Developing Reading for Pleasure:

engaging young readers

About this free course

This free course is an adapted extract from the Open University course .

This version of the content may include video, images and interactive content that may not be optimised for your device.

You can experience this free course as it was originally designed on OpenLearn, the home of free learning from The Open University –

There you'll also be able to track your progress via your activity record, which you can use to demonstrate your learning.

Copyright © 2021 The Open University

Intellectual property

Unless otherwise stated, this resource is released under the terms of the Creative Commons Licence v4.0 http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en_GB. Within that The Open University interprets this licence in the following way:
www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/frequently-asked-questions-on-openlearn. Copyright and rights falling outside the terms of the Creative Commons Licence are retained or controlled by The Open University. Please read the full text before using any of the content.

We believe the primary barrier to accessing high-quality educational experiences is cost, which is why we aim to publish as much free content as possible under an open licence. If it proves difficult to release content under our preferred Creative Commons licence (e.g. because we can't afford or gain the clearances or find suitable alternatives), we will still release the materials for free under a personal end-user licence.

This is because the learning experience will always be the same high quality offering and that should always be seen as positive – even if at times the licensing is different to Creative Commons.

When using the content you must attribute us (The Open University) (the OU) and any identified author in accordance with the terms of the Creative Commons Licence.

The Acknowledgements section is used to list, amongst other things, third party (Proprietary), licensed content which is not subject to Creative Commons licensing. Proprietary content must be used (retained) intact and in context to the content at all times.

The Acknowledgements section is also used to bring to your attention any other Special Restrictions which may apply to the content. For example there may be times when the Creative Commons Non-Commercial Sharealike licence does not apply to any of the content even if owned by us (The Open University). In these instances, unless stated otherwise, the content may be used for personal and non-commercial use.

We have also identified as Proprietary other material included in the content which is not subject to Creative Commons Licence. These are OU logos, trading names and may extend to certain photographic and video images and sound recordings and any other material as may be brought to your attention.

Unauthorised use of any of the content may constitute a breach of the terms and conditions and/or intellectual property laws.

We reserve the right to alter, amend or bring to an end any terms and conditions provided here without notice.

All rights falling outside the terms of the Creative Commons licence are retained or controlled by The Open University.

Head of Intellectual Property, The Open University

Contents

Introduction and guidance

Introduction and guidance

This free badged course, *Developing Reading for Pleasure: engaging young readers*, lasts 24 hours, with 8 'sessions'. You can work through the course at your own pace, so if you have more time one week there is no problem with pushing on to complete a further study session. The eight sessions are linked to ensure a logical flow through the course. They are:

1. The importance of childhood reading
2. Being a reader
3. The power of narrative
4. Knowing your texts, knowing your readers
5. Reading for Pleasure pedagogy
6. Building reading communities in school
7. Supporting children as readers at home
8. Enticing reluctant readers and addressing challenges.

Learning journal

Throughout the course you will be prompted to engage with learning activities and reflect on your own reading and teaching practices. It will be helpful to keep a learning journal where you can record your responses; this can be a notebook, or you can download the course learning journal. Please note, only you can see what you write here; OpenLearn and the course team will not have access. The learning journal will become an invaluable resource for shaping your reading curriculum and it will help you communicate the rationale for your Reading for Pleasure practices to parents, colleagues, school leaders and school inspectors.

Now would be a good time to download and save the learning journal, so you have it ready for when you begin Session 1.

Alternative formats

Developing Reading for Pleasure: engaging young readers is available in a range of alternative formats, including Word, PDF and ePub, so you can download the course and study offline if you prefer.

Please note though that interactive elements of the course such as videos are not available in these formats. Also, in order to gain your badge and your Statement of Participation you will need to complete the online version of the course. More details on how to gain your badge can be found in the following sections.

You can find the alternative formats in the 'Download this course' box at the side or bottom of each page.

Learning outcomes:

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- understand how reading changes children's life chances
- recognise the relationship between reading for pleasure and reading attainment
- describe the social and emotional benefits of being a keen reader
- identify challenges and barriers to fostering readers, and how to overcome them
- apply research that demonstrates ways to establish a life-long love of reading.

Moving around the course

In the 'Summary' at the end of each session, you will find a link to the next session. If at any time you want to return to the start of the course, click on 'Full course description'. From here you can navigate to any part of the course.

It's also good practice, if you access a link from within a course page (including links to the quizzes), to open it in a new window or tab. That way you can easily return to where you've come from without having to use the back button on your browser.

The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations for the course before you begin, in our optional start-of-course survey. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

What is a badged course?

While studying *Developing Reading for Pleasure: engaging young readers* you have the option to work towards gaining a digital badge.

Badged courses are a key part of The Open University's mission *to promote the educational well-being of the community*. The courses also provide another way of helping you to progress from informal to formal learning.

Completing a course will require about 24 hours of study time. However, you can study the course at any time and at a pace to suit you.

Badged courses are available on The Open University's OpenLearn website and do not cost anything to study. They differ from Open University courses because you do not receive support from a tutor, but you do get useful feedback from the interactive quizzes.

What is a badge?

Digital badges are a new way of demonstrating online that you have gained a skill. Colleges and universities are working with employers and other organisations to develop open badges that help learners gain recognition for their skills, and support employers to identify the right candidate for a job.

Badges demonstrate your work and achievement on the course. You can share your achievement with friends, family and employers, and on social media. Badges are a great motivation, helping you to reach the end of the course. Gaining a badge often boosts confidence in the skills and abilities that underpin successful study. So, completing this course could encourage you to think about taking other courses.

How to get a badge

Getting a badge is straightforward! Here's what you have to do:

- read each session of the course
- score 50% or more in the two badge quizzes in Session 4 and Session 8.

For all the quizzes, you can have three attempts at most of the questions (for true or false type questions you usually only get one attempt). If you get the answer right first time you will get more marks than for a correct answer the second or third time. Therefore, please be aware that for the two badge quizzes it is possible to get all the questions right but not score 50% and be eligible for the badge on that attempt. If one of your answers is incorrect you will often receive helpful feedback and suggestions about how to work out the correct answer.

For the badge quizzes, if you're not successful in getting 50% the first time, after 24 hours you can reattempt the whole quiz, and come back as many times as you like.

We hope that as many people as possible will gain an Open University badge – so you should see getting a badge as an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned rather than as a test.

If you need more guidance on getting a badge and what you can do with it, take a look at the OpenLearn FAQs. When you gain your badge you will receive an email to notify you and you will be able to view and manage all your badges in My OpenLearn within 24 hours of completing the criteria to gain a badge.

Get started with Session 1.

Session 1: The importance of childhood reading

Introduction

Ensuring that all children become proficient readers is one of the key goals of primary or elementary education. Through reading (and more broadly, being literate), children are able to engage with other subjects in the school curriculum. Furthermore, reading is necessary for participation in many aspects of daily life.

Each child deserves to be supported to become a keen, capable and engaged reader. Teachers intuitively know that children who enjoy reading and who read frequently, tend to do well in school; in the last decade this anecdotal knowledge has been backed-up with hard evidence from large international studies. Children who are keen readers don't only get better at reading and writing, they develop wider vocabulary and broader knowledge about the world. Reading can also make a significant contribution to the wellbeing of every individual and society as a whole.

The advantages, however, of being a keen reader go far beyond educational attainment and functioning in society; as the International Literacy Association (ILA) states:

> Teaching children to read opens up a world of possibilities for them. It builds their capacity for creative and critical thinking, expands their knowledge base, and develops their ability to respond with empathy and compassion to others.

> (International Literacy Association, 2018)

The ILA advocates for the 'right to read' to be recognised as a fundamental right for all children. Knowing that reading changes lives, learning to read and access to reading materials is therefore an issue of equality and social justice.

High quality reading instruction (comprising teaching strategies to promote word recognition, comprehension and decoding skills) is crucial for children to learn to 'crack' the alphabetic code, but instruction alone is not enough – children need to be *able to* read, and they need to *want to* read. Thus, the pedagogies, classroom practices and educator characteristics that support children to become engaged readers have the potential to

enhance children's educational attainment, their social and emotional wellbeing, and to enrich their lives.

This session explores why it is critical that every child has the opportunity to develop a lifelong love of reading.

By the end of this session, you will have:

- explored the concept of Reading for Pleasure and its significance in children's education
- considered the connection and distinction between reading instruction and promoting reading engagement
- been introduced to the wider personal, social and emotional benefits of being a childhood reader
- started to consider representations of equality and diversity in children's texts.

Before you start, The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations of the course. Your input will help to further improve the online learning experience. If you'd like to help, and if you haven't done so already, please fill in this optional start-of-course survey. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

1 What is Reading for Pleasure?

Reading for Pleasure is a term that has been adopted in educational policy and curricula across the UK nations; in other countries the terms 'free reading', 'voluntary reading', 'leisure reading' or 'recreational reading' are also used. In essence, Reading for Pleasure is 'reading that we do of our own free will, anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading' (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p. 6). It is the reading you do for pure enjoyment, for relaxation, for the suspense, thrill or emotion you experience or for the information that you seek.

For adults and children, Reading for Pleasure may involve fiction – in novels or picture storybooks – and a wide range of other texts, both paper-based and digital. Many people read magazines, recipe books, holiday brochures, comics, football scores, information leaflets, religious texts, non-fiction books, poetry and much more, simply for the pleasure, information and enjoyment that this brings. Essentially, Reading for Pleasure is reading that you choose to engage in and that you are motivated to sustain, or return to, because of your own intrinsic interest.

Being read to can also be a pleasurable experience and shared book reading between adults and children and group 'read-alouds' are, in-and-of-themselves, enjoyable experiences that nurture children's desire to read. In later sessions in this course, you will explore the value of shared, social reading events for building the habit of choice-led reading in childhood.

Encouraging and enabling children to *choose* to read both at school and at home is an important issue for educators and parents, because there is far more than enjoyment at stake. Research has evidenced a wide range of educational, personal, social and emotional benefits of childhood reading.

Personal reflection 1

Take a moment to reflect on the range of materials you have chosen to read in the past week. Make a note of the different texts you have chosen to read.

If you haven't already, you can download a copy of the learning journal now to save and use throughout the course. Remember, only you can see what you write here; OpenLearn and the course team will not have access.

Comment

If you are currently reading a novel, this might have been the first thing that came to mind. However, you might have browsed a website looking at holiday destinations, read a thread on social media that amused you, or engaged in perusing a magazine. Your reflections have probably highlighted that Reading for Pleasure involves much more than books!

In the next section you will explore the connection between Reading for Pleasure and educational attainment.

2 Reading for Pleasure and children's attainment

A growing body of research, both in the UK and internationally, highlights the educational benefits of children choosing to read for pleasure. For example, the five-yearly Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) measures 10-year-olds' progress in reading in around 50 educational systems across the world. Data from the PIRLS studies have shown that children who express positive attitudes toward reading and who are motivated to read outside of school achieve higher scores on reading assessments (McGrane *et al.*, 2017).

It stands to reason that children who enjoy reading tend to read more and thus become better at reading, yet choosing to read also impacts on children's wider educational attainment. For example, Reading for Pleasure is positively associated with comprehension, grammar and wider vocabulary (Sullivan and Brown, 2015). In addition, it was found in one study of high school students in the USA that those who said they read for pleasure showed higher grade averages in not only English, but also Mathematics and Science subjects (Whitten *et al.*, 2016).

Reading for Pleasure is also a tool for social justice and is recognised as a stronger indicator of future educational attainment than socio-economic status (OECD, 2021). Research has found that reading to 4–5-year-olds regularly to help develop a love of reading early, leads to higher levels of attainment in reading, mathematics and cognitive skills by the age 8–9 (Kalb and van Ours, 2013).

The educational benefits of children Reading for Pleasure therefore seem abundantly clear. However, in the next section you will read about some concerning statistics that suggest a decline in the number of children and young people who report enjoying reading and who choose to read in their free time.

3 The decline in children Reading for Pleasure

Every year in the UK, the National Literacy Trust asks children and young people about their reading habits (Clark and Teravainen-Goff, 2020). In 2019, 56,906 children and young people between the ages of 9 and 18 responded to the survey, alongside 3,748 5–8-year-olds who participated in a specially designed version of the survey for the first time.

The 2019 survey revealed a worrying situation: only 53% of children and young people stated that they enjoy reading, and 25.8% reported that they read daily. In fact, the percentage who said they enjoy reading was at its lowest since 2013, having dropped sharply since 2016.

Percentage of children and young people who enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot from 2005 to 2019

Year	Percentage
2005	51.4%
2007	50.6%
2009	50.6%
2010	49.1%
2011	50.2%
2012	50.3%
2013	53.3%
2014	54.4%
2015	54.8%
2016	58.6%
2017/2...	56.6%
2019	53.0%
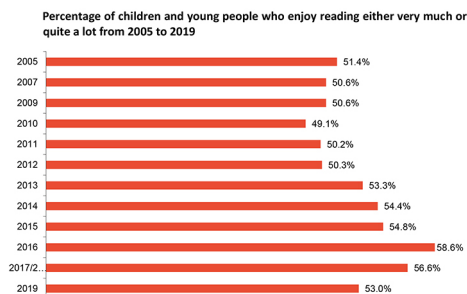
Figure 1 Percentage of children and young people who enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot from 2005 to 2019

Clark and Teravainen-Goff (2020)

As in previous years, girls reported more enjoyment of reading than boys. Reading enjoyment also varied in different age groups; while 76.3% of 5–8-year-olds enjoy reading, the figure was only 40.2% for 14–16-year-olds. The 5–8 age group was also most likely to report reading outside the classroom on a daily basis.

The UK is not alone in the decline of children's Reading for Pleasure. Data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey of 15-year-olds also indicated a 5% decline in reading for enjoyment between 2000 and 2010, noting the decline was greatest for boys and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (OECD, 2010).

Personal reflection 2

Think about your own reading practices during your childhood. How would you have answered the following question at age 6, at age 10 and at age 15?

Do you enjoy reading?

- Very much
- Quite a lot
- A bit
- Not at all

What motivated or demotivated your reading at different points in your childhood? Did any barriers stand in the way of you choosing to read regularly?

Comment

When the course team shared their reflections, it highlighted how different we all were as readers in childhood. Teresa has always enjoyed reading, though her engagement dropped off at university. Lucy was less enthusiastic about reading throughout childhood. Helen was an avid childhood reader at 6 and 10 but by 15 read less frequently for pleasure. Sarah recalled that she always loved reading, being read to and being around books.

The course team's volitional reading was influenced by our hobbies and passions, our families and friendship groups and our access to engaging reading materials.

Reflecting on the factors that influenced your own reading journey will help you understand the children in your class as readers.

With such a significant drop in children choosing to read as a pastime, it is the responsibility of policy makers, school leaders, educators, librarians, community and youth workers, and parents to support and encourage children to read, not only as part of the curriculum, but in their own free time, for their own purposes.

In the National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013), Reading for Pleasure is not only recommended, but also mandated. Yet how can pleasure be mandated? It is possible to insist that children spend time reading in school – but it's not possible to insist they enjoy it! Despite this, research suggests that there is a great deal that can be done to support and encourage children to become eager and engaged readers.

The benefits of Reading for Pleasure that you considered in Section 2 highlight the need for it to have a prominent place in school curricula; the next section will discuss how developing children's reading habits requires dedicated time and research-informed pedagogies.

4 Reading for Pleasure in the school curricula

In school systems in many parts of the world, teacher efficacy is measured in relation to children's assessment scores; this puts pressure on teachers to focus on reading proficiency. As a consequence, a research study found that, in some schools, even lesson time allocated to Reading for Pleasure was oriented towards the technical aspects of reading, rather than enjoyment (Hempel-Jorgensen *et al.*, 2018). This is despite both reading instruction and Reading for Pleasure each requiring dedicated time, resources and distinct, yet complementary, pedagogies.

It can be a real challenge to achieve a balance between high-quality reading instruction and dedicating time purely for Reading for Pleasure in school; however, it is crucial that both aspects are viewed as equal and essential components in literacy education.

Table 1 shows the correspondence and distinctions between reading instruction and Reading for Pleasure.

Table 1 Distinctions between reading instruction and Reading for Pleasure

Reading Instruction is oriented towards:	Reading for Pleasure is oriented towards:
Learning to read	Choosing to read
The skill	The will
Decoding and comprehension	Engagement and response
System readers	Lifelong readers
Teacher direction	Child direction
Teacher ownership	Child ownership
Attainment	Achievement
The minimum entitlement: the 'expected standard'	The maximum entitlement: a reader for life
The standards agenda	The reader's own agenda

(Cremin *et al.*, 2014, p. 157)

It is important to note that children's *skill* to read influences their *will* to read and, equally, the *will* to read influences the *skill* to read. For example, a survey of 6–7-year-olds in primary schools in England found that children's self-reported attitudes toward reading were positively associated with their word reading ability (McGeown *et al.*, 2015).

In essence, if educators and parents can help children to enjoy reading, they will become better readers, and vice versa. A love of reading is not an innate human characteristic; it can be nurtured and cultivated over time with the right support and focused attention to Reading for Pleasure pedagogies.

Activity 1 Reflecting on your reading curriculum

Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

Have another look at Table 1 and think about the activities in the reading curriculum during an average week in your classroom. In your learning journal, make a note in two columns of activities that are oriented toward developing children's *skill* to read on one side, and those oriented towards developing children's *will*, or desire to read on the other.

If you haven't already, you can download a copy of the learning journal now to save and use throughout the course.

Comment

Have a look at the ratio of 'skill' and 'will' oriented activities. Do you feel that your curriculum is currently well-balanced and fosters positive attitudes toward reading? Is there daily curriculum time dedicated to encouraging children to become engaged and keen readers? This may include read-alouds, independent and free-choice reading time, informal talk about texts, library visits and so forth.

The following sections will introduce you to some research that has examined effective Reading for Pleasure pedagogy and classroom practice.

5 Developing Reading for Pleasure pedagogies for *all* children

Research into disengaged male readers in four schools in England found that the way reading was taught in the classroom impacted on the boys' (and girls') motivation and engagement with reading (Hempel-Jorgensen *et al.*, 2018). This suggests that the ways in which children experience reading in school has profound consequences for whether they become engaged readers.

