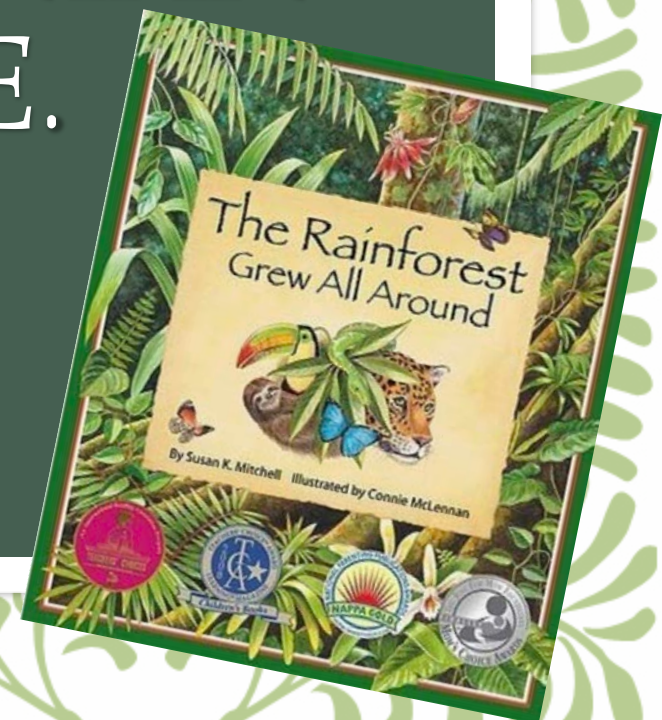
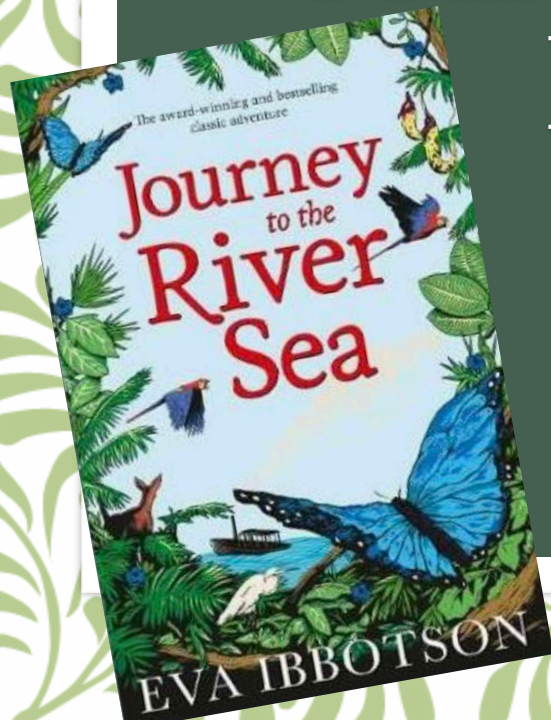
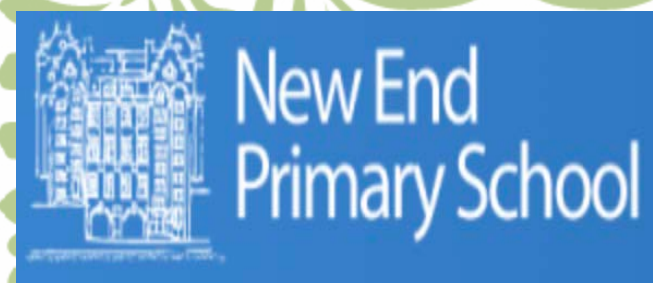


RAINFOREST RANGERS: BRINGING THE AMAZONIAN RAINFOREST TO LIFE.

