



READING
FOR PLEASURE



Informal Book Talk

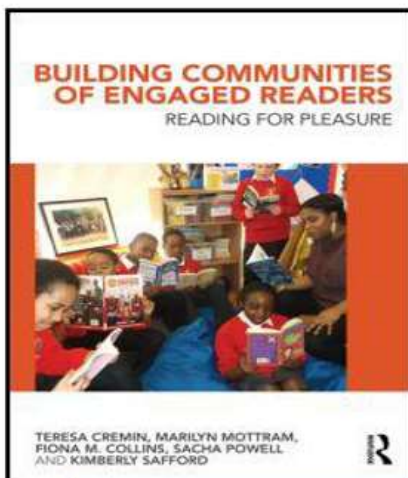


A key element of a reading for
pleasure pedagogy

Aims

1. To experience informal book talk
2. To examine what research reveals about informal book talk practice that supports reading for pleasure
3. To share and develop ideas for book talk practice
4. To plan ways forward to enrich and diversify informal book talk





Key findings from *Teachers as Readers*

In order to effectively develop children's RfP, teachers need to develop:

1. Knowledge of children's literature and other texts
2. Knowledge of children's reading practices
3. **An RfP pedagogy**, encompassing:
 - social reading environments
 - reading aloud
 - **informal book talk**, inside-text talk and recommendations
 - independent reading time
4. As Reading Teachers - teachers who read and readers who teach
5. Reciprocal and interactive reading communities.

(Cremin et al., 2014)

Informal book talk matters



It can...

- develop children's critical thinking (Roche, 2015; Moses, Ogden and Kelly, 2015).
- enhance children's engagement in and motivation for literature (Moses et al., 2015).
- enable children to take greater responsibility for their own learning, and supported each other as readers (Moses et al., 2015)
- promote children's enjoyment in reading (Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell and Safford, 2014)

Let's try some informal book talk...

1. Listen to the story being read aloud.
2. Now have a chat with those around you. Here are some ideas to talk about, but you can chat about anything to do with the story...

What did you like about the story?

What didn't you like?

Did it remind you of anything you've read or
your own experiences?

What was most memorable?

Were there any characters you particularly
liked or disliked? Why?

Who do you think, might enjoy this story?
Why?

3. Share some of the things you talked about with the whole group and discuss the experience of engaging in informal book talk

What do we mean by informal book talk?



Watch the video [Informal Book Talk](#)

What do we mean by informal book talk?



Informal Book Talk

ourfp.org

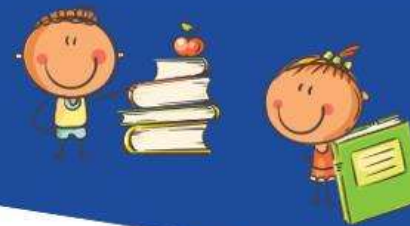
 @OpenUniRfP



What is it?

Learner-led, relaxed conversations around reading. As a strand of Reading for Pleasure (RfP) pedagogy, it includes discussion about texts, choices, preferences, recommendations and more.

N.B. Informal book talk is not 'activity driven.'
To find out more, follow the QR Code
or visit ourfp.org



What's involved?

- Spontaneity
- No assessment
- Social interaction
- Teachers as Readers
- Reader to reader chat
- Blethering about books in common

Why do it?

- To listen and learn
- To tempt children into reading
- To create reading communities
- To foster social motivation for reading
- To encourage children's reading for pleasure



How and when?

Initially, **informal book talk** may be more teacher-led as readers are shown how to blether. Books in common can act as stepping stones towards more child-led conversations about text. Gradually, the opportunities will become more authentic reader to reader conversations, as children develop their agency and autonomy to informally talk about texts.



Book talk often emerges from **reading aloud** and **independent reading** time as part of RfP pedagogy (Cremin et al., 2014). You could try *Book Blankets*, *Carry and Chat* or *Book Bingo*.

Informal book talk: what it *is* and *isn't*

Informal book talk <i>is</i> ...	Informal book talk <i>isn't</i> ...
Social, and therefore involving pairs or groups of children	Always led by adults
Enjoyable, relaxed and spontaneous	Quiet or solitary
A chance to just chat about what's been read	Followed by comprehension questions
An activity any pupil can engage in	Formally assessed
Draws on books we have read or shared	Limited to certain types of texts or reading
Tempts children to read more and share more	

What are the benefits of informal book talk?

- It creates an opportunity for teachers to listen, observe and learn about their children as readers
- The informality allows children to be tentative and try out their thoughts and ideas
- It uses social motivation to foster reading for pleasure
- The reader to reader nature of the chat allows children to make recommendations and share their won reading – from a range of text types and formats
- It builds a sense of community and the idea of 'books in common'
- It develops reader agency and autonomy



Review your practice

What already happens in your classroom?

1. When and how often do children get to chat informally about their reading?
2. Who do they get to chat to – adults? Friends? Peers?
3. How often do you talk to your class about *your* reading?

To use a questionnaire to review current practice, visit:
[Informal book talk: Review your practice](#)

What happens in 'informal book talk'?

When might it happen?

What do we talk about?

Who might we talk to?

Watch a video of Jon Biddle talking about how he developed informal book chat in his school:

[Developing Informal Book Chat](#)

How could we make it happen?

- To get informal book talk started, adults might need to model how to chat about books for their children to see and hear.
- Over time, gradually reduce the adult role and children to chat 'reader to reader'
- Informal book talk could follow on from 'reading aloud' and use a book that the teacher has already shared
- Plenty of tempting texts need to be available for children to engage in informal book talk
- Children need time, space and a relaxed environment to make the talk informal



You might try...

'Carry and chat'



Creating a 'book blanket'

For more ideas, see the Examples of Practice on our website:

[Developing Book Talk](#)

[Spontaneous Book Blether](#)

[The Sound of Book Chat](#)

Planning ahead: Developing Informal Book Talk

Which aspects do you want to develop?

- Making time and space for informal book talk
- Modelling how to chat informally
- Building a repertoire of 'books in common' to chat about
- Or something else...



For more ideas, visit our website:
[OU RfP Reading for Pleasure Website](#)

**Do consider sharing your
development work on the RfP site**



Visit our website:

[OU RfP Reading for Pleasure Website](#)

References

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