

Creating a Reading for Pleasure community. Claire Hunter & Lauren Stavert

Context

Alexandra Park Primary School.

The school is situated in Edgeley in Stockport and is a two-form entry school with approximately 420 children. The project was carried out in two Year 3 classes with mostly reluctant readers.



OU Research inspiration and rationale

We wanted to develop a culture of Reading for Pleasure (Cremin et al., 2014). Through completing reading surveys with the children, we discovered that they had limited knowledge of authors and books and did not enjoy reading. The majority of children did not have reading stamina and would change their books several times during a session, as an excuse to get out of their chairs! Some children were unable to get engrossed in a book as they were not sure how to choose a suitable book for themselves.

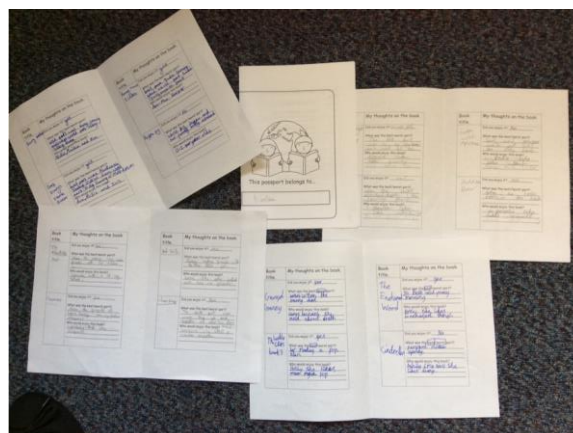
Aims

Our aim was to improve the reading culture within the classes so that children were able to confidently talk about different books and authors and develop enthusiasm for reading.

Outline

To begin with, we gave the children a reading survey which asked about their knowledge of different books, authors they had read and their general attitude to reading. This gave us a platform to explore the level children were at and how they felt about RfP.

Our next step was to launch a positive RfP environment within the classroom. We moved our bookcases to make the space more appealing, with a larger area for the children to relax and take their time to choose books. We gave each child a 'Passport to Reading'. This allowed each child to record their thoughts on a book they'd read and they answered questions to help us really understand their thoughts on the book.



In addition, we decided to develop the children's ability to recommend books and express their opinions (Reader Recommends). This was aimed at encouraging them to take ownership over their reading. We asked the children to write a post-it note on each book they'd read and leave it on the front cover of the book so that other children could read the recommendation and decide if they wanted to read it or not. We also gave the children the opportunity to talk to the rest of their class about a book they had enjoyed, to see if they could encourage others to read that book.

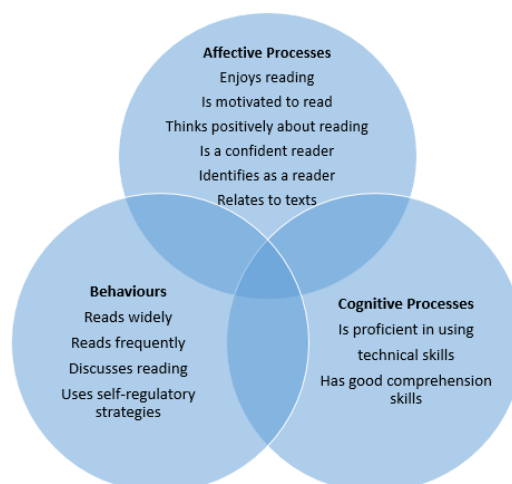
Following this, the children completed the reading survey again to see if there had been any development.

Impact

The impact of 'Reader Recommends' in both classes has been significant as the children have enjoyed writing their thoughts on the books they've read; they have liked that their post-it notes have been displayed on the bookcase for others to read. This has given them a sense of pride and also helped their reading stamina as children have wanted to stick with a book and read the whole story. We have found that this has also given the children confidence to say whether they are interested in a book or not, providing them with choice in reading. Behaviour during reading time has also improved and the children are more inclined to sit down with a book and enjoy it, rather than continuously getting up to change their book at the bookcase.

The Passports to Reading worked initially and sparked interest in the children; however, after a few weeks, some children were not keen to keep them updated and the novelty began to wear off. Also, due to the decreased interest from the children, it was easily forgotten about by us, as teachers. This was noted in the final reading survey completed with the children, as many children stated that they did not like having to write about why they enjoyed or did not enjoy a particular book. They stated that they preferred using post it notes or just talking to their fellow classmates.

Reading...



Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

We have enjoyed watching the children in our classes gain confidence and develop an interest in reading. The way the children have been able to reflect on their reading and be proud of their thoughts and opinions on a book (Reader Recommends) has meant that even our lowest ability readers have been able to participate. The project has shown increased positive attitude to reading, which is evident in the children's behaviour during reading. The 'Reader Recommends' really helped to engage some of the more reluctant readers as they wanted to read the books their friends had read. It also opened up possibilities such as children reading whole series of books or sets of books by the same author. This is definitely something that we plan to develop and continue with over the course of next year.

We feel that the passports were not well thought through and weren't engaging the children to keep updating them. It seemed almost like a task that they had to complete, which soon became associated with doing 'work'. We could adapt the passports by allowing the children to take more ownership over them, maybe by creating them themselves or deciding how they want to record their thoughts.