

READING FOR PLEASURE

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Context

I am a final year trainee on professional practice in a two and a half form entry school in Skelmersdale. I was in a Year 6 class who were close to taking their SATs and at this point in the year, time was not dedicated to reading for pleasure. The school however, was trying to promote more reading for pleasure strategies, particularly in upper key stage 2.

Aims and Outline

The aim of my project was to encourage the children in my class to read more frequently and reflect on their enjoyment of reading. I encouraged this by inviting the children to 'rate and review' the books they read. I provided the children with a chart to complete after reading each book. This invited them to award the book a star rating and provide a comment which might support other readers when they browse for texts to read. The pupils were motivated and excited to both rate the books and to see how others had responded. We awarded the book with the most stars, book of the month.



What did you think about the book?

Inspiration and Rationale



This was a challenging Year 6 class who were very close to their SATs. I wanted them to participate in a shared activity which would support them in reading more widely and sharing their thoughts on what they read that was manageable in the busy period before the tests. The 'rate and review' system meant that pupils could spend as much or as little time as they wanted reviewing the books they had read.

The Teachers as Readers (TaRs) research, 2014 identifies effective reading pedagogies which include creating social reading environments, book talk and recommendations. By inviting children to review their reading, I wanted to develop the children's ability to recommend and reflect on reading and share this with others.

'Reading increases our understanding of our own identity, improves empathy and gives us an insight into the world view of others' (The Reading Agency, 2015). This inspired me to start my reading for pleasure project as it reminded me how much reading affects our holistic development and how it allows children to develop empathy and feelings for others, something in which my class would benefit from.

Impact



The pupils were excited by the 'rate and review' system and were very interested to find out what different books had been rated. Leading on from this, the children were then excited to read the books that were rated highly. Some were also interested to read the books with lower ratings in order to understand why they had been awarded fewer stars!

The pupils were also excited to swap books with each other and talk about the ratings they had given and why.

I believe this strategy worked well as it provided the children with time to consider their reading, share their thoughts and preferences and engage in some informal book talk. Some children had commented that it helped them to stop feeling stressed and forget that SATs were coming up.

Reflection



By engaging with the children in this activity, I observed the children engaging in their reading. They began to challenge themselves by reading other children's recommendations and this encouraged them to make choices and read more widely. I noticed that their views on reading began to shift from something they felt the 'had' to do in school, to something they 'wanted' to do both in school and in their spare time.

It was also important for me to read books alongside the children and to use the same 'rate and review' system. This encouraged the children to see me as a reader, and they were interested both in what I was reading and to see how I rated books. My informal exchanges with the children impacted on their subsequent choices. This is a strategy I will definitely use again in the future, and I will make sure that I allow time in my classroom for children to read for pleasure, consider and reflect on their reading and make recommendations to their peers.