

**St. Patrick’s Primary School**

**Literacy Policy**

**Context**

This policy has been written within the context of the most current legislation and guidance available. Staff are guided by the following policy documents:

* The Northern Ireland Curriculum, CCEA
* NI Literacy Framework (reworked by SELB & WELB CASS team)
* Count, Read, Succeed – A strategy to improve outcomes in Literacy & Numeracy, DENI
* Every School A Good School- A Policy For School Improvement, DENI,
* Together Towards Improvement, DENI and
* Programme for International Reading & Literacy Strategy (PIRLS)
* The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF):Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary

These documents have outlined indicators of what is recognised as effective performance. This Literacy policy will address the guiding principles and practice in St. Patrick’s P.S. using the headings:

* + Ethos
  + Learning & Teaching
  + Planning
  + Leadership & Management
  + ICT
  + A School Connected to its Community

Though from the outset, it is considered important to establish a definition of literacy.

**Principles:**

We view the development of Literacy as an entitlement for all pupils and therefore the responsibility of all teachers - the whole school - in partnership with the pupils, parents, Board of Governors, Education Authority and other support agencies.

In St. Patrick's P.S., the following definition of Literacy as laid out in, *'Count, Read: Succeed:* guides the teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum:

‘Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately and legibly, taking account of different purposes, contexts, conventions and audiences. It involves the development of:

a. an integrated approach to the acquisition of talking, listening, reading and writing skills across the curriculum;

b. knowledge that allows a speaker, writer and reader to use language appropriate to different social situations;

c. formal and informal language across all areas of social interaction; and

d. the ability to read, understand and use information in multiple formats and platforms, including traditional print and on-screen material.

**Ethos**

St. Patrick’s Primary Schools’ vision is

**For all learners to achieve their true potential on their journey to becoming successful individuals and valuable contributors to society**.

We view Literacy to be an integral part of this vision and as such give literacy a high priority within the school’s development plan.

At St. Patrick’s we recognise ‘communication’ to be central to the whole curriculum and we ensure that through a coherent and progressive whole school Literacy programme (underpinned by the Primary Language Framework) we develop equally the modes of communication - ‘talking and listening, reading and writing’, so that all pupils at St. Patrick’s are empowered to develop their potential and become successful individuals and valuable contributors to society.

**Aims**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we meet the aims and objectives of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, and to ensure that at a level appropriate to their ability, pupils are enabled to develop skills in talking and listening, reading and writing.

This policy will outline the strategies and approaches we will develop in order to ensure that each child becomes equipped with the necessary language, knowledge, understanding and skills.

Through the school’s long and short term literacy plans we aim to support pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

* Attention and listening
* Phonological awareness – supporting their reading and spelling
* Social use of language- speaking confidently to a range of audiences
* Language and thinking – developing imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness
* Acquiring an extended vocabulary enabling them to articulate their responses and opinions
* Reading with confidence, fluency and understanding and
* Writing using a range of styles and for a wide range of purposes.

In addition this policy aims to support our pupils to develop their personal and interpersonal skills, their capabilities and dispositions so that they can effectively work with others and recognise their strengths and weaknesses and make strong and obvious links about communication across the curriculum and in real life.

In short we are determined to equip our pupils with the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and personal capabilities to enable them to achieve their potential in order that they may fully access and experience achievement whilst becoming positive contributors to their society in the future.

**Statutory Requirements**

The requirements for each key stage of the N.I. curriculum along with the Primary Language Framework forms the overall structure of the school’s scheme and planning. The framework is based on a model of language which describes Text, Sentence and Word Level Knowledge, Understanding and Skills and again this is translated through to the school’s planning format.

