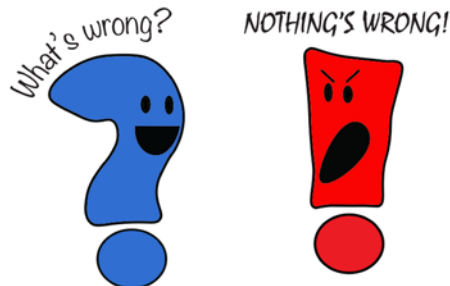


# Punctuation with Personality:

A study of reading aloud

Jasen Booton



# Context

I have been a primary school practitioner, leader and teacher educator for over 20 years.

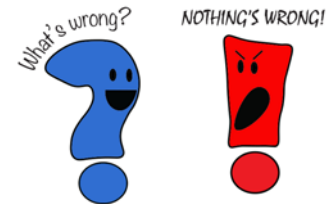


This pilot study was conducted whilst studying for the MSc Learning and Teaching at Oxford University.

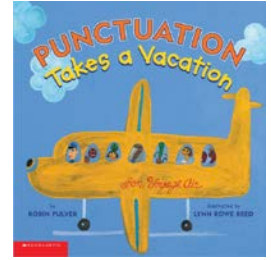


The participants are two year 4 boys for whom English is an additional language (EAL), attending a Worcestershire primary school in an area of social disadvantage.

The enquiry focuses on the reading for pleasure pedagogy: reading aloud, with an interest in exploring the effect of 'reading to the punctuation'.



# OU Research inspiration and rationale



The *Teachers as Readers (TaRs)* research highlights reading aloud as fundamental pedagogical practice to develop children's language and literacy skills.

There is much evidence advocating reading stories aloud to children to develop language knowledge; a claim which concurs with a meta-analysis of 31 studies of storybook word building (Mol, Bus & De Jong, 2009).

However, Cremin et al. (2008) highlight the lack of focus on reading aloud opportunities in classroom settings.

My review of literature reveals little research exploring the effect of specifically reading aloud, taking note of punctuation.

This study is influenced by the work of Dobson and Stephenson (2018), examining the influence of drama pedagogy in a primary school context.

# Aims

The main aims of the enquiry were to explore how reading aloud to the punctuation impacts on:

*pupils' reading engagement  
&  
reading comprehension skills  
(semantic processing)*

?



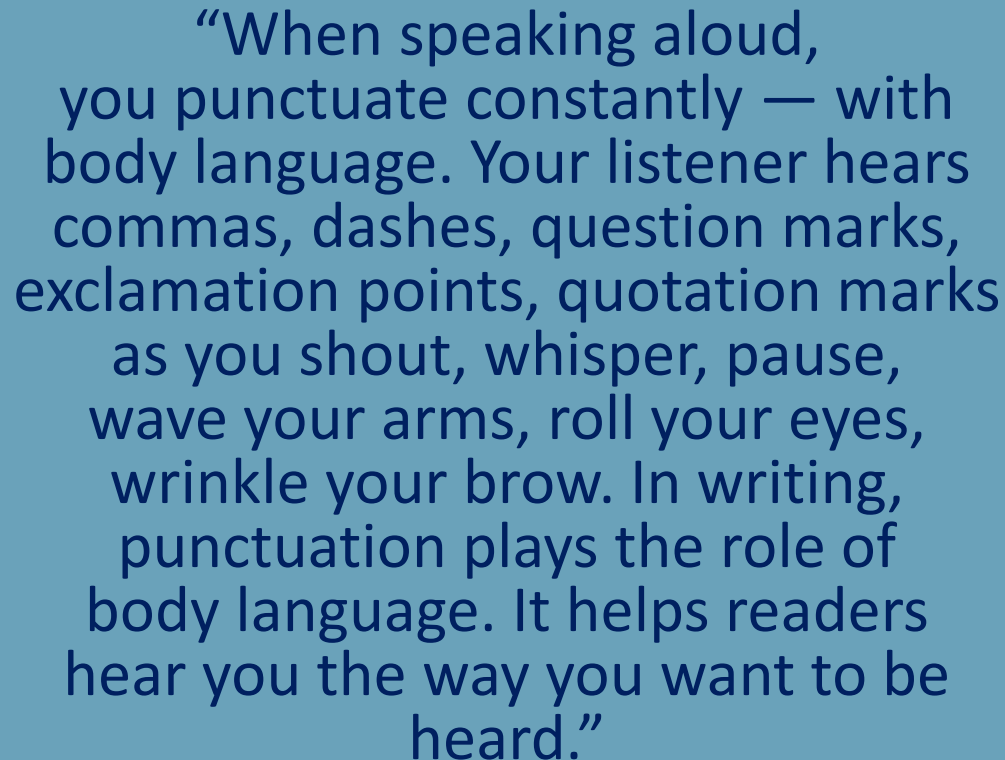
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# Outline