CHLOE DARRIBA





CONTEXT

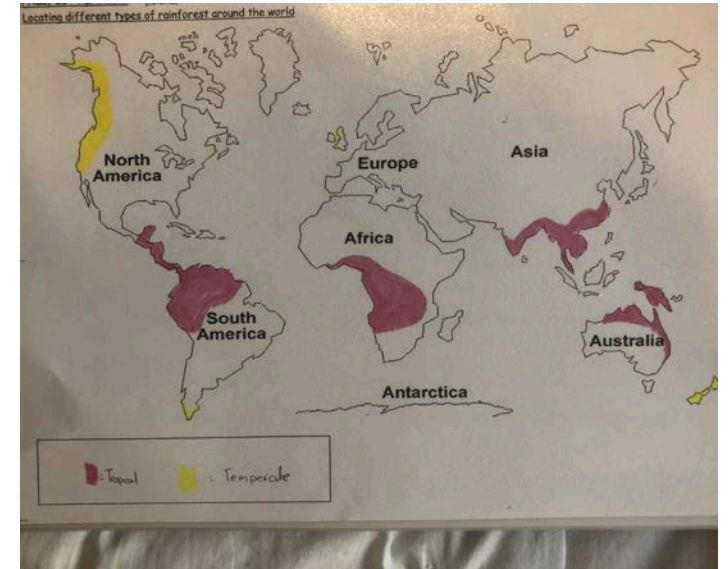
- I carried out this particular project in **New End Primary School**, Hampstead, London.
- I worked with the **whole class** (year 5, aged 9-10) for this session.
- The project was carried out during the second part of my block school experience (April and May 2019).
- I am a third year **KS1/2 Primary Education** student at **University of Roehampton**, London. My specialist subject is **Art & Design**.

CHILDREN'S PRIOR LEARNING

Prior learning to the session included:

- children exploring 'Journey to the River Sea' by Eva Ibbotson during **Shared reading sessions**, where I modelled the skills of a proficient reader such as expression and fluency. The children also engaged in **Shared reading** at the end of each school day as I shared the picture book 'The Rainforest Grew All Around' with them, bringing the animals and plants of the Amazonian rainforest to life.
- creating rainforest animals in **Art**.
- generating rainforest animal fact files as part of **Homework**.
- using key moments from the story 'Journey to the River Sea' as stimuli for extended and descriptive writing in **Literacy** (including diary entries, recounts from different perspectives, and informal letters).
- mapping the tropical and temperate rainforests of the world and exploring the consequences of their destruction in **Geography**.

All of the learning mentioned above was planned and taught by me.



REFERENCE TO TARS RESEARCH

- The UKLA project 'Teachers as Readers: Building Communities of Readers', "was planned in response to recurring evidence that suggests children in England continue to read less independently and find less pleasure in reading than many of their peers in other countries" (Twist et al., 2003; 2007). **This motivated me to tap into children's enjoyment of a subject area in order to promote love of reading, develop reader identity and demonstrate a more varied range of reading material. It was my initial hope that the children would become passionate and want to read as a result of their interest in the topic.**
- The topic of 'rainforests' is without a doubt a highly relevant and current topic for children of today and creates many opportunities to read and discover a wealth of beautiful descriptions. Therefore, by exploring texts that deal with the beauty, wonder and awe of the rainforest and contrasting them with information about the destruction of the rainforests, the impact on climate change and global warming, children are exposed to language rich descriptions while they engage in thoughtful discussion, critical reflection and the generation of opinions. **This addresses the TAR aim of teacher confidence and skilful use of children's literature in the classroom.**
- **Classroom reading communities** – children work together in the session that I devised to explore further, more varied texts based on the topic such as factual books and encyclopaedias. They then engage in reciprocal discussion and interactions, expressing their own thoughts based on their reading.

PERSONAL AIMS

- When I rejoined the class for my second block of experience, I noticed that the children were extremely excited and enthusiastic about beginning their new topic of rainforests for that half-term. This appeared as an opportunity for me to connect their excitement to literacy with the ultimate goal of inspiring love of reading and reading for pleasure.
- I saw their excitement as an opportunity to introduce them to an English text which they may not have chosen independently, and a picture book that would support me in bringing the rainforest to life and harnessing their imaginations.
- I noticed that there was not much variation in texts that children were choosing to read independently (if they were reading independently at all), with some opting to read action stories or narrow ranges of texts such as Roald Dahl and J.K Rowling. **I wanted to improve the children's literacy experiences and develop their reader identities by introducing them to new types of texts that could capture their imaginations through their love of rainforests.**
- I wanted learning to be inclusive and meet the needs of all pupils in the class, so I devised a session to cater to all – SEND, EAL, PP, LA, MA and HA.
- I had an incredible passion for reading as a child and have recently re-discovered that passion as a trainee teacher. As a result, I wanted to share that with the children and instill a love of captivating stories full of wonderful descriptions and interesting characters.

