



Reading Teachers: Teachers who read and readers who teach

More research details



Whilst all the *Teachers as Readers* (TaRs) project teachers widened their reading repertoires, documented their reading practices and developed their own pleasure and understanding about the process of reading, from the outset many expressed reservations about developing as Reading Teachers. They were unsure of the value of opening up themselves as readers in class and taking the time to share with the children something of their personal engagement as readers and their reading lives and practices. Many found the innovative nature of a Reading Teacher stance created uncertainty. They felt they needed to foreground the prescribed reading objectives from the curriculum and, whilst other changes to their pedagogic practice were made, some were reticent to risk introducing this personal dimension.

Over the project year, a continuum of practice developed. At one end, some teachers simply shared their renewed passion for reading with the children, whilst others took the opportunity to explore the scope of this more personal and creative stance, sharing something of themselves as readers and seeking to learn more about the children as readers and consider the nature of their different reading experiences.

As the Reading Teachers came to reflect on the impact of text and context on these experiences, and their everyday reading habits and practices, they demonstrated increased awareness of the significance of all readers' personal preferences and practices; the importance of emotional engagement in reading; the social nature of reading, and the salience of readers' rights and agency. They reviewed and re-described reading as a social and affective act of engagement and reframed their pedagogic practice in responsive ways to support the development of the children's positive reader identities.

The teachers who fully explored this Reading Teacher stance made the most impact on the children's attitudes to reading and their pleasure in reading. They also transformed children's conceptions of them as readers.

"It is surprising how you think the children would obviously know you are a reader and enjoy reading- they don't necessarily – unless you explicitly tell them and give examples and show them the adult books you are reading. All this needs to be taught- I now teach from a reader's point of view."

(TaRs teacher, Kent)

Developing as a Reading Teacher represents a new challenge, particularly in accountability cultures, where tests and targets dominate. Yet the project revealed that this stance has potential. Positioned as fellow readers, the Reading Teachers talked about their own reading experiences and explored the dynamic between the children's reading experiences and identities and their own.

Gradually the locus of control around reading shifted and more overtly reciprocal communities of engaged readers were built.

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

For example:

Cremin, T. (2013) Exploring poetry teachers' positions and practices in S. Dymoke, A. Lambirth, and A. Wilson, *Making Poetry Matter: International research on Poetry Pedagogy* pp. 9-19 London: Bloomsbury.

Cremin, T. (2010) Poetry teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach poetry in M. Styles, L. Joy and D. Whitley (Eds) *Poetry and Childhood* pp.219-226 London: Trentham

Cremin, T., Bearne, E., Mottram, M. and Goodwin, P. (2008) Primary teachers as readers, *English in Education* 42(1): 1-16.

The project book Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Collins, F., Powell, S. and Safford, K. (2014) *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for pleasure*, London/New York: Routledge also has a chapter devoted to Reading Teachers from which this work is adapted, pages 67-88.

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

