

# A Reading for Pleasure Book Club

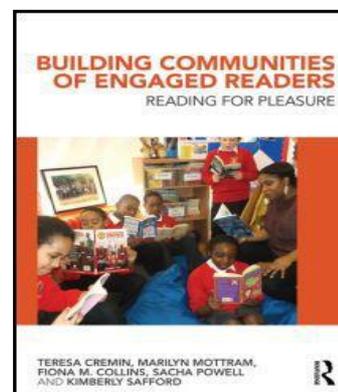
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## OU Research inspiration and rationale

TaRs found that in order to foster reading for pleasure effectively, teachers need to develop:

1. Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts
2. Knowledge of children's reading practices
3. A reading for pleasure pedagogy which includes:
  - Social reading environments
  - Reading aloud
  - Independent reading
  - Informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendations
4. As Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach
5. Reading communities that are reciprocal and interactive. (Cremin et al, 2014)



## Inspiration

The main strand that inspired me to develop 'reading for pleasure' in my school was **strand 3. A RfP pedagogy**, encompassing:

- social reading environments
- reading aloud
- informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendations
- independent reading time

I found that, other than in the mornings whilst the register was being taken, or through independent reading time as part of a weekly carousel of activities within whole class Guided Reading sessions, independent/voluntary reading was not something that was actively encouraged or carried out within the classroom environment or school. Therefore, I decided to establish a dedicated lunchtime book club to encourage reading for pleasure, ideal for those children who wanted time within the school day which they could read independently, discuss their reading experiences or listen to an enthusiastic reader.

## Aims

Aims of the project

To develop:

- my own and the children's wider knowledge of children's literature and other texts;
- a knowledge of children's reading practices and preferences;
- an understanding of reading for pleasure pedagogy;
- a time and place where children could read for pleasure;
- opportunities for children to share their books with other children and enhance children's interest in reading;
- participation of members of the School Council to nurture their peers and stimulate child-led reading for pleasure.

## Outline

Project plan:

- Establish a lunchtime book club in the school's library.
- Open to all children in KS1 & KS2.
  - children were able to peruse and choose books in the library
  - they could bring in their personal reading book from home / classroom to continue reading
- Conduct a survey to reveal children's reading choices, those of their peers and reading stimuli and habits at home.
- Children were encouraged to discuss their books – current and historic – with one another in order to make recommendations, explore themes, authors and text types.
- Children were given the opportunity to read different books and were encouraged to identify book reading 'opportunities' for their peers.
- Children read their chosen books quietly in the library in the comfortable, cushioned 'reading area'. Additionally, there were padded chairs arranged to encourage a book discussion area as well as tables with writing equipment to allow for more formal, written book reviews.

## Impact

- There was a great uptake of children who wanted to attend the club. Initially there was a high level of curiosity for the 'club' which settled down after the first week, with regularly 18 – 25 children attending per day.

- Most children brought in books from either their classroom or home revealing a wide variety of genres, which enabled opportunities for interesting discussions, establishing shared interests and identifying previously 'unknown' authors and books.
- As the club continued, children were talking about books with each other children, even with those they may not have even previously engaged with. This fostered an informal platform for mixing with children from other year groups as well as developing their interaction skills – further supporting our school's whole school wellbeing activities.

## **Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice**

The book club achieved 3 of the 4 strands by providing 'social reading environments; independent reading; informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendations'. (Cremin et al., 2014) The next step, prior to the enforced lockdown, would have been to introduce reading aloud sessions – however, since returning to school this is being completed daily by midday supervisors who read to the whole class and who, in many classes, encourage pupils to continue with extracts from the passage to their peers.

A review of the survey conducted revealed that 83% of the children chose to read the back catalogues of the same few authors: David Walliams, Roald Dahl and J K Rowling. The predominant reasons given were that these were the authors/books given to them as gifts, that they were the most accessible when entering book shops and they 'know' that they will enjoy the authors' books based on previous experiences.

The TaRs research findings will influence my teaching of reading in future by ensuring that a wider range of books, authors and genres is given a high profile within the classroom, and that children are actively encouraged to discuss in an open, respectful atmosphere their choices and experiences.

Additionally, I will actively pursue lesser-known authors to broaden the children's knowledge and experiences away from the more popular published authors who, while they may be entertaining, do not necessarily promote a quality of writing conducive to the expectations of the curriculum or inspire creativity or broaden the children's experiences.