BENEFITS OF EXPLORING THE RAINFORESTS TO LITERARY PRACTICES

It is argued that children are 'educable, and also an investment for the future. A citizen in the making, comprising a promise of a better society.'
Ideland, (2019)

Offering different perspectives on nature's beauty and human impact on the natural environment encourages critical thinking and reflection amongst children.

Providing stories that draw children into the wonders of the rainforest supports the development of environmentally conscious children with opinions.

'children can be educated with the aim of becoming competent at making decisions themselves and taking action as active participants and change agents for sustainability.'
Iliopoulou, (2018)

Children should be provided with 'a broad and language-rich curriculum: that is to say a curriculum that generates purposeful discussion, interest, application, enjoyment and high achievement across all the areas of learning.'

(Rose Review, DfES, 2006:16)

Providing children with texts that are language-rich and focused on rainforests promotes thoughtful discussion, improves engagement and thus, achievement in a range of areas of learning.

BENEFITS OF EXPLORING THE RAINFORESTS TO LITERARY PRACTICES

By exploring rainforests through a variety of text types (chapter book, picture book, encyclopedia) children can:

- Engage in thoughtful discussion as they critically reflect on information they are presented with from a variety of sources.
- Generate their own thoughts and opinions about important world issues and show respect for the opinions of others.
- Engage in critical thinking around different viewpoints of important issues.
- Demonstrate an emotional response and awareness to a world issue that is relevant to all but especially their generation.
- Show engagement with the issue and understanding of its complexities by voicing thoughts and taking part in group discussions.

All of the skills underlined above are key to ensuring children's engagement and enjoyment of reading, thus improving reading for pleasure.

SESSION OUTLINE

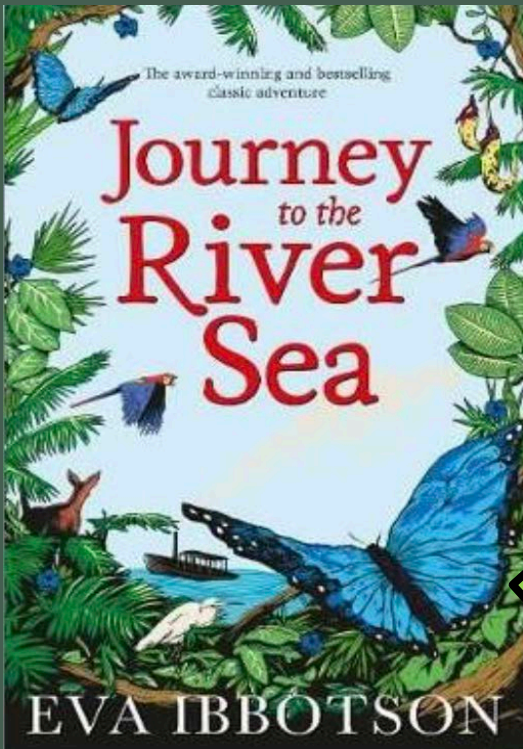
- I have incorporated drama into this session to encourage reader response. The spoken element of this session allows all children to express their understanding and thoughts which they otherwise may have found difficult to articulate in writing.
- Prior learning across a range of subjects ensured a secure understanding of the benefits of the rainforest to various different people/organisations which positioned the children well for the session being discussed.
- The session was inspired by the journey of the main character of the chapter book through the Amazon rainforest and her discovery of an enchanting natural wonder. As this journey raised questions about tropical rainforests and their destruction, a court scene was chosen for the children to explore the various viewpoints in the destruction of rainforests.
- The lesson consisted of 2 parts: the introduction of each table's character (who they had to fight for) and the court scene where each table presented their views in a persuasive manner, aimed at protecting their assigned character.
- I acted as the judge in the court scene and allowed the rest of the class to act as the jury.

