

Subverting or reconceptualising professionalism? The curious case of the imposition of synthetic phonics.

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Abstract

This article links Foucault's discussion on power and dominance with the directive to teach synthetic phonics in English schools. It would seem that teachers are being dominated by a Government power that is imposing a very narrow view of reading on all teachers, students and thus on children. Compliance and accountability now reign supreme in the world of the University and in the classroom. When exploring the theme of power Foucault refers to a 'game of truth'. This raises the question: is this what teachers are reduced to, playing a game? The game it seems must be played in order to appease the 'inspecting gaze' (Foucault 1977) of the Government. The article by employing the metaphor of the battle and of the Pentecost - where people were blessed them with the 'gift of tongues' - explores how notions of professionalism are reconceptualised or even subverted within the context of 'playing the accountability game'.

Keywords: professionalism, phonics, Foucault, reading

'War of words. -A teaching method called synthetic phonics has had huge success with children's literacy in Scotland: so much so that supporters believe they have found the holy grail of reading. So what explains the caution south of the border?' (Berliner.2005)

'Literacy campaigners attack phonics-based teaching plan.' (The Guardian: Sunday 20 February 2011)

Introduction

The overarching aim of this paper is to examine notions of professionalism by employing the Government's imposition of systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) in schools and into Initial Teacher Education (ITE). A conspectus of the literature base, (for example note the headlines above) surrounding professionalism and the employment of phonics denotes that the metaphor of the battlefield is a recurring theme as competing groups rally around their own particular flag of

ideological interest in the development of early reading. An examination of the language of professionalism led to a journey of exploration into subversion and of subverting of government initiatives. This paper, details this journey of subversion and of subverting and of an attempt to reconceptualise the professionalism metaphors of wars and battlefields with an analogy of the Pentecost. According to the Christian tradition, during Pentecost the apostles were praying together when the Holy Spirit descended upon them and blessed them with the 'gift of tongues.' The result being that the disciples were able to communicate with people in their own language, thus enabling all peoples to hear and understand the message of Jesus Christ. 'When they heard the sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.' (Acts 2:5-6) In other words, language was no longer a barrier. If this analogy is used with phonics it would mean that war and battle would not be necessary as children could be taught to read in a language that they can understand. To begin, though, there is a need to make a minor excursion into the literature base to contextualise this analysis of professionalism, namely into that of the curious case of synthetic phonics.

The curious case of synthetic phonics

The employment of phonics in early reading has historically been a contentious issue (Regalado, Goldenberg, and Appel, 2001). Early research carried out in Clackmannanshire, Scotland (2004), into a synthetic phonics approach suggested phonics was the "magic bullet" to early reading development. This research and its findings were heavily promoted by the media. The media frenzy that followed prompted the government to commence an enquiry into the teaching of reading and thus the Rose Report was born.

A key paragraph in the Rose Report states: "Having considered a wide range of evidence, the review has concluded that the case for systematic phonic work is overwhelming and much strengthened by a synthetic approach" (Rose, 2006, p. 20). The Rose Report concluded by raising a clarion call of stronger state intervention in the 'training of teaching force' (p.21). The language employed here is interesting as it again invoked the well worn metaphor of the battlefield. Indeed, 'the *training of the teaching force*' suggested, at one level, that an army was to be disciplined through literacy "boot camps" to be enabled to carry out Government orders. Teachers, and teacher educators, it seemed would have to choose to acquiesce or to fight in this battle of manipulation. Whilst there is not space here to articulate this extant discourse it should be noted that this debate is set to intensify as the new coalition government has indicated its intention to continue New Labour's enforcement of SSP as the only method of teaching early reading in schools.

The coalition's battle plan is though, in terms of professionalism, highly problematic. This is because, a reading of the recent Government white paper highlights many contradictory statements serving to leave one confused as to the status of the professional teacher. For example, it states:

‘There are many outstanding school teachers and leaders. But teachers consistently tell us that they feel constrained and burdened, required to teach the same limited diet to successive classes of young people (DfE, 2011: 4).

Yet, despite this statement this government will also make teachers ‘blindly follow orders’ to teach SSP on a daily basis to children without deviation; without question. At other points, the white paper further suggests that what is needed most of all is,

‘...decisive action to free our teachers from constraint and improve their professional status and authority... helping them to learn from one another and from proven best practice, rather than ceaselessly directing them to follow centralised Government initiatives.’(DfE 2011:4)

This document details ‘decisive action’, bringing into purview the notion of localised guerrilla campaigns, of teachers working together, militating against centralised government control. In reality, though this white paper only observes the government marching out of time with the teacher profession, “flip-flopping” between rhetoric and reality, between autonomous professionalism and centralised control.

