



# Whole-School Literacy

Phil Rigby  
Edge Hill University

*Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope*  
Kofi Annan

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# Session content

1. Current national picture and policy developments
2. Whole-school literacy - the background
3. What I can do to promote, develop and teach literacy in my school or classroom?

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"Every teacher in English is a teacher of English"

George Sampson (1921)

"All teachers are teachers of Literacy"

Sir Alan Bullock (1975)

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## Teaching Standards

### Part 1: Teaching

- 3. **Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge.**
  - c. Demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of Standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject.
- 5. **Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils.**
  - d. have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.
- 8. **Fulfil wider professional responsibilities.**
  - b. develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support.

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## 'The Framework for school inspection'

### Achievement of pupils at the school

When evaluating the achievement of pupils, inspectors consider:

- how well pupils develop a range of skills, including reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills and how well they apply these across the curriculum.

### Quality of teaching in the school

When evaluating the quality of teaching, inspectors consider:

- how well teaching enables pupils to develop skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics.

Ofsted December 2013

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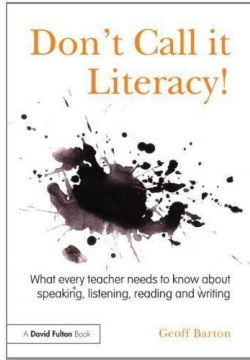
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Don't Call It Literacy

Geoff Barton

(David Fulton, 2013)




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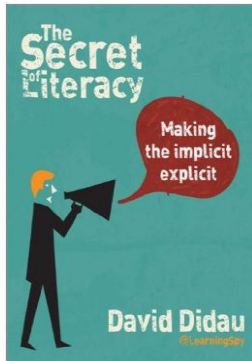
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The Secret of Literacy

David Didau

(Independent Thinking, 2014)




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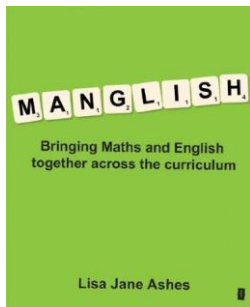
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Manglish

Lisa Jane Ashes

(Independent Thinking, 2014)




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### David Didau: The Learning Spy

Brain food for the thinking teacher



Home About Archive Favourite blogs Reading List SOLO taxonomy Training

#### What's the state of the evidence on... Teaching Latin

Posted on October 3, 2014



Originally posted on [Secondary Source](#):

I studied Latin at GCSE. My younger brother studied it to A level and then as a part of a Classics degree. I really enjoyed studying Latin and have always rather regretted the fact that I didn't carry on with it in the 6<sup>th</sup> form. Much to my delight, the comprehensive school in which I completed most of my teacher training offered Latin! The state grammar school in which I currently work does not teach Latin, having dropped it as a subject about a decade ago. I have always maintained that it *should* offer Latin but I have decided to

Buy the book




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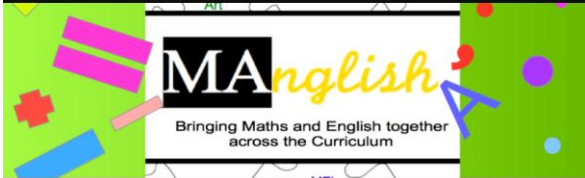
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### The Learning Geek

@isajancashes' blog about all things teaching and learning

Reflections of a Learning Geek Blog Manglish Pedagogy Contact Me Events Favourite Blogs YouTube Stuff

### Reflections of a Learning Geek

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### Hunting English

HuntingEnglish - An English teacher on the hunt for great teaching and learning strategies - or collaborate  
AN ENGLISH TEACHER ON THE HUNT FOR GREAT TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES - CONNECT WITH PEERS TO SHARE AND COLLABORATE

