



Raising the profile and embracing the power of 'Book Talk'

DAVID FENN



Context

- RAF Leeming Community Primary is medium sized primary in North Yorkshire. The school has high mobility due to its military context.
- Reading For Pleasure has been a real focus in the previous 2 years SIP. However, the challenge was to continue and sustain the successes gained from the introduction of class libraries and initial, informal book talk in classes.



OU Research inspiration and rationale

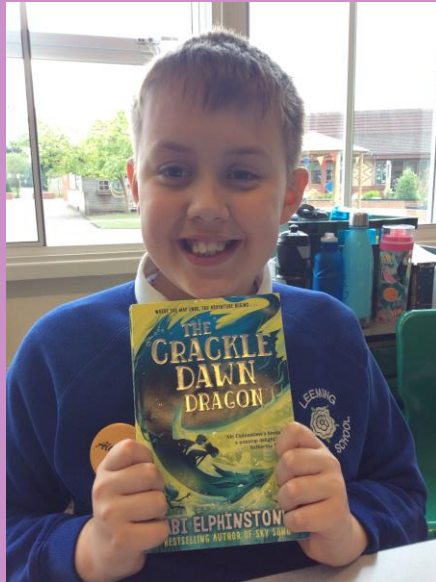
Following our previous work on Reading for Pleasure, after joining my local OU RfP group, the Teachers as Readers (TaRs) research inspired the next steps in our school's journey:

- TaR 1 and 2 **Knowledge of children's literature and reading practice** – We were keen to continue exposing children and teachers to not just those 'celebrity' (David Walliams, Roald Dahl etc) authors. We aimed to use Book Talk as a tool to gauge children's reactions to these. In turn, as staff, we wanted to be open to informing our own knowledge by becoming acutely aware of texts and authors the children are discovering and recommending themselves.
- TaR 3 **Reading for pleasure pedagogies** – Through research I became aware of how regular book talk and sharing recommendations had the potential to engage and empower our young readers. I was interested to see the impact of more opportunities for 'child-led', informal and 'inside-text' talk, where children could share views of texts they were encountering at the same time.
- TaR 5 **Reading communities that are reciprocal and interactive** – Research in this area made me realise the potential of creating 'social spaces' for reading where children could use more modern and informal methods to engage with literature, such as chatrooms and classroom conversations.





Aims



- To raise profile and reputation of reading amongst **low-stamina, reluctant** readers. This was in response to those children who, despite having the ability to read confidently, struggle to maintain good reading habits.
- Recognise, reinforce and celebrate those children with high-quality reading habits. This aim was designed to continue and consolidate healthy reading habits already developed; giving children a forum to share their experiences of the range of books they encountered.
- In contrast to formal book reviews as the only way in which children share responses to texts, embed 'Book Talk' as a statutory expectation across school and in children's psyche as an integral part of their young reading experience.

Outline

- Book Talk – Whilst this was already happening across school informally, all classes were to timetable a regular, weekly slot where children would have time to share their reading through recommending books, reading extracts aloud, verbally sharing their views about texts.
- The profile of Book Talk was to be raised by being shared in Key Stage celebration assemblies too



Outline

– Book Club

- An extra-curricular Book Club was set up and ran for KS2 children. In this they were able to:
 - take part in more in-depth book talk,
 - Share and read their favorite books from home
 - Take time to write reviews of recently encountered books



Outline – Book Award and related e-book-talk

- Children in UKS2 were invited to take part in a **Book Award**, where they were required to read at least 6 books over the course of the Spring Term.
- Invitations were open, but **reluctant readers** and those who **struggled with reading stamina** were targeted. Stickers were awarded for every book read on a passport and certificates were awarded to successful participants.
- Books were from a **wide-range of up-and-coming** children's authors and genres.
- A **link was created with a similar sized primary**, who ran the Book Award alongside our school.
- **Google Classroom was set up** so that all participants in the Book Award from both schools could access an online forum to share their comments, questions and reviews of the books. Children were given a regular in-school time each week to add their comments to the book talk forum.