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| **Primary Language Framework**  **Text Level: Comprehension and Composition:**  Text level is concerned with the type, organisation and structure of texts. In both reading and writing, the children’s attention is drawn to what the text is about and how to take account of purpose and audience when constructing text. Genre and form of text are discussed within fiction and non-fiction.  **Sentence level: Grammar and Punctuation:**  Sentence level is concerned with the sense and structure of texts. Attention is focused on how language works, how meaning is achieved and how language is described.  **Word Level: Phonics, spelling and vocabulary:**  The work here is concerned with developing children’s knowledge of the sounds of spoken language, phonological awareness, phonics, patterns of spelling, word recognition and vocabulary extension.  The main features are:   * a variety of fiction and non-fiction genres for each term; * progression in grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary; * learning intentions based on knowledge and understanding; * success criteria related to skills. |

Child centred provision is at the core of all that we do at St. Patrick’s. Each child is catered for depending on their particular need. In light of this, we plan for differentiation and extension so that all children are catered for and targeted for further improvement. This takes into account underachieving, low achieving and high achieving children identified through an analysis of their data, staff assessments and observations.

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| **Child Centred Provision**   * Decisions on planning, resources, curriculum and pastoral care reflect at all times the needs and aspirations of the pupils within the school. * A clear commitment exists to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity. * A school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists – with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of   their ability.   * Effective interventions and support are in place to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to   learning.   * There is a commitment to involve young people in discussions and decisions on school life that directly affect them and to listen to their views. |

The following ESAGS indicators were audited and will be reflected in school policy:

**Inclusion**

We aim to provide for all children so that they reach their full potential. Accordingly, early identification is the key to children’s progress and achievement. We identify annually pupils or groups of pupils who are underachieving, low achieving and high achieving and take steps to support their learning and achievement. Please refer to the Special Educational Needs Policy where a list of criteria and the assessments used is listed. Criteria and provision for additional support are reviewed and identified by the SENCO, Literacy Co-ordinator and Principal.

**Intervention Strategies:**

A range of strategies are used to both extend and support pupils’ literacy. Teachers will liaise with the SENCO and Literacy Co-ordinator following analysis of summative data from the previous year. In the event of having a concern with regard to a pupil's progress in Literacy. The school will follow the recommended process in 'Count, Read, Succeed' [[1]](#footnote-1)with regard to intervention;

Extension Strategies for high achieving pupils:

* Accelerated Reader
* Reading with younger children (Buddy Reading)

Intervention Strategies for underachieving children:

* Accelerated Reader
* I.C.T.- using for example LEXIA
* Peripatetic support
* Termly meetings between the class teacher, Literacy Co-ordinator and SENCO

**Learning & Teaching**

The following ESAGS indicators were audited and will be reflected in school policy:

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| **High Quality Teaching and Learning**   * A broad and relevant curriculum is provided for pupils * An emphasis on literacy exists across the curriculum. * Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, enjoying a positive relationship with their pupils and with other school-based staff and dedicated to improving learning. * Teachers use adaptable, flexible teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom. * Assessment and other data are used effectively to inform teaching and learning across the school and in the classroom and to promote improvement. * Rigorous self-evaluation is carried out by teachers and the whole school, using objective data and leading to sustained self-improvement. * Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils. * Education outcomes reflect positively on the school and compare very well, when benchmarked measurement is undertaken, against the performance of similar schools. |

Raising the profile of Literacy in our school is paramount and we endeavour to regularly celebrate Literacy as a whole school this is done through:

* ensuring language and literacy skills are developed across the curriculum at every available opportunity;
* daily silent reading sessions [E.R.I.C – Everyone reading in class];
* regular sessions whereby children are read to by staff;
* promotion of reading for pleasure through Accelerated Reader;
* celebration of pupils’ work and achievements through displays, assembly, send child and work to the Principal/Co-ordinator and school website;
* celebration days: eg) Roald Dahl Day, World Book Day;
* effective classroom management which designates an area for literacy and gives literacy a raised profile in the eyes of the children;
* well-stocked and vibrant school library where pupils can access appropriately pitched books with a high degree of independence;
* organise, promote and deliver parent literacy sessions;
* encouraging children to write for the newspaper/school website;
* Literacy will be a specific focus in Parent-Information Sessions (commencement of each school year for each class);
* rich ICT resources;
* targeted intervention support for individual pupils; and
* a strong partnership with community Library

**Planning**

We have a detailed whole school Literacy scheme. Each class has long term and short term planning. As mentioned previously the school’s long term plans follow closely the Primary Language Framework. The short term plans are completed and stored electronically on a monthly basis (but planned for week by week). These plans are evaluated reflectively and inform future planning to ensure value added teaching and revision if necessary. Parents are kept informed of the teacher’s planning through the monthly/termly curriculum letters. Teachers engage with the coordinators in termly planner monitoring and evaluation. The Literacy coordinator discuss outcomes with staff.

