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Surviving Socialisation
The making & remaking of the pre-service teacher

Resource students do not enter teacher education unaccommodated; they have experienced a set of formative influences in school and society, which implicitly or explicitly shape their understandings of their future work.

(Hattie, 1994, pp. 6-7)

It has been argued that teachers’ pre-existing beliefs about teaching and learning are so influential that attempts to change teaching styles will be ineffective unless those beliefs are directly questioned.

(Dart et al., 1998, p. 203)

Teachers are constructed from their histories – from the social and cultural discourses and practices that shape and define them (Marsh, 2002). If we remain unconscious of this construction, we are unlikely to question the stories and values we carry into the classroom. In turn, our stories may become the official storylines of society (Grundy, 1994), rather than stories to be constructed in a range of stories that make up the classroom. Yet if we probe deeply into the influences that have gone into constructing our identities, we may just retain our potential to transform and outgrow our indoctrination. We may also come to listen more closely to the stories of others.

To question our conditioning we need to understand how we are made and how we enact this making to influence and make others. As Marsh (2002, p. 493) suggests, “Learning to examine the discourses through which we enact our teaching lives provides us with opportunities to select those discourses that allow for the creation of positive social and academic identities for the children in our care.” Our students deserve nothing short of this type of self-examination – after all, they are relying on us get it right. Their futures are at stake.

Similarly, we need to examine how we are constructed and conditioned through university and practice placements, and to what degree we choose our professional identities. Alarmingly, many pre-service teachers enter university believing they were born to teach and have a gift and ‘special calling’ to the profession—in other words, that they already have the skills and qualities to teach (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Whitbread, 2000). Given this, it is important that reflective practices are developed to challenge and interrogate such perceptions (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Moore, 2004; Whitbread, 2000). Pre-service teachers are not qualified to teach on the basis of birth or having been to school (Hattie, 1994; Whitbread, 2000). Without a reflective and theoretical analysis of our school experiences and broader social conditioning, we may unconsciously reproduce the normalising discourses and social inequities we observed while growing up (Apple, 1997; Cochrane-Smith, 1991; Hattie, 1994; Voorhees, 2004). Or worse, we may use our classrooms to re-enact social and emotional struggles we experienced as children (Moore, 2004, pp. 18-20).

Many commentators note that teacher education programs struggle to ‘undo’ the deeply held preconceptions of pre-service teachers (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Dart et al., 1998; Hattie, 1994; Moore, 2004; Whitbread, 2000).

Hattie (1994, p. 10) writes: “However, it is possible to move beyond one’s biography if it need not be inevitable that teachers from dominant groups mindlessly reproduce through their practices the inequalities already present in society.” And Grundy-Smith et al. (2001, p. 127) remind us that “your own experience as a student, irrespective of how long ago this was, does provide you with a set of ‘tools’ for the roles that teachers and students play in these institutions.”

I do not want to become the teacher constructed through stereotypes in my younger head. I do not want to exclude others as I was excluded. I want to remain conscious of the forces that play upon my making. I want to be aware of the normalising discourses and practices that so readily play out in repeat performances (Aunger-Skinner-Smith et al., 2001, p. 127; Hattie, 1994; Nisbet, 2002; Moore, 2004). I want to teach who I am today—and who I can become tomorrow—by intervening my conditioning, reading myself against the grain (Boorner, 1988), and being a reflective practitioner (Dart et al., 1998, p. 254; Moore, 2004). I want to scrutinise the problems and dilemmas of teaching (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 259) and actively turn myself into...
It wasn't an easy time to be a schoolteacher, if it ever had been. Squeezed by the state for higher standards and by parents for higher grades, under the magnifying glass for any ethnic insensitivity or sexual impropriety, torn by the rote demands of proliferating standardized tests and student cries for creative expression, teachers were both blamed for everything that went wrong with kids and turned to for their every salvation. This dual role of scapegoat and savior was downright messianic… (Shriver, We need to talk about Kevin, 2003, p. 390).