A further difficulty for teachers in the blind acceptance of SSP as the magic bullet for early reading development is the contradictory nature of research evidence. For although research studies denote that there the ‘evidence is clear that the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective way of teaching young children to read, particularly for those at risk of having problems with reading’ (DeS, 2011:2). The findings of other studies are wholly inconsistent.

For some, literacy entails a repertoire of practices not just the code breaking of phonics (coding competence) but also includes meaning making (semantic competence), text using (pragmatic competence) and text critique (critical competence) (Luke & Freebody, 1999). This model of reading represents the sociocultural and cognitive elements of literacy practice. Literacy here then is firmly positioned as a meaning-based and purposeful activity rather than solely on phonics and the code breaking element of reading. In other words, there are models of reading development which offer to the teacher the exercise of professional knowledge and of professionalism expedited through the medium of choice and selection of methods of reading according to the needs of the child.

For example, Smith (2004) and Stanovich (2000) endorse the belief that children learn to read through a whole word approach to reading. It would also appear that whilst other research clearly promotes the use of phonics, it is not necessarily synthetic phonics that should have precedence. Indeed, extant research suggests other strategies ought to be employed to suit the needs of the child. This semiosis of the evidence base clearly contradicts the message

promoted by the Government. Wyse (2007) captures the feeling of many researchers when he relates that, 'The idea that children younger than five will benefit from a systematic phonics programme is not supported by evidence and is arguably one of the most controversial recommendations of the Rose Report'.

These contradictory research findings as with the contradictions within the White paper (DfE, 2011) itself raise issues of professionalism for both teachers and teacher educators alike. The questions they face are, what is the best form of teaching for the children that they work with and who should have the power to decide? What does seem clear is that the voice of the educator, the experienced professional is to remain unheard as the dictat, the battle orders dispatched by the coalition government, now mean that it is law to teach SSP, and nothing but SSP. However, within such a constrained discourse and praxis how will professionalism be conceptualised by educators and government alike? Within the next section of the paper the notion of professionalism is considered and reconceptualised both in terms of the extant metaphor of the battlefield and in a more compassionate and caring one, that of the Christian notion of the Pentecost.

Teaching and professionalism

From the very outset though, the concept of professionalism needs to be unfolded so that issues surrounding its discourse may be thoroughly examined. Ontologically, "professional" and its associated genealogy are both difficult to define and detail. In common parlance its employment remains opaque mired in the variability of situational contexts. As Freidson (1994, p. 169) accounts, "much of the debate about professionalism is clouded by unstated assumptions and inconsistent and incomplete usages". The paper though takes as a working definition that of Troman's, (1996, p. 476) view that professionalism is "a socially constructed, contextually variable and a contested concept ... defined by management and expressed in its expectations of workers and the stipulation of tasks they will perform". However slippery the definition of professionalism what is more clear is how its application affects educators and their perceptions of themselves and their roles in schools and in university education departments. Problematic for the individual is that professionalism in the current discourse is intertwined with notions of competence, identity, management and reflection. The paper turns now to critically analyse the discourse of professionalism within the variability of situational contexts. Firstly, then, let us analyse professionalism as "constrained" by the standards agenda.

Professional standards

Being part of a collective body, or part of a profession means aligning oneself explicitly to the values of that profession. As we know many professions have professional standards that are laid down and teaching is no different. Indeed, trainees have to achieve all of the standards before they are deemed fit to enter the teaching profession. However, the salient question is whose values is one aligning oneself with if one achieves these standards? For example, is it the

current Government values, as with the phonics initiative, or the values and beliefs one holds about how children actually learn to read? To compound this issue further, a lecturer in initial teacher education is answerable both to the Government and to the University, and increasingly, to trainee teachers themselves. The dilemma of professionalism here strikes at the very heart of what a university's purpose should be. For Newman (1907:124), the ideal university is a community of thinkers, who have the ability to make good judgments and who engage in intellectual pursuits as an end in itself. He stated that students ought to be encouraged "to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyse", Newman held the view that narrow minds were a result of narrow specialisation. The imposition of SSP into university education departments would seem to be narrowness in its most constraining form. If the lecturer, as a public sector worker, is at odds with the Government's view of the teaching, and moreover is being paid by the public sector, how much autonomy should they have to espouse their own view or that presented within the contradictory research base? In this sense do we actually mean that to be professional is the suppressing of one's own view of reading and blindly accepting pedagogies that we know to be ineffective for some children? By creating such inner conflict and turmoil, professionalism here it seems is recreated to undermine personal identity and what it means to act in a professional manner.

