

Reading for Pleasure – a Non-Class Based Deputy Head Teacher's Perspective

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Context



Haimo Primary School is a 2 form entry school in Eltham, Greenwich. There are 350 pupils on roll, approximately 40% of whom are eligible for free school meals; 22% are SEN pupils and the children speak a total of 35 languages other than English. Following our most recent Ofsted and our own self-evaluation, Reading, with a focus on developing Reading for Pleasure is a whole school focus.

OU Research inspiration and rationale

I was inspired to focus on developing Reading for Pleasure (RFP) pedagogies, focusing on reading aloud to children; supporting informal book talk and helping children to make recommendations to each other because I was such an avid reader as a child (and still am) that I wanted to consider how to develop this love in the children and adults I work with. I was also becoming worried about the number of classes who were finishing the day with an online story or cartoon rather than engaging the children in the experience of sharing a great book for pleasure. As this was something I always looked forward to in my own schooling (that moment when the teacher closed the book for the day always at THAT moment), I had begun to fear it was becoming lost to the big screen.

I was inspired by the Open University's Reading for Pleasure website (<https://researchrichpedagogies.org/research/reading-for-pleasure>) and the Teachers as Readers (TaRs) research (Cremin et al., 2014) which revealed that enriched pedagogic practice and enhanced subject knowledge (knowledge of children's literature) led to more informal book talk with children which was more spontaneous, informed and extended, and this made an impact on young readers. I wanted to rekindle a real love of reading in the children by positioning myself as a role-model and reading teacher. This links to the TaRs findings which identified that engaging children in reading aloud sessions, informal book talk and recommendations (amongst other practices) were pedagogies which support the development of a love of reading.

Aims

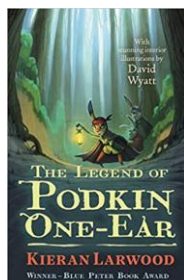
My aim was to develop a love of reading with the children that I work with across the school by sharing books I have loved, reading aloud to classes I cover (I am a non-class based Deputy Headteacher) and sharing my own books via lending shelves in my office with both children and adults.

Outline

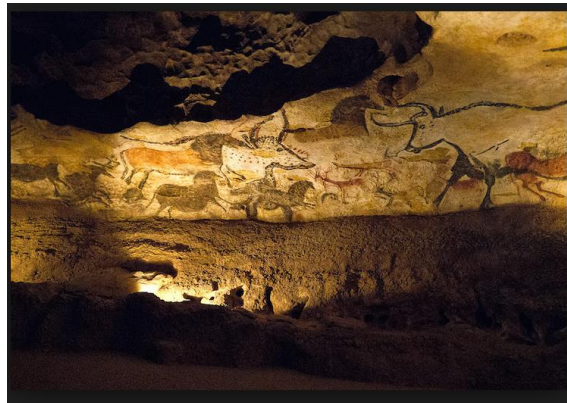
- I made all my personal books available for lending by displaying inside and outside my office. Children and adults all know they can borrow my books.



- When covering classes, I share my most recent and favourite books; I read an extract and ask if anyone wants to read it. The book is then left in the class for those who want to read it.
- I have my own whole class text to read with the classes I cover. Because the children hate waiting for my next visit, I encourage them to read on without me. they can carry on the story. One of the most popular texts shared and read independently was *Podkin One Ear* by Kieran Larwood with Y3. While enjoying the book, we wrote postcards to the author and Skyped with him. While Skyping him, he continued reading his story aloud from the point we reached; the children loved this!



- I advertised the monthly Twitter PrimarySchoolBookClub pick @PrimarySchoolBC in the staffroom and actively encouraged teachers to read the books and share them with their classes.
- When reading to the class, I invited children to come and sit at the front, light a virtual crackling fire. This worked brilliantly for *Podkin One Ear* because there are many campfires in the story. Children commented on how they were like Podkin around the fire, which they absolutely loved. I also used other visual backdrops – a cave with cave painting whilst reading *The First Painting*.



- I led a 'Book and Tell' session towards the end of the day in order to allow children to share their favourite books and make recommendations.

Impact

- Monthly PrimarySchoolBookClub books are borrowed by adults and children. Both groups talk about the books together. Some teachers have also joined in with the monthly book chat on Twitter.



- Year 3 children enjoy listening to books and talking to authors. Several have purchased their own copies of the book to read to themselves.
- Children are asking for books to read.



- Year 3 children are recommending books to each other and sharing their latest reads.
- Parents are asking about the books we are reading.
- More children are completing their reading journals.
- More children and adults are Reading for Pleasure together and talking about the books.
- Children are now running across the playground waving books at me, telling me what they have read and what they think I should read next.
- A child told me I was his reading hero – and it doesn't get better than that!

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

Attending the OU/UKLA TRG, led by Sadie Phillips, was really inspiring in terms of book activities that were shared by teachers with a wide range of experiences. As part of this group, I have been exposed to new books and book recommendations, and so my own reading repertoire has been widened. I feel that my knowledge of children's literature is continually growing. This enables me to select books which I believe the children in my school will enjoy. This aligns with the TaRs findings (Cremin et al., 2014) that following book talk and reader-to-reader recommendations in professional development sessions, teachers are able to pass on these enthusiasms to young readers. I believe that by repositioning myself as a fellow reader with children, talking about my own reading practices and choices, this is encouraging children and teachers at Haimo to do the same.

As a result of my involvement with OU/ ULA Reading for Pleasure Teachers' Reading Group, I intend to:

- continue to talk about and share my reading experiences, preferences, habits and texts across the school;
- use 'Book and Tell' as an opportunity for children to recommend books to their peers, and share these regularly on our Twitter page;
- always have a book on the go with every class I work with and encourage my colleagues to do the same, to choose a book over the screen.