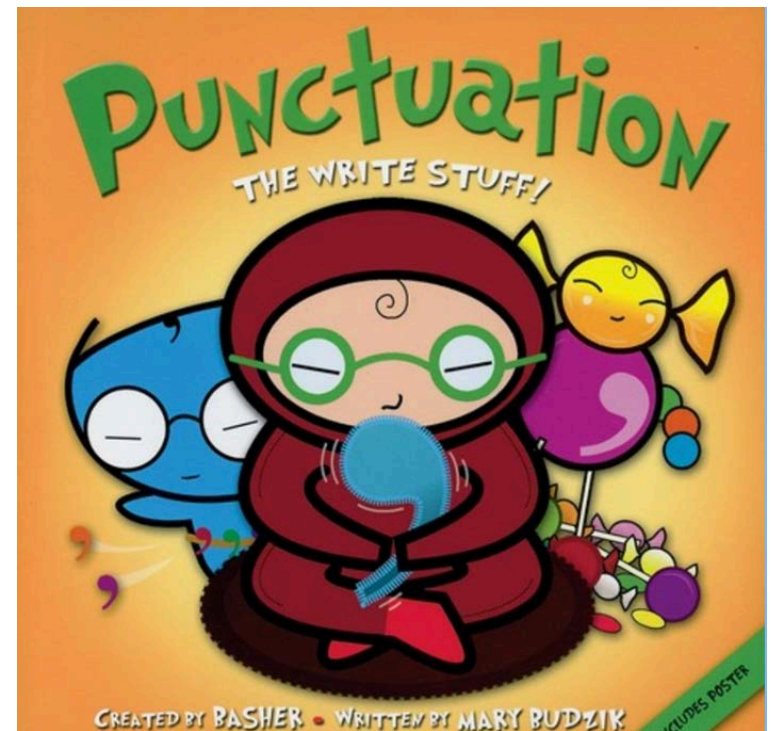
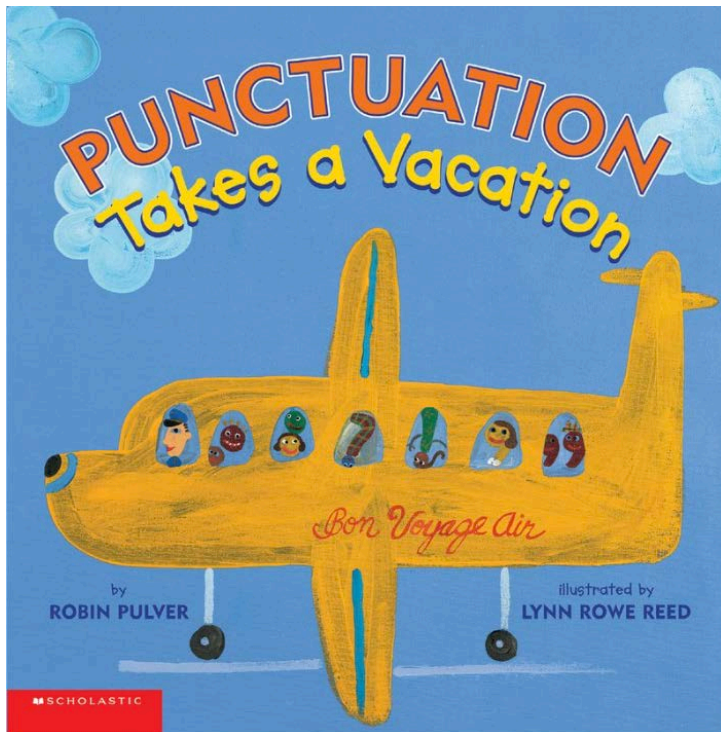
Explaining ‘punctuation with personality’,  
using the inspirational words of Russell Baker:



