

Making Reading Relevant

Encouraging reading for pleasure in children's everyday lives: through using books in cross-curricular teaching, and being a reading role-model both online and in the classroom.

Sophie Brown

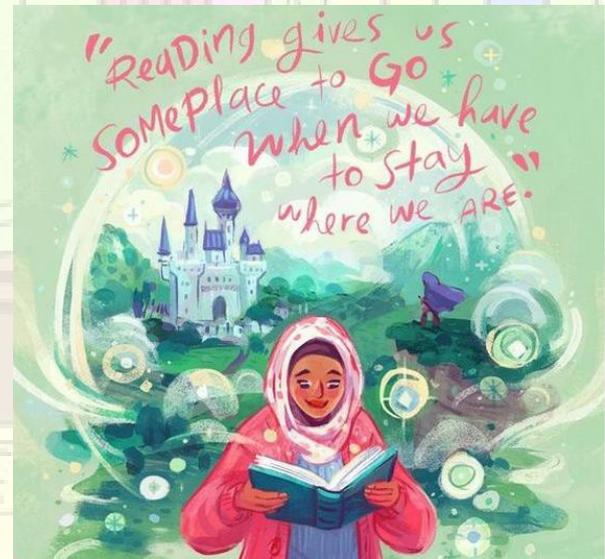
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@essbeereads



NORFOLK

Context

UEA
University of East Anglia

- **Primary PGCE** (KS1 and KS2) at the University of East Anglia, Norfolk
 - English specialism
- Two placements teaching mixed age classes (Year 2/ Year 3, and Year 5/ Year 6) in **small, rural Norfolk schools**
- As an avid reader myself, and after completing a PGCE assignment on children's engagement and motivation towards reading for pleasure, I am very passionate about encouraging reading in my classroom.



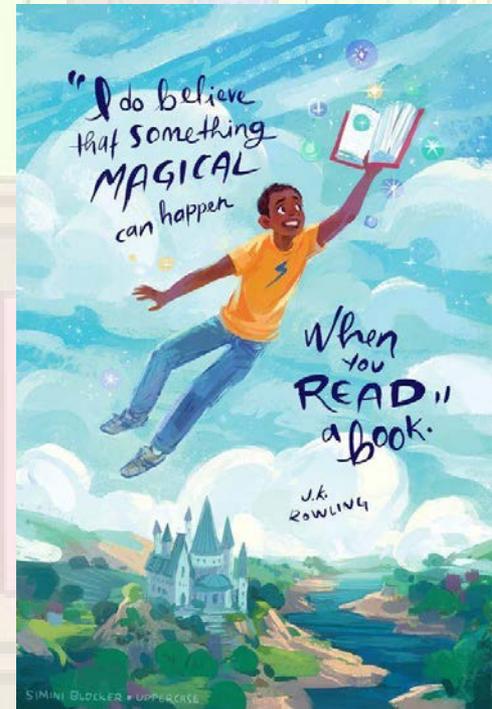
Research Inspiration and Rationale

The UKLA 'Teachers as Readers' research (TaRs) reported these key factors when encouraging children's reading for pleasure:

1. Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts
2. Knowledge of children's reading practices
3. A reading for pleasure pedagogy which includes:
Social reading environments
Reading aloud Independent reading
Informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendations
4. **As Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach**
5. **Reading communities that are reciprocal and interactive (Cremin et al., 2014).**

I believe that all five of these factors are important and work together in effective practice to promote a love of reading, however for the purposes of this project I chose to focus on areas 4 and 5.

https://ukla.org/downloads/teachers_as_readers.pdf



Aims

How can we inspire a child to pick up their reading book at home, rather than pick up their iPad?

- The reading and writing attainment of children in Norfolk is **below the national average**.
- It is widely reported that many families in the UK **do not read to their children**, and some **do not own any books**.
 - Quotes from children on my school placements:
 - "I hate reading." "Reading time is boring."
 - "Reading is my second favourite hobby." "I'd rather play Fortnite."
 - "I don't have books at my house."
 - "I like reading to my mummy at bedtime."
- Therefore, my aim was to make reading a priority: for children to see its value and the enjoyment of reading by presenting myself as a reading role-model.

