

Fostering a Love for Reading: A Coram Beanstalk Reading Volunteer's View



by Clive Tucker

Context

I am a Coram Beanstalk reading volunteer. I work with three children every Monday afternoon, and spend 30 minutes with each reader. Normally, we spend 15 minutes reading and 15 minutes playing a game of some sort (focusing on word games).

OU Research inspiration and rationale

The Teachers as Readers (TaRs) research project (Cremin et al., 2014) found that by extending teachers' knowledge of children's literature and talking to children about their reading habits and interests, teachers can guide and support children with their reading selections and enthuse them as readers.

Aims

I aimed to:

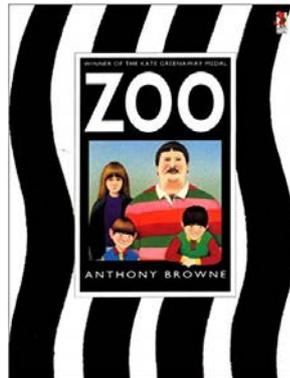
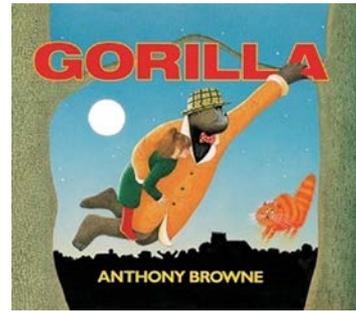
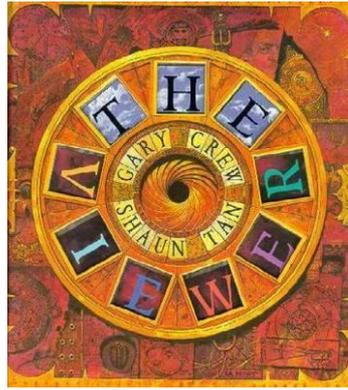
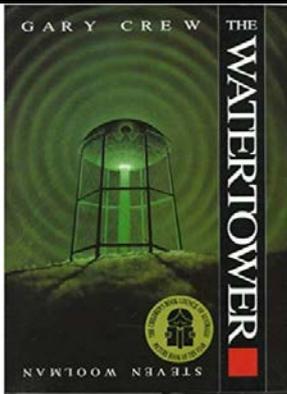
- ❖ use Coram Beanstalk as a focal point to establish how children read for pleasure
- ❖ use a wider range of materials to foster a love and enthusiasm for reading
- ❖ increase my knowledge of a range of children's literature based on the children's current interests
- ❖ encourage informal book chat.

Outline

I worked with the three children I usually worked with. I tried to encourage one student to bring along his own books to read to me.

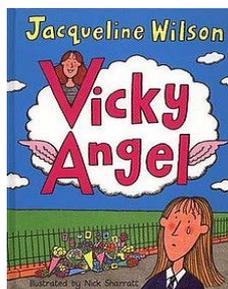
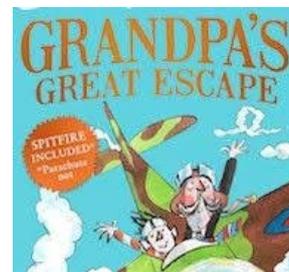
I also tried to introduce new texts and authors to the box of books which I use with the readers. These included: Anthony Browne, Gary Crew, Jessica Albarn, etc.





Impact

Of the three children I work with, the project became difficult with two of them due to unforeseen circumstances. However, with the third child, this was a great success. Initially, he started as a very nervous reader but by the end of the year had grown into a confident reader. He said that he read David Walliams books at home and by reading 'chapters,' his confidence had grown.



One book that did have an impact on both this youngster and me was *Vicky Angel* by Jacqueline Wilson. The reason for this was because of the subject matter: death and grieving. We were both surprised by the topic and how easily it was introduced and this gave us many opportunities for informal book talk.

This pupil grew in confidence in his reading throughout the year. It was particularly noticeable in the Summer Term how much he had progressed, and he said that he read at home far more frequently

I am increasingly aware of the power picture books can have on older children. Studying just one picture in depth can give a large insight into the story and intentions of the author. I have now included more of these type of books in our Coram Beanstalk book box.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

I feel that being a member of the OU/UKLA Teachers' Reading Group has been very worthwhile and has given me an understanding of the variety of children's literature available, and how engagement with exciting children's books contributes to success.

The TaRs research (Cremin et al., 2014) found that a breadth of knowledge of good quality children's literature is essential to motivate young readers and nurture the development of positive reader identities, and I will continue to develop my knowledge as a reading volunteer.

However, my experience through being a Coram Beanstalk reading volunteer has only had an impact with one pupil. He became a fluent reader through the year, and it was obvious that he enjoyed reading. He also became very fond of a game called 'Brainbox' - a memory game which promotes learning about countries in the world and animals through pictures and recall. This also helped his reading and pronunciation.



Our conversations or informal book chat and shared experiences of new and high-quality children's texts have helped to engage him in reading. As the TaRs research states, talking about texts gave me useful insights into his reading life and I was then able to be more effective in choosing and recommending texts for him to read (Cremin et al., 2014).

The OU/ UKLA Teachers' Reading Group sessions have been great for showing me the variety of materials available to use with youngsters, and the importance of enthusiasm in developing children's' reading skills.

I feel that I have benefited as a result of the OU/ UKLA Teachers' Reading Group, and the one success we had throughout the year has shown me what is possible in the right environment.

I have been very grateful how the reading group has shown me the variety and depth of reading materials available, and how *'enthusiasm is a key to learning.'*