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### LATEST POSTS

ALL THE LATEST BLOG POSTS



EDUCATION POLITICS AND PEDAGOGICS / NOVEMBER 2, 2014



EDUCATION POLITICS AND PEDAGOGICS - TEACHER




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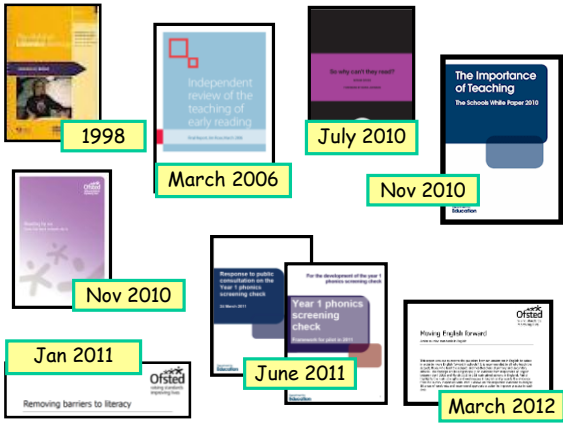
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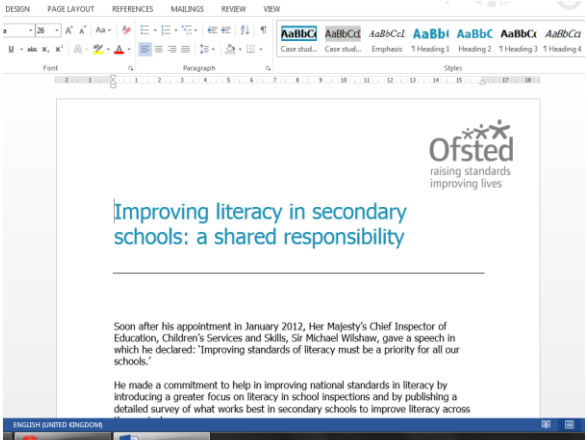
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*Literacy: State of the Nation (NLT, 2011)* provides a coherent picture of literacy in the UK today

- It reveals that:**
- One in six people in the UK struggle with literacy. This means their literacy is below the level expected of an eleven year old
  - A quarter of young people do not recognise a link between reading and success
  - Men and women with poor literacy are least likely to be in full-time employment at the age of thirty
  - There is a constant gender difference in attitudes towards writing. Boys do not enjoy writing as much as girls (38% vs. 52%), either for family/friends or for schoolwork

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- So how does the national picture for the UK compare with what you know of the pupils who come to your school?
- For pupils coming from backgrounds where conversation, reading and writing are sporadic and, perhaps, impoverished, what first impressions does your school give of an attitude to talking, reading and writing?
- What do you know of the attitudes of your pupils and parents to, say, reading and writing? How could you find out more?

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**How is Literacy different to English?**

Literacy is much wider than English.

English exposes students to a range of fiction and non-fiction texts.

Literacy is about communicating effectively.

Every subject has its own literacy.

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**A consistent whole-school approach can help pupils learn better**

Classrooms and corridors:

- Key words for the subject are on display
- Annotated examples of what high quality work looks like are visible
- Displays that are readable from a distance, e.g. with questions rather than statements
- The learning objective for every lesson is evident. Pupils know what they are expected to learn and how they will demonstrate it

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A consistent whole-school approach can help pupils learn better

Teacher talk:

- Exploratory talk: less use of 'what?' questions and more use of 'why?' and 'how?'
- Pupils are given time for oral rehearsal - briefly discussing their answers in pairs before being expected to say them aloud
- Pupils are given thinking time before giving an answer
- Increasing use of no-hands-up

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A consistent whole-school approach can help pupils learn better

Reading:

- Teachers teach the reading skills needed in a subject - e.g. skimming, scanning, speed reading, analysis and research
- Handouts are presented in ways that are attractive and accessible, taking account of the reading ages of pupils
- Key words are included at the start of handouts
- All handouts include a 'big picture' question or statement that helps pupils understand why they are reading it

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A consistent whole-school approach can help pupils learn better

Writing:

- Collaborative writing: pupils see their teacher modelling how to write the first paragraph of an answer
- The essential discourse markers of writing are taught (e.g. however, although, despite, because, while)
- Pupils are encouraged to use short sentences at the start and end of paragraphs

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Talking Point

- Which of these suggestions would you say were current strengths in your classroom / department / school?
- What are the main areas that need developing?
- What are the main blocks or restrictions to implementing these?

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The 2014 National Curriculum contains a section on 'Spoken Language' for each subject e.g. Science:

The national curriculum for science reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum - cognitively, socially and linguistically. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are key factors in developing their scientific vocabulary and articulating scientific concepts clearly and precisely. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear, both to themselves and others, and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions.