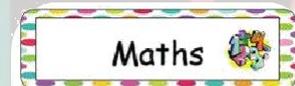
Outline

Reading role-model:

- I used my book-focused Instagram account, and my Twitter account to engage with authors and readers over a shared love of books and reading.
- I ensured to discuss this online platform, my own love of reading, and the children's own reading preferences with them regularly.

Interactive reading communities:

- Experienced teachers have reported to me that they often find it too difficult to make time for reading. Therefore I decided to consider how to incorporate a love of reading across different curriculum areas, in a way that would be achievable in everyday teaching.



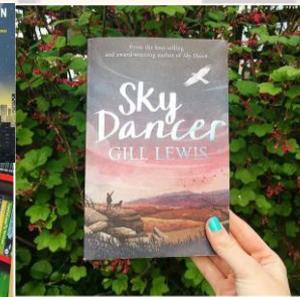
'Bookstagram'



@essbeereads



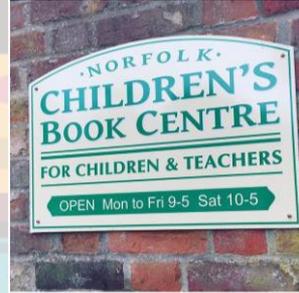
Liked by violetreadsbooks and 69 others
essbeereads Quickly popped in to #disppublishingbookshop today, starting to look for the books on the #uklabookawards list to read ready for the PGCE voting process 📖 #childrensreading



Liked by katethompson224 and 52 others
essbeereads My 3rd read from the #uklabookawards list was #skydancer by #gilllewis. I was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed this book, and how much I learnt about hen harriers and the complex issues covered in this story 📖 #readinteacher #currentlreading



Liked by mrs1bt180818 and 62 others
essbeereads I've just started reading #theexplorer by #katherinerundell as the next book from the #uklabook awards list. I saw a child reading it at placement today and had a great conversation with the teacher and her class about reading for pleasure - it was obvious that this teacher makes reading a big priority



Liked by violetreadsbooks and 62 others
essbeereads I visited the Norfolk Children's Book Centre today (as part of English Specialism week on the PGCE). It was the cutest bookshop ever, I wanted to buy everything, and they even gave us tea and biscuits while we browsed! On the way home, I popped into town and found a couple more children's book gems in charity shops 📖



Liked by fatma_tjen and 72 others
essbeereads Little break in the middle of a productive shopping day (before going back to work tomorrow), only around 40 pages into #theirlifofinkandstars but I'm enjoying it so far! This



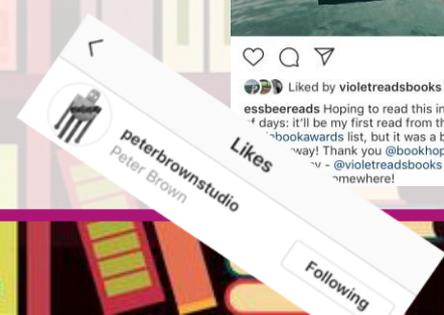
Liked by mrs1bt180818 and 45 others
essbeereads The two stories I've read to my placement class this week so far... I've missed reading picture books! 📖 #readinteacher

- I used 'Bookstagram' as a space for online book talk: to discuss books with like-minded people and find new recommendations.
- Since starting my PGCE, I have added posts and mini-reviews of children's books to my account and participated in worldwide 'readathons' focused on children's books.

Author Engagement

Children were fascinated to learn that I have met my favourite author 'in real life'!

- Telling my Year 5/6 children about these interactions made reading relevant to their everyday use of social media and 'celebrity' culture.
- By focusing on newly published books the children were able to see how reading is significant in today's society.