Examples of e-book-talk!

When The Sky Falls ▾

25 members

Chat

Files

Tasks

R

Rhys W May 20, 9:18 AM

a very serious and funny book would read again

👍 1

J

Jack H May 20, 9:18 AM

I LOVE WAR STORIES

L

Lottie J May 20, 9:21 AM

i really liked the book but the ending was sad

N

Nathan R May 20, 9:21 AM

What is the book like?

Perfect Parent Project ▾

23 members

Chat

Files

Tasks

Good morning guys ! what i liked about the Perfect parent it was so relatable i would give 😊 this a 8.5 out of ten

👍 1

G

Grace D May 20, 9:16 AM

I found this book a great read because some parts were relatable

J

Jessica C May 20, 9:21 AM

this book is great 😊

J

Jasmyn E May 20, 9:24 AM

i really enjoyed this book this was my first book that i read in the book award. if you are thinking of reading this book i would if i were you 9/10 👍 😊

👍 1

P

Paige C May 20, 9:27 AM

i like this book because its about a child who was in a adopting centre and had a list of what a perfect parent is !! 😊 😊 😊

👍 1

Examples of e-book-talk!

Wizard In My Shed ▾

24 members

Chat

Files

Tasks

T

Tyler P May 20, 9:18 AM

When I read this book I like all the old words and characters! I loved the jokes

L

Lana B May 20, 9:20 AM

it was really funny

P

Paige C May 20, 9:20 AM

It wasn't very good to be honest (my Opinion)

E

Evie J May 20, 9:20 AM

I loved this book!!! 😊 It was really good and funny. I liked when Merdin the Wild broke that mans car but I cant remember who his name was

R

Rhys W May 20, 9:21 AM

wizard in my shed is a funny and amazing book 10 out of 10 i liked the tho and thou

G

Grace D May 20, 9:24 AM

i found it quite funny at times

The Crackle Dawn Dragon ▾

24 members

Chat

Files

Tasks

O

Ollie H May 20, 9:22 AM

i really like it its just the ending is quite sad :(

J

Jack H May 20, 9:23 AM

HOW WAS THE BOOK EVERYONE

I

Isaac M May 20, 9:24 AM

What do you like about it that lured you in. 🤖

O

Otto S May 20, 9:25 AM

I am currently reading this awesome book I love fantasy and animal stories it is the best book award book I've read currently 😊

I LOVE ANIMAL STORIES 10/10 😊🤖

👍 1

I

Isaac M May 20, 9:26 AM

The book lured me in by the front cover and the dragon as well. it felt slow but it eventually speed up and it was INSANE!!!

👍 1

Examples of Book reviews posted on Google Classroom

How I Saved The World In A Week

Genre: real life/adventure

Author: Polly Ho-Yen

This is a shockingly sad story but that's not bad. It is a fast-paced engaging unexpected story with a sorrowful open into a happy climax.

I rate it a 9 out of 10

Billy has family problems and his mum is overly protective keeping him only learning survival tasks. But when a viral infection turns people grey he must learn to live of his mother's teaching.

I would recommend this story to any one who is a fan of long, high-stake journeys.

My favourite quote was: "How to (not) say hello"

REHS WATKINS



ESTERA'S BOOK REVIEW

How I saved the world in a week

This book is written by Polly Ho-Yen and the genre is adventure. This book is mysterious page-turning and magical book I would really recommend this to children and parents at any age it is really good and it's one of my favourite books and I hope that everyone else can enjoy this book.

And this story is about a boy who lost his father and his mother (Silvia). She taught him some skilful protection skills, but then when they moved into their new house it burned down and the boy had to be thrown out of the window and the mum suffered. They both ended up in the hospital but then the father came tried to keep him and then he ended up in a fight. I will leave you to find the mysterious page-turner of this beautiful book.



The boy who made everyone laugh!!!!!!!

