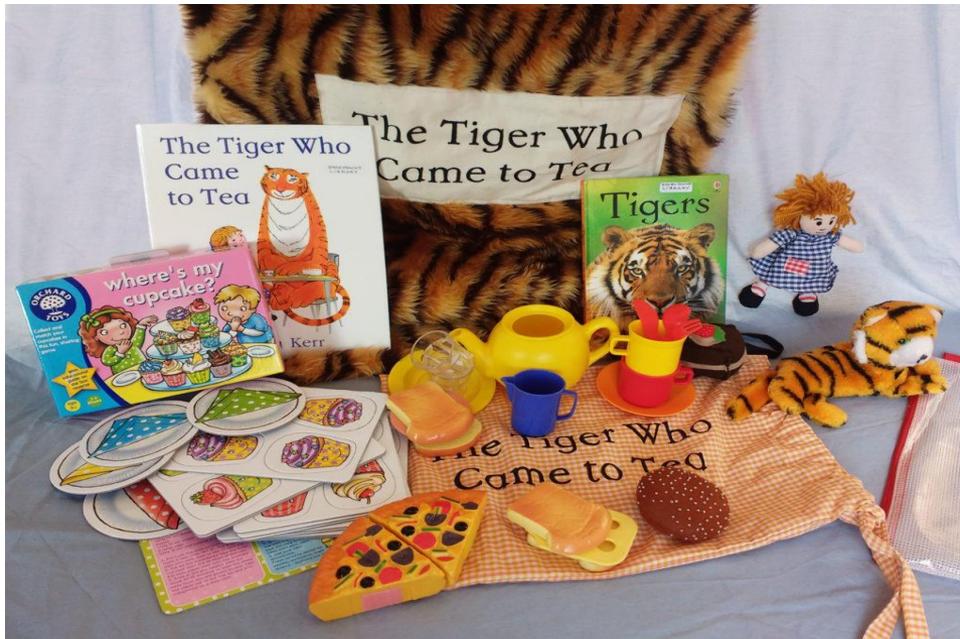


“Telling it Together with Story Sacks”

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Context

- ▶ I am involved with the planning, delivery and assessment of Childcare Learning and Development and Supporting Teaching and Learning qualifications. All the courses involve learners undertaking placement practices working with children and young people. It is important that my learners have the skills to be successful practitioners whilst on placement. This includes developing the skills to encourage children to engage in reading, not only for curriculum requirements, but also reading for pleasure. Whilst reading for pleasure has to be carefully planned, it is important that reading activities are child led and have a clear social element.

Research inspiration and rationale

- ▶ The Teachers as Readers research identified the importance of a clear reading for pleasure pedagogy to encourage independent reading with child led activities. (Cremin et al. 2014)
- ▶ The research also highlighted the importance of the childcare practitioner's having a knowledge of children's literature as well as a familiarity of children's reading practices and preferences. This is essential if practitioners are to ensure a positive change in children's reading cultures and to contribute to an enjoyable reading environment.
- ▶ It is important that practitioners ensure that activities are child-led and that children feel empowered when taking part in literacy based activities. This can contribute to developing children's positive attitudes towards reading.
- ▶ I have to ensure that my learners have the skill set to be effective on placement. The TaRs research provided me with the insight into how my learners' skills can be further developed.

Aims

- ▶ To introduce the concepts of reading for pleasure, which can support language and reading skills.
- ▶ To develop learners' skills in supporting and promoting literacy skills whilst on placement.
- ▶ To explore how learners can plan and produce activities which ensure children's engagement in reading activities.



Outline

- ▶ It is important that my learners understand the importance of motivating and making sure that children can engage with reading activities. Various reports, for example The Rose Report (2006) placed emphasis on the importance of promoting positive attitudes to literacy as early as possible. The report also highlighted the importance of regularly sharing and enjoying favourite books with a trusted adults. The longitudinal study by Hutton et al. (2017) explored children's brain activity during story time with a trusted adult. The findings reported that **encouraging children to participate actively during shared reading supported cognitive and language development, which plays a key role in promoting comprehension.** The Department for Education (2012) reported that reading for pleasure can lead to increased attainment. This emphasises the importance of making reading fun and engaging.



