

Review of the OU/UKLA RfP Conference Bristol on 30th November 2019 by Simone Goward

As anticipated, the OU/UKLA 'RfP: the thread that connects' conference was outstanding. The key message, that the work we do in schools must be targeted specifically to the needs of our children and not simply a string of 'Twinkle' activities, was repeated by Teresa Cremin throughout the day. It was reiterated that what reading for pleasure looks like in our schools must be based on a sound knowledge of our pupil's interests and needs rather than the blind replication of what has been done elsewhere.

Julie Doyle (Sneinton C of E Primary school and winner of the Whole School Egmont RfP Award) gave an inspirational talk about the journey her school has taken in developing RfP over the last 18 months and the impact that this has had on their children. Julie's project, '[Sneinton Primary...Where every day is a Book Day!](#)' can be downloaded from the Reading Rich Pedagogies RfP website.

The research keynote was given by Nikki Gamble. Her talk urged delegates to think carefully about the books that we share in our schools and her passion for, 'making the invisible, visible,' by choosing books that reflect the realities of all children was compelling. The wish lists created from her suggestions would have caused a rush at the bookshop.

Author, Gill Lewis, was invited to share her journey as a reader and a writer. Many of the teachers present would have been able to identify children very much like Gill who may struggle to read long texts or put pen to paper, yet have tremendous imaginations. Gill stressed that no book is a 'wrong' book, and that rereading a text over and over can bring immense pleasure to a child in ways that may not be apparent to others. She reiterated the message that reading for pleasure may take many forms and therefore the importance of allowing children to read widely, and follow their own interests, is key.

I have to be honest and say that I couldn't choose between workshops as they were all relevant and enticing. As a result, I closed my eyes and pointed twice at the list to make a decision.

The first workshop that I attended was, 'Ways to engage parents in reading for pleasure,' given by Dot Patton and Barbara Band. Rooted in research, this workshop was full of helpful suggestions on ways to develop meaningful relationships with parents.

My second workshop, 'Reading Allowed?' by Jane Carter and Dan Northover was also excellent. Modelling reading as a fun and pleasurable activity was the key message. I came away with another extensive book list and a simple and easily replicated technique for reading aloud.

In my opinion, the next OU/UKLA RfP conference cannot come around again fast enough and attendance should be included on all school's CPD.

Simone Goward