Given that schools (and schooling) have changed little in decades (Boomer, 1988; Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001; Suton, 2002; Tomlinson, 1996), and that teacher education programs struggle to reverse this trend (Cochrane-Smith, 1991), it is our responsibility - as learners, educators, and individuals - to disrupt and challenge these toxic and regressive habits and to actively promote reform (Boomer, 1988; Cochrane-Smith, 1991). We need to break through the habit barrier to help students break free from scribbled obedience to us and the system, we need to make explicit the powers we have and those that control us; we need to help students develop critical reflection and considered action, not heartless and mindless rebellion. We need to train students as people now, not people-in-waiting (Rymht et al., 2002, p. 257). In the Report to UNESCO, Delors (1995) outlines four foundations for education in the 21st century, one of which concerns traditional content knowledge while the others are concerned with being and becoming the best human beings we can be in a radically changing and uncertain world (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001). The same, I suggest, could be said of all learning paradigms, including teacher education programs. With a compelling, well informed, and articulate professionals identity as theory at hand, one that is pragmatic, radical, patient, and persistent, beginning teachers like myself can fortify themselves against the decadent discourse that Boomer (1988, pp. 190-191) talks about and shake off the thick musk of educational ritual that numbs beginning teachers into its ranks.
Learning by talking and teaching by listening (Darling-Hammond)

(Anti-Social) Socialisation

And raging against the mass schooling machine

Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 284) argues that pre-service teachers need to learn to teach against the grain through collaborative resonance with experienced teacher-mentors in one school, one classroom, and one day at a time. Beginning teachers cannot simply take on the entire education machine from day one. Collaborative resonance is a form of counter-socialisation—of learning how to critique existing educational habits and personal assumptions in partnership with others. This way, pre-service teachers can resist the pressure to align themselves with professional identity and attitude, dedicated to ongoing activism and reform. Rather than be mere functionaries of social reproduction, pre-service teachers develop the capacities and outlook necessary to sustain reformist activities into the future. They do not simply swallow guidelines and later negotiate them. They think critically about what they do and how they do it in collaboration with others.

While I agree with collaborative resonance in principle, the problem I face as a (would-be) reformer and activist is that I haven’t yet worked with experienced teacher-mentors on an individual level. In the absence of collaborative resonance, I am forced to adopt what Cochran-Smith (1991) suggests is the least effective of the two activist traditions—that is, critical discontinuity. Critical discontinuity involves reflecting critically on teaching practice outside the teaching situation through such outlets as university workshopping, essays, reports, and articles like this one. For me, there is one other option: to reflect critically on my teaching practices in private while on probation and then in public through university endeavours once outside again. This may be going against the odds, but the alternative is worse: doing nothing at all and just accepting the script. Given the perceived impotence of external methods of counter-socialisation, I need to work...
tasks as hard to undo and reconstitute my teacher identity if I wish to Rei the traditional induction (and brainwashing) process and remain true to myself'

Whilst I welcome the day that collaborative resonance is an integral part of the professional process, my in-school experiences have focused on sustaining and perpetuating the status quo rather than improving or changing it. This emphasis has been on how well I have talked, sounded, postured, and acted like a teacher in the traditional sense, rather than on how well I have scrutinised practice and sought reform—in other words, on socialising me into particular mass schooling scripts (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2004; Smyth et al., 2005). Deviations from the norm have usually—but not always—been met with polite if not slightly amused resistance, and sometimes even openly condemned as submissive and wrong. This form of socialisation has been both subtle and overt, but nonetheless persistent.

By large, my teaching performance has been assessed on the 'technicalities' of teaching ever and above the innovations and dispositions I bring to the classroom, or the ethics and morality of teaching per se. This isn't to say that supervising teachers ignore these aspects of their work, but rather that pre-service teacher evaluation criteria are largely concerned with technicalities. I am being judged on the way I plan lessons and units of work, the way I teach and transmit information to students, the way I evaluate and assess student learning, the way I position myself in the classroom to maintain control, the way I read and analyse reports, and perform surveillance on your duty, the way I adhere to instructions and institutional routines, how often and how much homework I set, whether I am punctual and well organised, whether I attend faculty and staff meetings, and how well I administer punishments and sanctions to maintain order. These technicalities are certain important elements of teaching—granted. However, the deeper issues and considerations that face beginning (and experienced) teachers in a rapidly changing and globalising world are largely unresolved. Competing claims to social justice and inclusivity are often lost, for instance, in the languages and conventions of the system. Procedures