Children are motivated to engage with reading for both intrinsic reasons, such as enjoyment or an interest in a particular topic, and extrinsic reasons, such as rewards, competition, or better grades. However, intrinsic factors are more important in fostering in children a love of reading (Orkin *et al.*, 2018). You will read more about this in Session 2, but first have a go at Activity 2.

Activity 2 Thinking about motivation in practice
Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Below is a short vignette that describes the reading activity of 7-year-old Logan in an English primary school. Logan is one of the youngest children in the class and scores below the expected reading level in standardised tests.

As you read the vignette, begin to think about how the classroom practices enable or constrain Logan's engagement with reading. When you have finished, you will be asked to explore the issues more deeply.

The end of each morning in Meerkats Class is free-choice reading time. Children can read independently or in pairs, however, noise must be kept to an acceptable level. Children are allowed to select a book and begin reading as soon as they have completed their daily writing task. Most children are expected to select a book from the classroom bookshelf. However, a few children, whose reading level is more advanced, are allowed to bring books from home, or may visit the more extensive library in a communal area in the school.

Logan sits at a table with his best friends, Zac and Toby. The trio are renowned for their passion for football and are devoted Chelsea fans. On this particular morning, Zac completes his writing in haste, and returns to the table proudly displaying his own personal copy of *Football School: Epic Heroes* (by Alex Bellos and Ben Lyttleton). Toby soon joins Zac, who quietly reads the book aloud, trying to muffle exclamations of delight. Logan hurries to complete his writing although is frequently distracted by the increasingly excited interaction across the table. He places his work in the tray and attempts to move his chair beside his friends. Mrs R returns the chair and directs Logan to the bookshelf to choose a book.
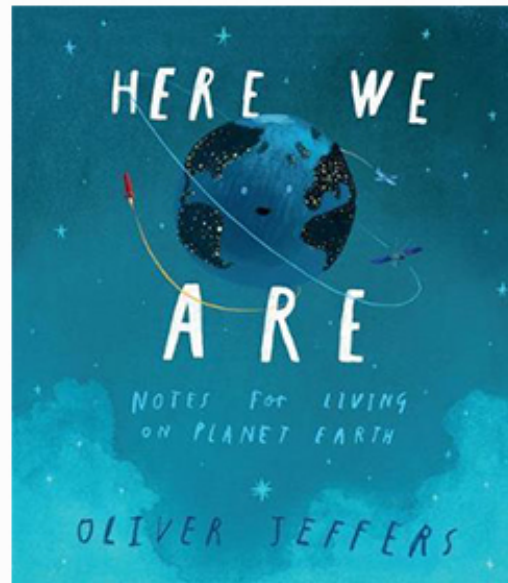
As one of last of the children to choose, the bookshelf is rather bare; Logan scans the shelf half-heartedly, glancing over to Zac and Toby. Mrs R comes to help him choose. He reaches for a David Walliams novel, but Mrs R says it might be a bit too difficult and hands Logan the picture book *Here we Are* (by Oliver Jeffers). Logan returns to the table holding up his book and calls to Zac and Toby, 'Hey, look, it's about space'. This is to no avail, they are engrossed in their discussion about *Football School*. He flicks through a few pages, glances across the table, before returning the book to the shelf and browsing the available books once more. After a minute or two, Mrs R asks the class to prepare for lunch.

Now make a note of your responses to the following questions.

- Do you think Logan is motivated to engage with books?
- What intrinsic factors drive Logan's motivation to read?
- In what ways do the classroom practices nurture or hamper Logan's reading motivation?
- What changes to classroom practices might help Logan become an engaged reader?

Comment

Logan seems very motivated to engage with the *Football School* book, which is understandable as the subject matter resonates with him. Yet the social interactions around books are possibly the greatest motivation for Logan to engage. You will read more about the social nature of reading in Session 2. Factors such as the rule on individual or paired reading, the requirement to finish the writing task and Mrs R's perceptions of Logan's reading needs, may together be constraining his desire to read.

Creating a classroom and school environment that fosters a love of reading for every child is not straightforward, it requires knowledge of texts and pedagogic knowledge, planning and commitment.

6 Pedagogies and classroom practices

The challenge for educators is to teach children *how* to read as well as to teach children to *want* to read. Reading for Pleasure is a nuanced aspect of the curriculum; there are no educational programmes or set activities through which to teach children to enjoy reading. However, instead, a love of reading can be nurtured through a broad, but coherent, strategy that focuses on developing children's intrinsic motivation.

In the *Teachers as Readers* (TaRs) project, Professor Teresa Cremin and colleagues from The Open University (2014) worked with 27 schools in England across a year researching volitional reading. As a consequence they developed a Reading for Pleasure framework that impacted upon children's desire to read.

Watch the following short video, in which Professor Cremin describes the research findings.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

As Professor Cremin explained in the video, the research found that in order to effectively develop children's Reading for Pleasure, teachers need to focus on:

- their knowledge of children's literature and other texts
- their knowledge of children as readers
- a Reading for Pleasure pedagogy, comprising:
  - social reading environments
  - reading aloud
  - informal book talk
  - independent reading time
- themselves as reading teachers

- reciprocal and interactive reading communities.

An effective Reading for Pleasure framework extends beyond the school gates as the ultimate goal is to encourage and enable children to choose to read in their own free time. To make this possible, schools, parents, librarians and community organisations must work together to build positive, reciprocal and interactive reading communities; you will read more about nurturing readers in homes and communities in Session 7.

The research discussed so far in this session demonstrates the connection between Reading for Pleasure and educational attainment. However, the benefits of being an engaged reader in childhood reach far beyond academic outcomes. You will examine some of these wider benefits in the next section.

7 Beyond attainment: the transformational power of Reading for Pleasure

Traditionally reading has been defined simply as the capability to decode an alphabetic script. However, recognising that the ways in which people engage with literacy are changing, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) developed a more expansive definition of reading.

> It can be summarised as understanding, using, evaluating, reflecting on and engaging with texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.

(Mo, 2019, p. 2)

Throughout this course this wider understanding of reading will be used; this will enable you to focus on what reading does for the individual child, and how Reading for Pleasure, that is choosing to read, potentially enhances their relationships with others and with their communities.

Personal reflection 3

Think about the different text types you have engaged with in the last 24 hours. Why did you read them? Make a note of some texts that enabled you to:

1.   achieve a goal
2.   develop your knowledge
3.   participate in some kind of social interaction.

Comment

Your reflections might highlight how much reading you do for your own purposes each day. Some examples of reading to achieve a goal might include reading a recipe or a set of instructions. Reading this online course is an example of developing your knowledge, equally reading a magazine or a novel can enhance your knowledge and understanding about particular issues. You may have been involved in a social media thread, or a WhatsApp chat, building relationships and your networks.

Reading a variety of different text types, and particularly different narratives (such as fiction, picture storybooks, biographies or historical novels) and poetry, is a powerful tool to develop your imagination, enhance your social and emotional understanding, develop your capacity for empathy and broaden your perspectives of the world. Literature has the power to transform – it holds the potential to promote positive mental health, and has a myriad of personal, social and emotional benefits, for children as well as adults.

A study by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) found that:

> Children and young people who enjoy reading very much and who think positively about reading have, on average, higher mental wellbeing scores than their peers who don't enjoy reading at all and who hold negative attitudes towards reading.

> (Clark and Teravainen-Goff, 2018, p. 2)

The NLT study also revealed that while the relationship between reading and wellbeing is not fully understood, it may be connected with the many social and emotional benefits of reading. These include:

- *Reading offers hope*: In many children's books, characters face and overcome adversity. That doesn't mean every story has a 'happily ever after' ending, but such narratives help children to cope with loss and change; they convey the message that feelings of sadness or despair are transient and will not remain forever.

- *Reading offers insight and understanding*: By becoming immersed in a narrative and relating to characters, children develop understandings of complex social relationships from a safe, onlooker perspective. Reading helps children understand emotions and situations they themselves might face, such as bullying or confrontational situations and thus helps them navigate the social world.

- *Reading offers escapism*: It fosters the imagination, enabling children to see other worlds in their mind's eye. They might imagine they are the one who just stepped through the wardrobe into Narnia to take up the role of hero/heroine to emancipate the oppressed. Reading invites us to think beyond what is familiar and beyond the here-and-now, to imagine alternative possibilities.

- *Reading offers comfort and connection*: Adult–child shared book reading enables children to engage with literature that is beyond their current reading level. Furthermore, this precious time, often snuggled up together, offers a sense of comfort, belonging, love and reassurance.

Thus, reading is a social and emotional investment, with the potential for invaluable returns. Furthermore, through reading you connect with characters and experience the world (feeling and sensing it) from their perspective. When viewing reading in this light, the 'affective' nature of reading become clear.

8 The affective power of reading

Reading is often described as 'affective' – that is, the way in which you engage with the subject matter or narrative can evoke feelings, sensations and thoughts.

When deeply invested in a book, you can imagine yourself in the narrative. You develop relationships with the characters, albeit fictional, and come to understand situations from their perspectives. This process can add a new dimension to the way in which you view a situation, a historic event or social issue. Therefore, reading is a key vehicle for developing empathy.

The following poem in Figure 2 was written by Coral Rumble. As you read, reflect on the feelings and emotions it evokes.

My Name

Grandma says she knows my name
(And my picture's in her photo frame)
Sometimes my name is just mislaid
Like glasses, pens, or hearing aid.

Sometimes, she searches for a while,
Touches my lips, traces my smile,
Then tells a tale I've heard before
About a party dress she wore.

Sometimes she thinks I'm someone else,
Dad says, 'Now, don't upset yourself',
And in her eyes I see the spaces
She tries to fill with familiar faces.

Her memories have gathered dust,
She doesn't quite know who to trust,
Some days she stares, some days she cries,
And when she does, I wipe her eyes.

Grandma says she knows my name,
Just not at the moment when I came
To see her, but she hasn't lied,
I know my name is locked inside.

Coral Rumble

Figure 2 *My name* by Coral Rumble

Personal reflection 4

How did you feel when you read Coral Rumble's poem?

- Did it conjure memories from your own lived experience?
- Did it evoke feelings, or sensation in your body?
- Can you identify the emotions you felt?

Comment

Different texts affect different people in different ways. Literature and poetry have the power to move people, to bring about a shift in thinking, both at an individual and a societal level. You will read more about the affective power of reading and empathy in Sessions 2 and 3.

Reading therefore broadens children's perspectives. In the next section, you will explore this in more detail by seeing how, when children's literature and other texts positively represent diversity, reading can be a powerful medium to promote equality and social justice.

9 Promoting equality through diversity in texts

Writing about African American children's experiences of literature, Professor Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) from Ohio State University introduced the metaphor of 'windows, mirrors and sliding glass doors' to explain how children see themselves reflected in books, and how they can learn about the lives of others and appreciate the rich diversity of society through reading. Bishop explained that:

- **Mirrors** enable children to see themselves in the text. By honouring children's diverse cultural identities in books and other texts, you can support them to see that their own life stories matter.
- **Windows** let the reader look upon unfamiliar cultural spaces and view worlds that are not like their own. For some children, stories might be the only place they meet people from other cultural backgrounds, and for others, books might offer alternative understandings of different cultural groups.
- **Sliding glass doors** invite the reader to step into other cultural worlds, to empathise with the feelings of the characters, and better understand the multicultural nature of the world they live in.

Highlighting the importance of cultural diversity in children's literature, author and cultural critic Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie describes how, whilst growing up in a middle-class Nigerian family, she loved to read, but the books available to her tended to be British or American stories featuring Caucasian characters. Adichie explains that as a consequence, her own childhood writing always included characters who were white with blue eyes, and that she didn't know that people like her could exist in literature. You will hear Adichie discuss these challenges in Session 3.

Professor Bishop used the metaphor of mirrors, windows and sliding doors in relation to ethnic diversity, however, it equally illustrates that when children's texts positively represent (dis)ability, linguistic diversity, gender equality and are LGBTQ-inclusive, they have the potential to validate the experiences of individuals and promote understanding and inclusion. Thus, diversity in children's literature has the potential to reshape societal views and promote social justice and equality for all.

You will read more about diversity in children's texts throughout the course and explore ways to expand your knowledge of diverse children's literature.

Optional resource

If you want to hear Professor Bishop explain her ideas further you can watch this short optional video.

View at: youtube:_AAu58SNSyc

Video 2 (The Open University is not responsible for external content.)

10 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 1, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 1 quiz.

11 Summary of Session 1

In this session you have read about the importance of childhood reading for the educational and wider benefits it affords. Whilst educational attainment boosts children's life chances, it is the wider personal, social and emotional benefits that have been foreground in this course.

As you progress through the sessions, you will delve into the complexities of being a reader, the power of narrative and the social nature of reading. You will read more about the Reading for Pleasure framework that was touched upon in this session and learn how to develop your knowledge and skills to promote children's desire to read both in the classroom and in homes.

In this session, as you will throughout the course, you have begun to reflect on your reading practices, preferences and your identity as a reader. By developing a deeper understanding of yourself as a reader, you will be empowered to help children exercise their rights as readers and develop positive reader identities.

You should now go to Session 2.

Session 2: Being a reader

Introduction

Reading involves making meaning from marks and images on a page or screen. It involves thinking about the meaning and constructing an interpretation of the text. Reading for Pleasure involves choosing to make such meaning regularly in one's own time, which often triggers sustained engagement and has multiple benefits.

In Session 1 you were introduced to the notion of Reading for Pleasure as complementary to the cognitive skills of decoding and comprehension. The focus of Session 2 is the personal, affective, social, and relational elements of reading, as these influence readers' dispositions and desire to read. You will consider the factors that influence how children and adults come to see themselves as readers and how educators can help children to self-identify as someone who likes to read, who chooses to read and who is keen to discuss their reading with others. You will also consider how the text and context always influence the nature of the reading experience. The session begins by exploring the nature of reading in the 21st century and considers 'what counts' as reading.

By the end of this session, you will have:

- considered reading as a broad meaning-making process, rather than simply a set of skills
- explored 'reader response' theory as a lens to understand how readers construct personal meanings from texts
- started to think about the social nature of Reading for Pleasure, reader motivation and the importance of 'book chat' for all ages
- an appreciation of the significance of young readers' identities.

1 Reading as meaning making

Reading and writing are extraordinary phenomena; the capacity to use language to communicate with people across time and space has been fundamental to civilisation. Reading enriches the lives of individuals and benefits communities and societies. It is estimated that 86% of the world's adult population are now literate (UNESCO, 2017).

Traditionally, reading has been thought of as the ability to decipher a written script with decoding skills and word comprehension. However, since the turn of the millennium, there have been considerable developments in the ways in which reading, and learning to read, are theorised. Reading is, in part, about cracking the alphabetic code, yet when viewed from a 'sociocultural perspective', reading (and writing) can also be thought of as a social practice, something that people do to participate in everyday life. You read in order to undertake activities, build social relations, achieve goals, develop knowledge, understand the world and imagine different possibilities.

It follows that when viewed from a sociocultural perspective, reading is essentially a process of meaning making. The words and images in the text do not simply transmit ideas or information, the reader must actively construct meaning from them.

The meaning you generate from a text depends on your purposes for reading it. For example, it may give specific information (e.g. a train timetable) or it may be more heuristic, evoking questions and further thinking (e.g. a political opinion piece). The meaning may be interactional in that it stimulates connections and social relationships (e.g. emails, cards, social media), or it may be imaginative, enabling the reader to explore ideas and fictional worlds (e.g. novels, poetry). In the next section you'll consider this in more detail by contemplating the question 'what counts as reading?'

2 What 'counts' as reading?

When you understand reading as a process of meaning making, it becomes clear how expansive reading is. Every day you read a wide range of texts through multiple different types of media, such as screens, books, leaflets, catalogues, food packaging and so forth. All this reading is of value and plays a role in children's everyday lives.

The *Teachers as Readers* research found that when teachers re-evaluated what counts as reading in the 21st century and found out about children's out-of-school reading practices, they were quite surprised by the wealth of texts with which children engaged (Cremin *et al.*, 2014). Through this process, teachers came to see that no two readers are the same, and this enabled them to offer more focused support to motivate young readers in their classrooms.

To help educators, parents and children themselves recognise and celebrate the expanse of reading children do in their home and community environments, The Open University Reading for Pleasure team created a Reading Treasure Hunt that can be played in families, at school, online or in person. Children (and families, if at home) are encouraged to look around their environment to find reading materials fitting some of the descriptions given (Figure 1). This is a simple but effective tool to develop a shared understanding of 'what counts' as reading with your children and families; it also potentially strengthens connections between children's reading practices at home and in the classroom.

Figure 1 The Open University's Reading Treasure Hunt

Claire Williams, who teaches 9–10-year-olds in the UK, details how she used the Reading Treasure Hunt in her class in this case study (content starts on page 2). Read the case study now to find out how the activity helped to foster peer relationships and discussion, and how it began to widen children's and parents' understanding of what reading encompasses.

Activity 1 24-hour reads
Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

Another activity developed by The Open University's Reading for Pleasure team is '24-hour reads', which involves noting down the different sorts of texts you have read over the past 24 hours. This can be done by teachers and children and can be displayed in creative ways, such as a collage.

Spend a few minutes now making a note of the different sorts of texts you have read over the past 24 hours, as in the example in Figure 2, then answer the questions that follow.
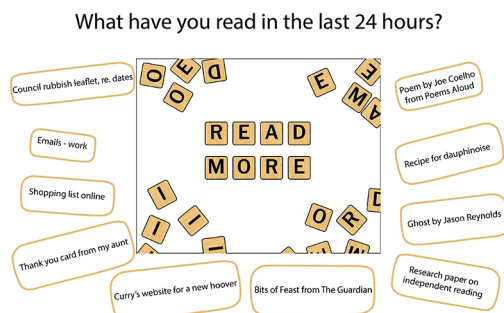
What have you read in the last 24 hours?