THE LESSON IS BROKEN DOWN ON THE NEXT SLIDE

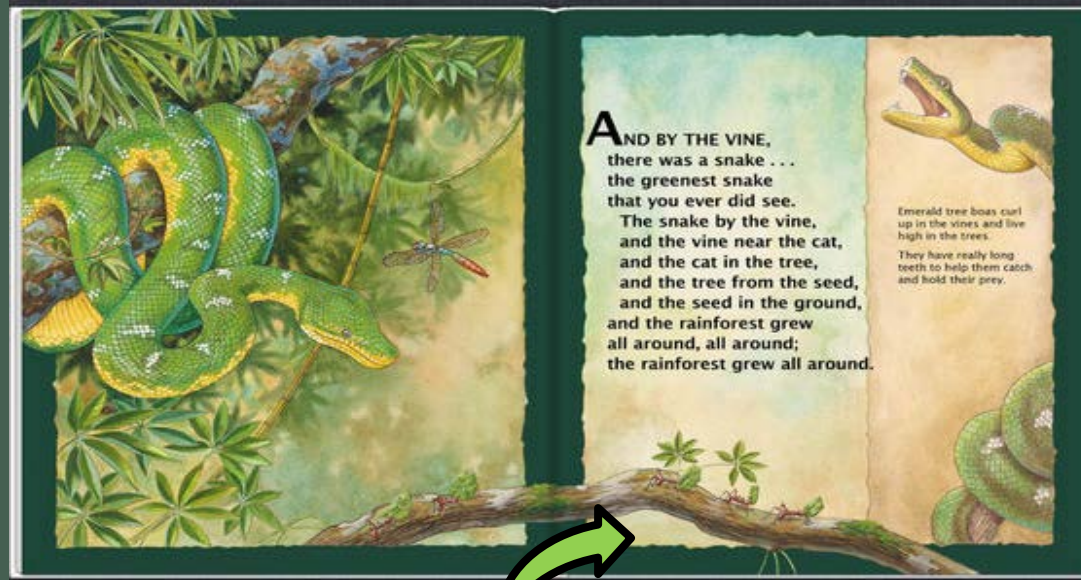
Receiving Cases (part 1)	Defence Arguments (part 2)
I entered the court room (classroom) as the judge and gave each table a piece of paper stating what character they would be defending (or arguing in support of).	The children came up to the top of the class in their table groups to present their defence of their particular character. They had to use factual information, persuasive language and demonstrate knowledge of the subject.
The children worked in their table groups to form an argument either for or against the destruction of rainforests, depending on the character they represented (recall of a previous Literacy lesson about inference, critical thinking, reflection and forming opinions).	The characters were: an Amazonian farmer, an environmentalist, the head of a fast food chain such as Mc Donald's and a tribesperson. As the children stated their defence and made their points, the rest of the class had to act as the jury, assisting me in deciding whether the table group in question had a strong enough argument or whether they could be challenged on certain points.
Pictures were shown on the interactive whiteboard to support the development of discussion, opinions and points they wished to make (e.g. farmers, rainforests being cut down, cows, oxygen symbol, rainforest animals, medicines).	Children in the audience made notes on their whiteboards regarding good points made by the defence and areas they could be challenged on. Children in the audience/jury were free to question the defence's points and make counter arguments if they saw fit.
Word banks were placed in the middle of tables to support all but especially EAL, LA and SEND pupils.	Court began and children argued their points in support of their character. I encouraged their discussions, gave feedback and allowed for peer-on-peer feedback to develop thoughts.

