyslexia's prevalence in the general population means that every class will contain dyslexic students. Inclusive education makes mainstream schools responsible for providing differentiated teaching for students with learning disabilities, including dyslexia, and Australian teachers' duties in this regard are enshrined in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) and the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011). Although, as has been

discussed, England has similar problems with coverage of learning disabilities and dyslexia in their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses, what can be drawn upon usefully by Australia are: firstly, the specific ways in which ITT has, and is being, reformed and standardised to provide consistent coverage of knowledge of learning disabilities and supportive practices; and, secondly, the approaches which have successfully increased the number of dyslexia friendly schools. It is vital that teachers in Australia are provided with the knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence they need to support students with dyslexia, so that *all* young Australians may become "successful learners" (MCEETYA, 2008, p8); "the valuable role of a knowledgeable and insightful teacher for children and adolescents with dyslexia should not be underestimated." (Washburn et al, 2014, p7).

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