Council rubbish leaflet, re. dates

Emails - work

Shopping list online

Thank you card from my aunt

Curry's website for a new hoover

Bits of Feast from The Guardian

READ MORE

Poem by Joe Coelho from Poems Aloud

Recipe for dauphinoise

Ghost by Jason Reynolds

Research paper on independent reading

Figure 2 What have you read in the last 24 hours?

- For each text type, make a quick note of your purpose for reading, for example, was it for information, to socially connect or entertainment?
- Now reflect on *how* you made meaning. Did you only decode the alphabetic script? Did you recognise logos or icons? Did you interpret emojis? Did you build meaning from a combination of written words, still or moving images and other visual cues?

Comment

A greetings card from a friend may be a vehicle for social interaction, you may have read the words, but also interpreted the sentiment they were conveying through the nature of the image. Seeking information on a website, you may have been drawn first to a familiar brand logo, before reading the product description.

This activity highlights how all reading is purposeful and legitimate. As educators, it is essential to find out about, acknowledge and celebrate all the reading that children do and validate their emerging reader identities. For many children, much of their out-of-school reading may be with digital technology. Whilst 'screen time' tends to be portrayed negatively in the media, it is important to take a balanced view. You will consider this in more detail in the next section.

3 Digital texts

Readers can be deeply and meaningfully engaged with print or digital texts. The latter, however, are often portrayed negatively in the media (Crum, 2015) creating concerns for parents and practitioners. In addition, print and digital texts are often pitted against one another. What is more important than the format, though, is the different types of reading engagement that it triggers.

Comparing print and digital reading creates a false dichotomy. Some studies have found greater learning benefits for print books (Munzer *et al.*, 2019) and some for digital books (Strouse & Ganea, 2017). The results of these studies depended on which type of book was tested, with which group of children and in which context.

Many children's contemporary reading experiences happen on and with screens, but research reveals that children use both formats, and flexibly switch media according to their personal purposes and preferences (O'Donnell and Hallam, 2014). It is important to avoid seeing one reading medium in isolation from the other. Both print and digital texts can be good and poor quality, contain fascinating or unsuitable content and have design features that may or may not encourage a meaningful experience for the reader (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020). The pleasure and meaning involved will always also depend upon the context and the reader. For instance, if you are in bed on a cold winter's evening with a hot drink and a novel, physical and sensory factors will shape and influence your experience of reading. They will also impact upon your personal response to the text and the meanings you make, regardless of whether your novel is in print or on a Kindle, for example.

Personal reflection 1

Think about your own preferences for digital and print texts. When reading a novel, do you prefer print or an eBook? If you are shopping at home, do you prefer a website or a catalogue? What is it about the different media that steers your preference?

Now reflect on your attitude toward children's use of digital texts. Whether you are comfortable or uncomfortable with children reading on screen – what do you feel steers your perspective?

Comment

Media preferences are very individual. There is no doubt that email is quick and convenient, yet many people enjoy receiving a letter or card in the post. E-safety is a real concern for many and the need for filters when younger children are using the internet is clear. However, digital media also offers children access to a wide range of literature and other texts. Therefore, it is important to take a wide-angled and balanced view of the affordances and challenges of both print and digital texts.

The next section discusses the wide range of printed and digital material that comes under the umbrella term of children's texts.

4 Children's texts

It is clear that texts are everywhere, and that adults and children are constantly making meaning from them for a range of purposes. However, in this course, you will mostly focus on the sorts of texts that are written specifically for children, which might tempt and inspire children to read for pleasure and sustain their reading. These are referred to collectively as 'children's texts'. Most can be accessed on page or on screen and include, but are not limited to, the following text types shown in the interactive Figure 3.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

Figure 3 (interactive) Different types of children's texts

In the school environment particularly, there is a tendency to value some of these text types, authors and genres over others. 'High quality' or 'classic' literary texts written by reputable authors are often privileged, whilst football magazines or comics might be viewed as having a lower status. Meanwhile, picture books are sometimes thought of as being for younger, or pre-readers. However, as the EU Expert Panel on Literacy states:

> There should not be a hierarchical ranking of reading material. Books, comic books, newspapers, magazines and online reading materials are equally valid and important entry points to reading for children and adults alike. … Books and other printed texts are important. But in recognition of the digital opportunities, people should be encouraged to read what they enjoy reading, in whatever format is most pleasurable and convenient for them.

(European Commission, 2012)

Constructing meaning from picture books and other illustrated materials, such as comics and graphic novels, can require sophisticated thinking and deep engagement. Likewise, there is no doubt that narrative texts are immensely powerful, and this is something you will read more about in Session 3. It is therefore important for educators to develop their knowledge of the broad range of children's texts available and legitimise and champion these texts in the classroom, so children are encouraged and able to draw on their out-of-school interests and bring their reading preferences into the classroom. This is key as children's preferences and tastes differ, and children interpret and respond to texts in different ways. This is something you will explore in the next section.

5 Reading as a personal process

Texts are always created with intent and purpose. Whether it be a commercial flyer, a webpage or a novel, the author uses written language and images to convey information, ideas and thinking on a subject or to tell a story. However, the idea that there is a single, fixed interpretation residing in a text is contested. Reader Response theory illustrates that readers are not passive consumers of text, but rather that each reader, or listener, plays an active role in the process of creating and constructing meaning.

In her seminal work on Reader Response theory, Louise Rosenblatt (1994) argued that a written text is only marks on a page until the reader engages with it. Rosenblatt proposed that the reader enters into a dynamic transaction with the text and actively constructs meaning. According to the Reader Response theory, each and every reader brings their own lived experiences and their own contextual, emotional and cultural knowledge and beliefs to the process. Everyone constructs interpretations of texts that fit their own current views and understandings of the world, though the text may expand this. This means that different readers will interpret the same text in different ways. Likewise, the same reader may construct different meanings from a single text on different occasions. Every engagement with a text is a unique and distinct experience.

As the author Piers Torday (no date) says:

> When we read a book, our internal imagining of the words on the page is entirely individual.

Personal reflection 2

Choose a novel, poem, magazine article or other text that you have been motivated or inspired to re-read.

- In what ways did the experience differ?
- Did you notice particular aspects that weren't so prominent on the first reading?
- What did you notice about your interpretations of characters, events or the information? Did this change or develop?

Comment

Three of the course team, Sarah, Lucy and Teresa all read *Felix After the Rain*, a children's picture storybook by Dunja Jogan. After Sarah shared her views about the identity of one of the characters, Lucy revisited the book, noticing that two illustrations were Felix, rather than different characters, as she first thought. Teresa on a second reading noticed the author's metaphoric use of the sea to indicate Felix's journey and thought about changes in her own life journey.

Reader Response theory illustrates that every reading of a text is a unique experience. Whether it is a first reading or a re-reading, the reader constructs meaning by finding connections between the text and their personal knowledge and understandings.

This deep engagement with a text and the benefits it brings is something you will explore further in the next section.

6 Personal resonance in narrative and other texts

Acknowledging the reader's active role in making meaning from text sheds light on personal preference and the importance of choice and variety in Reading for Pleasure.

People are naturally drawn to narrative texts with which they find connection and in which the events, characters and issues personally resonate with them. In these texts, the issues or circumstances presented may evoke emotionally charged memories or may carry some personal meaning and connection to the reader's own life. Personal resonance in a literary text stimulates deeper level involvement, and research suggests that it also enhances text processing as the reader attends to the text with greater care and concentration (Kuzmičová and Bálint, 2019).

Prior knowledge of the subject matter or situations presented in a text enhances one's mental imagery, enabling you to visualise scenes more intensely (Therman, 2008). It's therefore not surprising that illustrations (throughout the text or on the cover) are particularly powerful in activating connections and prior knowledge. Perhaps you are drawn to novels that are set in a geographical location of personal significance, for example. Many children seek out books that involve their favorite hobby, interests or a place they know. Recent research also shows that different genres take children's memories to different places, with books that focus on children's real worlds and relationships being best suited to prompt thinking about the complex fabric of children's social and emotional experiences (Kuzmičová and Cremin, 2021).

Personal resonance may be found in a narrative text when the reader perceives similarities between themselves and the protagonists, whether it be more objective characteristics (gender, ethnicity, religion, age, family situation) or subjective features, such as life experiences. Equally, it may be that the reader recognises features in characters that they desire or aspire to, such as bravery, achievements or popularity. Such texts enable children to see that people like them can be the heroine or hero, and these texts can help children to come to terms with adverse life situations.

Poetry and non-fiction also offer space for filling the 'gaps in texts'. This is what Iser (1978) refers to as the spaces and unwritten portions of any text that call for the reader's participation. Readers fill in the various gaps in different ways, depending on their life experiences and the wider connections they bring to the text. Reading the newspaper is

an obvious example, as is finding that connection to emotions, observations and understandings in poetry.

When children find texts that personally resonate, they become more invested in their reading, generate sharper mental images and experience the meaning more deeply. This is important because deeper engagement encourages children to read critically. Rather than taking the words on the page as an accurate and correct account, the deeply engaged reader critiques and asks questions of the text, comparing and contrasting the ideas presented with their prior knowledge. Additionally, in this space of deep engagement the reader engages more creatively and can begin to imagine themselves as a character in the story, or hypothesise about the parallels to their own context, the possibilities, and the ways in which it has been constructed to convey particular meanings.

Activity 2 Observing personal resonance in text in classroom practice

Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Read this brief account of one reluctant reader and make a note of the personal resonances which surfaced, the subtle shifts in his sense of self as a reader and the moves his teacher made to nurture his engagement.

Ishmael, a six-year-old, was described by his teacher, Miss P, as a boy who rarely if ever chose to read to himself or with others. He preferred mathematics. But on close observation during a 'book blanket' exploration (when the class were invited to explore a range of texts blanketed on the table), Miss P observed him looking at an atlas and encouraged him to take this home. Two days later Ishmael brought the atlas back and told Miss P he hadn't read it – he didn't know how. But during their conversation he shared that he had in fact found Birmingham (where he lived), Turkey (where the family hoped to go on holiday) and Pakistan (where his dad frequently visited). Miss P explained that this was reading – he'd made sense of the atlas for his own purposes and found things that were connected to him. His reading related to his goals for that book. Ishmael smiled – he appeared pleased, delighted even. Perhaps he was seeing himself as a reader for the first time.

After this encounter, Miss P noticed that Ishmael began to engage more fully in reading activities. For example, she saw his gaze following her for the first time during reading aloud – as if he were listening more intently. She observed that in reading time Ishmael often chose to sit near Ariq, a good reader, and began sharing books and talking informally with him about what they were reading. When World Book Day came around, Ishmael told her excitedly that he was going to spend his voucher on the book *Planet Omar: Operation Kind*, which was related to the class read-aloud *Planet Omar* by Zanib Mian. Ishmael's mother reported he had started to read at home – she was surprised and thrilled by this and wanted more book recommendations to support her son.

Provide your answer...

Comment

The atlas personally resonated with Ishmael, representing places of importance in his life and that were a part of his identity. Through observation and conversation, Miss P helped him recognise himself as a reader, and as a consequence he began to connect more to texts and became intrinsically and socially motivated to read and join Ariq and his classmates as they listened to their teacher reading aloud.

As the vignette about Ishmael demonstrates, reading is not only an affective, personal process, it is also a social one. Reading for Pleasure responds to the psychological human need to be competent, autonomous and related to others, and enhances self-motivation and mental health. Talk and informal reader-to-reader conversations play a key role in nurturing children's interest in reading as they recommend books to each other and build reading networks and relationships. In the next section, you will bring together what you have learned so far in Sessions 1 and 2 and consider reader motivation in more detail.

7 Reader motivation

Motivation is key in developing volitional readers, that is, readers who read of their own free will. Many reading programmes, online and off, seek to foster recreational reading through an incentive-based system such as reading a certain number of books to gain stickers or stars. Although such programmes have a role, studies of extrinsic motivation indicate it can have a limiting effect on readers. If teachers place high emphasis on a fluent reading performance, on grades, competitions and material rewards, children are less keen to read (Orkin *et al.*, 2018). Teachers should instead help children connect to each other as readers, engage affectively in the text and find pleasure in reading for themselves, not in order to please their teachers or parents, or to conform to the expectations of the school system. If children find pleasure in reading, they will gain all the benefits of being a childhood reader.

In Session 1, you read that readers who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to be reading for their own pleasure and satisfaction and to have a positive self-identity as a reader (McGeown *et al.*, 2012). Becoming an engaged and motivated reader has personal, social, emotional and cultural dimensions. It involves the reader seeing a purpose for reading. Texts that interest, engage and challenge young readers are seen to be intrinsically motivating. Another key motivating factor is the actual experience of reading itself (Ross *et al.*, 2006) and the child's personal affective engagement in the text, as you saw in the case study of Ishmael in the previous section. Affect drives reader's engagement; their emotional response to the text is very influential.

Children are also motivated by many kinds of texts, including digital ones, and value the opportunity to personalise such texts and the interactivity involved. Many readers are also socially motivated, they want to connect and belong. In the next section, you will look at how building reader networks, relationships and communities supports children's desire to read.

8 The role of talk and book chat

Talk is fundamental to reading and being a reader. It is the medium that allows you to articulate and share your thoughts, feelings and ideas about a text and listen to those of others. In homes and schools, talk is often both a precursor to reading, and a consequence of it. Through talking about texts, you think aloud, formulate views and opinions, share interests, relate new experiences to previous knowledge and refine and develop your understanding. As Britton (1970) observed, 'reading and writing float on a sea of talk'. The influential role of dialogue in the development of children's thinking and their literacy has been extensively documented (Littleton and Mercer, 2019).

Teachers who encourage conversations about being a reader and about the texts being read, help children construct meaning, collaborate, communicate, and expand their thinking. In addition, through such talk children gain empathy for others' views and can connect to and bond with other readers.

In seeking to foster children's delight and desire as readers, adults not only read *to* children, but consciously read *with* them. By encouraging children's active involvement in the story or in searching online to satisfy their curiosity for information, adults trigger valuable informal book talk that follows the learner's lead and helps them participate as meaning makers. They might for example anticipate what will happen, connect to their own lives, respond affectively and consider what they would do if they were in a similar situation. This approach is sometimes known as 'dialogic shared book reading' but is more accessibly described as 'book chat'.

Book chat is the informal interaction that accompanies quality reading to and with children and helps to develop children's language and comprehension, whilst at the same time nurturing a love of reading. To support teachers and parents developing book chat, The Open University worked with practising teachers to produce three short videos and additional resources based on books published by Macmillan Children's Books. You can watch these videos in Activity 3, which are designed to support teachers and parents in developing book chat and informal interactions around a text.

Activity 3 Identifying the key principles of book chat
Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Based on the age of the children you work with, watch one of the three book chat videos below.

Video content is not available in this format.
**Video 1** Ben Harris reading *One Fox* by Kate Read for 5+

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 2 Richard Charlesworth reading *A House that Once Was* by Julia Fogliano for 7+
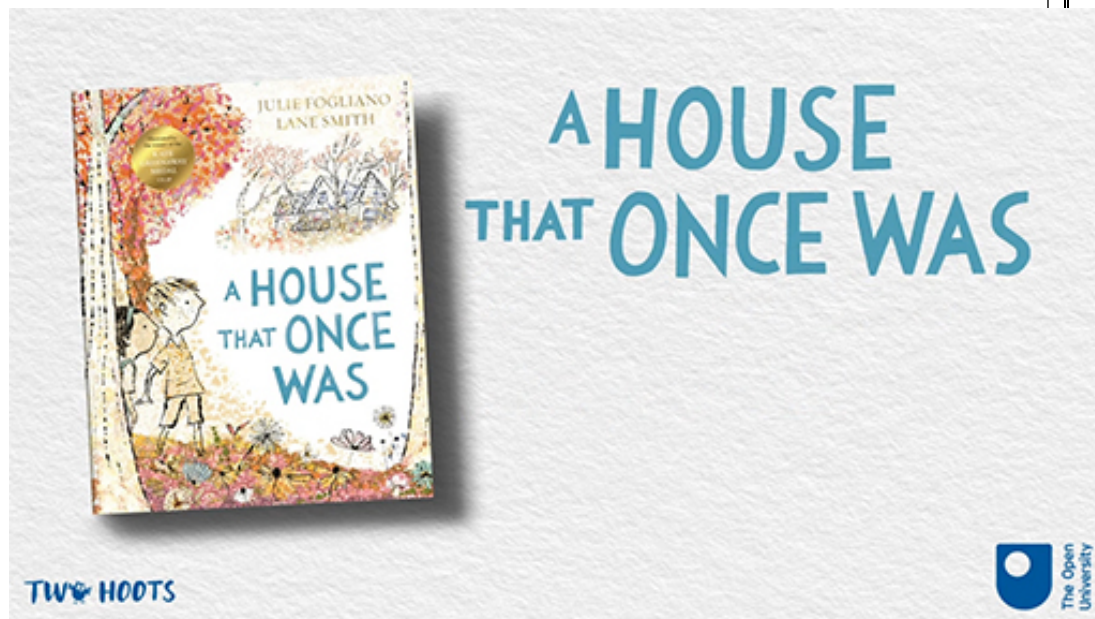
Video content is not available in this format.