**Assessment**

**\*Formative Assessment**

Assessment for Learning strategies are a key component of the teaching and learning in Literacy. Learning intentions and success criteria are clearly defined and shared with pupils. The marking strategies outlined in the school marking policy ensure that a key part of the pupils’ literacy experience involves editing and reformatting their work for improvement.

**\*Summative Assessment**

All staff makes use of data to inform classroom and whole school practice in literacy. Literacy targets are identified from standardised assessments to support pupil’s learning. These are reviewed periodically.

**\*Diagnostic Assessment**

A range of diagnostic assessments are used throughout the school to inform practice and to support specifically a pupil’s needs. Please refer to the Assessment policy for further information.

**\*Class teachers’ Monitoring and Evaluating:**

On-going monitoring of pupils’ Literacy knowledge and skills is a key part of the teaching and learning in each class. Teachers engage with the coordinators in termly book monitoring and the Literacy coordinators discuss outcomes with staff. Teachers gather samples of work for the internal standardisation process for Communication and use these samples to agree and set standards across the school.

**General Classroom Practice**

We are committed to ensuring that the literacy programme is appropriately pitched for each child. Within each classroom teachers ensure that differentiation and extension are key components in Literacy lessons and, presently, efforts are being made to ensure that differentiation and extension are highlighted in short term plans. We are currently establishing regular review meetings with classroom assistants to ensure the targets of pupils on the SEN register are being met. Some of the strategies used to help us with this differentiation/extension are:

* Running records. These are used to ensure children are reading at the appropriate level
* Finding alternative, more appropriate ways of recording answers e.g. highlighting the answer within the text for comprehension work or using ICT to assist pupils with handwriting difficulties;
* Ensuring that our lessons are multi-sensory in approach – I say, you say; tracing over words;
* Catering for different learning styles.
* Accelerated Reader data/information/star reading test to further support appropriate reading level (ZPD) for each individual child.

**Promotion of Active Learning, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities**

Teachers have embraced and shared through PRSD many of the Active Learning strategies defined by the Northern Ireland Curriculum. This ensures that children are more actively engaged in their learning, have opportunities to develop social skills and work effectively as part of a team, whilst developing their talking and listening skills.

**\*Guided reading resources:**

P1 – P4

The ‘Book banding’ organisation strategy is used with a range of schemes including Rigby Star, Collins Big Cat, Heinemann Storyworld and Oxford Tree Tops. There is a good balance of fiction and non-fiction books representing a wide range of genre. These are stored within the classrooms but are a shared resource.

P4 – P7.

Guided reading is well resourced for these year groups and comprises of:

* Sets of novels and higher level non–fiction texts for more able readers;
* Collins Big Cat ‘book banded’ reading material to include both fiction and non-fiction;
* Materials for pupils with significant Literacy difficulties (Harberton Reading Scheme)

**\*Shared Reading Resources**

P1 – P3

A range of ‘Big books’ and shared interactive texts from a variety of publishers are used in these classes to reflect a range of genre.

P4-7

Currently Literacy World is used to provide the scheme in these year groups, although it is supplemented with more appropriate shared resources relating to a particular genre.

**ICT resources**

ICT is an integral component of the language and literacy experience in St. Patrick’s. All classes have an interactive white board and staff have regular opportunities for professional development. The use of Junior Librarian software further supports the use of ICT, borrowing/returning books but also availing of the complete package; to reserve a book, write a book review for example. Increasingly the use of ICT is used in pupil’s presentation of work through Word, Powerpoint, Publisher and the use of APPS on the iPad.

