

Dear Professor Cambourne

Thankyou! Thankyou! Thankyou! I would type this word a thousand times had I the time. I love what you are intending to do. Intensive phonics approaches are WRONG!

Could you please add THRASS to the demon that is Multilit?

It was my very great pleasure many years ago to meet you at a presentation for Education Queensland (then 'The Department of Education'). I was a former primary teacher and principal who knew that Romalda Spalding, the first Queen of Intensive Phonics approaches - then making huge inroads into the Catholic system - did not work. Your presentation was held at Griffith University, a place where I continued my career, in the teaching methodologies area, for a further 15 years. Your presentation was such a pleasure because you gave an academic air of acceptability and respectability to the practices of (older) great teachers of infants. You gave a name to the conditions which exist when we learn – not only when we learn language, but every little thing in our lives.

I left my tenured lecturing position at Griffith because our 'English people' were no longer teaching children how to learn to use their language in all its written and spoken forms. They were bogged down in theory. They abandoned the student teachers and left them to their own devices to learn how to teach children how to read. Enter THRASS, a chanting cult of a monster which encourages decoding at the expense of enjoyment. Teachers are told if they 'do' THRASS, their children will be able to read. I'd label it 'word calling' - bereft of excitement, understanding and enjoyment.

Professor Cambourne, may I suggest that you widen your emailing activities to include all State and non-State schools in all Australian States - let everyone SEE the evidence. Let the P & C associations see what these one trick pony programs do to their children. The damage caused by the Dalek-inspired automatons who produce intensive phonics approaches is long-term. Let the parents raise their voices - politicians aren't frightened of a small number of academics, but they take notice of large numbers of voting parents!

Keep well. Keep watching the hang-gliders and wondering if you feel safe 'to have a go' - and thank you from a teacher and mum.

Kind regards

(name supplied)
Queensland