Video 3 Professor Teresa Cremin reading *The Same Inside Poems about Empathy and Friendship*, by Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Roger Stevens for 9+
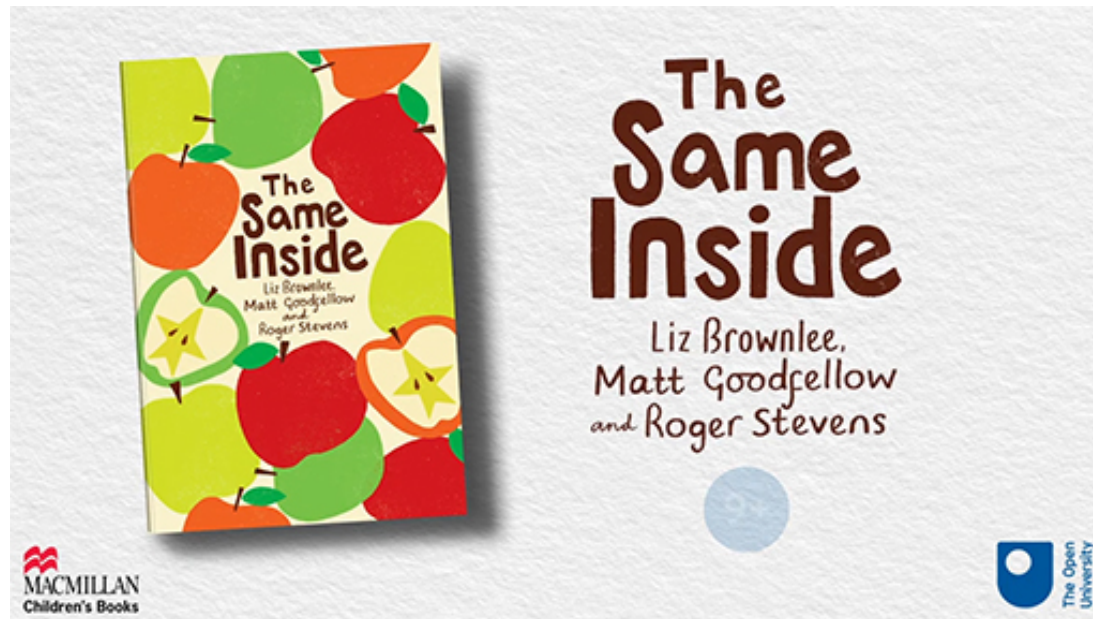
Note down the five core messages offered by the Book Chat team. Which do you think is the most important for successful informal dialogic talk about texts?

Comment

The Book Chat team identifies the following as the five top tips to help you build conversations about books with children:

• Invite your child to get involved

• Watch and listen carefully to follow their interests

• Wonder and connect to your lives

• Share your emotional responses

• Keep it light and enjoyable.

The value of such informal conversation is not always fully appreciated as it may appear unstructured and iterative, based on the child's interests and direction, but book chat helps develop children's language, comprehension and pleasure. It encourages readers to actively construct their own meanings and make personal sense of texts. In this way it underscores the pleasure to be found in reading and serves as a model for children's conversations about texts with their peers. Increasing children's informal social engagement in what they are reading contributes to reciprocal Reading for Pleasure.

Optional resource

If you would like to find out more about book chat, you can look at these resources in your own time.

- [A guide to book chat](#)
- [A book chat poster](#)

Informal book chat and spontaneous book conversations help to build connections between readers. These are critical to create reader relationships, something you will read about in the next section.

9 Reader networks and relationships

When books become part of the social interaction in the classroom, they play a key role in connecting readers and can serve to establish small networks of readers. Some networks will be transient, for example four readers who have all recently read the latest Malorie Blackman or Jon Klassen book after signing up to read it on a Book Buzz chart and who were invited to chat to each other about it. Other networks may be more sustained, for example a group of children who regularly choose to sit together during reading time to discuss what they are reading, passing on books to one another over time and creating an in-group of readers. Tracking the library borrowing of young readers, Moss and MacDonald (2004) revealed considerable book traffic between small networks of readers. These might be hidden to a busy teacher's eye, but they indicate the social support and interaction that engaged readers seek to sustain them.

As part of these networks, an interchange of ideas and views will develop between readers. This is not only healthy but to be encouraged, since by sharing their different views children will enrich their own understandings. This fosters reciprocal Reading for Pleasure and involves the cross-fertilisation of ideas, the development of new perspectives and the re-negotiation of previous ones. These processes are most effectively nurtured in open trusting contexts where all readers' views are recognised, valued and discussed, on or offline. It is not limited to only young readers either, as adult readers also engage in casual conversations and debates about reading and many participate in book clubs or reading groups, sharing the pleasure of literary reading and drawing on their own life experiences to do so.

Personal reflection 3

Think about an occasion when you have been involved in discussing a text. You may have disagreed with others' views, but perhaps come to appreciate their perspective.

- What was the text involved? A newspaper, recipe, a magazine article, a travel website, a novel?
- Did the discussion help you recognise the particular journalistic stance, understand more about how to cook the meal, or reveal more about a character?
- Was there a sense of pleasurable engagement in broadening your perspective and having others value your views?

Comment

In the discussion you recalled, you will have brought your own views and thoughts to bear. In the same way, it is important to enable children to bring something of their own reading selves, their views and perspectives to the classroom. This means hearing and valuing their voices and avoiding a sense of the 'right answer'. When children

---

share their thoughts, personal resonances and reading journeys with their peers and teachers, they share something of their lives and values. This openness helps to build connections and new reader relationships which offer a strong social motivation for reading (Cremin *et al.*, 2014).

In order to nurture a love of reading, schools can work to foster such reader relationships and child-initiated networks. Some schools pair up older and younger readers to read and discuss books together regularly, as peer involvement can be motivational and lead to peer-assisted learning (Topping *et al.*, 2016). Other schools invite teaching assistants to work with small groups of reluctant readers and identify texts that tempt and stimulate their curiosity. This helps to to maximise interaction and interest in each other's views.

As well as networks of just young readers, adult–child reading schemes can also be beneficial. For example, one school in the UK has a Reading Buddies scheme in which staff members (teachers, teaching assistants, office staff) partner with 'vulnerable' readers and meet them once or twice a week for 5–10 minutes with a focus on sharing stories, poetry, jokes, magazines and so on. The adult reading buddy shows interest in the child as a reader, shares their own reading life, and develops reader-to-reader connections to support the reader. Such adult–child reciprocal relationships nurture and help sustain children's engagement as readers and foster positive reader identities.

Optional resource

Case study: Developing whole school reading relationships at Jon Biddle's school

10 Reader identities

The ways in which children and young people 'identify' or 'see' themselves as readers influences their motivation to read. Self-fulfilling prophecies flourish: those who consider themselves 'good' readers are more likely to engage and sustain engagement, and thus become better readers, whilst those who see themselves as poor readers, or who struggle with the reading level required by a class activity might quickly become disengaged. Young children's reader identities develop at the intersection of how they are positioned by influential people in their lives, such as parents, teachers, siblings and peers, and how they position themselves as readers.

The ways in which reading is perceived in homes, alongside the nature of parent–child interactions around reading, positions children as readers in particular ways. For example, when young children's early attempts at reading from memory, reading pictures and reciting repetitive refrains are valued and celebrated as authentic reading, children come to see themselves as legitimate readers. However, when these practices are dismissed as 'not real' reading, children can construct a deficit view of themselves as readers. Similarly, teachers' views of what counts as reading, their understandings and reinforcement of the expected reading level at a particular age and the opportunities they offer children, will shape the young people's emerging reader identities. Influenced by the standards agenda, educators may think of reading as proficiency, and may thus position children such as Ishmael, who you met in Activity 2, as poor or reluctant readers if they don't read fluently, show accuracy with decoding or score well in comprehension tests (Hempel-Jorgensen *et al.*, 2018).

Unfortunately, research has also found that educators' perceptions of gender, social class and ethnicity also influence how they perceive and position individual children as readers (Hempel-Jorgensen and Cremin, 2021).

Personal reflection 4

Think of a less engaged or reluctant reader in your class. Are they given the same opportunities as more engaged or able readers?

Who do they interact with? Is the reading material they are offered equally as tempting?

What kind of reader identity do you think they hold?

Children also have agency; they may accept, negotiate or reject the ways in which they are positioned by others in particular contexts and may assert their own 'sense of self' as a reader. Opportunities for children to share their personal reading practices, whether it be novels, sports magazines, websites or superhero comics, are opportunities to promote themselves as 'expert' in a particular subject and positively position themselves as a

certain kind of reader. More attention needs to be given to the development of positive reader identities in education as young readers are always in the process of learning how to be readers. Reader identities are not static but are shaped by the context, the people within it and the opportunities offered to engage with texts.

To support children's identities as readers, teachers need to get to know each reader well, to notice, document, reflect and act upon their preferences and practices at home and at school. Ways to do so are examined in Session 4.

Activity 4 Nurturing young children's reader identities

Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Watch this video of a practitioner and a young child reading together. As you watch make a note of the ways the interaction may influence this little boy's identity as a reader. For example, does the practitioner give him space to lead? Does she respect and value his views and ideas? She certainly responds very positively to his comments.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 4

Comment

You probably noticed many ways that the teacher nurtured this little boy's reader identity. For example, she listened to him carefully and responded to his comments and actions. In doing so she made it clear that his voice and views are important and valued. She avoided asking lots of closed questions, or questions that he was unable to answer. Instead, she followed his lead, enabling him to express his ideas on aspects of the text that were important to him.

11 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this session by taking the end-of-session quiz. Open the quiz in a new window or tab then come back here when you've finished.

Now that you've completed Session 2, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 2 quiz.

12 Summary of Session 2

This session has discussed the nature of children's reading in the 21st century. Rather than simply a set of skills to learn, reading can be thought of as a process of making meaning from the marks on the page and constructing an interpretation of the text. It is a process that has personal, social, relational and affective dimensions.

Intrinsic motivation is key to children's Reading for Pleasure as finding texts that personally resonate deepens children's engagement. When educators take a non-hierarchical view of children's texts and learn about and value all the reading that children do, both in-school and beyond, they are better placed to support children as readers. Opportunities for children to discuss reading that has inspired them, to engage in book chat or debate over a book enhance the meaning-making process and foster positive reader identities. In the next session, you will build on these ideas as you read about why stories are so addictive and why narrative and narrative texts are so powerful in children's development.

You should now go to Session 3.

Session 3: The power of narrative

Introduction

Storytelling is an age-old human tradition; whether told orally, written by hand or in print, or enacted on stage or screen, our innate desire to create and experience stories has endured for millennia. Every culture and every religion has traditional stories that are passed along the generations to entertain, educate and inform, to preserve beliefs and collective identity or to instil moral values.

Yet narrative is such an integral part of everyday life that its significance and value at a personal, societal and global level tends to go unnoticed. This session explores what it is about stories that makes them so addictive and why narrative and narrative texts are so powerful in children's development.

By the end of this session, you will have:

- developed a detailed understanding of the role of narrative in understanding the world
- considered how single stories can perpetuate cultural stereotyping
- started to recognise implicit sexism, racism, ablism and heteronormativity in children's literature
- explored how to draw on literature to promote children's empathy and sensitively address difficult subjects.

1 Narrative

narrative

[ˈnarətɪv] NOUN

a story or an account of events, whether true or fictitious

Figure 1 Definition of 'narrative'

Narrative can be defined simply as a story or an account of events, whether true or fictitious (Figure 1). However, despite this simple definition, the actual creation of narrative involves the piecing together of many elements. There is a scene to be set, a plot and characters, it has a beginning, a middle and an end, but can at times also branch off into descriptive embellishments. Narratives can be uncomplicated accounts of events or they can be captivating stories filled with twists and turns that tell of people who have performed heroic deeds, committed crimes, or who have suffered and overcome some misfortune.

A good story is one with which the reader or listener finds a connection; the characters come to life and, for a time, are almost as important to the reader as people they know personally. Through the reader's response and personal resonance, a narrative may evoke memories and surface a host of emotions and feelings. It is these narratives that can fill you with joy, reduce you to tears, or evoke suspense, intrigue and anticipation. A narrative can cause fear, or it can calm, comfort and reassure. Through imagination, a well-told story can transport you into another world, offering you new experiences which are only present in your mind.

Personal reflection 1

Spend a few minutes thinking about one of your favourite books or films.

- Why did the narrative resonate with you?
- How well did you get to know the characters?
- What sorts of emotion did it evoke?
- How did you feel at the end of the book or film?

Comment

As discussed in Session 2, Reader Response theory explains why everyone interprets a narrative differently and how readers are most deeply affected by texts in which they

find personal connections. The connections the reader makes with characters and circumstances in a narrative can be deeply affective.

However, narrative is not just a medium for entertainment – it is also a tool for thinking and understanding the world. You will look at this next.

2 Narrative: understanding the world

It is through narrative that human beings construct and understand the world around them (Bruner, 1990). As the literary scholar Hardy (1977) argued, people dream and daydream in narrative, and remember past events and plan future ones in narrative. You generate narratives to hope, to anticipate, to worry, to complain and to persuade, and you also create stories about yourself and about others in order to understand how you fit in the world.

Narrative is a vehicle through which children learn about the world from the experiences of others, and through which they construct their own knowledge and perspectives. The educationalist, Harold Rosen argued that narrative is essential for children's cognitive, social and emotional development, proposing that it is 'a supreme means of rendering otherwise chaotic, shapeless events into a coherent whole saturated with meaning' (1988, p. 164). Activity 1 exemplifies Rosen's point.

Activity 1 Constructing narrative to understand the world
Allow approximately 5 minutes for this activity

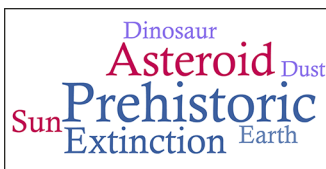Read each of the words in the first word cloud below.

Figure 2 Word cloud 1

Did you read seven individual words, or did you start to piece together a narrative that tells of a prehistoric event?

Of course, this is a story that can be told at varying levels of complexity, yet through this narrative you can learn about and understand a mass extinction. However, did you feel any connection with the characters in your story? Did it evoke empathy or feeling of injustice?

Now read the words in the second word cloud and think about whether the narrative you create affects you differently.
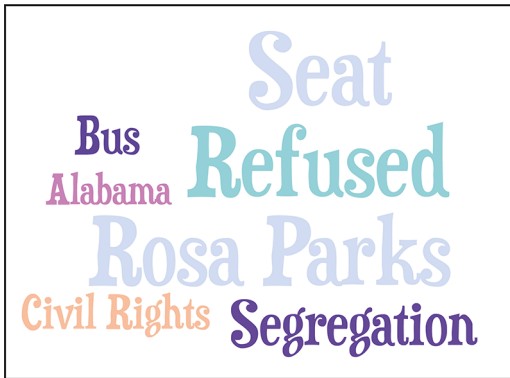

Figure 3 Word cloud 2

Comment

You may have again constructed a narrative that told of a historic event. How did this narrative differ? Did you feel a sense of connection or empathy? Did it evoke feelings or emotions? Did it resonate with your sense of justice?

This activity illustrates how you think about and organise your understanding of the world through narrative. Children who regularly experience stories learn about the world and about key concepts across the curriculum. They also learn to use narrative as a tool to organise ideas and events coherently, and to think and develop personal perspectives (Bruner, 1990).

Children's intrinsic drive to make sense of the world through narrative is clearly visible in their symbolic and imaginary play. This is where children learn to distinguish between the worlds of 'what is' and 'what if'.

3 Exploring possibilities through narrative play

In her seminal work, Susan Engle (2005) proposed that children use narrative play and stories to understand the world of 'what is' and the world of 'what if'. In children's play, the expression of narrative is embodied; they enact a scenario, take on roles and characters, and everyday objects become something entirely different. Engle argues that through both symbolic play and stories, young children begin to differentiate between everyday reality and pretend or fantasy worlds.

In re-enacting scenarios from their own lived experience, such as a visit to the doctors, young children develop understanding of events going on around them. Opportunities to playfully retell stories that have been read to them or they have experienced on screen allow children to explore the borderlands of reality and make-believe. Narrative play, whether symbolic role play or fantasy play, helps the young develop understandings about what is plausible, what is probable or improbable, and what is pure fantasy.

Additionally, access to story props or story sacks (a large cloth bag with a children's book and supporting materials) to accompany narratives supports young children to retell and adapt or reimagine the stories they hear. The benefits of this play are multiple; it stimulates language by encouraging children to try out new vocabulary and new language functions and forms. Such play also offers an invaluable opportunity to understand narrative structure, through which children organise their world.
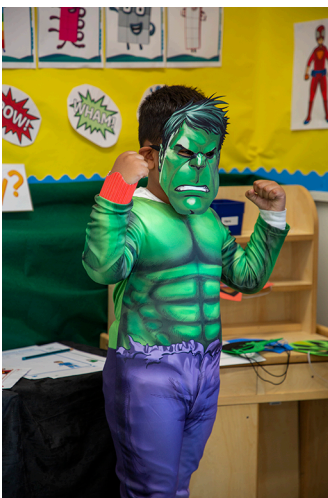
Research with 7–11-year-olds in two London schools (Potter and Cowen, 2020) illustrates how the school playground is a 'rich and dynamic meaning-makerspace'. In this space, children creatively and collaboratively draw on multiple resources, including their own

lived experience, folklore, video games and media culture in dynamic and spontaneous playworlds. For example, the researchers observed a group of children re-enacting the drama of the 2018 World Cup and another group playing at 'being YouTubers'.

The seminal writings of Hardy (1977), Bruner (1990), Rosen (1988) and Engle (2005), alongside contemporary research, demonstrate that both adults and children organise their thinking, and interpret, analyse and make sense of the world though narrative. Through stories, you construct and reconstruct your identity and develop understandings of others. So, providing children with opportunities to engage with a wide range of stories can help them to develop broad perspectives and understand that there are multiple truths, something you will look at in more detail next.

4 Dangers of the single story

The power of narrative is clear – yet author and cultural critic, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie warns of 'the danger of a single story'. In her Ted Talk (2009), Adichie explains that everyone is vulnerable and impressionable in the face of a story. When the only story told of people from a cultural or ethnic group is one of poverty and catastrophe, or of war and migration, you construct distorted visions of people, their backgrounds and their histories. The single story becomes the only story. It does not tell of rich cultures and linguistic traditions, or of deep and lasting friendships, nor of the people who create art, literature and music, nor the stories of innovation, and of those who thrive and prosper. Single stories create stereotypes, and the problem is not that these stories are untrue, but that they are incomplete.

Adichie explains that stories can be used to dispossess and marginalise, but the same story told another way can be used to empower. She comments, 'Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity' (2009). How a story is told, who tells it, when it is told, and how many stories are told, shape how you view the world.

Personal reflection 2

Think about a news story or an issue that has been prominent across your mainstream and social media recently.

Reflect upon how the narrative and the issues have been reported and how they represent a group of people. Have the narratives you have experienced on this issue told only a single story of these people, or multiple stories?

