



We love book talk!



Chloe Warren

Context

- I am currently studying BEd Primary at the University of Hertfordshire and I have recently finished the second year of my degree.
- I was introduced to the pedagogies from the *Teachers as Readers* project at the University of Hertfordshire, which I then developed whilst in school. During my 10-week placement in a Year 2 class, I focused on creating a reading for pleasure community through informal book talk and book recommendations.



OU Research inspiration and rationale

After reading the *Teachers as Readers* research project by Teresa Cremin et al (2014), I felt inspired to set up informal book talk opportunities in order to create a Reading for Pleasure culture in the classroom. Through reading this, I learnt that talking about books plays a key role in the Reading for Pleasure Pedagogy and often involves child-teacher or child-child book recommendations. Therefore, I decided that recommending books to one another would be the focus of our informal book talk.



Booktalk!

Book Talk *noun* (buk) (tawk)

1. A conversation about a book that one's read, infused with joy and emotion. Best if done daily.

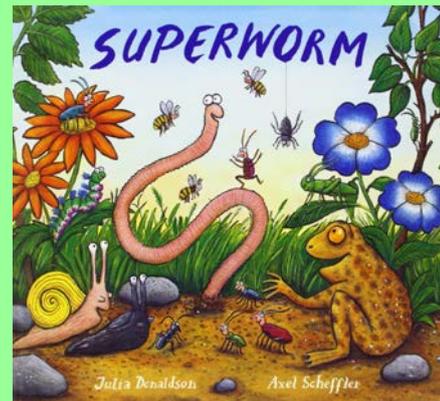
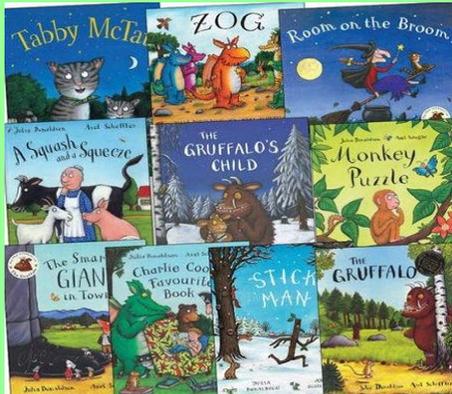
Aims

- Build a strong Reading for Pleasure culture through regular informal book talk.
- Create a book review display with the class, using the books discussed in book blether.
- Develop my knowledge about children's reading preferences.

Outline

To develop an understanding of the children's reading preferences, I asked the children about the types of books that they enjoy reading. I found out that the children's favourite author was Julia Donaldson.

I decided to tailor our first informal book talk to their favourite author by reading and discussing 'The Gruffalo.' The children were very excited to discuss their favourite characters at the end and even suggested reading 'Superworm' by Julia Donaldson next! I explained that we could have a Julia Donaldson theme of books for one week and next week we could swap to a different author and so on; that way we can explore and recommend more books!



The class teacher and I decided that the children could share their recommendations through a book review display. We decided to make the theme Julia Donaldson because it was the children's favourite author and they had read many of her books. We spread a variety of books written by Julia Donaldson around the classroom with the idea that the children feel inspired to talk about the books whilst writing their review. The talk that came from the children was both rich and passionate.



Here is a photo of the finished display:

Impact

Regular informal book talk created a reading culture where the children were comfortable and excited to share their book recommendations with each other and with the class teacher and myself.



After we read and discussed 'Meerkat Mail', a child came up to me and exclaimed "**We love book talk!**" This comment shows that the children are successfully encouraged to read for pleasure through informal book talk.

Book talk also allowed the children to gain a deeper understanding of the text through discussion of the plot, characters and emotions. This demonstrates how the meaning making process of reading is developed through book talk.

The display created a lot of discussion amongst the children as they wanted to know who recommended which book and why. They were all excited to see their own book review on the display, which really encouraged them to see themselves as a reader. As a result, they felt more motivated to read during other opportunities.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

In my future practice, I aim to encourage informal book talk as often as possible because the *Teachers as Readers* project highlighted the importance of making time for children to talk spontaneously about books. I feel inspired to start a weekly book talk session after school where some weeks there would be a focus book that I read and discuss with the children. The other weeks I would set up book blankets for the children to browse, read and talk about. I would like to include blankets and hot chocolate in these sessions to positively impact the reading environment as well!

