

Trainee teachers do it by the book

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Context

We are currently undergraduate students studying for a BA in Primary Education with QTS. We are in our first year at Bishop Grosseteste University in Lincolnshire. Throughout our first year of university, it was evident that our knowledge of children's literature was lacking and that it was essential for our degree and teaching practice to build on this knowledge whilst in teacher training and continue building upon this when qualified.



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OU Research inspiration and rationale

The *Teachers as Readers* (TaRs) research (Cremin et al., 2014) highlighted that it is essential for teachers to have a broad knowledge of children's literature. This knowledge is important as it allows teachers to be able to talk with children about texts, make recommendations and to encourage children to read for pleasure. However, the TaRs research found that even with a secure knowledge of children's literature, many teachers did not know a lot about individual children's preferences; including their favourite authors, text types, genres or reading practices beyond the classroom. It was also found that the previous two findings would be most effective when a reading for pleasure pedagogy is used. When these findings were used in conjunction with one another, children furthered their achievements in reading.

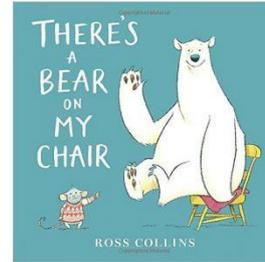
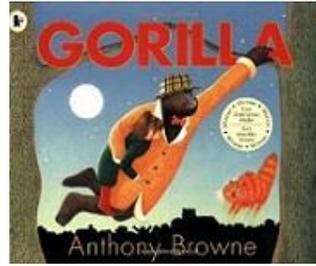
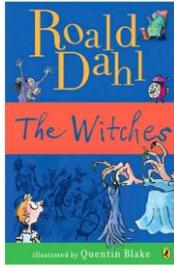
We wanted to improve our knowledge of children's literature to ensure that we were able to encourage children to read for pleasure, discuss literature with them and make tailored recommendations to individual children. We also wanted to ensure that we could talk to children about their reading interests. Alongside this, we wished to use the RfP pedagogies to increase children's attainment and attitudes towards reading.

Aims

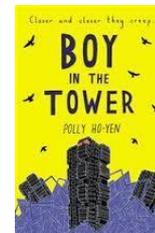
- Improve our knowledge of children's literature.
- Consider children's own reading preferences and practices.
- Use the reading for pleasure pedagogy.

Outline

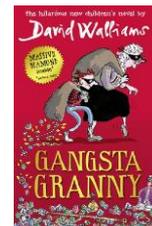
- We each began building a collection of children's literature, including classics and contemporary books, and borrowed books from our university library, which were recommended by our subject librarian (see below).



- We got involved in a university competition to find and read children's books that were recommended by a lecturer at our university. Once we had each read the books we had found, we swapped to widen our knowledge of different genres and different authors.



- Sophie attended a meeting at her placement school about reading. This increased her knowledge of methods to encourage children to read for pleasure. Sophie shared this learning with Chloé to increase her knowledge.
- We both had discussions with children about what they were reading and about their favourite authors, books, types of text and genres. We then took this into consideration in our teaching.
- We familiarised ourselves with the books children were reading. This allowed us to talk to the children about their book and suggest recommendations from similar books we have read.
- We both worked with individual children who did not read at home and read with them at school. We used informal book talk to promote reading for pleasure.
- When teaching lessons, Sophie incorporated a wide variety of children's favourite texts.
- Chloé read aloud to her class at her placement school to enforce the RfP pedagogy.



Impact

- We have built a strong and wide knowledge of children's literature. This has allowed us to have discussions with children about their reading and make recommendations to individual children to encouraged them to read further.
- Discussing reading preferences with the children allowed us to incorporate the children's interests into lessons which promoted good progress in those lessons and children showed motivation and engagement. This was evident in how the children were interacting with others and talking about what they had learnt from the texts.
- Reading aloud and having informal book talks with the children encouraged them to enjoy reading. This allowed children to talk about their thoughts and feelings about reading and the texts that were being read.
- Sharing books between us has allowed us to talk with each other about the books and therefore, build on our understanding of the book as we have been able to express different thoughts and feelings about the books. We also recommend books to each other.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

The *Teachers as Readers* research has highlighted the importance of having a wide range of knowledge in children's literature, discussing children's reading preferences and incorporating these into the classroom. Alongside this, it has highlighted that knowing how to encourage RfP in the classroom is as important as having a wide knowledge of literature and preferences. We believe that this research has positively influenced our teaching practices, as when working at our placement schools we used a variety of strategies to encourage children to read for pleasure. Children frequently engaged in informal book talks with us whilst on placement. Having a strong knowledge of children's literature and individual preferences has ensured that these informal book talks are purposeful, and children benefitted by furthering their reading from our recommendations.

As we pursue our degrees and teaching practice we will ensure to continue adding to our knowledge of children's literature, discuss preferences with individual children and consider their preferences in our teaching. We will also ensure we incorporate the reading for pleasure pedagogy into our teaching practice to encourage children to find pleasure in reading.