

Context

I am a Year 4 class teacher and Reading Lead at Horsenden Primary School, a four-form entry school in the London Borough of Ealing.



OU Research inspiration and rationale

The idea for the Picture Book World Cup builds on previous work I have undertaken to develop knowledge of children's literature and embed a reading for pleasure pedagogies: the Battle of the Books

(<https://researchrichpedagogies.org/research/example/battle-of-the-books>).

This work has been inspired by Teachers as Readers (TaRs) findings: to develop knowledge and use of children's literature and the importance of reading pedagogies in the classroom – that teachers of reading are not only reading teachers but take action in the classroom to develop a community of readers. It states, *'These practices are realised and made authentic by teachers' commitment to extend their subject knowledge of children's literature and other texts and continually reflect on what it means to be a reader, for themselves and for children.'* (Cremin et al., 2014:106). In each class where a Battle of the Books was held there was a significant impact on both the teachers' and children's knowledge of books and authors. However, the impact was limited to these classrooms and had not impacted across the whole school.

Outline

The Picture Book World Cup followed the structure of the FIFA World Cup. I created a huge display with brackets that we could use to track the outcome of each match, and this was displayed outside the school office so that every child, and their parents and carers, could see it and become involved.

In the group stages, each year from Nursery to Year 6 was assigned a collection of four books. Each class read the four books and voted for their favourite. The two books with the most votes made it through to the next round – the final 16.

For the final 16, the two winning books from each year group went head-to-head with the winning books from another year group – Nursery vs Year 3, Reception vs Year 4, Year 1 vs Year 5 and Year 2 vs Year 6. All of this happened on the same days as the final 16 stage of the FIFA World Cup.

For the quarter-finals, phases were invited to select a winner between the two books. These books went through to the next round, the semi final and in this round, and the final every class read each book and ranked it out of 10. These scores were emailed to me and combined to find the winner.



I used Twitter to reach out to most of the authors and illustrators whose books were part of our Picture Book World Cup. We received lots of messages of encouragement, many of which were very funny. To build further anticipation and excitement for the competition, I created posters of these interactions and displayed them around the school for everyone to see.

The books that made the final were *Ten Fat Sausages* by Michelle Robinson and Tor Freeman; *Shifty McGifty and Slippery Sam: The Cat Burglar* by Tracey Corderoy and Steven Lenton. The authors and illustrators of both books had been very supportive throughout the World Cup, sending lots of messages in response to my own tweets. On the day of the final, I provided every class with the latest poster which included the authors and illustrators latest messages – they were also beginning to get very competitive! The children loved this ongoing interaction and it helped make the whole event even more exciting.

The Picture Book World Cup Final!



vs



Oh wow, yay!!! Although this could be very divisive – Steven and I share a studio! NOT FOR LONG, STEVE!!! Come ON, Michelle! :-)))

Tor Freeman

*Actual messages from the illustrators and author!



Argghhhh! Too much excitement!!!

Tracey Corderoy




Steven Lenton



The team is nervous but tight. We've got this. Your team captains believe in you, little buddies. We're practically cheerleaders. Such physique.

Michelle Robinson

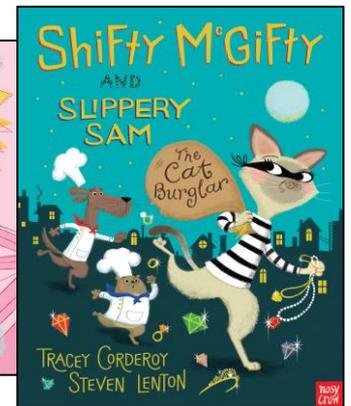
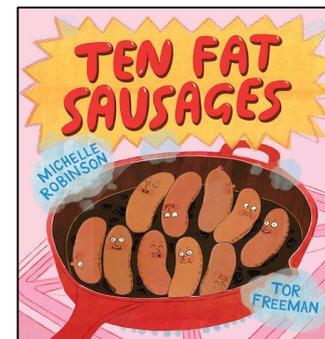




But we have Berets and buns galore! Move over Street Fighter 2 - Frank Spencer and Mary Beret are PREPPED AND CRÉPED!!!

Steven Lenton





The declared winner was *Ten Fat Sausages*, which I revealed to the authors and illustrators first, so that I could share their reactions with the children when they found out.



Tor Freeman

Amazing! What a brilliant idea – it's been such fun and hurrah for sausages, yay!
Thanks to the kids at Horsenden Primary School!



Michelle Robinson

And the crowd goes wiiiild! Thank you so much! Bravo to our awesome competitors in the Picture Book World Cup – and massive bravo to the pupils of Horsenden Primary School!



Steven Lenton

Congratulations you pair of sausages!!!! This has been SUCH sizzlingly good fun!



Tracey Corderoy

Congratulations to Ten Fat Sausages, Michelle Robinson and Tor Freeman. It's been very exciting waiting for the result!



Joseph Coelho

Massive congrats to Ten Fat Sausages for winning the Picture Book World Cup and to Horsenden Primary School for a genius idea.



When the World Cup had finished, I created a display board which integrated the messages from authors, information about the books and other parts of the competition. This celebrates the process and reading and will provide teachers and children with ideas when choosing books to read. The Picture Book World Cup was a great celebration of the shared reading experiences that we all enjoyed across the school, and this is challenging in a four-form entry school!

Impact

The level of engagement from both children and teachers throughout the competition was fantastic. The biggest benefit was how many teachers had been introduced to new authors and illustrators that they were aware of. Many told me that they had sought out further texts by the same authors and illustrators following the competition to share with their classes. Some teachers in Year 5 and 6 who hadn't previously shared picture books with their classes went on to select and share more after reflecting on how much the children enjoyed them.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

The TaRs research makes clear the importance of teachers' knowledge of children's literature. While one-off events such as The Picture Book World Cup go some way to widening teachers' repertoires of texts, authors and illustrators, we will need to explore and embed further opportunities for teachers to continually develop their RfP pedagogies and knowledge of a wide range of contemporary children's literature, for example through school CPD sessions and attendance at Teachers' Reading Groups.