SESSION OUTLINE

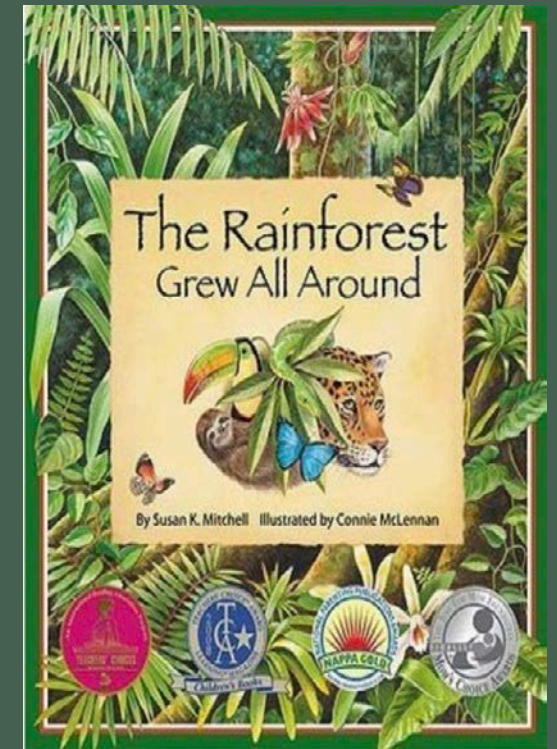
PHOTOGRAPHS



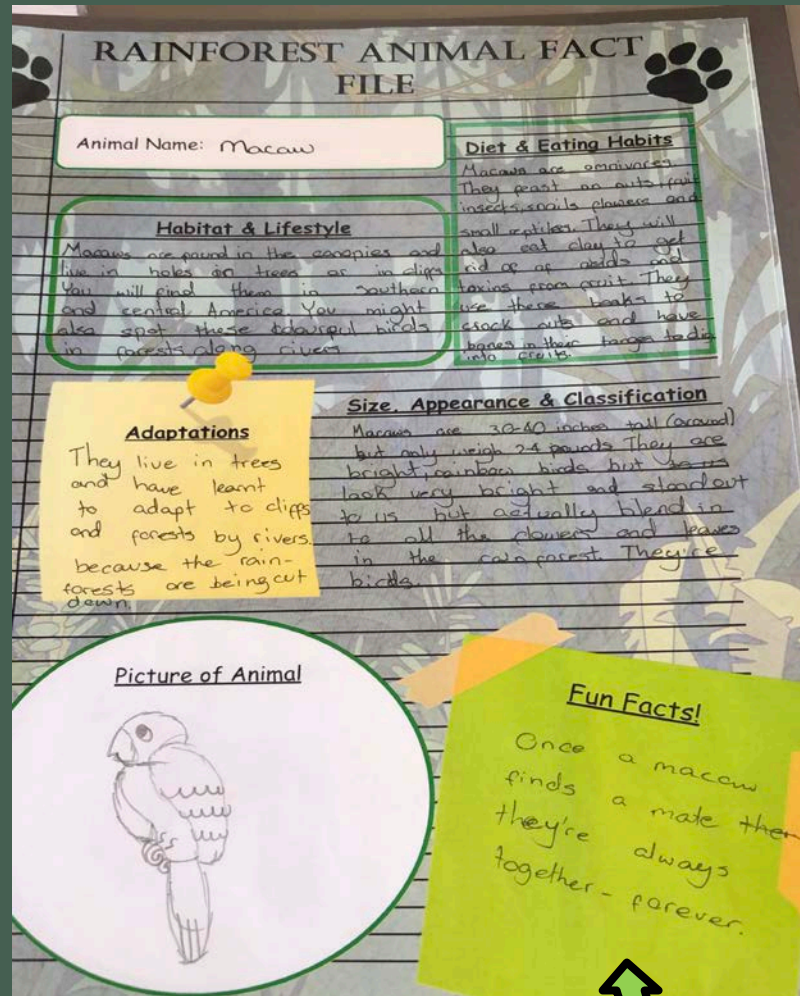
This chapter book was used for our English lessons and provided the stimuli for the fantastic thoughts and ideas that the children generated about rainforest animals, tribespeople and conservation. All children had a copy of the text in their personal trays.



This picture book was used at the end of the school day as the children gathered on the carpet. It incorporates beautiful illustrations and fun facts to encourage engagement, as well as repetition and rhyme to encourage participation and enjoyment.



PHOTOGRAPHS



Children created rainforest animal fact files as part of their homework. Their interest and love of the exotic animals in our story and picture books led to an interest in learning more about them. Interestingly, many children made their way to our reading corner and selected factual books about animals and nature to support them.



I created a rainforests display board in order to display the children's work related to the topic across a range of subjects including literacy, such as descriptive writing, recounts and diary entries.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Friday 26th April 2019

L.O To write descriptively using a range of techniques.