**Leadership and Management**

**\*Monitoring and Evaluating**

The effectiveness of our language and literacy policy is gauged using a variety of different approaches. These include

* Coordinators monitoring & evaluating termly;
* PRSD may identify a literacy objective for staff;
* Termly evaluation of planners, pupils’ books, and teachers’ evaluations of planners;
* Termly ‘underachieving children’ meetings between the teacher, literacy co-ordinator and SENCO,
* Peer teacher collaboration observations (are a current target being organised for implemention)
* Individual meetings which take place between principal and teachers; and
* Monitoring of assessment outcomes.

**\*Co- Ordinator’s Monitoring & Evaluating:**

The co-ordinator evaluates the quality of learning and teaching within the area of Language and Literacy by;

* Targeting a specific area within Literacy, subsequently evaluating planners, pupils’ learning and compiling a list of effective practice. This is completed once per term;
* Annual evaluations of Action plan
* Peer teacher collaboration observations (are a current target being organised for implemention)
* Meeting annually with Principal and SENCO to discuss progress made and areas in need of further development.

**\*Use of data for monitoring & evaluating:**

Annually the coordinator sets end of key stage targets, and evaluates how the school is performing using bench marking data. Along with the assessment coordinator, they analyse the outcomes of the Progress in English/Progress Test English assessments to determine any areas that need to be addressed in class teaching and learning. Data is also tracked longitudinally to evaluate the impact of Literacy development work, e.g., Linguistic phonics and its impact on pupil attainment.

**A School Connected to its Community**

We realise that the task of helping our pupils become literate has a greater chance of success if we bring other influential groups on board.

**Parental links**

* We use the school website to publicise Literacy tips via external website links
* We host Literacy parenting classes. These have included linguistic phonics and will include approach to reading.
* Homework: we send home explicit guidance re methodology used at emergent reading/ writing stages and linguistic phonics etc so that home and school are ‘speaking the same language’.
* World Book Day and Roald Dahl Day raises the profile of Literacy within and beyond the school, underpinning the importance of Literacy as a life skill.
* Monthly/Termly information newsletters further supports parental involvement and includes details regarding literacy learning.
* Parent teacher meetings are used as an opportunity to share approaches to developing literacy skills.
* We meet with parents who we feel need further guidance in extending their child’s reading material.
* We encourage parents to purchase books from the school book fairs and through the book clubs to enhance children’s home reading and reading for pleasure.
* We provide important opportunities for pupils to access ***at home*** online educational software, such as, LEXIA.
* Fundraising opportunities, such as creation of the ‘new school library’, ‘Sports and Fun Day' develop opportunities for Literacy, eg) create posters to publicise the event, write letters requesting businesses and parents to donate/help.
* School focus on Eco initiative will lend itself to literacy opportunities, eg) create posters to publicise ‘Ramp up the red Skipathon’, write articles for the local newspapers, create and market a school cook/recipe book, create I-movies of the school before and after Eco-work, write the lyrics for an Eco-Song and sing at Eco-celebration event, present and talk at school assemblies, create a brochure on Microsoft Publisher, create a guided tour of the school, answer questions to parents/members of the local community who will visit upon gaining the Eco-Schools Green Flag award.

**Links with External Agencies**

* St. Patrick's P.S. works closely with a variety of external agencies. The newly appointed Literacy Co- coordinator to the school attended training provided by the Education Authority Literacy team. The Principal, Literacy Co-ordinator and SENCO liaise closely with the Educational Psychology, SEN and SpLD services, with regard to pupils experiencing difficulty in Literacy. The school Principal and Literacy co-ordinator has attended information sessions and training for Library Software (e.g. Junior Librarian)
* The school participates in the KS2/KS3 CPD project delivered by the Education Authority.

**Links with other schools**

* We are currently establishing partnerships with local pre-school establishments regarding Literacy practice to ensure a consistent approach to pencil grip and handwriting formation/practice.
* We hope to commence engagement in meetings with local post primary schools, sharing levelling of writing and reading to establish more consistent expectation and a cross-phase shared understanding.
* We hope, in the near future, to become involved in a regional cluster where the focus will be standardisation and levelling of pupil work, assisted by CCEA.

