

# Reading for Pleasure surrounded by nature

By Hannah Ellis



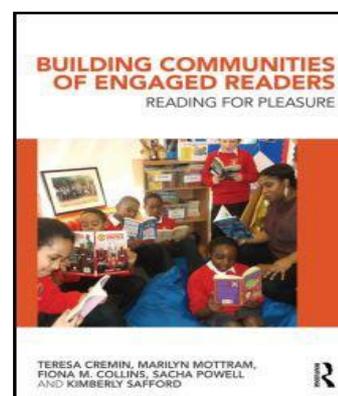
## Context

I am a Year 1 Class Teacher at the University of Cambridge Primary School in Cambridgeshire. I completed my Postgraduate Certificate in Education at the University of Cambridge. As a school, we have been striving to enhance curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment and we will be continuing to embed Reading for Pleasure across the school and developing effective pedagogical approaches.

## OU Research inspiration and rationale

This year I have been greatly inspired by the Open University's, Teachers as Readers (TaRs) research findings which identified four key pedagogies which impacted significantly upon children's enjoyment of reading and development of RfP (Cremin et al., 2014). I have used these findings as a starting point to develop my reading for pleasure practice.

In addition to this research, the Open University RFP Newsletter LIVE! Event run by Teresa Cremin was truly inspiring. During this live event, several different practitioners discussed top texts and examples of successful practice. Marcia Williams, an outstanding children's author with an inspiration and real passion for children's literature was also present. This event echoed the importance of teachers developing considerable knowledge of children's literature, knowledge of children's reading practices and creating reading communities with rich inspiring reading environments and opportunities.



As a teacher, I have been particularly interested in exploring the impact of environment upon learning and therefore decided to focus on developing **social reading environments**. The other key pedagogies naturally developed and worked alongside to support the children's enjoyment of reading. Many children had displayed a significant enjoyment of outdoors learning across the curriculum this year and this was the starting point of my research. I was keen to explore how a change of environment supported levels of concentration and interest.

## Aims

This research responded to a need to support all children to develop a love for reading. Striving to engage all children including those that were displaying a lack of interest in reading, through the development of a wonderful social reading environment.

## Outline

I decided to set up an afterschool **reading club** to investigate how environment influences levels of interest and enjoyment in reading. This club included 15 children within Year 1.

The environment where this study was taking place included an onsite newly planted **forest**. This had tunnels, log seating and a range of plants and natural building material. The children were familiar with this setting and the **Forest School** rules from sessions they had participated in throughout the term. The children had the task of creating their own **reading space**, shared with others or by themselves. No time limit was given for how long they should spend building or exploring spaces and how much time they should be reading.

## Impact

Due to there being no time limit set for how long the children should spend reading or constructing spaces, during the first 2 sessions some children spent lots of time constructing dens and imaginative spaces but had little time left to read within these.

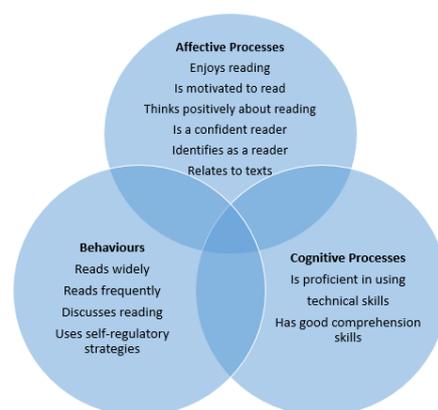
As the sessions progressed, we found that the **duration children were reading increased**.

Reluctant readers were now enjoying books and displaying a real motivation to read. They were discussing the books they were exploring with others. The children displayed great pride in their reading environments: *"come and look at my space"*.

They were actively considering what they wanted their space to look like: *"I like reading in small quiet spaces"* and in doing so, reflecting on their behaviour and preferences as readers.

Reading began to encompass more than the cognitive process and reflected the affective process and reader behaviours. (ROGO model evidence base National Literacy Trust 2017, page 2)

Reading...



## Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

The four key pedagogies identified in the TaRs research supported me in recognising areas that could be enhanced within my practice. Having decided to focus upon the improvement of social reading environments, I found that this had an impact upon other key pedagogies. For example, book talk increased as children's excitement and enjoyment of reading excelled, the children were making recommendations and enjoying the additional time provided for independent and group reading both within the classroom and beyond.

In the future, I plan to develop both an indoors and outdoors reading space for the class. This will be led by the children and they will be able to support in this process.