

Paired Parent Project

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Context

I am a teacher and Literacy Lead at Loscoe CofE Primary and Nursery School. We are a small rural school in Derbyshire with an intake of 150 pupils. Our school is situated in Amber Valley which has one of the lowest ranking areas for social mobility amongst disadvantaged pupils in the country. (Taken from Social Mobility Commission's State of the Nation 2017 report.) It is our aspiration to enable children from all backgrounds to achieve their potential and in order to achieve this, I feel 'Reading for Pleasure' needs to be a higher priority in our community.



OU Research Inspiration and Rationale



As part of the Derbyshire READ project, I attended two conferences which began my journey into 'Reading for Pleasure' and 'Parental Engagement'. These discussed the Open University research *Building Communities of Engaged Readers* (Cremin et al., 2014). The research project aimed to link Reading for Pleasure and parental engagement in children's education, as well as bring the ethos of 'Reading for Pleasure' to the school and the community.

Aims

- To increase children's reading for pleasure in the home environment.
- To develop a reading community.
- To enable families to become involved in 'book blether', where they talk about books together.



Outline



Children in two KS2 classes were asked if they wanted to participate in **paired book reading with a parent**. The child took home two copies of the same book, and they then read either independently, together with a parent or a bit of both. The important part was that they discussed the book with an adult at home.

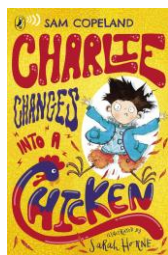
Impact

There were several ways in which I feel the children's reading and attitudes changed from the project.

Firstly, the children's choice of books was interesting. Not one child opened the plastic envelope to look at the first page or the blurb on the back. Most of the children chose the book because they liked the cover. One child chose an old-but-gold book, because he knew his mum liked Flat Stanley.

I chose two KS2 classes to take part. A third of children in each class were enthusiastic in taking part. That left me wondering why two thirds of each class did not want to take part. As a quick show of hands, the two main reasons were lack of time or they didn't like reading. Clearly, we have a lot of work to change attitudes with our Key Stage Two children.

Some children found it hard to choose because their favourite author wasn't there. Most were easily persuaded to try something new. One boy expressed a liking for humorous books, his usual author being David Walliams. He



agreed to take 'Charlie changes into a chicken' by Sam Copeland and reported back that he really enjoyed it. I had to beg another child to take a book by a different author by reassuring him he could swap it after the first chapter if he or his mum didn't like it. I realised that different authors needed to be promoted more in school to widen children's reading experiences.

The level of book talk was increased. Even during our race for life, when I was staggering around the course, a child jogged with me to tell me how much he was enjoying 'Boy at the Back of the Class'. I had several conversations with children throughout school, who wanted to discuss the book they were reading. The children were also

'Book blether' in the most unlikely place!



discussing and recommending the books to each other, and I realised the books were been passed onto each other, without be returned to me.

Feedback from the children was very positive. They all enjoyed reading their books and talking about them with their parents (usually Mum) at home. One child read his book through and really enjoyed it, stating that he would definitely be reading more books by this author. Finley read 'The fastest boy in the world' by Elizabeth Laird and was surprised to find a book set in Africa. He enjoyed reading it and we discussed the sad part and then talked about his own granddad.



Talking to the parents about their book experiences also provided very positive feedback. Most parents enjoyed the fact that they were engaging with their child's learning in a way that fitted in with their own working patterns. Most of the parents were active readers themselves but found it interesting to become involved in children's fiction. Some parents said it had been a long time since they had read a book with their child.

One mum discussed the fact that her daughter didn't seem that engaged with the book, she tended to resort to her favourites and Mum usually had to suggest reading their shared book. We discussed the books her child usually read, and I think the book was possibly too hard and she hadn't developed an interest in the characters and story. On reflection, I think she would have been better reading something which was more in line with her usual authors.

Most of the children who wanted to participate in the project were already keen readers, but it gave me the opportunity to broaden their reading.

Two children approached me expressing a desire to participate in the project but didn't feel their parents had time to read alongside them. As I was reading 'The boy who grew Dragons' as part of my own wish to become a teacher who reads, I thought it would be great to do the paired project myself. It would be 'killing two birds with one stone' as I would be improving my own knowledge as well as increasing book talk. I didn't have a desire to read Horrid Henry but if it was going to get one boy to read, then so be it.



We managed to fit time in reading together at breakfast club and he read the next part in his class reading time.

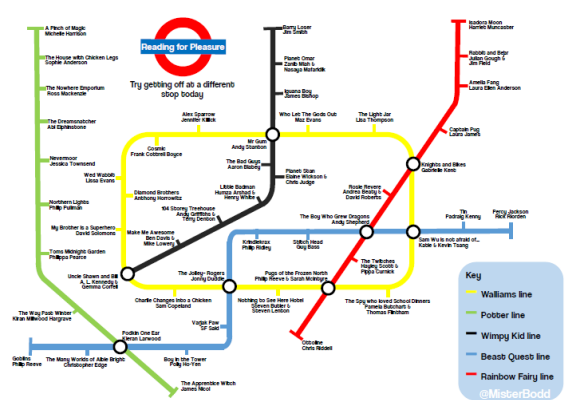
Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

The project bought up lots of issues and things that we need to do differently in school.

Knowledge of children's books

This proved essential to encourage children to read different authors. Next year, I hope to use the underground map of book authors, found on twitter. This will help children read similar books to their own usual authors.

@MisterBodd has replaced tube stations with books and authors. The yellow line is alternative authors to 'Walliams'.



Reading for Pleasure questionnaire

I need to do an RfP questionnaire to fully understand why children don't like reading and find ways we can change that. As a first step, school has already bought some graphic novels and this will be one genre we will use to help us encourage reluctant readers.



Rights of the Reader

I need to introduce 'The Rights of the Reader' at our school to let children have the confidence to 'give up' a book which they aren't enjoying. I would also like to do some projects on reading choices, e.g. rivers of reading, to help children to know their preferences. This might encourage them to look at the blurb on the back before choosing.

Teachers as Readers

It would be great to buy two copies of every book. While I try and increase my knowledge of children's

literature by reading children's books, a child could be reading the partner book and we could both benefit by hearing each other's opinions.