“When speaking aloud,  
you punctuate constantly — with  
body language. Your listener hears  
commas, dashes, question marks,  
exclamation points, quotation marks  
as you shout, whisper, pause,  
wave your arms, roll your eyes,  
wrinkle your brow. In writing,  
punctuation plays the role of  
body language. It helps readers  
hear you the way you want to be  
heard.”

# Outline

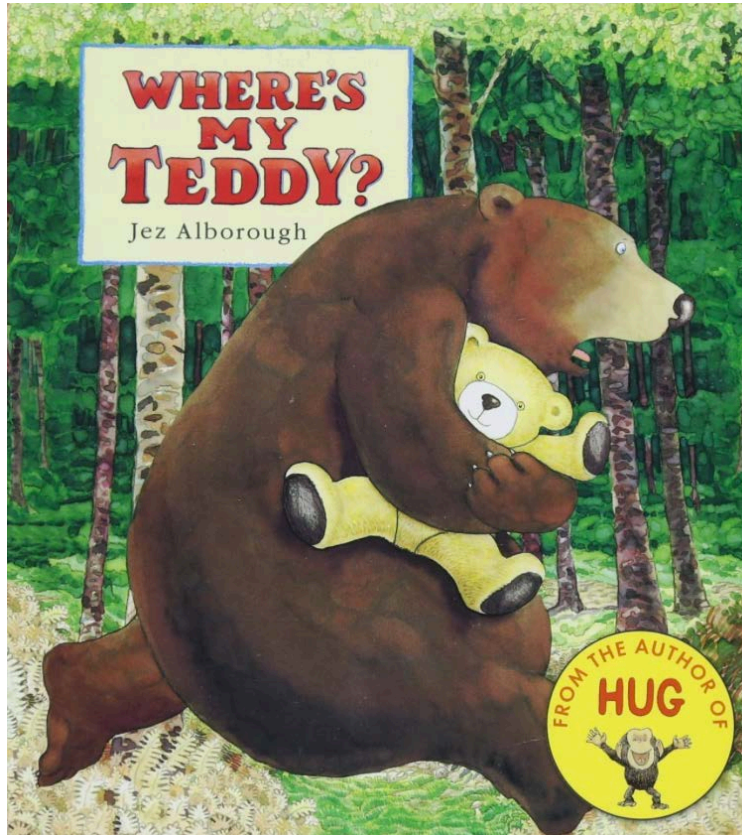
Two great books to promote a curiosity of punctuation!