"Schools are still based on assumptions about uniformity and homogeneity, and evidence to school rules tend to be based on administrative convenience rather than principles of social justice. Teachers and students also operate under educational policies which express some commitment to promoting the rights of individuals and groups, but do so on the basis of the imperative to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, rather than as a positive recognition and affirmation of difference..." (McKinney, 2004, p. 62)

and routines which are designed to make schools efficient, manageable, and fair to all, often overlook the particularities and background differences of individuals, thereby justifying their exclusion. Form, uniformity, and logistical rules and regulations for students and teachers are often articulated using language that suits and reproduces certain types of people and behaviour. Human differences are not acknowledged. The system welcomes and socialises a particular type of student (obedient, quiet, and hardworking) and a particular type of teacher (obedient, quiet, and hardworking). Somehow all these directives and discourses real people see lost, and in their place are idealised and two-dimensional caricatures that optimise the mass schooling dream.

Supervising teachers are themselves required to by the rigid rules and technical demands of day-to-day school life—including the accommodation and surveillance of the displaced and nomadic pre-service teacher. It would be exceedingly difficult, I expect, to break away from the usual teacher-student relationship, as adapted and institutionalised in the classroom, to one that accommodates the pre-service teacher who occupies an in-between identity, and who may threaten and challenge the accepted scripts of the profession with new and unusual university-based ideas and research findings. Whether to treat the pre-service teacher as a student or colleague, outsider or insider, mentor or ally, must be difficult. The discourses passing from experienced teacher to beginning teacher often reflect this tension, and often depend on which relationship and which perspective is accepted or resisted, and what the pre-service teacher has or has not done. The teacher's task is a difficult one. Are they a supervisor, a cooperating teacher, or a mentor? Or are they in fact a teacher impacting the rules of the game to the newcomer and assessing compliance? Do they side with change or convention? Do they allow the newcomer into episcopes of themselves? Do they have time to think about such issues and the potentially career-altering influences they impart to their charges?

And the task of the beginning teacher is equally daunting and ambiguous. Are they a student, a teacher, a colleague, a co-worker, or some logicky blend of each? Are they trespassing on someone else's intellectual and physical space? Where do their loyalties lie? How far, in real terms, can they go with the threat of assessment hanging over their heads (and therefore their careers)? Do they dare question the system and challenge its methods? Or do they cringe at the fringe and attempt to
pass through the gaps uncovered and intent? Do they keep their secrets close to their chests and simply aim to pass?

For this reason I usually resisted the temptation to question deeper school issues. I felt reluctant, for instance, to question behaviour management strategies that relied on sanctions, standover tactics, punishments, and surveillance, since any tentative efforts to breach these issues and to propose humanistic alternatives were usually met with tokenistic explanations or complete indifference. That’s just the way we do school here (Tomlinson, 1995, p. 115). Yes, very quietly, very subtly, I feel the pressure to go with the flow and to accept and uphold the status quo (Boomer, 1989; Cochran-Smith, 1991). I am being socialized into the profession. I am also learning to speak a language I don’t believe in, to nod in assent when I mean dissent, and to do those things with an inner knowing that I will eventually wash out of this contaminant and begin my work. The real work. The social/justice work. The ethical work.

The learning work. I am biting my tongue and firmly raging against the mass schooling machine. Boomer (1989, 1988a, 1989a) suggests that I should not feel guilty about what I can or cannot do in conservative hegemonic systems, but should look instead to better compromises and long-term goals rather than short-term gains for the sake of personal and professional survival. Change, whether of the Self or of the System, is a slow and grinding process. Patience and persistence are essential.

Having not experienced the ‘collaborative resonance’ that Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 288) advocates, my pragmatic radicalism has been emerging, as suggested through critical discourses. I have relied less on school-based collaboration and more on imagining and conceptualizing teaching against the grain through university seminars and critical inquiry. For me, university educators have been better positioned to speak against the constraints and constraints beneath because they are not under threat from the school system. Hence, inschool educators are less accustomed to collaborative resonance and ongoing transformative action because they are hemmed by social and systemic restraints. Instead, these educators are contained by the never-ending list of tasks and competing interests that make their days a minefield of frustration, red tape, and hypocrisy. It is because of this inschool frustration that I have sought my own de-socialisation (or re-socialisation) through articles like this one. As Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 288) points out:

In most of their student teaching placements ... there are few opportunities for either the experienced teachers or the student teachers to participate in thoughtful inquiry, reflection on their daily dealings, or collaboration with others. In most of their encounters with school and university supervisors, student teachers are encouraged to talk about relevant and technical rather than critical or epistemological aspects of teaching. Finally, in most of their preservice programs, the role of the teacher as an agent for change is not emphasized, and students are not deliberately socialized into assuming responsibility for school reform and renewal.

Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 288) reminds us that teaching against the grain “is not a generic skill that can be learned at the university and then applied at the school.” Other university provides a place to “immerse” and “ail both the already present radical impulse, and to turn the latent potential into effective practice (D. Kamenetz, personal communication, September 19, 2005). However, in the absence of authentic collaborative resonance on practical placements, the pragmatic radical educator, the me, the I, the human being will fly solo if need be, and practice the craft of teaching against the grain (to succeed through critical distance) and self-analysis rather than succumb to ethical suicide, transmission teaching, blind obedience, neo-liberal bullying, and the Fordist factory model script. We can still rage against the machine on the inside.

Thomson (2002, p. 12) writes: “Teachers must fulfill the potential of each child, ensure that all children are active, intelligent citizens, good parents and productive workers, sort and select for higher education and employment those children who are safe and occupable while those parents are at work, improve standards, deliver a hierarchy of credentials, discipline the discipline and prevent lower social mobility, assist the natural economy... the list seems endless.” In signified ways, the mandates and expectations pull in different directions.

While Boomer (1988, p. 148) suggests that “[individual action is] usually contained” and becomes intellectual while it “begins to lessen the established order,” he also suggests that this should not deter would-be reformers. He writes: “This does not mean that individual teachers should delay action until they can find support from their colleagues. At least, teachers can talk to their students openly about how they think they can help students, and about societal consequences of various behaviours” (p. 145).
Teacher Construction
And critical awakenings

As teachers we need to do more than simply reflect upon school experiences at university (and home) to revolutionise our teaching practice. We need to carry this capacity with us. We need to acculturate the discourses and practices we take to the classroom in ongoing and reflective ways to get to the heart of our hidden assumptions and unconscious habits. That said, we will never completely undo our assumptions. We will never completely eradicate stereotypes. We are all socially situated agents with personal histories and perspectives. To eradicate these biases would require erasing our identities and being re-conditioned in a culture free of dogmas and assumptions of any kind—a culture that cannot co-exist with human agency and human perception. Certain aspects of Self will always remain hidden to Self, but this should not deter us.

What we can do is question our theories and practices to see what toxic habits and views we do uncover (Thompson, 1992, p. 296). In other words, we can make the unconscious conscious (Selye et al., 2000, p. 2) and take it public. We can turn our critical awareness back on ourselves, as pragmatic radicals and reflective practitioners do, before turning our attention to the social, political, and cultural norms that position and shape us, including those of governments, policy makers, and school hierarchies. We need to de-normalise and de-mythologise these unquestioned habits (Matherney, 2004; Meechmore, 1999; O'Farrell, 1999) and resist being used as unthinking pawns in the mass schooling machine. We can invigorate our practice by being sensitive human beings capable of personal and social reflection and action when ‘trot’ practices are discovered. We can become conscious of our own habits and idiosyncrasies and prepare to confront and challenge these rather than overlook and bury them. We do not live behind history and tradition to perpetuate harmful and exploitative practices. We do not hide behind social and personal prejudices and stereotypes to perpetuate social inequalities and personal hostilities. We do not mindlessly follow government directives because we are told to. Nor do we challenge them, we expect them, we critique them, and we act on them in socially-critical and socially-responsible ways. We need them against the grain (Boomer, 1998; Cochran-Smith, 1991). This, for me, is the radical impulse. It is pragmatic radicalism in practice.

