

#WeAreReaders by Sadie Phillips



Context

I am a Year 5 teacher in my fourth year of teaching at a free school in London. Last year, I was given responsibility for Writing within the school and I am also part of the Literacy Co-ordinator Team. Creating a Reading for Pleasure (RfP) culture is an essential part of my role.

Research inspiration and rationale

I saw the #mydadreads social media campaign implemented by Jon Biddle on the OU RfP site and was inspired to do something similar to raise the profile of RfP within our own school community. The relationships between children, teachers, their families and wider communities have a strong influence on RfP as research shows (Cremin et al., 2014). *The Teachers as Readers* project highlighted the need to develop and build reciprocal and interactive reader relationships between children, teachers and families, so we began by starting a social media campaign to promote RfP at home.

Aims

1. To raise the profile of RfP within the school community
2. To demonstrate to children that adults (teachers, parents, families) RfP
3. To create a buzz around reading at home with a social media campaign and prominent display within the school entrance.

Outline

'WE ARE READERS'

Calling all children, carers, mums, dads, aunts, uncles and family members!

Can you help out with our exciting new reading display?
We're calling it 'WE ARE READERS'!

All you need to do is send us a photo of yourself reading (this could be a book, magazine, newspaper, train timetable, map or anything at all!), or a 'shelfie' (a photo of your reading shelf at home) and tell us why you love reading.

You can either email it to us at readers@canarywharfcollege.co.uk and we'll post it on our Canary Wharf College Facebook Page, or tweet it straight to [@canarywharfcoll](https://twitter.com/canarywharfcoll).

Don't forget to tag us and use the hashtag **#WeAreReaders**



We took inspiration from the #MyDadReads campaign and kept it simple with a straightforward photo campaign on Facebook and Twitter.

- We chose the #WeAreReaders hashtag and then sent a parent mail home explaining how they could get involved. All we asked is that they sent a photo of themselves reading or a 'shelfie' (a photo of their book shelf at home) and a short comment about why they loved reading.
- We included short articles about the #WeAreReaders campaign in our school newsletter and our magazine.
- We gave the option to post photos online or email them to a teacher. Photos were sent in regularly over the course of the term and as they were added to the social media photo album, more and more photos flooded in. We tried to respond to every reader that sent a photo and acknowledged him or her online by adding their photo to the album or simply by re-tweeting their pictures.
- To promote involvement, we offered a £10 Waterstones book voucher for the best photo. This was presented in an assembly where some of the photos were shared on a slide show.

- We then created a high profile display of all the photos and quotes in the school reception area so that everyone who entered the school could see it.



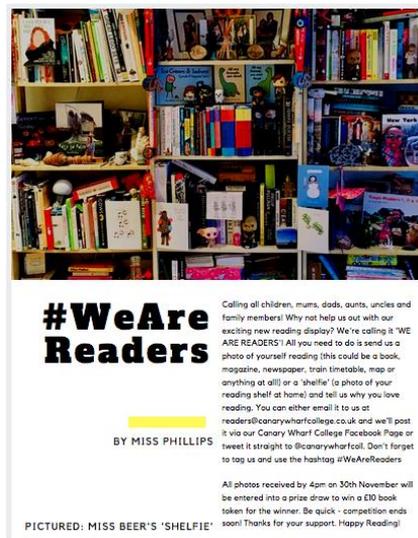
Impact

- In total we had photos of over 50 children, parents and family members reading for pleasure. The Facebook album received almost 100 likes in total, as well as multiple comments and shares. Photos are still received almost every week.
- Children were excited to see their own photos, as well as photos of family members online and on display in school
- The display and quotes attracted lots of attention and provided a welcoming environment at the main school reception. Lots of discussion around the photos and quotes about reading were happening amongst children (and visitors!)
- Feedback from parents and children was positive, with increased talk about books and reading due to the request to provide a quote. Comments included:
 - "We all love reading because simply it feels like travelling through time and worlds in a few moments!"
 - "I love reading with my boy, because he helps me with the words I find hard!"
 - "I love reading! I absolutely love the way I can interpret words, or even a whole entire story, in a completely different way. It reminds me that the human mind and imagination is a truly extraordinary gift!"

- "We love creating a special place which makes reading even more exciting!"
- "We love reading because books don't have annoying commercial breaks!"
- "We love reading as it's a moment of quiet and calm in a busy world and it is a special time for our family where we sit together, talk about the books and what has gone on in our day."
- "I love reading because I can pretend to be the character in the book!"
- "Our quiet and tranquil time before going to sleep."
- One of the parents wanted to thank a member of staff for something and so they bought her a book stating 'they'd seen her photo on Facebook so they knew she loved reading.'
- The campaign was so successful and popular that we are repeating it during Spring term with the hashtag #WeAreWriters to raise the profile of writing for pleasure too.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research has had on practice

The #WeAreReaders social media campaign helped us to connect with parents, carers and families and involve them in promoting a love of reading for enjoyment and pleasure. Sharing photos and quotes about why we love reading helped to build a buzz around reading for pleasure throughout the school, as well as to model to the children that adults read for pleasure too.



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