



## Aims

- To provide trainee teachers with the opportunity to reflect on themselves as readers and their knowledge of children's literature
- To enable the trainee teachers to develop an understanding of what children enjoy reading
- To offer a vehicle that would provide an opportunity for shared discussions about favourite reads.

## Outline

Trainees were asked to choose 10 to 20 pieces of children's literature that they enjoy reading, drawing from what they have experienced outside of the course, to what they had engaged with on the PGCE in our English sessions and our PGCE book club books and in the classroom.

Trainees were asked to portray these on 10 9x9cm squares (or 6x 9cm squares cut into two triangles + 4 9cm x 9cm squares). They could do this in any way they wanted, from writing a blurb, copying the cover, outlining a website, using key images or words from graphic novels, books, magazines, websites or any other text they wished.

Then, during an English seminar, trainees followed my instructions to make their own Explosion Book.

### Reading for Pleasure Explosion Book Tutorial

You will need: 3 pieces of card 21cm x 21cm, 10 squares paper 9cm x 9cm – cut 6 of the squares in half into equal triangles.

1. Decorate each square/triangle of paper with a piece of children's literature that you value. This could be a book, magazine, website, graphic novel, poem etc... These could be printed out, hand drawn, include text or just pictures.



Take your three pieces of card.



Fold each piece on the diagonal, once, from the bottom right to the top left.



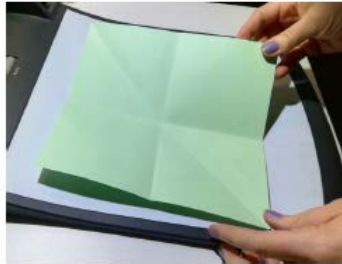
Make a horizontal fold from the bottom to the top.



Fold a vertical line so it divides the square in half.

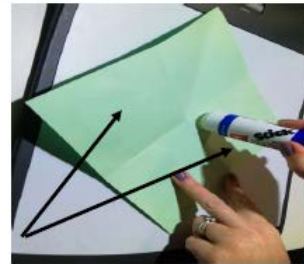


Open out and fold back each fold you have made so that each crease is well folded.

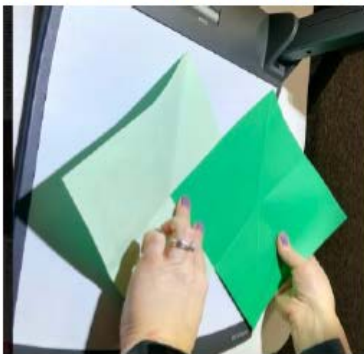


Choose one piece of card to be the centre.

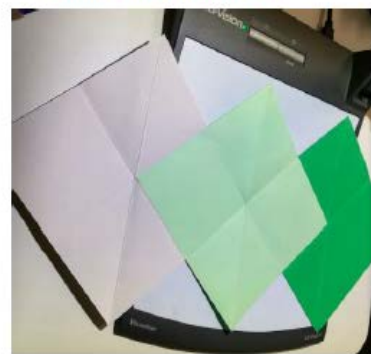
Apply glue to the 2 inner diamonds that have no folds.



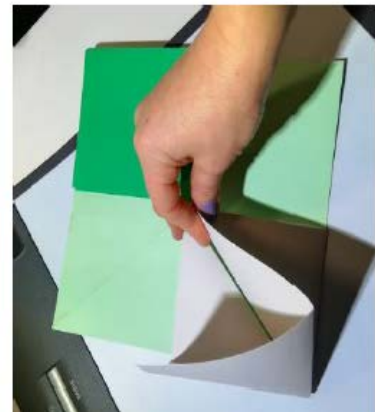
Then with your two other pieces of card, stick one equal diamond to each glued area.



Now turn over your diamonds.

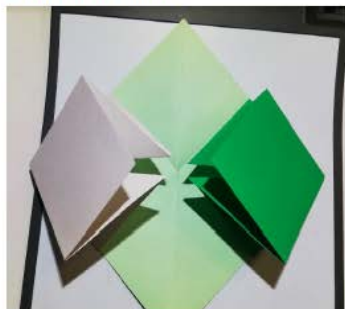


On each outer diamond piece, fold by pushing the diagonal folds towards you, squeezing the two sections together.





Flatten down each side.



Next fold the diagonals on the centre square away from you.



You should now have a square book.



At this point you could stick a piece of card the same size as the finished book to the front to firm up the book you could also stick a piece of ribbon or string to the back face and stick a piece of card on top so that you can tie the book shut.



Open out your folded book and on each diamond and triangle space stick on your children's lit pieces.



## Impact

The trainees expressed how much they had enjoyed thinking about what they enjoyed reading in the past and now. They discussed what they would choose during break times and in other sessions. Some of them included books that they had shared whilst on placement which had brought joy to the children, whilst others talked about how this had sparked a family discussion and a trip down memory lane. Each trainee talked about the different stimuli that went behind their choices.

During the choosing process some trainees took to social media to chart their journey.



**Grace Ratcliffe** @Grace\_Cliffe · Feb 11

At university today we were given the nearly impossible task of choosing 10 of our favourite children's books. Then, we need to represent them on little squares of paper!  
I will be documenting my progress over the next couple of days.  
Narrowed it down to 12 so far 🍷



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**Grace Ratcliffe** @Grace\_Cliffe · Feb 12

Mr Gumpy's outing is up first! I was absolutely OBSESSED with this book when I was younger.  
I have fond memories of taking this book out into my garden and reading it in the summer. I also for some reason really loved looking at the food pyramid. [#readingforpleasure](#)



**Miss Cunningham** @misscunny98 · Feb 17

many hours and lots of pencil sharpening later, and we have a selection of 10 pieces of children's literature ready for tomorrow's English session...  
[@RS\\_Hargreaves](#) [@UoMTeach\\_ed](#)



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Once the book was made it created a real impact as it 'exploded' with colour and gave them much to talk about. As a tutor I found that it was lovely to be part of each trainee's world of favourite literature as they talked with so much pleasure about their chosen reads. In addition we all found that we had new books that we wanted to search out because of the sharing of texts we'd not heard of before.

## Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

Reflecting on how I could help the trainees to realise that they were reading teachers with much to offer the children in the classroom was the catalyst for this activity. I wanted to give them a lasting resource that they could share with their class as NQTs and beyond. We talked about how each year they could make a new Explosion Book and this would chart their own journeys as readers. It would show what type of text they like to read and perhaps enable them to consider expanding into new realms that were less represented, embedding TaR s1. *Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts* and TaRs 4. *Being Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach.*

We talked about how you could replicate the activity with the children in their class, considerations about resources and how to facilitate it for all learners. It was discussed that it would enable them to show the children they valued what they also liked to read and would definitely provide them with TaRs 2. *Knowledge of children's reading practice.*

The rich conversations and animated voices and body language throughout the session reinforced the value of such an activity. The room was alive with book blether as each person shared with the next what they had chosen and why. This happened naturally and wasn't a result of prompting. It showed what a reading community has developed on the course and how they could draw from each other in the future as they now saw each other as experienced children's literature experts.

This will be a session repeated with future trainees as well as with my OU/ UKLA Teacher Reading Group members.