Professionalism as identity

Professional identity in Higher Education (HE) is a contentious issue as Nixon (1996) accounts; accountability and managerialism have led to a crisis of the professional. Hargreaves (1994) also warns of managerialist cultures pervading schools in which the only views or values that count are those of the principal. In such environments, professionalism and the choices for individual teachers become invidious. 'Professional' teachers can, therefore,

'remain and conform to the prevailing vision, and thereby become somewhat anonymous; (ii) remain and maintain their views (privately), but forfeit any right to a "voice" or agency within the school community; or (iii) resign or be "forced" to leave. Indeed, in such an environment, the implications for teachers' professional identity are troubling to say the least'. (Hargreaves, 1994:250).

Ball (2003:215) supports Hargreaves asserting that the current 'epidemic of reform' or the 'terrors of performativity' not only change what educators do, but fundamentally 'changes who they are'. This change, this reconceptualised notion of professionalism can be accepted, or rejected by the individual; there is no middle ground here (Hargreaves, 1994). Barnett (1997: 155) provides the logical extrapolation of this view of professionalism when referring to the modern academic:

'Endorsers is too polite a term for these modern academics . . .
Academics now have their livings in the world and simply fall in with

dominant frameworks . . . [offering] solutions to the problems as defined by the state and its dominant powers.'

Barnett then does not believe that the identity of an academic is actually called into question by accountability. Indeed he suggests that academics have no difficulty operationalising professionalism and becoming puppets of Government control. Locke (2001, 2004) offers some support for this notion conceptualising this as an era of the "erosion of professionalism. Kemmis, though, believes educators are becoming cynical, increasingly regarding themselves as servants of the state (Kemmis, 2006:462). Some educators have been led to believe that the only way to keep their professionalism intact, to avoid coercion by the State, is to leave the world of education, thus, they make the ultimate sacrifice.

In terms of the teaching of phonics this element of accountability and managerial control is clearly evident. For example, in teacher education, students at the end of their course complete a governmental questionnaire, one element of which refers to their level of confidence in the teaching of phonics at their university. If the institution does not receive high student satisfaction ratings a process of inspection is invoked which focuses upon the University's teaching of SSP. The impact of any steps taken by the University to rectify the situation is then measured; with an underlying threat of closure if the impact of remediation works is not positive. This quantification of compliance causes a personal crisis for many teacher educators, not necessarily the accountability itself, but the stress on SSP as the only method to teach reading. This quantification exercise, this external measurement does ensure though that for many professionalism becomes reconceptualised as compliance (Schuck, et al. 2008).

The alignment of accountability and professionalism in this manner should be observed to be highly problematic as they appear to force professional identity along discrepant axes. If professionalism means the ability to take responsibility for our own actions and make decisions based on one's own education and reflective practice (Moon, 1999). But that accountability is the ability to justify and account for our actions to an external body (ref) then professionalism becomes contextualised in a process of justification of one's own values over those of government. In reality then the teaching of SSP becomes a 'battle' of wills of identity and values over the inspecting gaze of government's (Foucault 1980) conformity and compliance.

The 'battle' for professionalism

The language and employment of the battle metaphor mentioned earlier is explicit within the teaching of phonics. Take as example this excerpt from a Guardian article,

'you get a glimpse of the bloody battles that are still being waged over the teaching of reading by people who hold divergent views on

the best way to do it: battles that have been raging for more than a generation, are seen as a war between the traditional, represented by phonics, and the progressive'. (Berliner, 2005)

Much of the language used in this literature is associated with power and of the battlefield as related to power and to dominance. These are two recurring concepts in the work of Foucault (Foucault, 1980). The power here is with the Government as they have the control over the educators; the struggle is the innermost turmoil that educators have concerning the dominance of SSP in the sovereign power struggle that Foucault describes. This concept of sovereign power is a useful tool of analysis as it reveals the crisis of identity experienced by educators. It is an example of the ruler and the ruled. Here then there is apparently no choice for the educator they are accountable to Ofsted and the Teacher Development Agency. The ruler has the power to close down the provider should compliance be withdrawn. In other words, there is no choice; the ruler has spoken, the commanders have been retrained, the troops marshalled and battle plans issued:

