

Creating a Book Buzz at Ark Academy!

By Rhiannon Thomas & Matilda Hughes



Context

- We are classroom teachers working across Reception, Year 5 and Year 6 at Ark Academy Primary in Wembley, Brent.
- For our school's development plan, we have been working to ensure that reading is brought more into the heart of Ark Academy, which links perfectly to the Reading for Pleasure work we have been implementing in our classrooms.

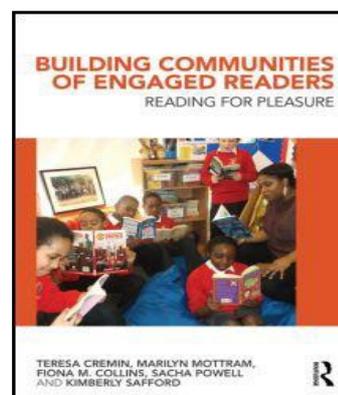
OU Research inspiration and rationale

We were inspired to develop reading for pleasure in our school after learning about the Teachers as Readers (Cremin et al., 2014) research findings that:

In order to foster Reading for Pleasure effectively, teachers need to develop a reading for pleasure pedagogy.

In exploring this, we saw from other teachers' practice that social reading environments, and informal book talk and recommendations were a great way to create an excitement around reading in which a whole year group of children could get involved.

We wanted our less 'keen' readers to be excited at the thought of picking up a book and to be inspired by classmates to read.



Aims

We chose to focus our work on the TaRs aim in Reading for Pleasure Pedagogy:

Informal book talk, inside text-talk and recommendations.

Our research in each of our classes showed that many children were unable to name three favourite authors and those that could, mostly stuck to authors that had been studied in class.

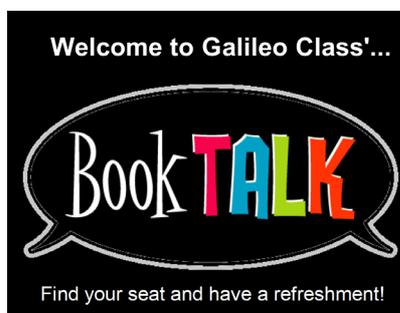
Following this, we wanted to create an environment where children took a more independent approach to finding authors and genres of books they enjoyed, and to foster a culture where children could openly discuss books together and find out about new authors from one another, rather than from their teachers.

We wanted to create a love of reading and a buzz around reading so that children were also reading more at home, exposing themselves to new texts and authors, and not just having class novels and reading lessons as the only time they would actually read. Additionally, before the project, we found that some children would pick up the same author over and over again and we wanted for them to expand their choices.

Especially in year 6, we noticed that there was a very low reading stamina, and that many children were taking a very long time to finish one book – we wanted them to feel more motivated to finish a book.

Outline

- In order to achieve our aims, we began a ‘Book Talk’ which takes place every Friday afternoon in the classroom. Children can nominate themselves to present a book that they have read to the class, read a couple of their favourite pages and then answer questions that the class may have.



Book TALK

Name	Book Title
DB	A Dog Named Homeless
Hisham	Attack of the Killer Anties
Mude	High Rise Mystery
Holly	The dark house murder
Percy Anas	Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief
Taray	Raven's Gate Night Rise
Delina-debra	The worst thing about my sister! Jacqueline Wilson
Molly	The secret garden
Sahar	Goosebumps Jay cheese! and die screaming
Finca	The girl with the lost smile



Impact

We have found that introducing our regular ‘Book Talks’ has really created a buzz around reading.

- They are **excited** for ‘Book Talk’ every Friday and consistently ask, “Miss, will there be a book talk today?”
- In general, the class are **talking more positively about books**, they are asking their friends if they can read the books they recommended and they are excited to finish a book so that they can share it with the class in a ‘Book Talk’.
- There is a lot more **natural talk about books** in the class that is **not necessarily initiated by the teacher**
- The children’s knowledge of different authors has expanded since the ‘Book Talks’
- In one child’s reading journal, he wrote:

By Humza Arshad and Henry White

Q13 - After ~~reading~~ finishing reading 'Little Badman And The Invasion Of The Killer Aunties' by Humza Arshad and Henry White, this book's author has made a new fan. (Me). Now I have 3 favourite authors - It is funny and tense.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice:

We feel that through creating informal book talk and a social reading environment, there has been an increased buzz around reading in our Year 6 corridor. Additionally, we have found that our own knowledge of children's literature has significantly expanded (relating to TaRs research area 1).

Moving forward, we will be taking more time to discuss books and reading with children, and we are excited to launch 'Book Talk' next year with our new Year 6s as a regular feature of our timetable. It would be great to roll this out across the school too!