Similarly, we cannot rely on solid subject matter knowledge to teach effectively and to revolutionise the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Simply knowing something doesn’t mean we can teach it. Rather, we need to deliberately, consciously, and collectively transform ourselves into effective teachers through ongoing scrutiny and ongoing practice. This dispels the myth of being born to teach or pre-equipped to teach on the basis of expert knowledge and/or liking and loving children. We need to do more than simply turn up and regurgitate facts under the guise of being authentic and entertaining. Darling-Hammond (2009) suggests that beginning teachers need to learn how to teach effectively through in-school practice and university reflection—a la, authentic praxis (Frieze, 1999). Darling-Hammond (2009, p. 227) writes:

Learning to practice in substantially different ways from what new teachers have once experienced can occur neither through theoretical imaginings alone nor through experience alone. It requires a much tighter coupling of the two. This tighter coupling of theory and practice in the context of a broader and deeper base of knowledge about learning, development, and teaching is perhaps the key feature of teacher education for the twenty-first century.

University knowledge and school knowledge should not remain separate. I need to transfer knowledge constructed at university to the classroom. I need to transform this knowledge into effective practice. There is no point writing powerful essays on learner-centred pedagogies only to enter the classroom and revert to hierarchically teacher-centred practices observed and endured at school. And I have done this; under the watchful and suspicioning eyes of supervising teachers, I have done this. I have embodied the personae and practices of former teachers. I have spoken their orders and mimicked their behaviours. I have lost me and become them. This is how quickly the institutionalisation process can go to work on new teachers and胶囊s and coerce them back into historical habits: to assumptions and stereotypes struggled against at university, to hasten and despair, back to Teacher with a capital T. But being mindful of the socialisation process has permitted me to undo and unpick (some of) these forces and to act differently on subsequent occasions. This gives me some chance of resisting conservative pressures in the future, some chance of retaining my integrity and hope, and some chance of living up to and respecting the expectations and experiences of a younger me, whose cries for help still ring in my ears (Backett, 1965, p. 79).
Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 283) suggests that both discursive and “reorientant” teacher education programs recognize that:

the formal aspects of professional preparation are largely incapable of altering students’ perspectives, while the less formal, experiential aspects of student teaching are potentially more powerful. Both recognize that an important part of what happens during the student teaching period is “expansional socialization,” in which the culture of the profession, including how to behave, talk, and think like experienced members, and both aim to interrupt the socialization that normally occurs (my emphasis).

For me, this is motivation enough to work against the (anti-social) socialization process, and to somehow distill my teaching identity in a manner that is functional, ethical, and powerful in the face of conservative pressures and neoliberal agendas. Ultimately, I need to maintain my personal integrity as well as contribute to the broader school effort, but I must do so in a way that does not damage and demoralise the Self or permit systemic violence to batter me down. I need to stand up for me and the students in my care. I need to make hope practical, achievable, and accessible to all (McIntyre, 2004).

In Making Hope Praxisical, McIntyre (2004) describes the transformative activities of teachers (and parents) at Wattle Plains who are committed to critical pedagogies and social justice in a political regime hell-bent on the militarization of schooling. Similarly, in Learning to Teach against the Grain, Cochran-Smith (1991) describes the reflective activities of a group of teachers at Community Central Lower School who actively challenge their own assumptions and those of traditional teaching practice. Like these teachers, I view myself as an active agent who has the right and moral obligation to “make certain aspects of teaching problematic” (p. 292).

As Cochran Smith points out, “the underlying image of the teacher as an active agent poses a sharp contrast to the image of the professional as a pawn pushed around by the figures of habit, standard procedure, and expert authority. Indeed, the teacher is put forward as the one who is directly responsible for raising questions, interrogating her own knowledge and experiences, and then beginning to take responsible and reasoned action” (p. 250). To me, these actions are pragmatic and radical, strategic and considered, and active and empowering for all. They take in both the memoirs of and the people and places involved. As one contributor in Cochran-Smith’s (1991, p. 253) paper points out: “What is at issue is the right of practitioners to be emancipated from the stifling effects of unquestioned habits, routines, and procedures, and in this “struggle” to develop ways of analysis and enquiry that enable the exposure of values, beliefs, and assumptions held and embedded in the way practitioners experience and lead their lives.” It seems that at Community Central and Wattle Plains, in an era of standardization and teacher repression, pragmatic radicals not only exist, but thrive.