Comment

At the time of writing, during the Covid-19 pandemic, there are news reports that socio-economically disadvantaged children have suffered a greater 'loss of learning' than their better-off peers. It is reported that these pupils will require educational 'catch-up'. The pandemic has undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on many students' learning, however, it is difficult to generalise across any particular group. Every pupil is an individual, and it is important that we do not accept the single story as the only story.

Optional resource

You can watch Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Ted Talk here

View at: youtube:D9Ihs241zeg

Video 1 (The Open University is not responsible for external content.)

To enable children to develop broad perspectives of the world, it is crucial that they have access to a wide range of rich literature written by diverse authors. Reading widely offers children multiple stories, voices and perspectives, which enable them to reject the single story.

In the next section, you will explore how literature broadens children's perspectives of the world, offering multiple stories and diverse insights into unfamiliar cultures and ways of life.

5 Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion through children's literature

As discussed in Session 2, children's texts include a wide body of written and illustrated work, however in this section you will focus on 'narrative texts' that broadly come under the genre of children's literature. It is a genre that tends to be defined by its audience, rather than its subject matter. Children's literature is expansive, it includes fairy tales, traditional tales, historical fiction, fantasy, dystopian futures, science fiction, mystery, action and adventure, biographies and autobiographies, and more.

Narratives are presented in children's literature in diverse ways. Written accounts may be told in the first or third person, and narrative can be creatively told in poetry, verse or through image, such as wordless picture books, graphic novels, comics and websites.

As you read in Section 9 of Session 1, regardless of theme or subject matter, characters, events and situations in narrative texts act as metaphorical 'mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors' (Bishop, 1990), and play a significant role in transmitting a society's culture. Literature enables children to see what the world may look like from another's perspective and provides opportunities for them to construct their views of self and the world (Tsao, 2008).

Children's narrative texts (and all texts) reflect a society's culture captured from the author's perspectives at a moment in history; however, cultural attitudes, values and beliefs evolve and progress over time. This means that issues like gender bias remain evident in children's literature collections in libraries, in classrooms and on bookshelves. Many children's books, including some much-loved classics, convey sexist cultural messages that women don't work or do certain types of jobs, and that it is only men that fix things and make decisions (Persiani-Becker, 2011).

For example, the children's picture book, *The Tiger Who Came To Tea*, was written by Judith Kerr in 1968, yet it is still popular in the UK today and has sold over a million copies. In this story, after the tiger wreaked havoc in the kitchen, Sophie's mother begins the clean-up declaring, 'I've got nothing for Daddy's supper'. It is also notable that it is 'Daddy's' beer that the tiger drunk, and it is 'Daddy' who decides that they should go to a café. This is just one example of how children's books convey messages about gender roles.

In the same way that gender bias remains evident in children's literature, characters from diverse ethnic backgrounds, characters with disabilities, and diverse families continue to be sorely under-represented in children's texts in the UK. This does not mean that you should reject all children's classics and traditional fairy tales; but it is imperative to engage critically with these books and challenge prejudice, bias and cultural stereotypes through book talk and wider discussion with children and young people.

In more recent years, many children's authors have sought to promote equality and social justice by subtly raising awareness of unfair and unequal conditions in the world through their writing. Authentic representations of cultural and ethnic diversity in literature validate the experiences and sense of belonging for children from minority backgrounds. Positive portrayals of people with disabilities and representations of diverse families in literature promote understanding and inclusion. Through these stories, society becomes more knowledgeable and open in their interactions, and children whose life experiences are reflected in a book come to understand that they are not alone. You will read more about developing your knowledge of diverse children's texts in Session 4.

Activity 2 Reviewing representations of equality, diversity and inclusion in your texts

Allow approximately 20 minutes for this activity

Randomly select one or two narrative texts that you know well and that you have recently read with children (you might like to select one picture storybook and one

---

children's novel). Briefly re-familiarise yourself with each one and then make a note of your responses to the following questions.

(Adapted from Persiani-Becker, 2011).

- Are characters presented as unique and distinctive personalities, regardless of gender, culture, ethnicity, disability or background?
- Does the narrative link the characters' activities or achievements to gender, culture, ethnicity, disability or background? If so, does it challenge or sustain stereotypes?
- Are occupations represented as gender and culture neutral?
- Are characters' sensibilities, feelings and responses portrayed as gender and culture neutral?
- Are families only represented as two-parent or male / female couples?

Comment

This activity further illustrates why it is so important that educators have a good knowledge of children's literature and other texts, and critically evaluate the texts that are made available to children in school.

All children deserve the opportunity to see themselves and their peers positively represented in books. Whilst children's literature offers a reflection of a society, it also offers a medium for discussion about sensitive issues and tricky topics.

6 Addressing sensitive issues and tricky topics

Contemporary children's literature and other texts may refer to characters' experiences of bullying, bereavement, mental ill-health, disability, family break-up, migration, terrorism, racism and homophobia, amongst other things. Some informational texts discuss disabilities or migration directly, whilst other narrative texts may include characters who are refugees, who are coming to terms with their sexuality or who live in LGBTQ families. Whether directly or indirectly, children's literature sometimes addresses some sensitive subjects.

Although adults instinctively want to shelter and protect young children from difficult issues, providing a safe space for children to discuss and grapple with such matters benefits them in many ways. Stories give a unique angle from which to address and discuss these tricky topics. Discussion around a narrative can help children to process personal circumstances and provide reassurance, comfort and support. These stories and related discussions show children that they are understood and may help them find resolution.

In the classroom, sharing books on sensitive or controversial subjects opens up a space for dialogue and discussion. Through participating in book talk, children can explore multiple perspectives and engage in nuanced and complex thinking, examining life experiences from different vantage points.

Activity 3 Working with texts to address sensitive issues
Allow approximately 20 minutes for this activity

Below are the synopses of three children's books. As you read each synopsis, think about specific situations in which you might use this text in the classroom. Have you previously known a child or children for whom these texts would help them understand their own situation, or that of their peers? Think about how you might plan to introduce this text to your class, group of children, or an individual child.

Luna's Red Hat, Emmi Smid - Jessica Kingsley Publishers
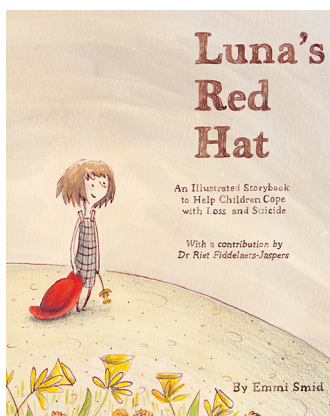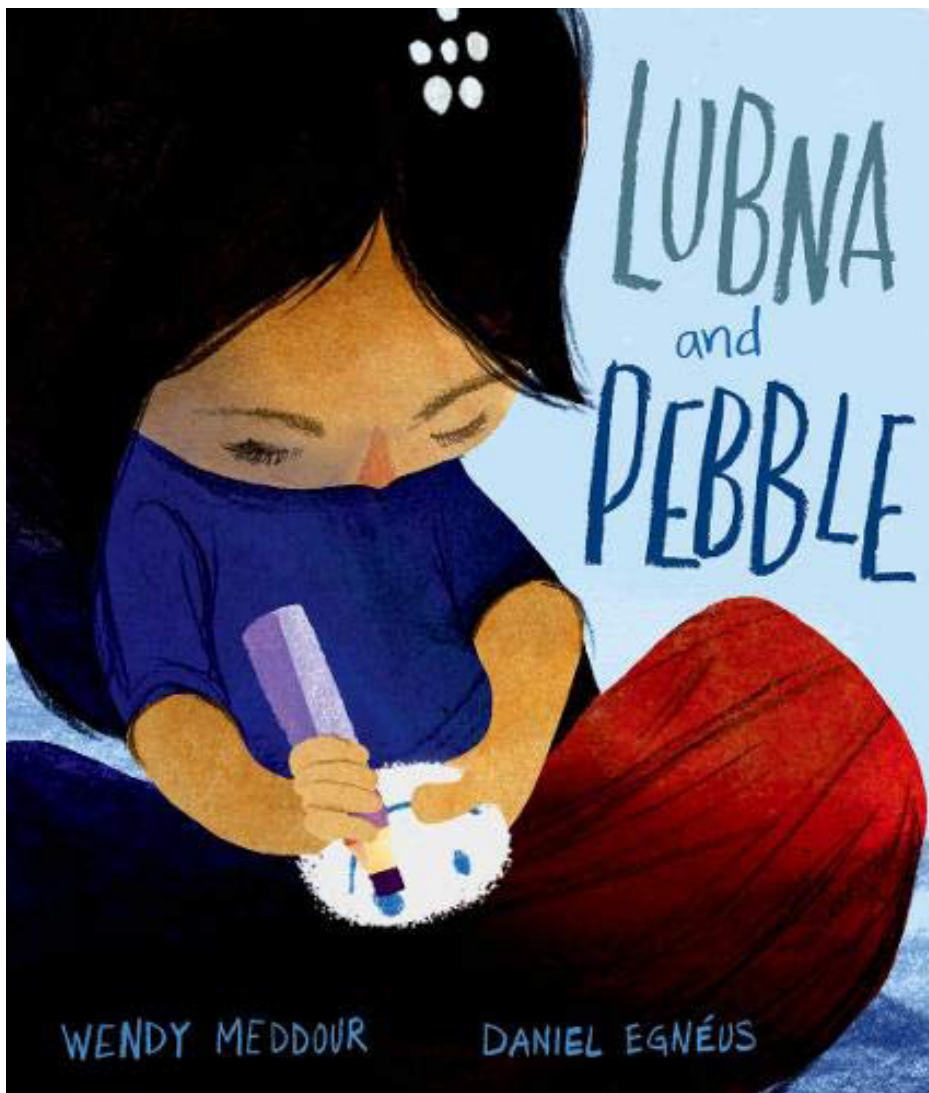

Synopsis

This beautifully illustrated and compassionately told story centres on Luna, a little girl who lost her mum to suicide. As Dad and Luna approach the one year anniversary of Mum's death, they share memories and explore the melting-pot of confusion, guilt, sadness and anger felt by Luna as she tries to make sense of what happened. This is a stunning picture book especially designed for children who have experienced the loss of a loved one by suicide.

Extract from Books for Topics website

Lubna and Pebble, Wendy Meddour and Daniel Egneus – Oxford University Press

Synopsis

Lubna's best friend is a pebble. She found it on the beach when they arrived in the night, then she fell asleep in Daddy's salty arms. Lubna tells Pebble everything. About home. About the war. Pebble always listens to her stories

and smiles when she feels afraid. But one day, when a little boy arrives, alone in a world of tents, Lubna poignantly understands that he needs Pebble even more than she does . . .

Extract from Oxford University Press

Wonder, R.J. Palacio – Corgi Children's Press.
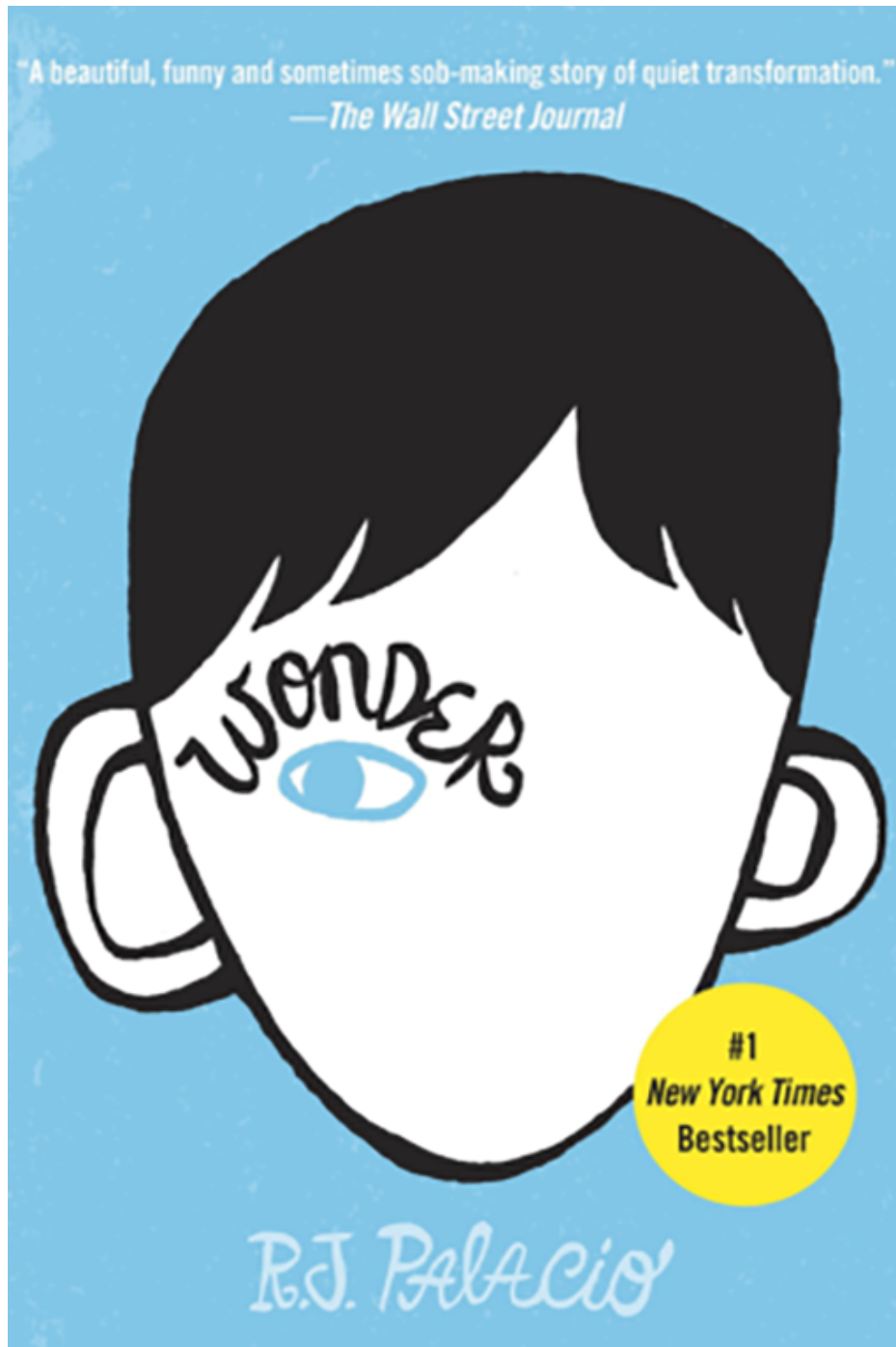
Synopsis

August Pullman (Auggie) has a severe facial deformity and is home-educated until the age of 10, when he begins to attend school. The story is not just told from Auggie's perspective, but also through the eyes of his family and friends – following his fears and challenges as he comes to terms with other children's reactions to his appearance. It's an emotional journey and a superb book to start discussions about accepting people for who they are, empathy and the importance of friendships.

Extract from Books for Topics website

Comment

It is important to remember that children will respond to a narrative in different ways, and also that it is difficult to predict how children will respond. As discussed in Session 2, stories personally resonate with different children in different ways. To adults, a child's response might seem overly dramatic, or it might seem heartless and appear to lack empathy.

The way in which books speak to us is very individual, there is no right or wrong response. However, texts offer a space to explore and discuss issues and ideas. Stories help children to see issues from the perspectives of the characters, and sensitive discussion and book chat around the story helps children develop deeper understandings.

Children see themselves in books, they see others in books, and they see themselves in others (Boyd *et al.*, 2015), therefore children's literature is also a powerful vehicle for developing empathy. You will look at this in more detail next.

7 Empathy

empathy

[ˈɛmpəθi] NOUN

the ability to imagine and share someone else's feelings
and perspectives

Figure 4 Empathy definition

Empathy can be defined as the ability to imagine and share someone else's feeling and perspectives (Figure 4). The simplicity of this definition, however, does not reflect the significance of empathy to humanity.

Empathy is both cognitive and affective. It enables you to comprehend another person's perspectives, or their way of seeing a situation. Through your capacity for empathy, you also experience feelings and sensations as a response to someone else's emotions or life circumstances, whether it be their pain, their joy or any other feeling.

In Sessions 1 and 2, you considered how reading can be thought of as an 'affective' process that can conjure sensations, feelings and emotions and you read the poem entitled *My Name* by poet, Coral Rumble (Session 1, Section 8). You might recall how you felt after reading the poem and whether it evoked a potent affective response.

For the individual child, developing empathy is integral to their social and emotional development, and their ability to connect with others and build relationships. It is empathy that underpins altruistic kindness, compassion and acceptance. Empathy helps you connect with others, build relationships and establish rapport.

For society, empathy is the glue that holds communities together. Empathy connects people and breaks down barriers to action, progress and creativity, it reduces confrontation, and leads to a fairer, more just society. Empathy is good for the home, school or workplace environment; it's good for road safety; as a medium for social action, empathy is good for society, for the environment and for the planet. Yet how well does western society foster children's empathy?

As Barack Obama noted in one of his speeches,

> The biggest deficit that we have in our society and in the world right now is an empathy deficit. We are in great need of people being able to stand in somebody else's shoes and see the world through their eyes.

Obama (quoted in Rutsch, 2010, 00:22)

Empathy can be nurtured at any point in life and children's books are powerful tools through which to foster it. Through reading, children get to know characters they might never otherwise meet. They gain insight into others' ways of life and they get to think, feel and view the world from another person's perspective. The close connection children develop with characters in literary text promotes sensitivity in their interactions with people in their daily lives.

Optional resource

The UK organisation Empathy Lab founded in 2014 is dedicated to building children's empathy, literacy and social activism through literature. This is the organisation behind the annual national Empathy Day, which produces 'Read for Empathy' collections.

In this recorded webinar, Miranda McKearney, founder of Empathy Lab discusses the importance of raising an empathy educated generation.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

Children develop deeper understanding through narrative texts, and such texts are powerful tools for cognitive, social and emotional development. In the following section, you will explore how narrative texts are also vehicles to develop children's sense of agency.