Author: Helen Rutter

Book name: The boy who made everyone laugh

If I had to describe this book it three words it would be funny, exciting and touching. It is a story about a boy who has stammer and he tried to overcome his fears but there are some challenges in the way. It was really inspiring because even if you have stammer or other disabilities you can still do anything you want!

I would give this a 5/5



The Perfect Parent Project

3 words to describe this book would be: realistic, funny and adventurous.

I would give this book a 10/10 rating.

The parent project is a realistic story about a young boy who is an orphan and is trying to find his perfect parents. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes realistic stories.



Author: Danny Wallace

Title: The Day the screens went blank

Genre: Realistic

I rate this book: 10/10

This is my favorite book because its very funny and entertaining and here's a bit about it.

When stella wakes up to discover all of the screens have gone BLANK!

By: jessica corrigan



The Crackle Dawn Dragon

The crackle dawn dragon is amazing and a cliffhanger.

I would definitely recommend this to an adventurous person

Because if you want adventure; this book delivers.



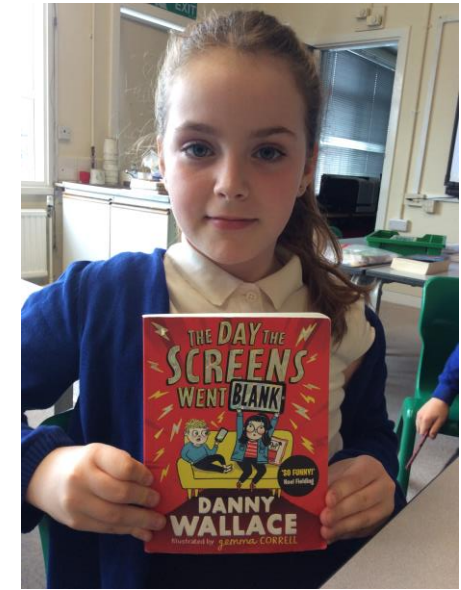
Outline - Recommended reads

- Development of each class in school having a designated area to promote books, share reviews and photographs of children with current reads
- In UKS2 child-led development of a mini-book review, enabling children to scaffold a shortened book review to add to book displays



Impact

- **Raised engagement in targeted group of reluctant boy readers.**
Evidence from regularity of choosing to read in class, comments in reading records and willingness to contribute in book talk sessions.
- **Significant rise in children achieving expected standard in 2022 Y6**
Reading assessment. (17% gain: 2019 – 65% to 2022 – 82%)
- **Increased levels of informal book talk around school observed:**
children discussing books at breaktime; asking for friends to recommend books from class library; 90% of children in KS2 put up hand in Reading Assembly May 2022 willing to share a book they had enjoyed.



Quotes from children involved in the project:

"I liked this one, has he written any other books like this?" **Y6 reluctant boy reader**

"I wouldn't usually do something like this but I now like to explore more about books" **Y5 reluctant girl reader**

"I don't usually read this much, but I've really enjoyed these books and I want get all 6 read so I can vote" **Y6 boy**

"It was really good to organise the award and post on our forum – I liked seeing what people thought of the other books, then I read it cos loads of other children said it was good – It was definably my favourite in the end" **Y6 confident reader**

"I liked it because I got to read some authors that I had never heard. I chose a huge book that took me ages to read, but I loved it because all the twists and turns" **Year 5 SEN pupil**

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

- Being open to new ideas and alternative strategies (Using an online forum for book talk) generated unexpected, but rewarding outcomes.
- Sharing knowledge of texts was so important during the project as it informed decisions about which texts to invest in and which to avoid.
- The regular opportunity to share how each other's projects were going in the OU group was beneficial as it increased realisation that other teachers also had many challenges to overcome too.
- As a school we plan to continue developing RfP principles through:
 - developing teacher's knowledge of children's literature further,
 - embedding 'Book Talk' through a range of varied strategies (including ICT)
- Increasing opportunities to celebrate and raise the profile of Book talk as an essential tool in learning to read.



**The Open
University**