As a teacher, I need to set the example. I need to think out loud and role model action. I need to make explicit my agendas, activities, and outlook. I need to involve students in their own schooling lives, including the gradual reconstructions that go on behind the scenes (Boomer, 1989, p. 12). This requires unmasking through our “willing suspension of disbelief” about the naturalistic and innocent nature of classrooms, curriculum, schools, and hegemonies (Boomer, 1989, p. 12), and evoking an alienation or estrangement effect that ensures that “the audience distances itself and develops a critical frame of mind as well as an awareness of the theatrical effects being used dialectically to change and sharpen the audience’s opinions and views.” In turn, “The audience, while critically estranged, is nonetheless pressed to see the content in a new light, to question old constructs and to be shocked (though not surprised) (p. 11). Such a teacher, or anti-teacher, is still very much concerned with scaffolding (and therefore manipulating) meaningful learning, but she does so by revealing her props, prejudices, emotions, and values, and by letting rhetoric, hidden and secret knowledge disrupt and interrogate the learning space—the learning mind.
Critical Reflexivity

Turning the page back on me reveals that I have not been a particularly successful pragmatic radical yet. My practice experiences tell me that I haven’t completely resolved the ‘pragmatic—radical’ duality. I shift vacuously between the binaries along the continuum from blind obedience to conscious distance, in order to try to balance myself against the situation or person at hand. This isn’t easy. I have more mistakes in my body than many teachers have stopped under the radar of convention and gotten away with. I am a pre-service teacher, after all, and when in school I am situated awkwardly between opposing worlds and opposing identities. According to one view, I am a bona fide teacher and power holder; in another I am an ignorant wearer, pseudo-teacher, and wayfarer who works for peanuts and from another I am a quasi-student — a rogue from the badlands — who cannot be completely trusted given my close proximity and natural affinity to other students. This is a shaky and precarious identity. At times I am treated like a colleague, at others like a defiant student steeped in university normure (and they might be right). I don’t want to bring the school — and my career — down on my head in one grand and fulsome act of disruption. Rather, I want to adopt theories and practices that are consistent with my evolving experiences and outlooks, but also subtle enough to avoid the aura of authoritative. I need to stay within the system in order to help restructure and reform it, even if only in small ways and with some learners and part of the time. Having said that, I haven’t — yet — got blood on my hands — yet! (Ferri, 2005: p. 690). I haven’t — that I know of — victimised, or deliberately hurt or excluded any students — yet! This is important. But the real question remains: how do I remain a pragmatic radical in the years ahead?

This is what I am writing for — to indelibly impress the importance of praxis, reflexivity, and pragmatic radicalism upon my developing professional identity and practice.

Perhaps most importantly, teachers who work against the grain must name and wrestle with their own doubts, must fend off the logic of reform and depend on the strength of their individual and collaborative convictions that their work ultimately makes a difference in the fabric of social responsibility.

(Cochran Smith, 1997, p. 383)

As such, pragmatic radicalism is a risky business, involving a delicate balancing act between restraint and action. It involves occupying different roles and different spaces — strategically — to maximise the potential and resources of each (L. Wilkenson, personal communication, February 1, 2008). This is a way of being. A theoretical and philosophical way of being. A way of being informed, in which our identity shift and change to accommodate different perspectives, different agendas, different positions, and different demands. It involves being strategically placed to survive the system and to help reform it. We need to adhere to the system in order to subvert it — thereby using the system in its own transformation. Pragmatic radicalism is both an ideological outlook and a way of being and acting in the world; an activity. A process, an act of disruption and power. It involves teaching students (and teachers) to react against the grain; to read the curriculum, read the classroom, read the teacher, and read books and texts in the traditional sense (Booser, 1988 & 1998). Pragmatic radicalism is a constructive, calculating, patient, and didactic activity rather than a destructive, insipid, and
In order to break these various complicities of tact and illusion, in order to liberate teachers from the tyranny of a decadent discourse, I advocate a revolution in explicitness and honesty which will require, initially, concerted perversity and courage. We need to call education at all levels as it is. We need to make opaque many of the presently transparent follies and absurdities that flow through our system. And perhaps the best technique for doing this is to begin swimming against the flow.

(Boomer, 1998, pp. 103-104)

References


SMS (short message service) text has led the way, with its arcane language of abbreviations and symbols that seem to be shredding the written language – or, perhaps, to be inventing a new kind of language. Emails are increasingly adopting the same abbreviated style (Mackay, Advance Australia Where, 2007, p. 122).