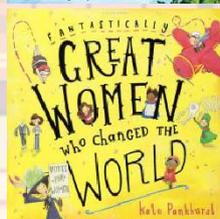


"I'm a Ravenclaw too, Miss Brown!"

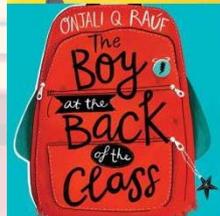
– N, Y5



When I spotted a child reading a book I had read, I started an **informal conversation** with the child about their opinion so far and general reading preferences. Books we have enjoyed discussing include: *The Explorer*, *Kick*, *The House With Chicken Legs*, *Wonder* and *A Pinch of Magic*.



I used the Anne Frank pages of this book in a History lesson to inspire empathy for emotive diary entry writing. Later, two girls who are usually **reluctant readers** asked to borrow my 'special History book from home', which they enjoyed and then passed on to peers to read too, discussing their favourite pages.

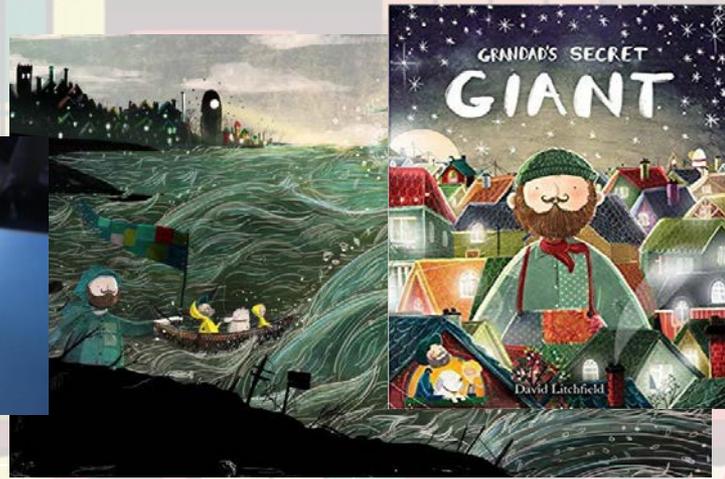


I used an extract of this book during a PSHE lesson to give children a different perspective on bullying, to think about the character's motives and choices. This provoked a great **discussion**. Afterwards, a Year 6 boy said, "*I hope that book's in the library Miss Brown, I'd like to read the whole thing.*"



Once children discovered that I am a Harry Potter and Percy Jackson fan, they were keen to discuss the books (and films) with me; this gave me a natural platform to provide them with **more diverse recommendations** (e.g. *Nevermoor*, *The Trouble with Perfect*, the *Aru Shah* series, *The Magic Misfits*).

"I read your new book Miss Brown; it's really good!" - M, Y3



Following UEA advice to make spelling, punctuation and grammar teaching interesting and relevant, I planned a punctuation lesson using *The Last Wolf* to provide context. Afterwards, I left this book in the book corner, and it was immediately picked up by two girls during quiet reading time.

Jerry
"The setting dark" said Red.
Red lurked behind a tree.
"Don't forget your lunch box"
said the last bear.

She took a hard-boiled egg,
a sausage roll, a chicken
sandwich and an apple
out of her lunch.

I used the art from my favourite picture books to inspire drama. The children loved acting out their interpretations of the story and writing their own dialogue.

"We get to read a story in Maths?" – R, Y2

I planned a lesson bringing together our measurement topic (length, mass and volume) where I read the story, and children were provided with 3 different investigation stations to answer questions linked to the story. Other adults remarked on the **high level of engagement and mathematical language** used by the children during this lesson. When I returned to this school, J (Y2) asked me, "Are we doing some more fun measuring when you teach Maths again?"

Mass
g kg
This elephant weighs 1000kg.
• Put the pictures of animals in order from lightest to heaviest (in groups of 4 or 5).
• See if you can match up the measurements with the animals by estimating.