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What research tells us about classroom talk

- Talk - of the right quality - promotes the development of children's reasoning, conceptual understanding and reading comprehension
- Many pupils do not get a rich enough experience of spoken language outside school for this development to be assured
- Pupils do not merely need experience of speaking and listening in school: they need to be expressly taught the relevant functional skills: how to use talk to construct arguments, jointly solve problems and comprehend texts

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**Children learn most from talk in class when:**

- The teacher develops pupils' reflective awareness of how to talk and work together
- The teacher encourages them to express tentative ideas
- The teacher models good spoken language skills in whole class discussions
- The teacher scaffolds group work, but mainly stays out of it
- Group work involves tasks that really require children to think together

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**Group work matters:**  
 It can aid learning  
 It can assist pupils' social development  
 It can assist pupils' linguistic development

- Organising group talk:**
- Listening triads (talker, questioner, recorder)
  - Envoys
  - Snowball
  - Rainbow groups
  - Jigsaw
  - Spokesperson
  - Observer/listener

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**"The ability to read and write"**

- Skills for life**
- Reading
  - Writing
  - Speaking
  - Listening
  - Creativity
- These life skills are essential to the happiness, health and wealth of individuals and society. (National Literacy Trust, 2011)*

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## Reading

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath  
Matthew 13:12

... while good readers gain new skills very rapidly, and quickly move from learning to read to reading to learn, poor readers become increasingly frustrated with the act of reading, and try to avoid reading where possible  
Daniel Rigney: The Matthew Effect (2010)

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## Reading

There may be a social dimension involved as well, as good readers may choose friends who also read avidly while poor readers seek friends with whom they share other enjoyments

Researchers generally agree that early differences between good readers and poor readers tend to persist into adulthood and poor readers rarely catch up  
Daniel Rigney: The Matthew Effect (2010)

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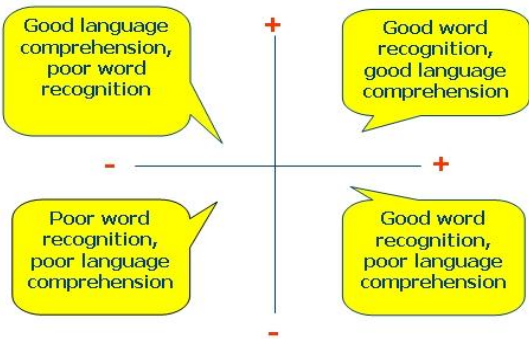
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## Simple view of reading



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This sentence has five words. Here are five more words. Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety. Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes, when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals—sounds that say listen to this, it is important.

Gary Provost

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## Glombots

Glombots, who looked durlly and lurkish, were very fond of wooning, which they usually did in the grebble rather than the grimper.

- What did glombots look like?
- What were they fond of doing?
- Where did they go wooning?
- Why do you think they preferred the grebble to the grimper for wooning?

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## Reading

Unless children have learned to read, the rest of the curriculum is a secret garden to which they will never enjoy access.

The Importance of Teaching: Schools White Paper. DfE. (2010:28)

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## Spelling

1. criticise
2. prejudice
3. twelfth
4. desperate
5. harass
6. conscious
7. privilege
8. recommend
9. necessary
10. sufficient

These spellings are all on the Years 5 and 6 list for the new primary English curriculum!

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### “The Dirty Thirty”

1. accommodation
2. beautiful
3. because
4. beginning
5. believe
6. business
7. ceiling
8. decided
9. definitely
10. disappear
11. disappointed
12. embarrass
13. extremely
14. friend



15. immediately
16. minute
17. necessary
18. neighbour
19. nervous
20. opportunity
21. persuade
22. queue
23. queueing
24. quiet
25. quite
26. receive
27. separate
28. sincerely
29. surprised
30. until

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## Teaching Spelling

- Break it into sounds (d-i-a-r-y)
- Break it into syllables (re-mem-ber)
- Break it into affixes (dis + satisfy)
- Use a mnemonic (necessary: one collar, two sleeves)
- Refer to word in the same family (muscle - muscular) (word webs)
- Say it as it sounds (Wed-nes-day) (spellspeak)
- Words within words (Parliament - I AM parliament)
- Refer to morphology (bi + cycle = two + wheels)
- Use patterns (bright, light, night, etc.)
- Use a key word ( advice/advise for practice)
- Apply spelling rules (writing, written)
- Learn by sight (look, cover, write, check)