**Links with Community**

* St. Patrick’s P.S. and Enniskillen Library staff work closely to encourage families with no internet connection to use the library’s ICT provision to access ‘Accelerated Reader’. We promote summer time reading in an effort to encourage pupils to use the public library. St. Patrick’s organise an annual school visit to the library for key Stage Two children to further support its utilisation, equipping our children with essential library skills and foster a love of reading.
* Pupil visits to Tesco, for example, reinforce concepts such as Fair Trade and links to writing
* Competitions such as the Easons Spelling Bee, Fermanagh Feis Poetry Recital, Fermanagh Feis Own Poetry, Credit Union Quiz, provide numerous opportunities for pupils to engage with children from other primary schools and to apply their communication skills.
* Children will participate in the ‘Talking Townlands’ Programme which will be an opportunity to work independently but also to meet and work and collaboratively with children from other schools.

Policy Revised: February 2017

Next Revision: February 2019

Chair of Governors:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

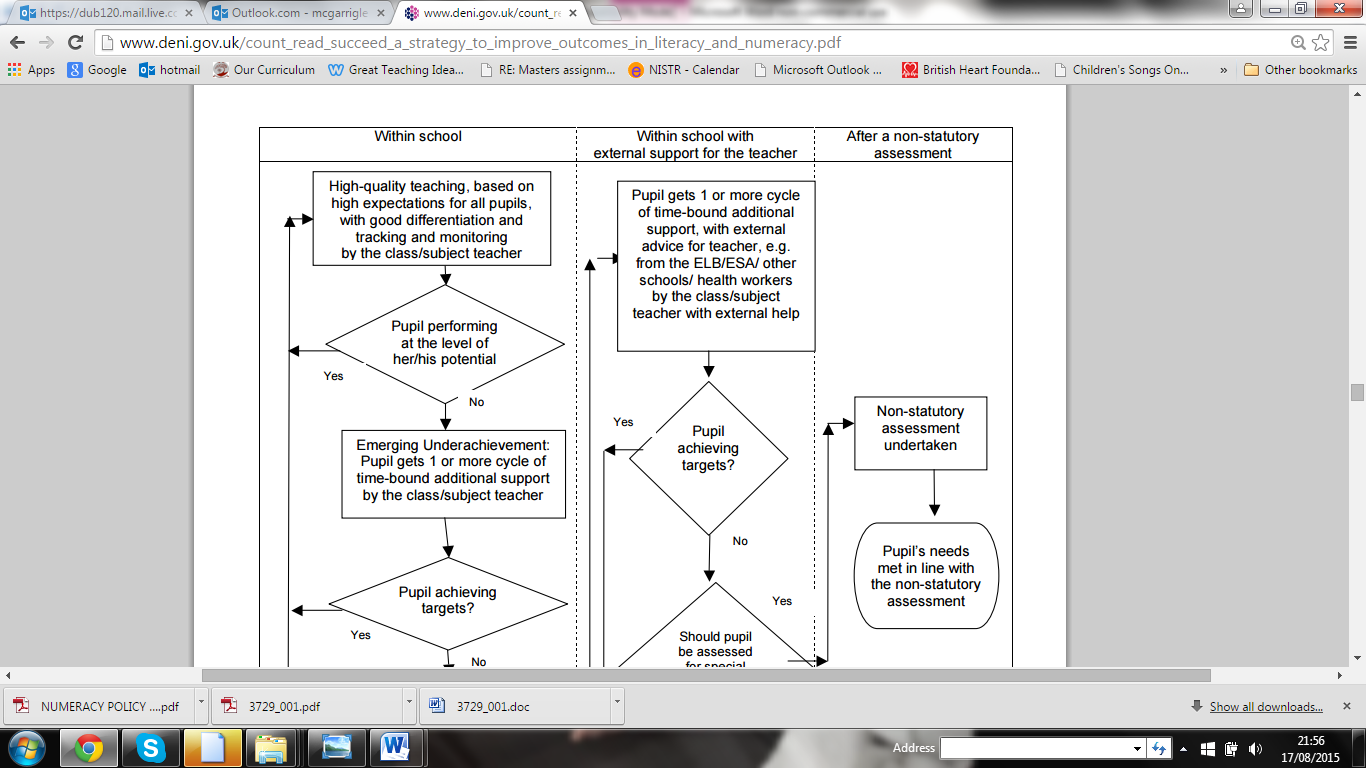
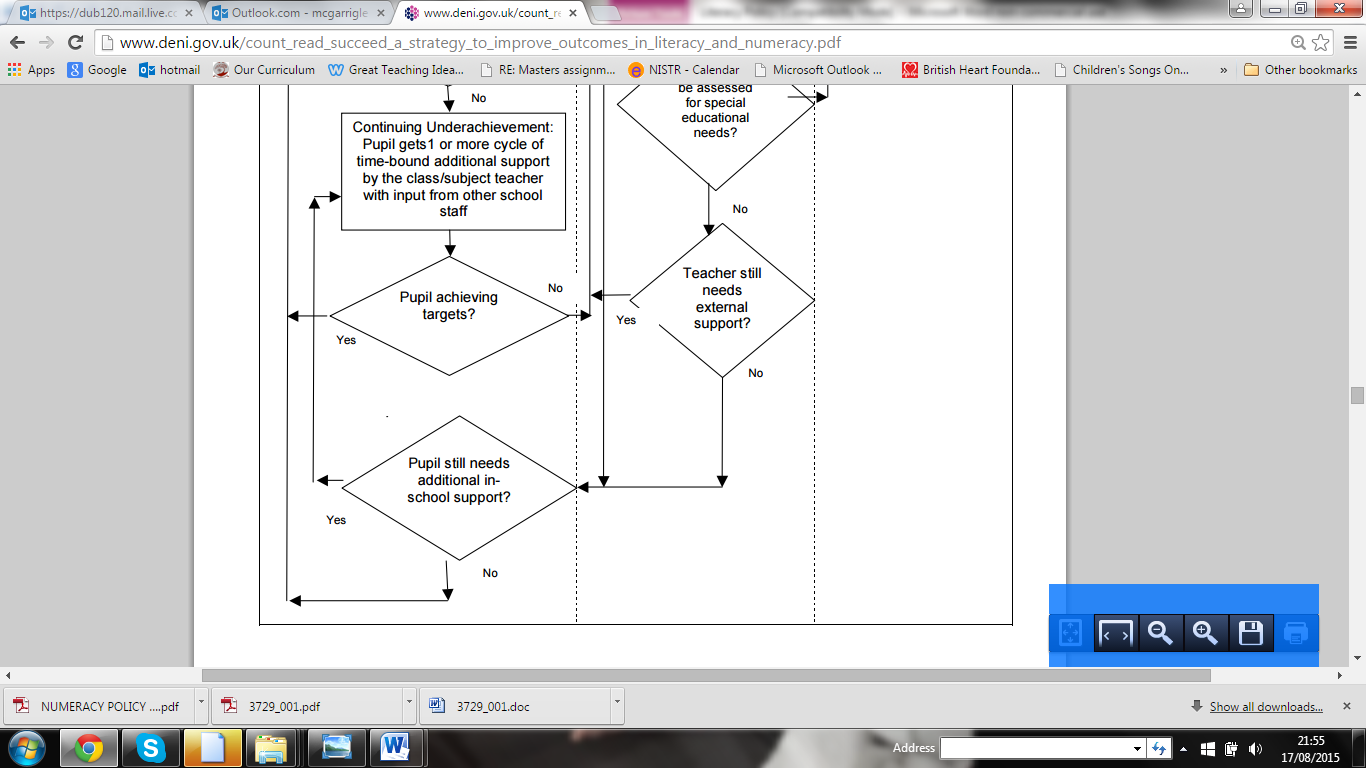
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Miss Aideén McGarrigle Mr Paul Fitzpatrick

[Literacy Co-ordinator] [School Principal]

Appendix 1

Page 41, 'Count, Read: Succeed- A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Literacy', DE. 2000.



1. Page 41, ‘Count, Read: Succeed’ – A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy’, DE. 2000. (See Appendix 1) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)