'Ofsted will enhance its inspectors' expertise in assessing the teaching of reading, so that their judgements reflect appropriate expectations and recognise particular features of systematic synthetic phonics teaching. We will also reform initial teacher training to ensure that trainee teachers have the confidence to teach systematic synthetic phonics.' (DfE, 2010: 6)

This statement clearly illustrates the power that Foucault is referring to; the use of the word *reform* reflects the power that the government has over the programme of teacher education. This is also evident in the way in which the teacher education programmes have had to be adapted in order to ensure that students are confident in the use of SSP; thus ensuring a positive result in the national newly qualified teachers' survey. This process could be likened to a dictatorship; it is certainly not democratic, as educators are instructed to promote this particular model of reading.

As detailed above many researchers, including Larson (1996), employ the metaphor of the battle and of power, or to battle against. This implies, perhaps, a bitter fight between two sides and also implies that one side will be the victorious. For me though, and for many others, the employment of these metaphors to the teaching of reading lead one to experience feelings of entrapment and isolation by the situation we find ourselves. We would question whether the metaphor of battle is too dramatic? Whilst it may be true that Larson's (1990) metaphor of the battle will to some educators resonate and some will indeed view the Government directive as a declaration of war, the question that should be posed is, is it actually truly a battle?

Whilst to some it seems in the political arena that teachers and teacher educators are to become mere pawns in a battle, a battle implies an army on

both sides. Are we in fact deluding ourselves that we have any choice in this matter at all? In reality, the very fact that accountability can close down a Faculty takes away any value in Newman's notion of choice and renders all in its path as victims, perhaps the battle should be observed to be over before it began. How can individuals fight the inspecting gaze of the State? In this employment of the battle the educator then is surely lost; professionalism here may only be constructed as at Versailles, more in the terms of the surrender and the articulation of power over the utterly defeated.

I suggest that the metaphor of battle with its associated discourse of victors and of surrender ought to be replaced and consigned to history. Can there ever be victors here, in this case the Government, and if so does this not paint academics, teachers of reading and children as the victims? Of interest here is that in Goodson's (2000) analysis he does not present the professional as a victim and like Barnett above observes them as "...less and less planners of their own destiny and more and more deliverers of prescriptions written by others" (Goodson, 2000: 14). The teacher/lecturer/ child as a "victim" is a discourse that we should oppose; not merely on an emotional level, but also on an intellectual and practical level. In this form teachers would be observed to be conscripted, press ganged, into the battle, they go through boot camp and are not only trained in one vision, one orientation but forced to accept such orientations completely and without mediation. Much of the current media discourse portrays educators in negative and uncomplimentary ways suggesting that there is a national portrait of unhappy, unwilling, discontented and despondent teachers.

Is subversion the way forward?

This media image plays to the image of pitiable victims lost in the fog of war of competing policy discourse. Teachers though are not victims, they are not without choice; indeed, they all can make choices, and some make those choices very willingly. Note the comments of this practitioner:

As long as headteachers and unions bow down to government dictat, the lowly classroom practitioner will continue to follow instructions and/or teach by their own beliefs in secret. (Cramp, 2004) There is no page no

A further tribute to this power of subversion is offered by Richards

I agree with Bernard Trafford, head of a leading independent school, that Star Trek-like we "should stride out boldly and seize the opportunities" supposedly on offer from the coalition Government...However, I cannot accept his characterisation of teachers as battery hens conditioned to passivity during the last two decades. During that period there was certainly a degree of conformity but there was also a good deal of underground,

creative, educational subversion in children's interests. (5 November, 2010.)

The individual as a professional educator should not be seen as a person who merely responds to external demands, but the empowerment of the individual is in the use of power. That is to say the individual is empowered through resistance, because the professional should be a free thinking, critical person, ultimately the integrity of their decision is one to be respected. This view actually resonates with Rose's (1996) earlier conceptualisation of 'autonomy', which focuses on the power of the self, a power which enables a person to define a path to enable them to achieve their goal in life. This directly correlates with Foucault's notion of power and his 'game of truth.' The individual to become professional then must be able to recognise the game and become an active player rather than being driven to behaving in a state of automation, controlled as opposed to being controlling. In the words of Helsby (1990) the professional is the 'key' to the 'ongoing contestation between state control and professional autonomy' (Helsby, 1990: 93). It is the difference between what it means to be educated, and schooled, and in this sense I use 'schooled' in reference to University schooling (Kemmis, 2006).

