



Heyyy, Let's read!

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Context

I am a Year 2 Teacher at Glade Primary School, Redbridge. I enjoy reading myself and have always encouraged my pupils to read, preferably beyond the books that they are given or they themselves select at school. I used the questionnaires to gauge the year group's reading interests.

Reading and Phonics are the key areas we still need to develop as we slowly come out of lockdown. The gaps have widened between those children that did read and those that didn't. Pupils for whom English isn't a first language found it difficult to access the curriculum as well as tackle the lessons. English lessons were especially difficult for these pupils.

OU Research inspiration and rationale

Having read the article 'Reading communities' by Professor Teresa Cremin, I wanted to look at; 'Teachers' knowledge of children's literature with elements of 'Teachers' knowledge of children's reading practices.

We had already changed the books in Year 2, I was extremely keen to get more pupil voice for the next set of books we would be looking at in the Summer term. This would be the perfect time to action the research.

I wanted to research children's literature and their practices. Choosing the right literature from the beginning gives pupils an opportunity to respond and develop their own opinions about issues and topics. But the question is what literature to share with them. Knowing what children like to read and where they enjoy reading go together. To understand this area better and before I actioned my own research, I asked my class to create their own 'Reading Rivers' as well as sending out a pupil questionnaire.

Donna Norton (2010) identifies the value of literature for young people in her book, 'Through the Eyes of a Child'. Not only do they appreciate their own culture through literature, but it also develops their emotional intelligence and creativity.'

Understanding children's love for reading allows the teacher to develop other qualities. Their confidence to read aloud to share their love of books and drama/role play. Through my DEAR sessions, a customary held task at the end of the day, I let children bring in their own books and discuss with their peers, why they enjoyed reading the book. I gave them opportunities to 'act out' their best parts of the story. Through talk

during play and discussions at the end of the day they often found, they liked or disliked the same parts in the story.

I would intentionally bring in books I hadn't read, leave them on my chair. Pupils would ask about the books, asking me to read to them or if they could take them home. I shared this practice with KS1 team. Year 2 were better than Year 1 and Reception.

Aims

- To enhance teachers' knowledge of children's literature
- To get the children involved in creating their own 'Book/Reading' corner for the class
- To get teachers to share what they are reading on the classroom doors
- To have a regular reading session at the end of each day with both pupils and teachers sharing books
- To have a regular slot in the school newsletter

Outline

'Perhaps here I am just externalising my own deficiencies, but I have got myself in the odd position of having a collection of children's books that I like so much I find myself getting a bit prissy about giving them out to actual children.'

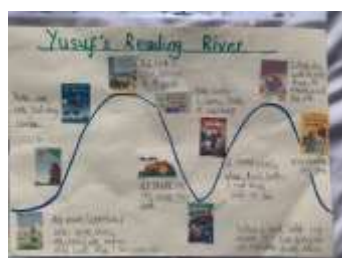
'Share the damn books'

'I lent out my copy of Noisy Outlaws and started to get palpitations.'

Walker, J. (2017) *Are you Dahl dependent?*

<https://jonnywalkerteaching.wordpress.com/2017/03/25/dahl-dependency-break-the-cycle/>

This is what pushed me to go ahead with my research. To kick start the research I asked the class to draw Reading Rivers and I sent out Pupil questionnaires. They all said they preferred reading somewhere cosy in bed or on the sofa.



I let go of my books, I let them be corner bent and curled up. A book is a book, it needs to be shared and passed around. I did just that. Before I would buy books and keep them in my part of the library in class, making sure I said to class that 'if you need to borrow, ask'. I bought books by looking at the illustrations, title and maybe the

story, always 'playing' it safe. Then I thought to myself the books are for the children so does it really matter if I like the cover, the story or even the illustrations.

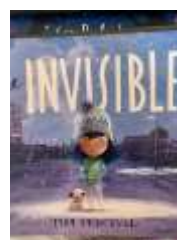
To start off my research, I 'planted' books here and there in classroom. Children picked them up and ask what the books were about. This was hard at first, but I did it. Initially, I choose books that I knew would interest them just to get their attention and interest started. We already have regular DEAR sessions at the end of the day, so I used this 'shared' time to read 'my' books.

Modelling the usual skills of annotating voice and responding to appropriate punctuation, I really engaged the class. Sometimes I used to clown around with the text, words and noun phrases in the book. Not only did it make them laugh but it also made them think about how much power was behind words and noun phrases to create or 'paint' an imaginative piece of writing hence story.

I found these sessions so valuable and rewarding especially to my reluctant readers or those that can't get to read at home because of language barriers. I found that by 3 o'clock my class always looked forward to share reading with me. An informal approach to reading helped the children to 'open up' a bit more. They became very expressive, their vocabulary bank expanded, even making connections with other similar stories. We began to look at stories in books as a way of escapism. We went on adventures together, solved my mysteries and even managed to be a hero.

Their creative writing developed, and I could see the enthusiasm in their sentences. Experimenting with words that they had heard in their reading. The reluctant readers always looked forward to the reading sessions escaping and going on adventures beyond their wildest dreams.

Guided group reading is no longer seen as a task they have to do, BUT more of what new words will we learn today. The new word they put into a sentence. I also found that peer pressure has a significant part to play, 'if she/he can so can I.



I got children to read my collection of children's books and to give me feedback on them by writing reviews. This helped my research significantly as I was able to discuss with them at length what made a story a good story. They realised they shared similar opinions on the same parts of the story. They enjoyed these books more so because they knew they were sharing 'teacher' books'. Here are a few of their book reviews.



Impact

- Regular book reviews/discussion displayed outside my class
- Quality of creative writing improved
- Pupil ownership of books we read in class
- Reluctant readers/EAL always part of a group
- Word vocabulary enhanced
- Peer modelling both verbally and written
- Comprehension skills have improved

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

Previously, reading in class was mainly centred around guided group reading, visiting the school library once a week and 'how many reads' the children completed over time, just so that they could get a certificate and a mention in the weekly newsletter. Reading was reaching a target, a focus point in the parents' chat group and then getting your child's name mentioned in the newsletter.

The research showed children gained more interest in reading when the books they shared were of interest to them and not for the sake of a box having to be ticked. Teachers in my school particularly enjoyed the Reading Rivers task, this will become a whole school task come this Autumn 2021. The children loved talking about their journey on this river, sharing fond memories with who they liked reading with and why.

We hope to continue class book clubs in Autumn 2021, maybe as an extra club after school. Different members of staff will run this club voluntarily. The book club had a big impact on their writing, as well as their comprehension skills. Reading wasn't boring anymore; it was fun with a twist. I made word games with the characters from the books we read, 'Alphabetic Adjectives' was one of them. The word games made reading more enjoyable as they could share words from one book to another.

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