



## Reading Communities: Guidance Notes for the PD

### The section of the website devoted to this includes:

- A self-review (audit) document
- A short film of a Dr. Rachael Levy exploring ideas around working with parents
- A short film of Professor Teresa Cremin and Jon Biddle in discussion
- Practical classroom strategies (10 ideas for practice)
- A research summary (2 pages)
- Multiple Examples of Practice (from teachers)

### Preparation before the meeting

This PD is designed to bring together learning about building reading communities informed by the OU *Teachers as Readers* research and other studies. It is most appropriate for schools where teachers are familiar with, and have developed their knowledge of, texts and children's reading, and RfP pedagogy. It closes with beginning to form an action plan.

As 'Building Communities' PD brings together learning from all previous development work, this session is longer than others and presenters should decide beforehand whether to extend the meeting beyond one hour, divide the meeting into two shorter sessions, or miss out some material.

#### Before the meeting:

- Select a picture fiction text you'd love to read aloud.
- Make copies of the Independent Reading poster for staff- found [here](#) (slide 17) and the Building Communities Review your Practice document found [here](#) (for slide 21).
- Open your browser and test the video quality for slide 18:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9x6pErTF0fA>
- Prepare the 'benefits of a more engaged reading community,' suggested on slide 5, onto cards for each group that will work on the timeline
- Prepare copies of the Examples of Practice suggested on slide 20. Catherine Bridger's EOP can be found [here](#). Eve Vollans' EOP can be found [here](#).

### Discussion and activities during the meeting

- Slide 2: Share the aims of the meeting with colleagues.
- Slide 3: Recall the significance of the TARs findings. Remind colleagues about how your school practice upholds or is developing aspects of these.
- Slide 4: Share the quote to explain the concept of 'reading communities' which this PD is focused upon.
- Slide 5: This activity explores the benefits of a strong reading community (Cremin et al., 2014). Point out that some gains are easier to achieve than others and it is important to sustain practice over time.  
**Activity:** Working on paper in small groups, invite staff to discuss the benefits and then arrange them along a timeline starting with the gains that are likely to become visible most quickly (early impact gains).  
**Discuss:** How will you know that any of these benefits are taking shape? What will be different? Are there other benefits that staff might anticipate /hope for? Are some of the gains more important to your context, than others?
- Slide 6 – 7: There are good reasons to extend your reading community to include families and to include them in your school reading culture. Research suggests schools should actively seek to understand home reading practices and co-create solutions together. Share the benefits demonstrated through the research cited on slide 6 and the advice that gives rise to more effective engagement from families. Further detail may be found in Reading Teachers, Chapter 11 (See slide 4). A significant point to understand is that reading communities grow better when schools take time to



ask and understand home reading practices and then work with families to find workable and enjoyable new ways to share reading. Initiatives that seek to import school-generated solutions are rarely successful.

- Slide 8: **Activity:** Structure a discussion that will support staff to focus on *who* they might hope to engage within their reading community and *what they know* about these groups or individuals that will help the wider community work together with the school to offer innovative and welcome solutions.
- Slide 9: The upcoming sections will explore how the reading community is developing, and could be further strengthened, through each aspect of the TARs research. Remind colleagues of this diagram or take time to introduce it carefully if it is not already familiar. The diagram shows how all aspects of the TARs findings (slide 3) complement one another and work together. Following the reintroduction of the integrated nature of RfP elements, slides 10 - 18 will encourage you to revisit each aspect in turn, considering how subject knowledge and pedagogy are helping you to build a reading community, and whether there is any potential to further strengthen practice to support this goal.
- Slide 10: Recall the significance of wide knowledge of children's texts (for building a reading community) and what you have done in your school to develop this knowledge. Do you know whether your improved knowledge is impacting on children's reading habits yet? This slide is not intended to spark discussion about specific books but rather to focus on the importance of knowing and continually updating teachers' knowledge of children's texts, the difference this knowledge is making to children's reading habits, and how we know.
- Slides 11 – 18: **Discuss** how each pedagogy is working to support the reading community.
  - Slide 11 indicates some ideas that teachers or schools might have done to develop their own knowledge of texts. Presenters may use these as prompts to discuss the ideas most pertinent to their school. What else might we do?
  - Slide 12 asks colleagues to reflect upon how their learning about children's reading habits and interests has impact upon the strength of the reading community. What else do teachers want to know? How might teachers find out? How will they use the information? Does the impact extend beyond teachers' own classrooms?
  - Slides 13-15: This section could focus on photos of colleagues' classrooms and spaces in school
  - Slide 16: List the books that teachers have read aloud to children in the last week / half term. How diverse are these? Is there evidence that reading aloud is encouraging reading connections between pupils?
  - Slide 17: How does independent reading time support the reading community? Are there any exceptions?
  - Slide 18: Watch the video of Jon Biddle talking about Informal Book Talk (2 minutes).... How might your school extend this sort of talk into your wider community?  
<https://ourfp.org/finding/rfpp/booktalk-and-recommendations/>
- Slide 19: Not every school can have a school library and public libraries are often under threat or have disappeared altogether. Often though, schools are doing innovative things either to reinstate their libraries or engage with local public libraries. **Activity:** Decide which is the most relevant for your colleagues to discuss. How can the school or public library be utilised to support your reading community?

### To close: Planning ahead and developing our Reading community

- Slide 20: Read the Examples of Practice in small groups. If time, discuss why the engagement with parents was successful in each case or send around afterwards and discuss them in another staff meeting if you are following through to an action plan (see slide 21). Consider what colleagues know about your wider community of readers e.g. (parents and families) and how you might engage with them to understand what support or interaction around RfP, they would value.
- Use slide 21 and the discussions throughout to outline a draft action plan that will strengthen your reading community. You may wish to use the [audit document](#) to further clarify thinking in some areas.