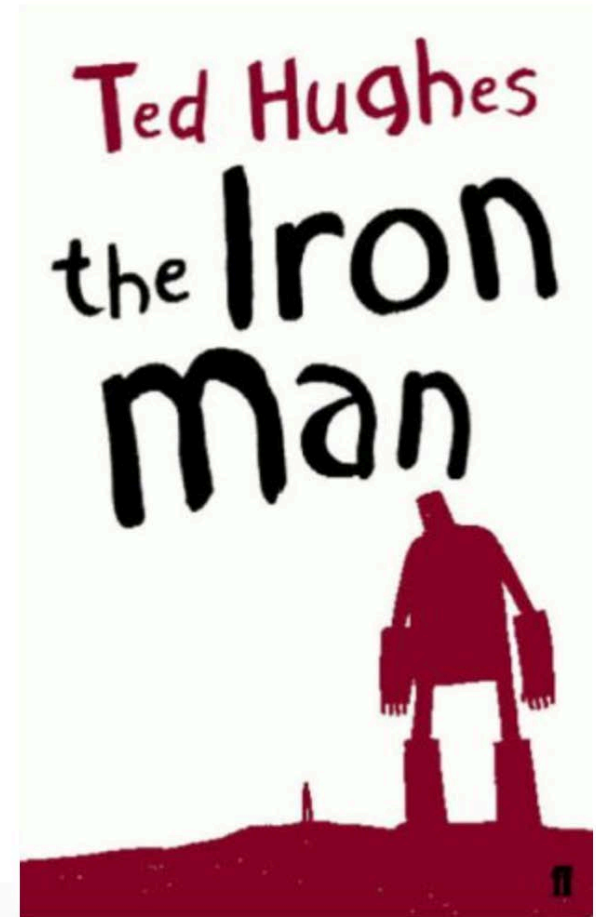


# Outline

Two classic books packed with punctuation:

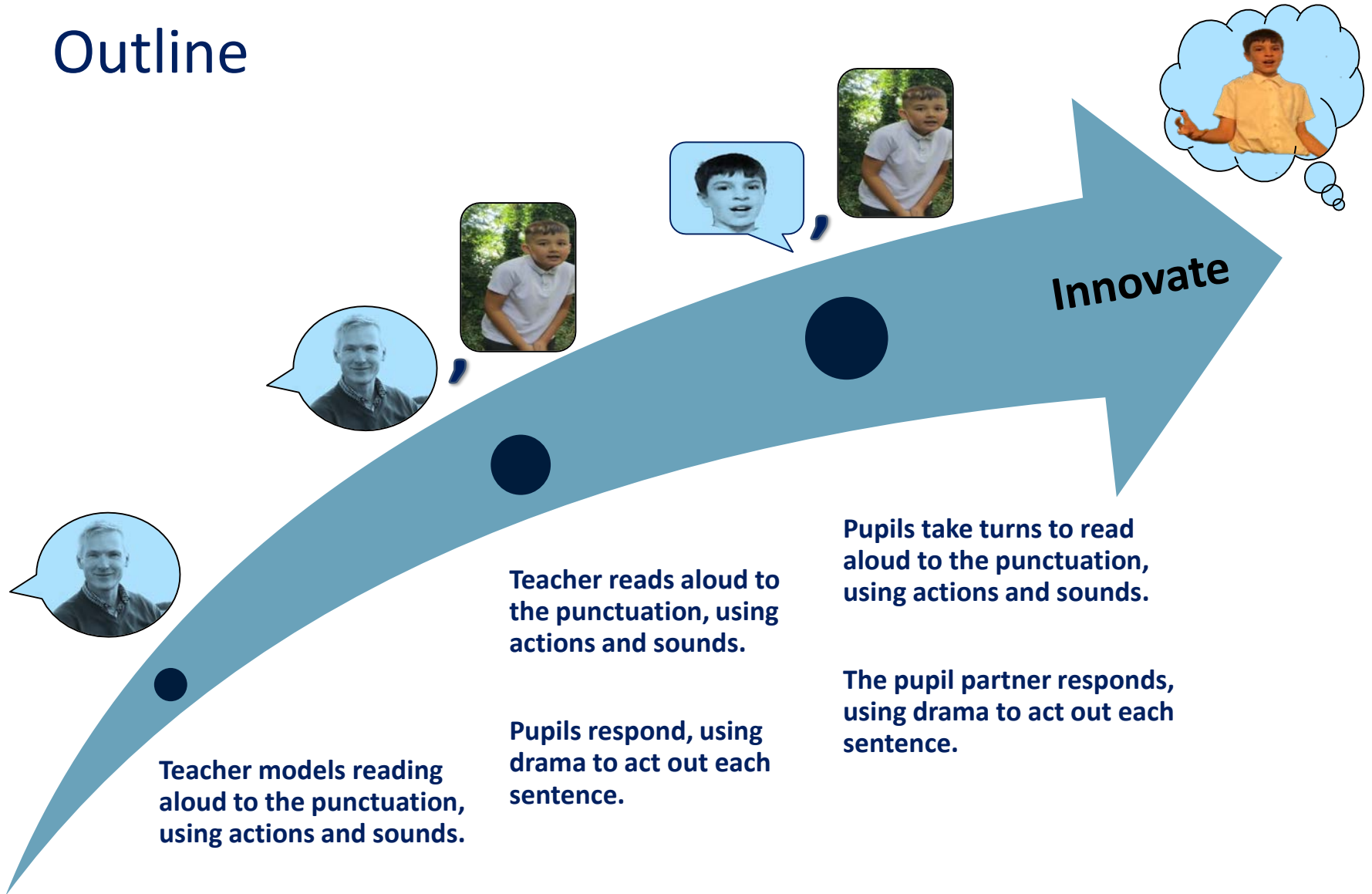


*Perfect punctuation practice  
for all ages!*



*Powerful performance punctuation  
for the confident reader.*

# Outline





# Impact

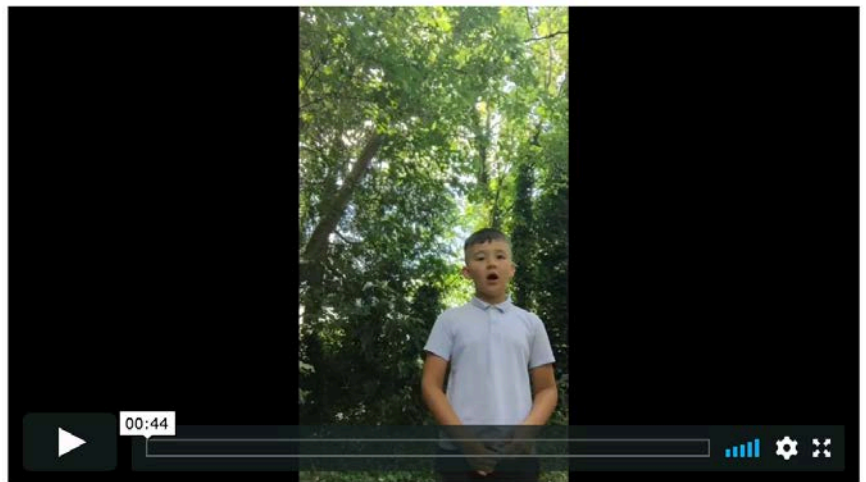
The snorting grew louder and louder and the whole wood seemed to be closing in on him. **Shrieking** like a frightened animal, Troy **bolted** towards a hollow tree to hide in. He **glanced** back over his shoulder and saw two fiery eyes staring straight at him. Troy's whole body **trembled** with fear as he crawled inside the tree trunk, listening to the noises outside. For the moment he was safe... or was he?