Outline

- ▶ Learners attending the courses at SOLC, have to complete various assignments to complete the qualification. They also have to undertake placement practice. Feedback from learners starting placements in schools highlighted that many felt under confident in taking ownership of activities.
- ▶ Working in small groups the learners discussed and produced a **list of skills and resources they would like to develop**, the importance of sharing ideas was highlighted.
- ▶ The learners **reflected on their own preferences as children reading and also as adults reading to children**, was an important factor when discussing activities.

Outline – Preparing for Placement Activities

- ▶ One activity I used to introduce learners to “reading for pleasure” is **book talk**. Working in pairs learners had to produce a short presentation about a chosen book. Their presentations had to motivate and convince other learners to read the book. The presentation had to be fun and engaging, highlighting the plot, focusing on a character or recreating a book’s mood/theme to ignite readers’ curiosity.
- ▶ Once learners had gained in confidence with their chosen book I introduced them to the amazing world of story sacks. Story sacks are a really good way to create another dimension to the book and really allow children to make sense of a story line. **Children can enjoy and interact with reading activities, which can bring stories alive and prove to be useful for encouraging creativity and imaginary play.** Not only does a story sack encourage children to play and explore, it encourages critical and creative thinking.

Outline

- ▶ The next two sessions proved to be learner led, ideas and resources were shared.
- ▶ Time was spent in discussing different types of resources to be included in story sacks. Useful websites were identified.
- ▶ Children's Books and puppets were brought into class.
- ▶ One group of students worked together and produced a display of the Hungry Caterpillar , the learners felt this was a good way to develop their ideas.



Outline

- ▶ Learners exchanged information about their placements, ages, needs and interests of the children they worked with.
- ▶ Each learner had discussed with their class teacher about using their story sack.
- ▶ One learner brought her completed story sack into class.



Impact

- ▶ The feedback from the learners about gaining knowledge of “reading for pleasure” concepts and their performance on placement was very positive.
- ▶ My observations of learners in the classroom and the witness statements provided by teachers, highlighted how each learner had gained in both confidence and classroom practice skills.
- ▶ **Learners commented on the way their story sacks influenced children’s behaviour, especially those who experienced difficulty engaging with reading.**

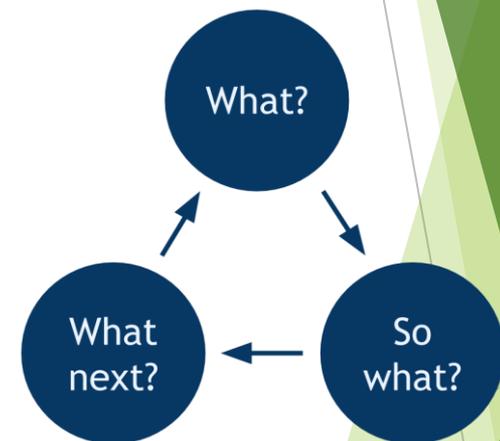


Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

- ▶ Reflection is not just about the knowledge held by an individual. Reflection should challenge the concepts and theories by which you make sense of the knowledge. When you reflect you do not simply see more, you see things differently. By completing the Teachers Reading Challenge and reflecting on the impact of TaRs research, I have certainly begun to see things differently, which has enhanced my professional practice and the way in which I prepare my learners for placement practice.
- ▶ Once I was sure that my learners had the knowledge and understanding of the importance of “reading for pleasure”, I became a facilitator and was able to observe the changes in behaviour and improved self-esteem, especially for the under confident members of the group.
- ▶ **It also reinforced the importance of seeing the world through the eyes of children, which was often commented on by my learners.**

Reflections on impact of TaRs research on practice.

- ▶ In line with the findings of the TaRs research, it was clear from observations feedback from my learners and their class teachers, that **child led initiatives are important in developing reading for pleasure.**
- ▶ Once my learners had fully understood the importance of developing activities and resources to motivate and engage children they became more effective practitioners.
- ▶ Initially I tried to guide my learners in producing their resources I quickly realised how creative the learners were. **Through observation and taking on board their feedback, I soon took on the role of facilitator.**



Next steps

Throughout the process the learners demonstrated enthusiasm and motivation. The learners enjoyed learning in a more informal way. The general consensus was that story sacks were a more interesting way to use children's book. Children are encouraged to enter into the story through the accompanying activities.

Learners commented that story sacks are an excellent way to create and sustain an interest in books.

However, although all the resources produced were excellent,

I would encourage learners to have more confidence in using less traditional books.

I would also continue to develop my knowledge of reading for pleasure pedagogy.