Title: Resisting a ‘back-to-basics’ Agenda: Literacy Education and On-Line Discussion

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The global obsession with excellence in literacy is interwoven with government aspirations to tout ‘world-class’ standardized test scores (Alexander, 2011). In parallel, popular media discourses often blame teachers and teacher educators for a so-called ‘literacy crisis’. This reductionist approach contrasts with a post-modern landscape of profound socio-cultural diversity, which requires complexity in teaching, learning and researching literacies (Cumming-Potvin, 2012). Drawing on qualitative research which resists a ‘back-to-basics’ agenda, this presentation focuses on the journey of one pre-service teacher who was afforded on-line learning opportunities to discuss literacies with postgraduate students, a unit coordinator and other pre-service teachers. Conducted in a West Australian tertiary community, the study draws on Gee (2005, 2011) and The New London Group (1996). Preliminary results suggest that influences of power cannot be dismissed when opening dialogic space characterized by complexity and difference (Blackburn, 2012; hooks, 1994).

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