Due to the very nature of what it means to be a professional there can be no doubt that for some there will be subversion at work the creation of guerrilla campaigns against the imposition of SSP. I would suggest that there is much more subversion that goes on than can be possibly realised, both in school and in universities. Subversion of this kind requires a particular type of individual; it has to be an individual who is informed. A lecturer with integrity and a good understanding of how children read will ensure that students, who are learning to teach reading, understand that the sole use of SSP is not an effective way to teach reading, but that for many children a variety of approaches is required. There are educators who assert their professional agency, who reconcile their inner conflict by selectively applying the rules – applying their 'secret beliefs' there is though also a sense that teacher students have to survive within the dominant discourse.

Yet, it would seem that this subversion at the micro level is not the same as organised subversion enabling students not only to survive but to challenge the power of the dominant discourse. In order to change the dominant discourse there would have to be organised, strategic resistance. Educators must become agents of change. For example, an organised, strategic resistance may be through the philosophy promoted within a faculty. As SSP is the dominant discourse, educators must become more proactive in the fight for change, or perhaps become more subversive? Foucault (1981) refers to the concept of discourse as reflecting power; hence, educators must pose an alternative discourses in order to challenge the dominant one of SSP. The power is with the group, as members of groups or communities, we can contribute to the production of new or hybrid discourses as we engage socially, professionally and politically (Fairclough, 1980). Undoubtedly, educators are conditioned by societal

demands and under such conditions a person's revolutionary capacity is dampened; the power here is always with the group, rather than any individual.

Stronach *et al* (2002) explore such professionalism through Dawson's (1994) notion of professional virtue, which Dawson sees as having two sides: The 'inside- out; side is the notion of the virtuous professional in an Aristotelian sense. It is perhaps worth exploring this notion further, as it holds a mirror to my argument of the conditioned educator. The relevance of which will hopefully become appreciated as this paper unfolds. Aristotle (Brown, 2009) believed that happiness occurs when a person lives their life in accordance with reason. In this life reason and emotion must be in harmony, but it is reason which is preeminent. For Aristotle, happiness is not confined to morality, but it includes intellectual virtues as well. I would argue that the imposition of phonics causes much unhappiness because there is disharmony for the professional between reason and emotion. Teachers of reading know in an informed manner that the focus on SSP is unreasonable, and that is why in Aristotelian terms professionals become unhappy; there is disequilibrium in their professional judgement. If we examine the 'outside-in' contention then the debate locates itself outside to the profession and is conceptualised as an 'inspecting gaze' (Foucault, 1977: 155). How much of this exterior gaze then becomes introspective? So it becomes inside-out as well as outside-in? Professionalism in this guise thus becomes a question -a struggle -between Dawson's 'outside-in and 'inside-out'? Is professionalism in actually for an educator a matter of reconciling the imbalance between the two?

Professionals fighting back?

I want to explore the idea of the professional as a victim referred to above and as a victim, as a person without choice, as this is not necessarily an accurate conceptualisation, as a victim may also be reconceptualised as strong person who despites the odds *chooses* to fight for their cause. This reconceptualisation attempts to connect professionalism with the notion of empowerment and the imbalance of power, issues I will return to later in the paper. The overarching idea of the victim as weak is something that we need to militate against. The polarity of the picture or professionalism illuminated here as strength and weakness is offensive. The notion of professionalism as an opposition presented through this polarity is evident in the dualism that is employed freely within the literature of professionalism. It should be observed as an unhealthy position to adopt. It may be seen to be unhealthy because it inadvertently causes unnecessary anxiety and discord; between the practical and the 'technical' (Galton *et al.*, 1999: 189; Smith, 1999), the traditional the progressive, the holistic and the fragmented (Chinn and Jacobs, 1987; Kirby, 1995; Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996), and professional work as 'art' or as 'science' (Smith, 1985 Friedson, 1994; Sarvimaki, 1988; Wragg, 1993). It might be argued that the present demand of the current Government to make SSP a national requirement is reductionist and turns teacher educators into mere technicians (Galton *et al.*, 1999). Stronach *et al* talk of professionals as having to mobilise a number of shifting identities in order to be able to respond to shifting contexts (Stronach *et*

al., 2002). This is the agency which belongs to the professional; however, the question remains, how much of this agency is survival and how much is free personal choice? This question resonates with empirical research carried out by eminent researchers (Sachs, 2003; Huberman, 1995).