8 Enhancing agency through narrative texts

Agency can be defined as a person's capacity to act independently, make their own choices and affect their situation. Reading can help children to generate understandings of themselves as integral and active members of local and global communities. Thus, it plays a significant role in cultivating and supporting their sense of personal, cultural, and social agency.

Mathis (2016) proposes three ways in which engagement with literature promotes children's agency.

1. **Agency through discovering the familiar in stories** – when children's reading is choice-led they often select texts that align with their current interests and existing knowledge. The connections between the book and 'real life' enrich the reading experience, validating the child's knowledge, life experiences and identity.

2. **Agency in the actual engagement of reading and becoming informed** – through the process of reading, children come to think of themselves as capable readers. Furthermore, the process of building new knowledge, ideas and vocabulary enables them to speak with authority on a subject and enact the role of 'expert'.

3. **Agency through entering the story, becoming a character, and extending the story** – ideas from books provide stimuli for play, through which children can creatively adapt and extend the narrative as they wish. This creativity is amplified when several children have experienced the same book, enriching the story in collaborative re-enactments.

Personal reflection 3

Think about a situation you have observed in your classroom in which a book or other text has promoted children's agency in one of these three ways.

Comment

When the course team reflected on this question, Lucy recalled a group of 3–4-year-old children who loved the book *Little Rabbit Foo Foo* by Michael Rosen.

Little Rabbit Foo Foo

MICHAEL ROSEN

illustrated by

ARTHUR ROBINS
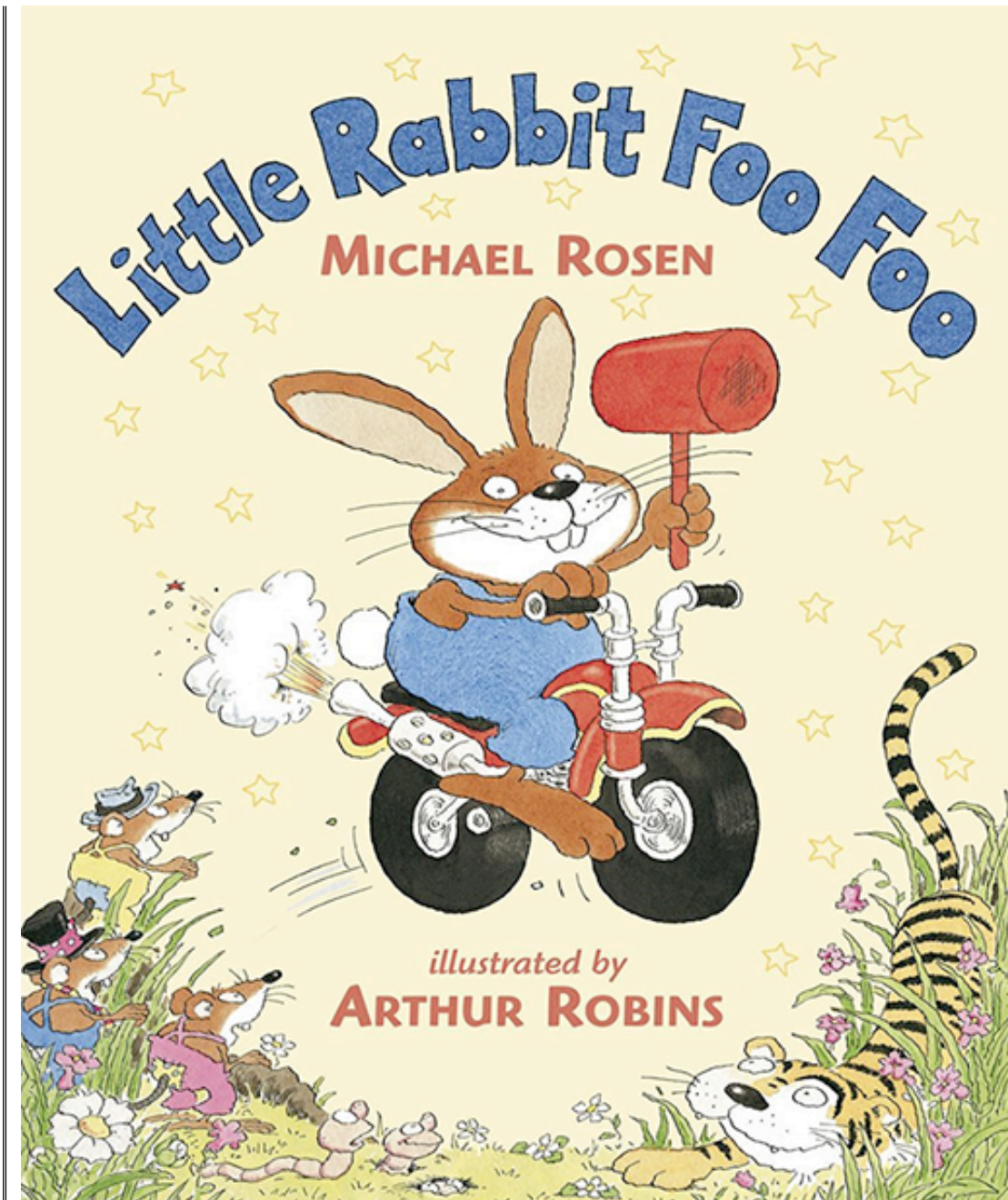
Over the course of three weeks, they developed their own 'play' in which they acted out the story, sourcing and making props to enhance each new rendition. They explained to Lucy that they wanted to invite the school office staff to a performance, and set about making tickets. The performance was a huge success! Through the experience, these young children developed their individual and collective capacity to act, make choices and affect their situation.

9 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this session by taking the end-of-session quiz. Open the quiz in a new window or tab then come back here when you've finished.

Now that you've completed Session 3, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 3 quiz.

10 Summary of Session 3

This session has explored how narrative is a medium through which human beings come to understand the world; it plays a powerful and transformative role in the lives of individuals and societies. However, you have also read about the dangers of the 'single story' and the importance of ensuring children have access to multiple perspectives.

Contemporary children's literature increasingly offers a way to help children identify and challenge racism, sexism, heteronormativity and ablism. These narrative texts can provide focal points for discussion about sensitive issues and foster children's empathy and sense of agency. However, to do so, it is vital that educators develop their knowledge of individual children as readers and develop their knowledge of children's literature to ensure that children have access to diverse texts and multiple perspectives. You will learn more about this in the next session.

You should now go to Session 4.

Session 4: Knowing your texts, knowing your readers

Introduction

To support children to read widely and with enthusiasm, educators need a secure knowledge of children's texts. Children become more engaged readers when they are 'tempted' by texts that adults read aloud to them, recommend to them and talk about, so teachers have a professional responsibility to be able to draw on a rich repertoire of authors, genres and text types (Guthrie and Davis, 2003). Adult knowledge of children's texts should include 'classic' literature and also incorporate new authors and publications to ensure that this knowledge is constantly developing and up to date.

To engage children as readers, teachers must also understand children's reading habits, preferences and personal interests. In knowing the sort of reading children have previously enjoyed, or any barriers or difficulties they experience in the reading process, teachers can recommend alternative texts that might 'hook' the less enthusiastic reader. In addition, knowing children as readers enables adults to offer alternative texts to those that love reading, but tend to choose from a limited range. This session will help you to improve your knowledge of children's texts and 'tune in' to the reading preferences of children you work with.

By the end of the session, you will have:

- identified areas to develop in your knowledge of children's texts
- considered the benefits of different texts for different readers
- reflected on your knowledge of diversity and representation in children's texts
- explored ways to understand more about children's reading practices.

1 The role of educators' knowledge of children's texts

As in previous sessions, the reference to children's texts reflects the broad range of text types that children might choose to read in their own time. Whilst encouraging children to read high quality books (that might be referred to as literature) is important, so too is ensuring that all readers have a broad reading diet. Comics and magazines may be a regular reading choice for some children, alongside graphic novels, poetry and non-fiction texts. Knowledge about a wide range of different types of text is therefore important for any adult hoping to entice children to read.

To begin this session, complete the activity below, which will enable you to reflect on your current knowledge of children's texts.

Activity 1 Audit your knowledge of children's texts

Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Without looking at your bookshelves or searching the internet (!) can you name:

- three children's authors;
- three picture fiction creators;
- three poets;
- three non-fiction texts for children;
- three children's comics or magazines?

Now look at your list and make a note on the following points.

- Did you struggle with any of the categories more than the others? If so, which ones?
- Did you find you could name book titles but not authors?
- Did your lists include authors/ illustrators/ texts from your own childhood reading?
- Did your lists include celebrity authors (e.g. David Walliams), or exceptionally well-known authors that have become celebrities (e.g. J.K. Rowling, Michael Rosen)?
- Do your lists reflect social and cultural diversity?

Comment

As you reflect on your responses to the questions above, you will begin to get a sense of your reading repertoire, and areas where your knowledge is well-developed or

---

needs some attention. You might like to write a statement of intention identifying where and how you plan to develop your knowledge.

Statement of intention: I need to develop my knowledge of ….

Previous research indicates that primary teachers tend to draw on a limited range of texts, often based on their own childhood reading or well-known celebrity authors (Cremin *et al.*, 2014). This study also found that teachers had particularly limited knowledge of poetry and picture fiction. These limited repertoires were mirrored in a National Literacy Trust Survey drawing mainly on secondary teachers, which revealed that their reading repertoires were inadequate and that they were not able either to offer young people a comprehensive range of contemporary and classic texts (Clark and Teravainen, 2015a). Framed by this narrow professional knowledge, the young people's 'favourite books', were also narrow and tended to include texts that had become well-known through film adaptations such as *Harry Potter* (J.K. Rowling) or *The Hunger Games* (Suzanne Collins). This is evident in the wordle in Figure 1, representing some of the most frequently named books that children and young people said they read in a survey by the National Literacy Trust survey in 2014. These studies highlight that the range of texts and authors available to many children may be restricted and lack diverse representation.

Figure 1 Wordle of children's favourite books (Clarke and Teravainen, 2015b)

Watch the following video clip, in which Teresa Cremin professor of education at The Open University and Claire Williams, from St Andrews Church of England Primary school, discuss the findings of research examining teachers' knowledge of children's texts and the importance of continually developing that knowledge.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

Now you have considered your current knowledge of children's literature, the next section will help you consider the broad range of text types you can add to your reading repertoire and the different purposes they serve for young readers.

2 The affordances and benefits of different children's texts

Motivation to read and engagement in reading are key factors that enable children to develop as readers (Gambrell, 2011). When educators continually develop their knowledge of children's texts and get to know texts in depth, they are better positioned to develop a successful Reading for Pleasure pedagogy in school and more effectively foster children's desire to read.

Different text types have different features and formats which may benefit readers in various ways. Texts with a lower density in the written script, such as picture storybooks can appear more manageable and may be more appealing to younger or struggling readers. Yet, the interpretation of images requires critical thinking and involves no less depth of engagement than other text types (Roche, 2014). Comics and graphic novels can also be visually enticing and an 'unthreatening' read for less confident or reluctant readers (Griffith 2010), however the subject matter and choice available may appeal to older children.

Novels and short stories provide opportunities for sustained reading engagement and developing reading stamina. As the narrative develops, these texts evoke the imagination and prompt the reader to predict, hypothesise and relate the plot to their own experience. The interactive figure below will help you to think about the benefits of textual features of different children's texts.

> Interactive content is not available in this format.
>
>
>
> **Figure 2 (Interactive)** The benefits of textual features in different types of children's texts

The potential benefits of different types of text highlighted in Figure 2 show how important it is for educators to read a wide range of children's texts in order to be able to recommend the right text to the right child at the right time. Each genre of children's texts includes an expansive range of topics. For example, whilst graphic novels tend to be associated with comic books, classics and fantasy fiction have also been presented in this format. You then have poetry, which is often highlighted for its range of forms and use of language, but can also be light-hearted and very accessible to read. It also provides opportunities to read aloud and perform and there is a wealth of poetry freely available online to watch and listen to. Similarly, non-fiction texts can entice children when the subject matter links to

personal interest and passions. Non-fiction texts and magazines can also be 'dipped into', or equally, they may encourage sustained reading.

Activity 2 Selecting appropriate texts for young readers
Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

Read the case studies of three different readers and consider what type of text or specific title/author you might offer to them to encourage widening of their reading repertoire. Make a note of the reason for your choice.

1. Ruby says that she doesn't like to read, but if encouraged she usually reads non-fiction texts and says she prefers books about History and Geography. The appeal of non-fiction for Ruby seems to be that she can read small chunks of information and dip in and out of the text. She also often comments on the illustrations and photographs in her reading.

2. Nafiul doesn't choose books to read. His favourite activity at home is console games, but he has recently shown an interest in *The Beano* and *The Phoenix* comics during independent reading time. He will pick out a joke or a funny storyline and share it with others at his table.

3. Connor struggles to read fluently and independently and does not have a wide vocabulary, which makes comprehension difficult. He enjoys creating his own drawings and paintings, and in Science and Geography he has shown a passionate interest in animals and nature. Recently he has responded thoughtfully to the poetry that the teacher has been reading aloud in class. Specifically, he has talked about how the poems made him feel.

Comment
In the classroom, you would no doubt look at the available texts with Ruby, Nafiul and Connor and chat about what they might like to try. In this activity, you may have struggled because you do not have detailed knowledge of these children's reading abilities or previous reading. However, some possible ideas could be:

1. Offering Ruby a comic or magazine to read. These could include longer stories such as those in *The Phoenix* or articles about non-fiction topics such as 'Eco Kids planet'. Sharing a hybrid non-fiction picture book might encourage her to read something more narrative.

2. Nafiul might be enticed by something funny and visual. Graphic novels could be a good choice for him. *The Bunny and Monkey* series by Jamie Smart could lead on from the familiar characters in *The Phoenix* comic. Alternatively, he might be interested in an amusing illustrated poetry collection such as *The Book of not Entirely Useful Advice* by A.F. Harrold, illustrated by Mini Grey.

3. Connor might enjoy some short reading material that doesn't overwhelm him. Offering him some picture books or poetry with a nature theme and touching message could help him to connect with his reading in a new way.

Although you should help to guide young readers with text suggestions, be wary of pressing your recommendations on the children. Instead, by offering a choice of 'texts that tempt' they will retain a sense of their own agency as readers. This activity may have reinforced the importance of continually enhancing your own knowledge of children's texts.

The suggestions in the box below offer some practical ways to help you develop your knowledge of children's literature and other texts. Whatever you choose, be sure to share with others that you are on this journey, seek encouragement and voice your views about the texts as you read them.

Box 1 Ways to develop you knowledge of children's texts

- Target texts that reflect diversities
- Read award winners
- Choose a genre and get focused!
- Identify one author, one illustrator and one poet – become their greatest fan!
- Agree with a friend to set targets together
- Invite your class to set you a reading challenge
- Participate in the annual Teachers' Reading Challenge (June–September)
- Read to your knee in books (stack up the books you read until you reach your knee in height!)
- Take the 4-books-a-month challenge
- Turn to Twitter to ask for recommendations, then read each one!
- Find inspiration from The Open University's Reading for Pleasure webpage on Texts and Authors
- For more ideas visit The Open University's Reading for Pleasure website

---

3 Broadening your knowledge of texts that reflect children's realities

In Session 1, you read about Rudine Sim Bishop's (1990) metaphor of mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors, which illustrates how children see themselves and their own lives represented in texts, and how they can get to know unfamiliar worlds and different perspectives through reading. You also explored the ways in which texts can sustain or counter social and cultural stereotypes. Because interaction with text can be so powerful for a child's developing sense of self and understanding of the world around them, there is growing recognition that texts should represent all children and families. Therefore, it is important that educators develop their knowledge of children's texts that positively reflect diversity. Such texts, however, are not always readily available on bookshelves, in libraries, book shops, or on-screen.

Since 2017, the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), a UK based organisation, has conducted an annual 'Reflecting Realities' survey of children's picture books, fiction and non-fiction published in the UK for children aged 3–11 years. This study specifically examines representation of children of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage. The survey shows that children from these ethnic backgrounds continue to be significantly under-represented in children's literature (CLPE, 2020). Only 7% of children's books published in 2019 had a non-White character, in comparison to the UK primary school population where 33.5% of children are from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background.

The Reflecting Realities survey also considered *how* characters of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage were positioned in books, for example, whether they were the protagonist, a secondary character or a 'side-kick' (CLPE, 2020). In addition, the research looked at the ways in which racism, celebrations of multiculturalism and civil rights issues were represented. The findings highlighted that even where texts appear to have ethnically diverse characters, these characters may not be fully developed. For example, some only show a diverse character on the cover, some illustrations or character descriptions appear to erase the detail of ethnicity and in some cases even choices of character names may be convenient, rather than representative.

Furthermore, multilingual children may encounter few or no texts in their home language whilst at school, which may impact on their confidence and motivation to read for pleasure. Smaller-scale research shows that for social reasons and issues of access, children who have been previously educated in another country and language might choose texts in English and by English authors rather than those in their home language or set in their country of origin (Little, 2021). Including multilingual texts in classrooms can help all children value linguistic diversity and support the positive identities of multilingual learners.

As discussed in Session 3, it is not only children of ethnic minority heritage and multilingual children who are under-represented in children's texts. In a recent UK survey of almost 60,000 young people (9–18-year-olds), 40% wanted to access texts that

reflected their own lives (Best *et al*., 2020). This was particularly important to young people from less affluent backgrounds and children and young people who reported being gender non-conforming. Other realities that need to be authentically and sensitively reflected in children's texts include adoption, divorce, poverty, bereavement, disability, mental health concerns, and LGBTQ parents. You may be able to add more to this list. When educators develop breadth and depth in their knowledge of children's texts, they are better positioned to recommend and share texts that promote equality.

Personal reflection 1

Browse your book collection at home, or if you have the opportunity, browse your classroom bookshelf or school library too. Think about the statements below and reflect on where you would place yourself on the scale.

- I know a broad range of children's texts which reflect social and cultural diversity.
- The bookshelf or library in my classroom/school includes texts that reflect the children's realities.

