



towards greater understanding

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**Comment supporting the concept of the Think2 Read' Project Phase 2:**  
*building creative and critical reading, writing and thinking power through language,  
meaning and philosophical enquiry*

Donna Thomson in association with Dartington Primary School  
and Dartington Social Research Unit

Triune Initiatives is a private educational company based in Wellington, New Zealand. We develop, write and publish educational resources for teachers - in particular, specialised reading resources. The company's focus for the last eight years has been on the assessment and teaching of reading comprehension. Triune Initiatives created the **PROBE Reading Assessment** ©1999 (revised 2002) with an emphasis on comprehension (8 – 14 years old). It has been well received in New Zealand (in more than 70% of all schools), and has become a top seller for the Australian distributor - Australian Council of Educational Research Press.

The data gathered from working with hundreds of children and adults and the anecdotal information from a wide variety of teachers has pointed to the fact that competency with decoding does not necessarily go hand in hand with understanding.

Whilst developing the skills of recognising and/or deciphering the words in texts must not be disregarded, we believe that waiting until students have mastered these skills before developing comprehension/thinking skills is unwise.

Consequently, we support Think2Read's creative and well thought out Project Phase 2 that aims to teach the rudimentary skills of critical reading to younger students (regardless of ability) - especially since the plan involves helping them to develop philosophical enquiry to support this.

If, as a study suggests, an estimated 100,000 young people leave UK schools each year without sufficient basic literacy, oral, social and thinking skills to function adequately in society, how many leave with just the basic skills? A modern democracy needs its citizens to take an active role in the decision making from the local community level up. To do this successfully they must be able to act on given information with a multiplicity of skills - such as gathering together separated pieces of information and unravelling inferences.

To do this successfully most people need to be taught. Specific teaching must occur; and the best time to start this teaching is right at the beginning.

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