Copy the links and take a look online

<https://vimeo.com/372168980>

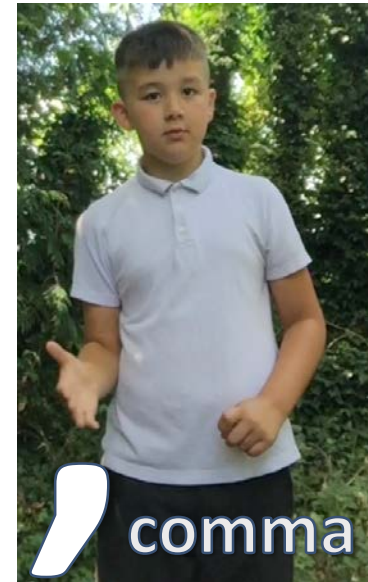
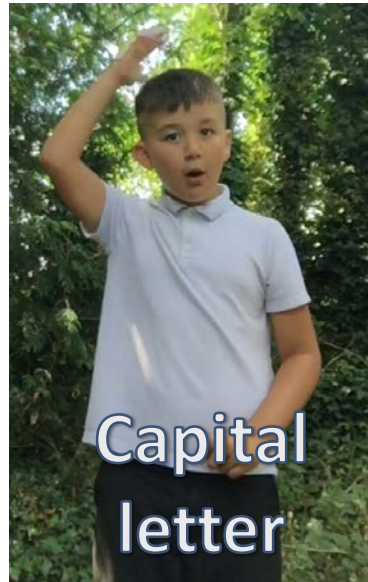
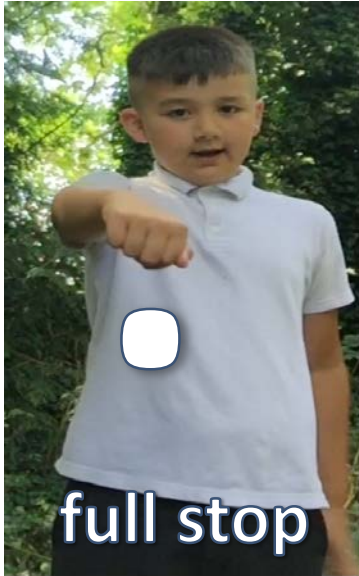


<https://vimeo.com/372165832>



# Impact

How does reading aloud to the punctuation impact on pupils' reading comprehension skills (semantic processing)?



“ “

*I look at the commas and full stops to pause – it gives your partner time to act out the text.*

*Having a sound and action helps you slow down and concentrate on the words.*

# Impact

How does reading aloud to the punctuation impact on pupils' reading comprehension skills (semantic processing)?



“ “

*I stopped at the ellipsis and made it sound dramatic – like in a movie.*

*I wanted the question mark to sound scary – that's why I used an evil laugh.*

# Impact

How does reading aloud to the punctuation impact on pupils' reading comprehension skills (semantic processing)?



“

*When you read aloud to the punctuation, it makes you slow down and think about the verbs - you really think about the action and the mood.*



# Impact

How does reading aloud to the punctuation impact on pupils' reading engagement?



“ “

- ✓ *From a teacher perspective, reading aloud to the children certainly helped foster a positive attitude toward reading; the children were more enthusiastic to take books home and read to their family.*
- ✓ *Reading aloud to the punctuation, using dramatic techniques, proved to be an effective method for modelling expression – the children were more emotionally engaged.*
- ✓ *Reading aloud to the punctuation appeared to be an effective stepping stone for different forms of reading that ensued; the children voiced that the process of reading silently had become easier and more enjoyable: “The words flow better and the pictures in my head are clearer.”*



*- Jasen Booton: Teacher Researcher*

# Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice



- This TaRs project provides insight into the positive effect of reading aloud on children's engagement with reading;
- The performative approach of reading aloud to the punctuation seems to combine well with dramatic techniques, supporting both positive attitudes to reading and improved reading comprehension;
- The scaffolding process supports pupils to take ownership and build agency – ultimately leading to increased confidence in a range of reading forms, deeper understanding and greater enjoyment;
- From a teacher perspective, reading aloud is a perfect platform for modelling expression and emotion: children are captivated and drawn to the words;
- As a teacher researcher, I am interested in exploring teachers' attitudes to reading aloud and effective classroom practice.



# References

Cremin, T., Bearne, E., Mottram, M. & Goodwin, P. (2008) Primary teachers as readers. *English in Education*, 42(1), pp.8-23.

Dobson, T. & Stephenson, L. (2018) Challenging boundaries to cross: Primary teachers exploring drama pedagogy for creative writing with theatre educators in the landscape of performativity. *Professional Development in Education*, pp.1-11. doi: 10.1080/19415257.2018.1557240.

Mol, S., Bus, A. & de Jong, M. (2009) Interactive book reading in early education: A tool to stimulate print knowledge as well as oral language. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(2), 979-1007.