Here then we again return to professionalism as a conflict in identity as educators reconceptualised as victims who passively promote a form of reading that is against their beliefs. However, we need to move beyond such “narrowing” discourse and the metaphor of the battlefield. For example, there would be less need to fight and win or for the inculcation of victors and of victims, if the current discourse relating to phonics was a more positive, encouraging and optimistic one such as that presented through the Pentecost.

Analogy of Pentecost

In terms of a battlefield, warfare is a task of dominating and conquering the lands/lives of other people by imposing your will upon them (just as, maybe, the teacher might impose an unfit method of teaching on a child who is unreceptive). Another vision of education is more about adapting teaching methods to suit each child, meaning that of the educator is not imposing their will upon a child, but actually finding a method of communicating in order to meet the needs of the child.

In the Pentecost all the disciples gathered together and were told that they had to spread the “Good News” about the Resurrection of Christ. They were encouraged to go forth and show the true path to all. However, it was recognised that communication of the “Good News” could not be effective because the barrier of language would render people unreceptive to the disciples preaching (as with SSP here was an issue of communication which was 'unadaptable'). To overcome this difficulty the Holy Spirit gave to the disciples the ‘gift of tongues’ the ability to speak and to be heard with one voice. Thereby what was first conceived as battle – a battle of language, an inability to communicate was thus transformed into an effective method of educating individuals. The educators, (the disciples) here then had been equipped with a medium of communication which would allow them to adapt their teaching methods (their language), to suit the people they were teaching. ‘The unity which the Spirit brings is thus seen as a unity in difference, a unity in freedom, which brings out rather than suppresses the multiplicity, the richness of the universe which God has made’ (Allchin, 1991: 126). The metaphor of 'battlefield' here therefore becomes more benign: it is not about forcefully imposing a single method of education on people, but rather is about allowing them to adapt to the specific requirements of those being educated. This adaption of the unadaptable through common dialogue and a diverse range of methods allowed the disciples to educate people in the most effective way possible. Through compassion, love, respect for the Other, the continual seeking out of common ground and speaking with one voice effective and genuine teaching and learning for all ensued.

Conclusion

To conclude, it would certainly appear that there is a direct link between professionalism and government initiatives. The question is where can educators have agency? Professionalism, in the context of phonics should be an individual and collective striving for recognition of the importance of the research into early reading. There must be a dedicated and undeterred fight for the recognition of the autonomy of the educator. There is a continual need for action research to inform the debate concerning early reading, thus, strengthening an alternative discourse, resulting in an acceptance of multiple perspectives.

Without autonomy and a questioning workforce the teaching of reading would be led by a perverted interpretation of research, resulting in many more children being unable to read; thus, being locked out of the wonderful world of literature, in its widest meaning. If there is to be any battle at all it must only be one that is conceptualised as raging against all such perversions of power. For if professional means that educators are simply, servants of the state (Kemmis, 2006) then the term 'educator' can no longer be used, as it would be a contradiction of the definition. This battle should also be one against research being used indiscriminately, as this is a distorted use of research; a complete negation of the purpose of its aim. Once again we return to the unhelpful metaphor of the battle.

I propose that a change of metaphor is required, from the negative metaphor of a battlefield to a more positive metaphor. The impact of the picture that is painted and the lens through which one chooses to look directly affects ones perspective. Changing the metaphor may result in a more positive identity emerging, thus supporting the Lacanian view (Lacan, 2002) that a professional identity is self constructed; and as such it ought to be positively constructed, rather than negatively deconstructed, as in a battle. This must not stay at the level of rhetoric; educators must continually strive to overturn the dominant discourse, especially a dominant discourse which is as biased as SSP, this utopia must become a reality. It is here that the common language as portrayed in the Pentecostal analogy would, I believe, lead to a shared language and shared purpose. In this manner the Aristotelian notion of happiness would be achieved and educators would feel an increased sense of professionalism through identity and ownership of their role in the education of early reading.

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