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### 'Independent View of the Teaching of Early Reading'

51. Having considered a wide range of evidence, the review has concluded that the case for systemic phonic work is overwhelming and much strengthened by a synthetic approach  
(Rose. 2006:20)

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### Removing Barriers to Literacy

- Teachers with **high expectation** for pupils' achievements **in literacy**
  - An emphasis on **speaking and listening** skills from an early age
  - A rigorous, sequential approach to developing speaking and listening and teaching reading, writing and spelling through **systematic phonics**
- Ofsted (2011)

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"We know that, whatever else may work, teaching children to read using the tried and tested method of synthetic phonics can dramatically reduce illiteracy"

(Michael Gove speaking to Westminster Academy, 6 September 2010)

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"There is more to reading than phonics. But high-quality academic evidence from across the world - from Scotland and Australia to the National Reading Panel in the US - shows that the systematic teaching of synthetic phonics is the best way to teach literacy to all children, and especially those aged five to seven."

(Nick Gibb Schools Minister, March 2011)

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## Impact

Philosophical Perspectives on Educational Policy



To read or not to read: decoding Synthetic Phonics  
Andrew Davis  
(Issue 20  
pages 1-38  
November 2013)

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## Primary Schools

Teach students to comprehend texts as well as decode and encode words

Systematic synthetic phonics refers to teaching word recognition whereby phonemes (sounds) associated with particular graphemes (letters) are pronounced in isolation and blended together (synthesised) in order to decode words.

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### I CAN READ IT ! CAN YOU ???

fi yuo cna raed tihs, yuo hvae a sgtrane mnid too. Cna yuo raed tihs? Olny smoe plepoe can. i cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aocccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihg is taht the frsrit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mniddeos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wloke. Azanmig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot speling was ipmoranttl if you can raed tihs sahre it.

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'Chab, queep and sarps': The nonsense 'words' pupils, aged six, are made to read in new 'back to basics' phonics test

The Daily Mail

#### New phonics test failed by four out of 10 pupils

By Hannah Richardson  
BBC News education reporter

BBC News

Fewer than six out of 10 pupils, 58%, passed the controversial new national phonics reading test in England, official statistics show.

The test checks six-year-olds' ability to read about a mixture of all real and made-up words, according to critics but using the phonics system.

Ministers said the check had identified pupils who needed further help in learning to read.



#### Three-fifths of six-year-olds reach expected standard in phonics test

Controversial reading test has been criticised by teaching unions who say it could do more damage than good

The Guardian

New phonics reading tests will confuse children, warn teachers

The Independent

#### Thazz, spron and fape: the new reading test for six-year-olds

Head teachers have criticised government plans for children to be tested on made-up words like "voo", "terg" and "bin" to check their reading skills amid fears it will damage their education.

The Telegraph

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### How can I help?

- Reading is THE MOST important skill a child learns at school
  - High language comprehension
  - High word recognition




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### Isn't this a job for the English Department?

What literacy skills do my students need to have to succeed in my subject?

- Read
- Write




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### GCSE exam question

Explain the difference between muscular strength and power.

(4 marks)

#### Connectives for comparison

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| however            | on the other hand... |
| ...although...     | despite this...      |
| on the contrary... | instead...           |
| as for...          | ...whereas...        |
| ...while...        |                      |

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### Isn't this a job for the English Department?

What literacy skills do my students need to have to succeed in my subject?

- Read
- Write
- Speak
- Listen

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## Repetition

Expose students to as many different opportunities to read, write, speak and hear others speak as possible.

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'It is only when *all* students in a school have a voice - and can read - that they can be really successful'  
Ruth Miskin (2009)

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## Further reading

- Independent Review of Early Reading (2006)
- Moving English Forward. Ofsted (March 2012)
- National Literacy Strategy. (1998).
- Ofsted Inspection Framework. (2011)
- Reading by six. How the best schools do it. (2010)
- Removing Barriers to Literacy. Ofsted (2011)
- So why can't they read? (2010)
- The Importance of Teaching - The Schools White Paper 2010. DfE, (2010)
- The government published its formal response to the Wolf Review on 12 May (2011)

All of these are available from [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

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TEACHERS OF  
ENGLISH

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Any Questions?

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