

'HIGH QUALITY TEACHING' FOR SYNTHETIC PHONICS BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WASTED MILLIONS?

The interim report by the Rose Review, published Thursday, 1 December, into the poor teaching of synthetic phonics in British primary schools, focuses on the need for 'high quality teaching' for phonics in all British primary schools.

However, British phonics expert, Alan Davies, Educational Psychologist, believes that the report is clear evidence that Tony Blair has failed to deliver on the teaching of English in British primary schools. Davies said, "In 1998, David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, stated 'The government has pledged financial and practical support to train teachers in using the most effective ways of teaching literacy'. Now, eight years and hundreds of millions of pounds down the track, we have confirmation that teachers have not been trained to use 'the most effective ways' of teaching literacy." He added, "What we are witnessing is tantamount to 'PHONICSGATE'. That is, the government have wasted millions and they are doing a cover-up. Does anyone really believe this Cock-and-Bull story about the need to dramatically change things because of 'latest research'? We are not talking about rocket science but about the relationship between the twenty-six letters of the alphabet and the forty-four sounds of spoken English. For goodness sake, how many more millions of pounds, of hard-earned tax payers' money, are the Government going to waste? We are the laughing stock of the world. It is 2005 and the 'Brits' don't know how to teach English!".

Alan Davies has pioneered THRASS (Teaching Handwriting Reading And Spelling Skills), which is used extensively worldwide, especially in the UK, Australia and South Africa. Indeed, a Botswana Government official, interviewed for the videostream THRASS IN AFRICA, said that the Ministry of Education aims to implement THRASS in all primary schools.

In June 2000, David Blunkett wrote to Davies, "I understand that the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) decided not to accept the THRASS materials because they were not at an appropriate level for trainee teachers. The materials were considered to be more suitable for classroom use rather than being aimed at improving trainees' subject knowledge." Earlier this year THRASS UK launched an extensive website, containing 3D animations, free email courses, downloadable files and streamed videos of features, interviews, demonstration lessons and a video diary (including a 'Phonics 4 Parents' section) – with the aim of ensuring high quality teaching for phonics both at school and at home.

"We have thousands of written evaluations, from hundreds of courses, accumulated over nearly a decade. Just last week nearly fifty teachers attended a two-day course in Hampshire, presented by my wife, Hilary. The first evaluation stated, 'After 30 years of teaching I wasn't sure there would be much that was new. How wrong I was!'. All this goes to show that, when it comes to phonics, the staff at the Teacher Training Agency don't really know what they are talking about. To prove my point, we have, today, uploaded a video feature to our website entitled '20% Is Unacceptably High', which features a courageous and principled 'NQT Whistleblower' (Newly Qualified Teacher), who has been brave enough to give the interview that many have said they would not do, for fear of putting their careers in jeopardy."

In July, Ruth Kelly, the present Secretary of State for Education, rejected Alan Davies' request for a future meeting in London, on the grounds of 'heavy diary commitments'. However, ITV's Meridian Tonight broadcast a news feature in October, where Hampshire LEA's Dr Roger Norgate, Consultant Educational Psychologist, stated that "We looked at nearly a hundred children and it [THRASS] was very effective. They made, on average, about two-and-a-quarter months progress for every month they were on the programme." – which might encourage Ms Kelly to find the time for a future meeting.

THRASS UK NEW MEDIA CENTRE: www.thrass.co.uk/nm.htm

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