

For consideration within Egmont RfP Award – Early Career Teacher

Teacher Bookworms

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Context

Upon identifying the reading practises that were already taking place within the school, we decided to address the gaps and began a Reading for Pleasure (RfP) project in September 2017. Our focus was on building reading communities within the school and the local community. Throughout the year, we set up reading cafes, mystery readers and book clubs, which promoted a love of reading. Following the start of a new school year and listening to feedback from colleagues, I decided to enhance and support our teachers' current literary knowledge. With CPD texts such as the '7 E's of Reading for Pleasure' by Sue Cowley, 'Modelling Exciting Writing' by Rob Smith and the OU website I was able to find simple strategies to put in place and support colleagues in the school.

OU Research Inspiration and Rationale

OU Research Rich Pedagogies, TaRs research:

- Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach, through sharing personal experiences of reading, these teachers made a positive impact on the children's desire to read.
- Teachers' knowledge of children's literature and other texts will build reader to reader relationships with staff and children, enable us to make tailored book recommendations, engaging enthusiastically as readers in school and enrich literacy experiences.

It was vital for me to encourage staff to share their reading habits with each other and the children as well as ensure that they were aware of the current literature that is available in abundance to us.

Aims

The TaR's research demonstrated that by teachers' having a wider knowledge of children's literature, it would enrich children's pleasure in reading. Teachers must have a wide and up to date knowledge of children's literature and other texts. The research highlighted that although it is not a statutory part of the subject knowledge required of teachers, it is highly significant when supporting the development of children becoming readers who can and do choose to read. The aim for our school is to foster a love of reading and demonstrate this to children. We will do this by:

- To engage staff with children's literature through a range of different media.
- To use literature to inspire learning across the curriculum.
- To ensure that the literature provided is varied and current.
- To put a focus on the importance of role modelling a love of reading across the school.

Outline

Following on from a previous Reading for Pleasure project that encouraged building reading communities, further areas of development were highlighted. After discussing with colleagues on where they felt they needed support, I set out to improve the knowledge of current children's literature amongst colleagues.

- **Waterstones Staff Meeting:** I organised a completely free CPD opportunity for staff instead of a staff meeting. The staff at Waterstones took their time to show us books that had recently been released as well as books that were popular and those that had been nominated for or won the Costa Book Award. Teaching staff were inspired to purchase books that linked to the current topics they were teaching.
- **Twitter Recommendations:** In an attempt to reduce costs and be able to share new texts more frequently, Twitter has been a quick and easy way to keep up to date on texts that other teachers are enjoying.



- **OU and UKLA RfP Group:** Following on from our previous RfP project 'developing communities of readers', I wanted to encourage a community of readers amongst the staff and wider community. I began to run an initiative myself and encouraged teachers, librarians, support staff and other educational professionals to join and share book blether. I am currently continuing the book group with the support of the OU and UKLA.



- **CPD Bookshelf:** To encourage the sharing of books among teaching staff, I have set up a space in the staffroom to share their recommendations from Twitter, other members of staff and a space for CPD books available for reference whenever.



Impact

It is already possible to see the impact that it is having on both teachers' text knowledge and the quality of texts that the children are using as inspiration for both their own reading for pleasure and in their writing. There has been a notable increase in how much teachers are reading aloud to their class every day and how often children have the opportunity to share texts and read in the classroom. A few examples have been noted below:

- There has been an increase in book blether around school and adults sharing texts for both children and themselves.
- There is a steady growth in the number of attendees at the Reading for Pleasure group.
- Children are beginning to see their teachers as readers and enjoy sharing book blether at more opportunities.

- Teachers are finding more opportunities to read books with their class. One teacher stated that 'It's lovely to be able to share a book with my class when they hang on every word'.

Reflections on Impact the TaRs Research had on Practice

The TaRs research massively influenced the approach that I took when tackling the gap in teachers' current knowledge of literature. It enabled teachers to reflect on their own practice and adapt their teaching to model Reading for Pleasure and introduce current literature within the school.

We have highlighted further areas of development:

- Poetry (only 10% of teacher's could name 6 poets)
- Promote a book at the beginning of each staff meeting

With these goals in mind, we will be using the TaR's research to support this and put actions into place.

Bibliography

Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Bearne, E. and Goodwin, P. (2008) Exploring teacher's knowledge of children's literature Cambridge Journal of Education 38 (4): 449 - 464.