DISAGREE (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) AGREE

Figure 3 Disagree to agree scale

Comment

Even if you have a great selection of children's texts available, it is important to keep updating your knowledge and collection with diversity and inclusion in mind. In the Further resources section at the end of this session, you will find a list of websites and resources that might be helpful in developing your knowledge of diverse children's texts.

Optional resource

You can read the most recent Reflecting Realities report here.

4 Teachers' knowledge of children's reading practices

Research has found that when teachers develop their knowledge of children as readers and are aware of their interests and out-of-school reading practices and preferences, it helps them to foster children's reading and build reciprocal and interactive communities of readers (Cremin *et al.*, 2014). Using student voice to promote reading engagement for the economically disadvantaged, and indeed all students, is also of considerable value (Ng, 2018).

Katharine Young is Assistant Head Teacher at Elmhurst Primary School in London. Elmhurst has been developing a culture of Reading for Pleasure for several years and won the 'Whole School Award' in the Egmont Reading for Pleasure Awards 2019. In the following video, Katharine discusses the benefits of educators getting to know children as readers.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

Activity 3 Reviewing your knowledge of children's reading practices

Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

After watching Katharine in Video 2, reflect on your knowledge of the reading practices of three children that you work with. You should try to choose children that are Reading for Pleasure 'disadvantaged', i.e. they rarely choose to read in school and may not be read to or own books at home. Then respond to the following prompts.

- For each child chosen, name three books (and their authors) that they are currently Reading for Pleasure.
- How much do you know about these children's out-of-school reading practices, the kinds of reading they engage in currently and the frequency of these?
- How much do you know about the online/digital reading that these children in your class engage in at home/in the community/with friends?
- How aware are you of the individual children's reading histories and their journeys as readers thus far?

Comment

As Katharine suggests, teachers often know more about their pupils' technical reading proficiency than what and how they choose to read in their independent reading time at home and school. Teachers' knowledge of children's reading practices should include *where* and *when* children read, *what* texts they choose (including digital/ online reading) as well as *how* they socially connect through reading with their peers and family.

When teachers have more information about their children's reading practices, they are more able to tune into their needs and interests, offering relevant recommendations and connections with their home lives (Collins and Drury, 2015). Watching Video 2 and reflecting on your own knowledge of children's reading practices may have highlighted areas that you want to develop.

Finding ways to share and discuss children's everyday reading practices will prompt both you and the children to broaden what counts as reading. It will also help you pay more attention to the individual choices and preferences of young readers and thus be able to offer more finely tuned support for the development of positive reading identities as discussed in Session 2.

5 Finding out about children's reading practices

Educators are often surprised by what they find out when they really focus on noticing the reading behaviours of the children they work with. There are different methods with which to obtain this information, which you will look at in turn in this section.

Informal observation

Informal observation and conversations during reading times in the school day highlight children's reading practices in the classroom. For example, you might notice that your reluctant readers are laughing along to funny poems that you read aloud, or that a child shows an interest in the front cover of a science fiction novel, even though they do not read it independently. Such observations might help you know where to start with recommendations or reading conferences. These observations can be kept over a period of weeks, perhaps with the teacher or teaching assistant noting the behaviours of a small number of children that are struggling to engage as readers.

Reading conferences

Reading conferences involve group discussions with children about their reading preferences and the texts they like or dislike, both at home and at school. They often work best when the group shares a particular interest in a theme/genre or a common attitude to reading. Scheduling regular reading conferences adds to information about children interests and attitudes to reading.

Book blanket

Another useful strategy to help discern children's interests, is to create a book blanket either from the classroom bookshelves or from a focused collection of non-fiction or poetry. The books can be laid out on tables or on the floor. Children are then invited to explore the collection. Close observation alongside regular invitations to find 'a book that interests you', 'a book by a poet you've heard of' or 'a book you've read before' can help you notice individuals reader behaviours and preferences.

Figure 4 A book blanket

> ## Optional resource
>
> Read what Ben Harris learnt about his readers through undertaking a book blanket.

Learner visits

In the 'Building Communities: Researching Literacy Lives' project, teachers made visits to the homes of children in their classes and met with parents to understand more about the children's reading beyond the school gate (Cremin *et al.*, 2015). This experience changed some teachers' perceptions of children as readers, widened their understanding of home reading opportunities and improved the relationships between home and school. This could be built on with a 'Reading at Home' display, where pupils regularly add example texts and extracts.

Surveys

You may also want to use a survey across the school or key stage to establish a 'baseline' of information about pupils' activities and attitudes to reading at school and home before you seek to develop your pedagogy. You could develop your own or use one of The Open University team's RfP surveys.

> Key Stage 1 Children's Reading Survey
>
> Key Stage 2 Children's Reading Survey
>
> Key Stage 3 Children's Reading Survey

Reading rivers

Reading rivers is an activity first applied to reading by Cliff-Hodges (2010) who asked keen adolescent readers to document their reading histories. This was later reshaped by Cremin *et al.* (2014) into a strategy for adults and children to appreciate the wealth of reading materials they encounter in everyday life. These can be created using drawings, writing, photographs or even clips of reading material and can document reading practices in general, or capture just '24-hours of reading'.

Figure 5 Mrs H's reading river

By undertaking your own reading river and sharing this with children, you will be modelling the variety of reading undertaken across life. This may help you begin to widen what

counts as reading in school beyond an assigned or chosen 'reading book'. The reading river shown in Figure 5, by headteacher Lisa Hesmondhalgh from Peover Superior Primary School, captures her reading across 24 hours, but you can capture a longer period, such as during a half-term holiday.

Activity 4 Learning from reading rivers

Allow approximately 20 minutes for this activity

Read the case study below, which describes how Jon Biddle, a primary school teacher from Moorlands Primary Academy in Norfolk, England, used the reading rivers strategy in order to get to know the everyday reading practices of the children in his class.

As you read, make a note of three things Jon learnt about his class's reading practices, how he built on this new knowledge and the actions he took as a consequence.

Jon's reading rivers case study (content starts on page 2)

Comment

You might have noted that reading rivers showed Jon that the children read comics and graphic novels at home, which led him to review and improve the range of texts on offer for them to read in the classroom.

---

6 Using your enhanced knowledge of children's reading practices

Having developed your knowledge of children's reading practices and preferences, it is important to make use of this to support the development of positive reader identities. It is not enough to find out and create displays around the school of favourite authors or everyone's 24-hour reads as this can result in little more than wallpapering. Instead, as an educator you will want to analyse and then summarise what you have learnt from using strategies such as surveys, book blankets or reading rivers and then take actions, as shown in Figure 6. This might include widening the range of texts available in class, ordering a weekly comic, allowing children to read online during free reading time, drawing on the children's interest in *Minecraft* manuals and getting to know a wider range of the children's popular texts. Most significantly, however, you will come to know, understand and appreciate the uniqueness of each individual reader better.

Figure 6 Teachers' knowledge of children as readers

By developing your knowledge of texts and of individual readers, you will be far better positioned to make tailored recommendations to individual children. Knowing the texts and knowing your readers matters if you want to nurture children who choose to read regularly and widely in their own free time.

Activity 5 Focusing on two less engaged readers

To be completed in the classroom

Identify two readers in your class who can read but tend to avoid it and appear disengaged and distracted.

Observe them over the course of a day or two and make notes on their reading behaviours and engagement as readers. Then, select and use one of the strategies noted in Section 5 to enable you to find out more about them as readers. You may choose to use:

- book blankets
- surveys
- 24 hour reads
- reading rivers.

Once completed, look at your notes and the children's responses or collages, and then meet with them to talk about what they have drawn and written. Decide what actions you might take to build on your new knowledge. Will you draw in one of their friends, go to the library together, suggest a number of potentially relevant texts or even buy a new text that appeals to them?

Comment

You might have noticed that by finding out about the children's reading practices at home, or observing the texts that intrigued them in a book blanket activity you changed your perception of these children as readers. To build on this, you might like to consider how you will monitor any changes in these children's engagement with reading as you seek to support the development of more positive and engaged reader identities.

Many schools find it challenging to find sufficient books to support children's different reading journeys and interests. For example, one child may be fascinated by ferrets as they have one for a pet, but the school library has nothing relevant; another may be enjoying the first book in a series, but the rest of the set cannot be afforded at that time. Make maximum use of your local library to borrow books, comics, magazines and so forth to support young readers' interests. Local library provision differs, but many local libraries have superb e-book collections, will send their librarians out to schools, and have very considerable knowledge to help you. The books you can borrow for pleasurable reading and reading across the curriculum are invariably excellent value compared to buying new books. The texts will be in good condition, widely chosen and worth reading. In addition, local library services run additional schemes and can connect children to the UK-based Summer Reading Challenge for children. You too could join the Teachers Reading Challenge at the same time and share your reading journey with the children.
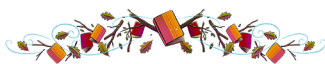
Optional resource

If you would like further ideas about enhancing the books you offer, then you can borrow from the ideas at Finding and Funding Quality Books.

7 This session's quiz

It's now time to take the Session 4 badge quiz. It's similar to previous quizzes but this time, instead of answering five questions, there will be 15.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 4 compulsory badge quiz.

Remember, this quiz counts towards your badge. If you're not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

8 Summary of Session 4

In this session you have read about the importance of teachers' knowledge of texts and of children's reading practices. Developing both aspects of your knowledge will enable you to connect reading opportunities with the young readers you work with in order to motivate and support them. Important ways to do this include, ensuring that you can recommend reading from a range of genres and text types and that your reading collection authentically reflects diversity in all its forms.

This session will have helped you gain a better understanding of any gaps in your own knowledge of children as readers and has given you a variety of 'tools' to continue to increase your knowledge. This is vital to effectively develop Reading for Pleasure in the classroom.

You are now halfway through the course. The Open University would really appreciate your feedback and suggestions for future improvement in our optional end-of-course survey, which you will also have an opportunity to complete at the end of Session 8. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

You should now go to Session 5.

Further resources

The following links are to resources you may find helpful in developing your knowledge of diverse children's texts. When browsing these resources, you might want to note five books you would like to read or ask your librarian or school to buy.

2021 Book Collections & Guides – Empathy Lab

Multicultural Diversity Children's Books – Letterbox Library

Dual language books and bilingual books and resources for bilingual children and parents and for the multi-lingual classroom – Mantra Lingua UK

Every Child, Every Family – NEU

Family Diversities Reading Resource

Transitions Reading Resource

Disability Reading Resource

Session 5: Reading for Pleasure pedagogy

Introduction

Developing children's desire to read is a subtle process – adults cannot demand children find pleasure in the experience. Nonetheless, in recognising that children benefit cognitively, socially and emotionally from reading, educators seek to create relaxed invitational spaces to read, model the process and offer sustained support. Choice, agency and interaction are key features of fostering voluntary readers, while the texts children read also influence their persistence and depth of engagement.

A coherent, evidence informed RfP pedagogy developed in the UK by the *Teachers as Readers* (TaRS) research team, as seen in the Venn diagram in Figure 1, has been seen to be effective in motivating young readers and impacting positively upon their reading frequency and attitudes (Cremin *et al.*, 2014). This encompasses planned time for reading aloud, independent reading, book talk and recommendations, all in the context of a social reading environment. The English Government's RfP Audit uses this model and recognises that such practice is dependent upon teachers' knowledge of texts and of their children as readers.
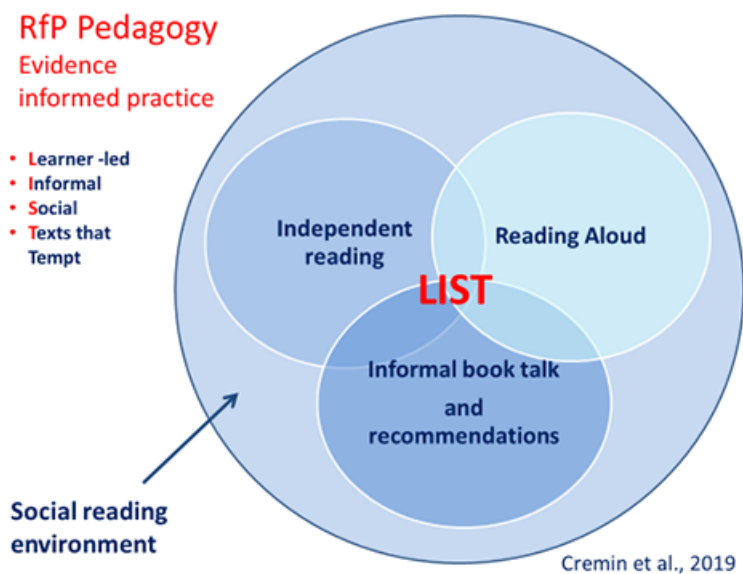
Figure 1 Evidence informed Reading for Pleasure pedagogy

While RfP pedagogy needs to be explicitly planned, the four strands are highly interdependent, so professional skill, responsibility and rigour are essential. RfP pedagogy studies reveal that in order to nurture voluntary reading (i.e. the desired impact) what counts is not *what* teachers do per se (e.g. offer regular reading aloud), but *why* they do it, (i.e. their intent), and the *way* they shape their practice (i.e. their implementation of it) (Cremin *et al.*, 2014 in the UK; Moses and Kelly, 2018, 2019 in the US).

RfP pedagogy which is responsive and flexible is most effective when it is underpinned by the following tenets, which form the acronym LIST. It needs to be: **L**earner-led, **I**nformal, **S**ocial and with **T**exts that tempt. Using this RfP pedagogy 'checkLIST' can help teachers ensure their practice is planned with the goal of developing children's pleasure and the habit of childhood reading in mind (Cremin, 2019). In this session you'll look in turn at how each strand of the RfP pedagogy aligns with the LIST principles to help nurture motivated and engaged child readers.

By the end of this session, you will have:

- considered the four strands of interrelated RfP pedagogy: reading aloud, independent reading, book talk and recommendations, in the context of a social reading environment
- explored how the pedagogy checkLIST can be applied to each of the strands
- thought about the need to monitor the impact of changing pedagogy on children's motivation and engagement as readers.

1 Reading aloud

Reading aloud to children from their earliest years matters. Inviting their playful engagement and attention though the use of actions, sounds, words, chants and props, and participating in connected book chat helps to enrich their narrative understanding and pleasure. In later years, retaining time in school for reading aloud remains crucial to

nurturing the habit of free reading. However, while it is often recognised in policy and practice, and teachers value this time with their class, the pressure of curriculum coverage tends to reduce opportunities to engage in this shared reading experience (Merga and Ledger, 2018).

Some studies into reading aloud focus on its value for developing literacy skills by tracking gains in vocabulary, comprehension and decontextualised language. For example, Zucker *et al*. (2013) show that reading aloud with 'extratextual talk' is associated with vocabulary gains in early years. Other studies identify that children must not only hear, but be prompted to use the new words in order to sustain long term gains (Wasik and Hindman, 2014). The latter study highlights the value of teachers using contextualized text talk (in the book) and decontextualised text talk (beyond the book), as part of read-alouds. Although in many cases the claimed benefits are modest (Hall and Williams, 2010), the work of Kalb and van Ours (2014) in Australia does indicate that reading aloud recurrently to 4-5-year-olds enhances their reading, mathematics and cognitive skills at age 8-9.

Other studies undertaken in classrooms tend to examine reading aloud as it happens and focus on affective and behavioural consequences, such as developing a sense of belonging. This, Wiseman (2011) observes, can be particularly valuable for children from marginalised groups, such as those speaking English as a second language and struggling readers. Read alouds are often pitched at a level above what most children could access alone. Whilst cognitively challenging, hearing engaging texts places few literacy demands upon children, which enables them to experience increased autonomy and fluency, and focus on comprehension (Kuhn *et al.*, 2010).

Watch the following video of Ellie, a teacher at Elmshurst Primary School, London reading to 9-10-year-olds in her class.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

Activity 1 Considering the value of reading aloud

Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

Take a moment to think about why educators read aloud to young people.

Drawing on your experience of reading aloud to children, make a bulleted list of as many different kinds of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that you think may be fostered by regularly reading aloud to 3-11-year-olds.

Provide your answer...

Comment

Reading aloud to children is valued and valuable. When effective it helps to develop children's:

- vocabulary
- curiosity and desire
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- capacity to process challenging content beyond their reading ability
- capacity to respond to texts informally
- listening skills, concentration and attention span
- internal models of fluent reading, based on this externalised model
- openness to the music and drama of language
- narrative knowledge (e.g. how stories begin and end, plot, characters)
- reading repertoires
- reading miles (i.e. the amount of reading)
- reading for pleasure
- sense of belonging to a community.

There are many benefits of hearing stories and other texts read aloud regularly. Listening to rich engaging texts offers a foundation for later understanding and helps sustain a love of reading throughout education. It enriches children's inner treasure chests of words (Sullivan and Brown, 2015): in fact, the word 'vocabulary' in German '*wortschatz*', literally means 'word treasure'.

Look at Figure 2, which shows the range of language used in *Look Up!* by Nathan Byron and Dapo Adeola. Brilliant books are packed with new vocabulary, so hearing and reading such books can enhance children's prior knowledge and understanding, and enrich their capacity to access the curriculum.
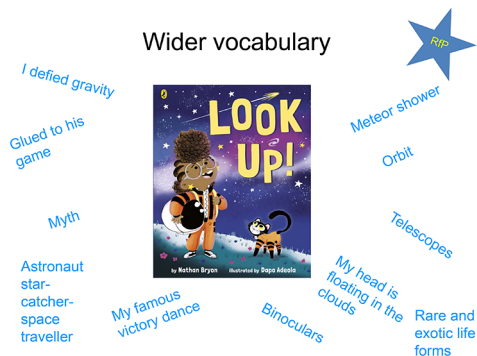

Figure 2 Some of the vocabulary used in *Look Up!*

As well as fiction, non-fiction texts also introduce children to subject-specific higher-level vocabulary, which they are unlikely to come across in everyday life (Beck, 2002). Teachers who read aloud to inspire and motivate choice-led independent reading are also introducing the young to the grammar of written language and building something known as 'books in common', which you will learn about in the next section.