Volume and Capacity
ml l
How big was the flood that the elephant caused?
• How much water do you think the bath held? Estimate on the group sheet of paper.
• We will investigate the capacity of the washing up bowl together.
• Miss Brown knows that the capacity of the bath was 10 times bigger than the washing up bowl. What was the total volume of the flood?

Length
cm m
An elephant's trunk is 2 metres long.
• Measure the elephant's ribbon trunks on the carpet.
• Write these measurements on a whiteboard.
• Put them in order from shortest to longest.
• Which is closest to the size of a real trunk?

Mass: Challenge!
g kg
This elephant weighs 1000kg.
• The weight limit for Sam's bicycle was 200kg. The elephant was too heavy for the bicycle. How much heavier was he?
• What materials could an elephant's bicycle be made out of to make it strong enough? Note down your ideas on paper.

Length: Challenge!
cm m
A baby elephant is 1 metre tall.
• Measure objects in the classroom.
• Write each measurement on a Post-It note.
• Put the Post-It notes on the whiteboard: is your object taller or shorter than a baby elephant?

David Walliams PRESENTS THE SLIGHTLY ANNOYING ELEPHANT
Illustrated by the author's friend Tony Ross

Impact

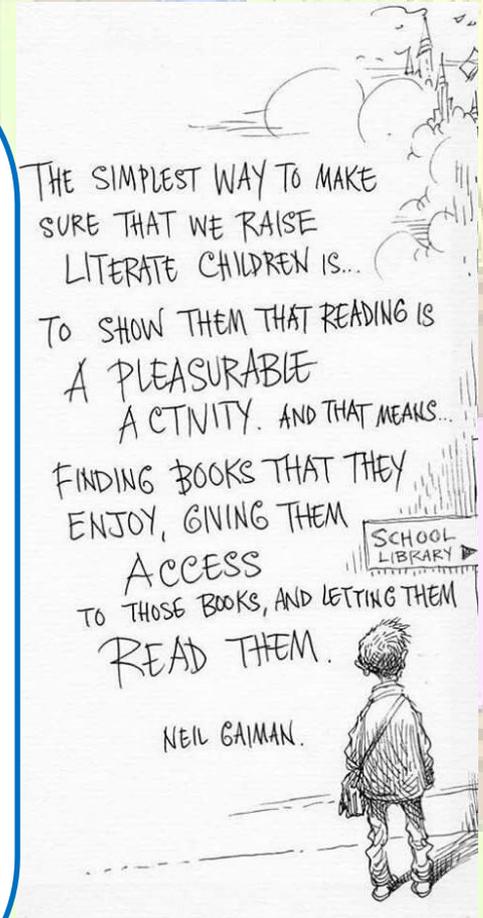
- I noticed that my Year 5/6 class became **increasingly keen to discuss their reading** with me, and would tell me **proudly** when they had finished a book! In particular, one child would often ask me to come to the school library with her, to help her decide what to read next. The example with the History book also showed how a **community of readers** was developing: I had never before seen this group of children choosing to discuss a book before!
- I noticed a similar impact in the informal talk undertaken by my Year 2/3 class. However, with these children it manifested more as asking if I'd bought in any **'special' books** during quiet reading time, and wanting to read their books to me during **choosing time**.
- Creatively planning using books and stories in cross-curricular lessons engaged the children in their learning, while providing an environment where the children **associate books with fun and exciting** activities.



Reflections

My experiences have shown me that being a reading role-model can effectively encourage book talk and a love of reading. I believe that encouraging reading improves not only children's Literacy skills, but their understanding of the world and other people.

As an NQT, I will aim for my classroom to be an environment where children can voice their opinions on books, and create a community which encourages all children to read for pleasure. To take my first step towards this, I have started a 'Miss Brown's Top Reads for Year 3' list, which features fiction, non-fiction and poetry which I have read and enjoyed. I will display this in my classroom to promote book talk and provide diverse recommendations. I would also like to incorporate online book talk into my classroom: perhaps using the school website, blog or Twitter account.



Miss Brown's Top Reads for Year 3

