



Reading and writing for pleasure research project 2020-2023

In the context of increased professional and academic interest in the UK and internationally in fostering young readers and writers who **choose to read and write for their own pleasure and satisfaction**, the Open University is working with Mercers' Company as their research partner in a project running 2020-2023. Exploring this exciting space with Doorstep Library, Get Islington Reading (Reading Agency and National Literacy Trust), Literacy Pirates, Ministry of Stories, Primary Shakespeare and World Book Day.

Whilst reading for pleasure is mandated (DfE, 2014), writing for pleasure is not so clearly positioned in education policy or practice and there is a real need to **identify what approaches and methodologies most effectively motivate and inspire children to find pleasure in reading and writing**. Whilst the will to read influences the skill and vice versa (OECD, 2002), in recent years, less assured, reluctant and disadvantaged learners have often been estranged by the dominance of the skills agenda and a more nuanced balance needs to be developed between the will and the skill.

Reading for Pleasure (RfP) research indicates that features such as the social context, the texts, learner agency, choice, informality and the opportunity to engage personally, aesthetically and creatively with others, all serve to motivate young readers, fostering a love of reading (e.g. Cremin, 2020; Cremin et al., 2014; Westbrook et al., 2019). **Writing for pleasure** (WfP) is often argued for by educationalists, but this area has been less explicitly researched as a concept or a practice. Instead studies tend to examine 'creative writing' and the consequence of educators offering increased choice, an audience/purpose for writing and opportunities for children to write and share, and talk about themselves as authors (e.g. Cremin, 2017; 2020; Jesson et al. 2016).

Some work has examined the practices of children who choose to write at home (e.g. Chamberlain, 2015, 2019 a,b) and the influence of RfP on WfP (e.g. Sénéchal, et al. 2018). But for both RfP and WfP

the balance between these features and the influence of the way in which they, and other motivating features, are made available in classrooms or programmes is not yet well understood.

As research partners in this project, we are working on a **literature review and a three stage meta-analysis** drawing the knowledge, skills and data from those involved in the programmes situated within the research literature. With Activity Theory (Engeström, 2011) as our analytic lens, we are examining: the types of resources that are used in the programme, the context within which they take place, the nature of the communities and ethos created, the relationships established with schools, parents and children and how these impact on the young people's desire to read or write, particularly those who are reluctant or who face barriers to learning of various kinds. This work will reveal programme level nuances that will allow us to examine approaches and features of RfP and WfP across the programmes. Drawing these insights together we aim to shape **a RfP/ WfP Framework** to articulate new insights into the effective approaches and methodologies that foster children's RfP and WfP.

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