



Reading for pleasure pedagogy: Social reading environments

More research details



Whilst at the start of the *Teachers as Readers* (TaRs) project many teachers had reading areas, when they came to review their reading environments, most acknowledged there was room for improvement: scope to make the area and the classroom as a whole a more richly engaging space for reading, both physically and socially.

The teachers reflected upon their own preferred environmental conditions for reading – what they liked to read, how they chose this, when, where and what they like to read at home and elsewhere and began to explore connections to pedagogic practice.

The teachers often focused first on the available reading resources, their diversity, accessibility, and potential interest to young children. Many sought to broaden their classroom library provision. The teachers' professional knowledge of texts, in print and online, and their knowledge of the children's reading practices and preferences were critical factors in this changing practice. Teachers encouraged children to bring their personal reading preferences, such as comics, manuals, catalogues and magazines to school and classrooms began to order and discuss these.

Choice was an important factor in developing children's reading for pleasure in the project classrooms. The teachers profiled reading choice in the shared social spaces for reading which they created and a growing understanding of reading as a social process led to positive changes in classroom cultures, the reading environment became highly sociable and interactive.

In other Open University research – into extracurricular reading groups – the role of the environment, a relaxed ethos, and the space and support for choice and conversation about texts was also seen to be crucial (Cremin and Swann, 2016). The school librarians and teachers in this study sought to develop the students' sense of agency as discriminating readers, and enabled them to make informed and supported decisions about texts. Other studies also indicate that choice and interest enhance readers' motivation, self-determination and engagement (e.g. Moss and Macdonald, 2004; Pihl, 2012).

The TaRs teachers reconfigured space and time for relaxed reading and created physically engaging reading areas and environments that tempted and enticed children to read, borrow books, get to know new authors, talk about texts, and see themselves profiled as readers. These environments promoted reading as a richly positive experience and prompted sharing and significant book talk and inside-text talk.

“Lots of things have developed together through the environment... Children relax – that creates an atmosphere too.”

(TaRs teacher, Birmingham)

The environment became a learning tool to support children's development as readers. These changes in resources and environments laid the groundwork for further key developments in the teachers' RfP pedagogy.

Adapted from pages 91-94 from Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Collins, F., Powell, S. and Safford, K. (2014) *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for pleasure*, London/New York: Routledge.

This research summary also draws upon research into the environmental conditions which support extracurricular reading groups undertaken in the context of the Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Shadowing scheme in the UK.

Cremin, T. and Swann, J. (2016) Literature in Common: Reading for Pleasure in School Reading Groups'. In L. McKechnie, K. Oterholm, P. Rothbauer and K. I. Skjerdingsstad, (Eds). *Plotting the Reading Experience: Theory/Practice/Politics*.pp. 279-300. Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

To read more about the research: see the Executive Summaries, related papers on <http://oro.open.ac.uk/>

or the core book

<https://www.routledge.com/Building-Communities-of-Engaged-Readers-Reading-for-pleasure/Cremin-Mottram-Collins-Powell-Safford/p/book/9781138777484>