~~Respondent the~~ Respondantly,
The lush, green tree glowered at me. The damp, misty air was sucked into my nose, smelling like decaying dung, a very strong odour. The low-hanging branches were coated with pure, rainforest water that sent hopeful shivers down my spine. The Dripping, a raindrop fell from the dark green leaves, to the damp, muddy ground. Radiantly, the beams of rainbows shine on the swampy, boggy forest floor. The Sun's boiling rays slightly burned my skin, but gave me courage. The roar of a jaguar sounded like a raging thunderstorm. The brightly-coloured peel of tropical fruit dazzled my eyes. The delicious, juicy flesh of it was torn apart by my canines. The vibrant colours of the leaves blinded my eyes. The long, slim bananas hang from the shivering, but long branches. In the distance, there were some angry army ants, furiously burning their teeth into some rotten papaya and satsumas. Rarely, I see some stinging ants that get blown by the wind.

Hint: Try to use other words other than "The"!!!

Children used the descriptive language from the chapter book as inspiration to produce their own rainforest descriptions incorporating all five senses. Vibrant images from the picture book as well as other texts in our reading corner acted as stimuli and inspiration.

Beautiful, vibrant pieces of art were created in response to children's interest and love of the exotic Amazonian animals. These were used to decorate our display board and invoked an emotional response to the destruction of their habitat (rainforests) as the children recognised the beauty and rarity in these animals.



IMPACT (pupil voice)

Child 1

"The rainforests are actually so cool, like the animals and all the plants that live there and stuff. I can't believe people really harm them."

Child 2

"Describing it (*the rainforest*) and why it's important to all these people is so much fun!"

Child 3

"Miss Darriba can we please do debating again?"

IMPACT

Strategy	Impact
Drama/Role Play Activity (court scene)	All of the children participated well and expressed their own thoughts, irrelevant of any additional needs. Putting themselves in the shoes of the person they were arguing for encouraged children to use various texts as well as previous lesson content to provide evidence during their persuasive arguments.
Creating a Display Board	Children often looked at the display together and expressed how proud they were of all of the work on it. It encouraged discussion about the topic and the chapter book and kept the story in children's minds everyday.
Collaborative Work	Children demonstrated a great deal of peer-on-peer support in all activities as they engaged in thoughtful discussions as a class and in smaller groups, taking on different ideas and opinions and adjusting their thinking.

IMPACT

The diagrams show the shift in attitudes from the beginning and the end of the rainforests topic in Literacy. It clearly highlights how children enjoyed learning about tropical rainforests which ultimately lead to a genuine love for reading.

Lack of knowledge or awareness of various types of texts and the enjoyment they bring.

By the end of the topic, children showed a keen willingness to explore various types of texts with some even opting for their independent reading book to be factual and based on nature. They came into class every day with new fun and interesting facts and information and were keen to source reading material that linked to real world issues – one girl chose to read 'The Boy at the Back of the Class' as it relates to refugees.

Minimal to no enjoyment of genres other than fiction in the form of action, adventure or sci-fi.

Prior to this topic I saw little to no enthusiasm for books that did not involve a stereotypical villain, action scenes or some element of sci-fi. However, exposure to the story book and chapter book in this topic encouraged enjoyment of a range of genres and topics. Many children wanted to continue reading the chapter book independently at home rather than their usual choice of Alex Rider or Horrid Henry.

REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPACT THE TARS RESEARCH HAD ON MY PRACTICE

- The TaRs research impacted my practice massively in terms of my role in promoting RfP and the effect I can have on children's view of reading. **It reinforced the importance of 'teachers who read and readers who teach'** and in turn how a teacher with a wide knowledge of children's literature is in the best position to make 'skillful use of such literature in the classroom'.
- It is clear that by skillfully linking children's literature with a topic of great interest to the children I was able to develop their reader identities and generate a positive approach to reading where all children can source material that is of interest to them. The children were less limited.
- This session also made me realise that while written evidence of work is often a focus for assessment purposes, the incorporation of role play and drama in a lesson provides excellent evidence of engagement, understanding and imagination as well as the opportunity for class involvement, thus helping to generate reading communities where thoughtful discussion about a text or idea can take place.
- **NEXT STEPS:** Continue to encourage engagement and reader response through exciting activities such as hot seating or freeze frames. These particularly develop inference skills and provide the opportunity to demonstrate genuine understanding of emotions.

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