2 Building books in common through reading aloud

Developing a rich repertoire of favourite class books and poems through read-alouds is not only a pleasure, but it also enables 'books in common' to be established.

> The books which we live through together for the sole purpose of shared enjoyment represent a rich resource for conversation, for connection and for spinning webs of reader relationships. Such 'books in common' nurture our pleasure in reading and play a particularly resonant role in helping build communities of engaged readers.

(Cremin, 2019)

For early years, establishing a core set of picture fiction and poetry books, and re-reading them aloud regularly with associated actions and sounds creates a positive shared experience and a sense of community. In re-reading, children increase their familiarity with particular books, which enables them to get to know well-chosen texts in depth and enhances their confidence and capacity to engage in book chat (Rodriguez Leon and Payler, 2021). Many children will choose to return to these books alone and with others and may engage in book-related play. At home, too, families can build books in common through sharing texts aloud and listening to audio books.

In the later years of primary schooling, creating a set of books in common – a shared repertoire – remains important as it can help children make connections to their own and others' lives, and encourage them to make inter-textual connections. However, reading to children in the home tends to decline once they are able to read to themselves (Farshore, 2020).

Adolescents also benefit from experiencing books in common, especially if the books read to them are high-level interest, are read with fluency and pace and offer challenging narratives that are not 'dumbed down' for less experienced readers (Westbrook *et al*., 2018). Additionally, avid adult readers often report that reading aloud at home and school impacted on their positive dispositions towards reading (Merga, 2017).

Activity 2 Reading aloud in your childhood

Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

Looking back, when were you read to as a child? Was a bedtime story part of your family routine? Do you remember a particular teacher reading aloud to you?

Think back to those memories, then jot down a few memories and make a notes on the following.

- Where were you and what time of day was it?
- How did you feel at those times?
- Who else was with you?
- What books were read?
- What do your recall about them?

Provide your answer...

Comment

Maybe you remember your parents or teachers 'doing the voices' and the suspense and sense of warmth the experience evoked. The adult's own engagement, expressive use of voice and informal invitations to participate, are a key part of the experience and support children's understanding. Although teachers and parents do not need to be performers, in order to bring the words to life it is important to tune into the music and meaning of the text and use the theatre of your mouth to evoke it. This helps children connect emotionally and grasp the meanings more easily.

Maybe you recalled a sense of togetherness? The shared experience of being read to creates a sense of belonging, closeness and almost an intimacy as the fictional world of the story unfolds and themes are explored alongside trusted adults.

In the home, reading aloud is often a special, private time and space for children and their caregivers. Educators want to offer this to children in school too and allow the young to take the lead, as you will read about in the next section.

3 Making read aloud LIST

In order to maximise the influence of reading aloud on developing volitional reading, it needs to be Learner-led, Informal, Social and with Texts that Tempt (LIST).

Learner-led read-aloud

Child-led/shaped reading aloud is valuable in addition to teacher-led reading aloud. For example, Moffatt *et al.*(2019, p. 159) found that when 3-6-year-olds 'were positioned, and positioned themselves, as readers in their own right daily' this had advantages. They signed up to read enthusiastically and they were permitted to take ownership of 'the reader's chair' giving them status as readers.

Another way to make read-alouds more learner-led is for teachers to offer a choice of texts for the daily read-aloud, with children then voting with counters, as in Figure 3. Alternatively, when asking children to select a class novel, several books that are all related to the history theme to be studied or to their interests, for example, can be offered. Book promotion on each text can then take place before a class vote.

Figure 3 Choosing today's book

Informal reading aloud

In seeking to ensure that reading aloud is offered in a relaxed environment many teachers choose to invite children to gather around them. Some choose to sit on the floor with children to reduce any implicit hierarchies, though much will depend on the space and age of the children. Another aspect of informality relates to the low-key opportunities offered to interact, so children participate freely and share their thoughts with one another in small groups in a non-assessed manner. This is not a time for teacher-led comprehension.

Social read-aloud

While discussions can extend children's thinking (McClure and Fullerton, 2017), it is vital to balance the skill with the will, and ensure conversations are inclusive and reader to reader. As noted by research (Hempel-Jorgensen *et al*., 2018), if children are mainly positioned as listeners and respondents to teachers' targeted information-retrieval questions, they will be prevented from asking their own questions, and from making connections and personal responses.

Children's questions and thoughts are key. Using drama techniques, such as freeze frames of a likely narrative event in the forthcoming chapter can help to prompt children to

embody their predictions and increase engagement. Many teachers additionally invite children to draw during read-aloud, and offer opportunities for discussion before, during and following it. This 'extra-textual' talk can have positive consequences.

Reading aloud from texts that tempt

Reading aloud is often equated with 'storytime' – the sharing of rich narrative texts. As you learnt in Session 3, fiction is uniquely powerful, but teachers will want to read aloud from a far wider range of genres in response to the children's preferences.

The texts need to tempt your children. Getting children involved and encouraging them to establish their views is also beneficial, particularly for the less engaged readers.

> ## Optional resource
>
> For more ideas and strategies to refine and shape reading aloud for RfP, see The Open University's Reading for Pleasure website.

4 Independent reading: time to read

Intuitively it makes sense that time spent practising a skill will lead to improvement. It also makes sense that in order to help young readers develop their stamina and extend their reading miles, time needs to be set aside in school. This is particularly important when recognising the reality that many young people don't choose to read at home, and may not be being read to there. Providing time and space to read in class is a core element of an effective RfP pedagogy (Cremin *et al*., 2014).

Independent reading should be accompanied by the three other strands of RfP pedagogy and supported by teacher knowledge of texts and readers to ensure it doesn't become devoid of authentic reader engagement and interaction.

Having said this, internationally, the value of independent reading in school has been debated. Over 20 years ago, the National Reading Panel in the US asserted that the research base was insufficient to support the use of independent reading in classrooms (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Concerns about the impact on comprehension and whether some children might be 'fake reading' or choosing particularly easy, non-challenging texts have been voiced and consequently the time assigned to choice-led reading in school has been eroded. But demeaning reading behaviours such as choosing easy texts is unhelpful; adults, too, often choose 'easy' texts according to their purpose, such as perusing recipes, magazines and newspapers.

Personal reflection 1

Take a moment to reflect on some of your recent reading choices.

Do you choose only to read longer, harder, fatter books or simply what you wish to read according to your current purpose?

> *Provide your answer...*

Discussion

To support children's RfP, you need to let them exercise their rights as readers to choose what they want to read, not impose hierarchies and more demanding books or castigate them for engaging as 'fake readers'!

Nonetheless, focused professional attention and informed support for text choice and reading time is needed. If you think a child is pretending to read, even when they are able to then, as discussed in Session 3, get to know your reader and find texts that have relevance for them. More guidance is offered in Section 9.

Recent research indicates that reading time can foster engagement and motivation and nurture a love of reading (Moses and Kelly, 2019). Through closely observing 6-7-year-old's reading behaviours, these researchers found that when children are supported by an informed practitioner and wider RfP pedagogy, their engagement during this time developed their capacities as meaning makers.

Other research shows that when children read silently at their own pace, they read and comprehend up to 30% more than they would if they were required to read aloud to their teacher (Hiebert, Wilson and Trainin, 2010). A meta-analysis of vocabulary research also reveals that child-led 'free reading' is 12 times more effective at widening vocabulary in the long term compared to explicit instruction (McQuillan, 2019).

Independent reading has value for all young readers: those in the early stages, those struggling, those reading in their second language, and even those more assured (Hudson and Williams, 2015). However, to build, motivate and sustain the habit of reading children need significant support. You will look at this in more detail next.

5 Supporting reading time

Reading time has multiple titles: Everybody reading in class (ERIC), Uninterrupted silent sustained reading time (USSR), Sustained quiet uninterrupted individual reading time (SQUIRT) and Drop everything and read (DEAR). Whatever you call it, it is misleading to suggest that it is ever fully independent as ongoing support is needed to help children make informed choices, engage as readers, develop their stamina and perseverance, and participate in related informal conversations. Reading time, like all the RfP pedagogies needs to be Learner-led, Informal, Social and with Texts that Tempt (LIST).

Learner-led reading time

Learner-led reading time will develop by giving children options. This might include the chance to choose:

- what to read (online or in print)
- where to sit
- who to sit alongside
- to talk about what they're reading
- to remain silent and read alone
- to swap their book or magazine for another
- to seek teacher support for making a new choice
- to read to or with others
- to engage in book related play.

Informal reading time

Children who don't choose to read at home may not associate reading with relaxing, and a few cushions in the book corner will not solve this. Allow children choices and keep the tenor relaxed. Teacher participation – perhaps through discussing a book with small groups, reading themselves, offering a model of an adult engaged reader and supporting children's choices – is also important. Occasional stories and hot chocolate time, creating dens complete with torches and blankets, and moving reading opportunities outdoors can also help as they make reading time special and overtly shared.

Social reading time

Conversations about what children are reading can be included at the start or end of a more silent reading session and may also develop spontaneously during it. In the earlier years, children may choose to retell a story, alone or with others, by acting it out, using soft toys, turning the pages and re-voicing the narrative. They may even be invited to use specific reading strategies, but too overt a focus on strategies can constrain children's engagement and divert the purpose of the activity to skill development rather than nurturing choice-led reading.

Texts that tempt

Children need help to develop and exercise their discrimination as readers and find books that satisfy, surprise and sometimes stretch them. Friends' recommendations help and teachers' knowledge of children's texts and of individual learners, as was argued in Session 4, is also critical. Children's choice of texts that tempt them as readers is key, as the video in Activity 4 demonstrates.

Activity 3 The pedagogy checkLIST in action during reading time
Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Watch this video of Becky Thomson and her class of 10-11-year-olds during enriched reading time.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

Now you have watched the video, reflect on the following questions.

1.   What kinds of activity did the children participate in during this time?

---

2.   What range of text choices were evident?

3.   How engaged were the children?

4.   What opportunities for motivated engagement and talk developed?

5.   What was Becky's role prior to and during this time?

Comment

In Video 2, Becky offers a range of activities to nurture the children's engagement. Teachers do not need to insist on silence, although setting some time aside or a space in the room for relatively quiet, sustained reading is invaluable.

Children can only make choices from what is available. So, classroom collections, the teacher's mini-library and the school library all need attention to ensure breadth. In the early years, a core set of texts enriched by others offers support.

In the video, Becky joins a group to facilitate children's informal book talk, and their engagement and motivation, but does not dominate. The noticing teacher will be aware of off-task talk and those children who do not settle to read and will offer additional focused support.

The teacher's role involves ensuring their pedagogy is LIST, modelling their commitment and pleasure in reading, sharing their repertoire and establishing a supportive classroom environment in which relaxed book blether emerges naturally. You can learn more about this in the next section.

Optional resource

For more ideas and strategies to refine and shape reading time for RfP visit The Open University's Reading for Pleasure website.

6 Informal book talk and recommendations

Both adult and child readers often discuss what they have read by sharing their thoughts and asking for the views of others. This might be by responding to a frustrating newspaper report, a character's unusual behaviour, a moving letter or a delightful Facebook entry. Interaction is not required, it is not tested nor assessed, but it is reader-initiated, is often reciprocal and is one of the markers of an engaged reader. Research suggests that children who are engaged readers are:

> motivated to read, strategic in their approaches to reading, knowledgeable in their construction of meaning from text, and socially interactive while reading.

(Guthrie *et al.*, 2012, p. 601).

Informal discussions between children and adults about what they are reading enable common interests to be identified and connections and views to be shared in safe non-assessed contexts. Such talk helps readers make sense of what they are reading, cements friendships, triggers new reader relationships with peers and teachers, and contributes to the creation of interactive communities of readers (Cremin *et al.*, 2014; Moses and Kelly, 2018; Merga, McRae and Rutherford, 2018).

Informal book talk regularly emerges in the context of reading aloud and reading time as part of RfP pedagogy that is LIST, but assigning time to other book talk opportunities, at least initially, is necessary to support children's personal capacity to talk about texts reader to reader. Children often need support to participate fully in such significant book blether and may take time to accept that others are interested in their views and that they will be respectfully heard. Teachers will also be sharing their responses and listening carefully since such conversations offer useful insights into children's lives, which will enable more effective tailored text recommendations to be made.

Optional resource

To help you consider your practice around informal book talk and recommendations, you might want to complete this self-review.

7 Opportunities for book blether and making recommendations

Informal book talk opportunities abound, from low key conversations, to more structured book activities such as book blankets (as discussed in Session 4), 'big up your book', reading cafes and many more. 'Bigging up' a book is in effect focused book PR, with young people speaking persuasively to the class or in groups about a chosen book in such a manner that it tempts the listeners to want to read it.

The key purpose of such activities is not simply as book related 'fun' time-fillers, but as deliberately shaped opportunities to introduce children to a wide range of texts, to enhance their confidence in talking about texts, and to express and exchange their opinions. Teachers can join in the conversations as readers to stretch their own and the children's thinking through their engagement and text recommendations.

Even experienced readers find it hard to decide what to read next. Recommendations to help children find books that link to their individual interests and nurture their enthusiasm are key. The potential benefits that reading offers will only be enabled if the book resonates with the young reader, so as Session 4 highlighted teacher knowledge is critical. If this is thoughtfully used, reciprocal reader recommendations will develop.

Book buzz

As a teacher you might make recommendations by giving a brief introduction to three or four texts, reading aloud extracts or making connections to other texts, all of which lead to book sign up charts and time in groups for children to discuss what sounds tempting. This will in turn trigger more conversations between readers who have read the same text, which will generate a growing sense of a 'book buzz' in the classroom.

Aims

- To create a Reading for Pleasure culture in the classroom.
- To promote a 'book buzz' with children sharing and recommending stories and books to each other.
- To encourage children to read a wider range of books.

Read Casey Lynchey's case study about creating a Book Buzz with 8–10-year-olds.

Book shopping

With younger children, research indicates that following on from weekly teacher book talks and recommendations, book shopping became common practice in a class of 6-7-year-olds (Moses and Kelly, 2018). This involved children, each week, sharing their favourite book from the previous week with a partner and then browsing labelled classroom baskets and selecting six books to read. The combination of teacher and peer book talk, alongside reading aloud, teacher conferencing and independent reading, contributed to the gradual shift from 'off task, frustration or reading resistant behaviours' to markedly more positive reader identities (Moses and Kelly, 2018, p. 317).

Peer recommendations shelf

To help offer agency to child readers, a peer recommendations shelf can also be established. This provides opportunities for less-assured children's choices to be given equal status and triggers book talk between friends. When developed and then modelled by Jon Biddle in his class, he found it triggered borrowing, widened children's choices and helped strengthen the class' reading identity (2019).

Read Jon Biddle's case study with 9–11-year-olds about
creating a peer recommendation shelf.

Personal reflection 2

Think back through the three examples of practice: book buzz, book shopping and peer recommendations shelf. Think about what these have in common.

- To what extent were they Learner led, Informal, Social and with Texts that tempt (LIST)?
- How tightly were the teachers holding the reading reins?

> *Provide your answer...*

Comment

All three examples were underpinned by the pedagogy checklist, albeit in some cases unconsciously. The teachers involved gave considerable agency and autonomy to the children, allowing them to shop for their own book choices and recommend their choices to each other, for instance.

These activities were low key and informal in nature, none were assessed. The children all had the opportunity to shape them in their own way, connecting to friends and other readers in a sociable manner as they signed up for new books and chatted conversationally about their chosen or recommended texts.

Despite the autonomy given, the children's teachers guided the activities and offered considerable support in terms of the book baskets, related read-aloud and book promotion and the range of texts available.

Optional resource

For more
[practical classroom strategies to refine and shape book talk and recommendations](#) visit The Open University's Reading for Pleasure website.

8 Social reading environments

Reading environments in schools invite readers to engage and share the pleasures of reading. They contextualise reading aloud, supported independent reading and book talk activities, which indicates that the strands of RfP pedagogy operate in complex combination.

Each strand of RfP pedagogy highlights the role that social interaction plays in children's development as childhood readers. Through interaction, networks of readers – both small affinity groups and larger communities of readers – are built, which can help alter children's perception of reading. Two studies of children's lived experience of RfP in classrooms show that initially they viewed reading as a required school-based solo activity, but over the year came to see it as a more social and communal activity (Cremin *et al*., 2014; Moses and Kelly, 2018). The teachers' perceptions of reading also altered; they began to appreciate the social and relational nature of reading (Cremin *et al*., 2014) and worked to build communities within and beyond school, something you will look at in more detail in Session 6.

Reading environments encompass the physical resources (i.e. displays, books) as well as the social element (i.e. staff, children, visitors). It is easy to assume that if the former is well resourced, and time and effort has gone into creating attractive reading areas for instance, the latter will operate effectively. However, research indicates this is not the case and that acts of RfP 'window dressing' abound. For instance, in a study of disengaged boy readers (aged 9-10), the dedicated classroom reading areas were predominantly used for time-out for bad behaviour and as extra workspaces, and rarely for volitional reading (Hempel-Jorgensen *et al*., 2018). Furthermore, the reading displays were not made or owned by the children, but by staff who, pressured to raise standards, profiled reading as proficiency both physically and in interaction. No displays showed texts to tempt readers, and both reading time and reading aloud were teacher-led, relatively formal, and with very few opportunities for interaction beyond replying to teachers' questions. In addition, almost no informal book talk was documented (Hempel-Jorgensen *et al*., 2018).

Personal reflection 3

Imagine your classroom (or one you know) with children arriving in the morning or after lunch.

- What explicit or implicit messages about reading are evident?
- What does the atmosphere tell you about the social nature of the reading environment?
- Can you see/hear mini networks of engaged readers?

Comment

Every classroom carries messages about reading, so you will want to consider if your reading area and related displays promote and entice readers. Perhaps the key message is one of proficiency, with lists of key comprehension strategies and no outward facing texts, in which case RfP is not being foregrounded. In addition, who made the area and how child owned and shaped is it?

In reading environments that are inherently social, children will seize opportunities to talk to each other about what they are reading and to share texts of all kinds, so to some extent you can see and feel the social nature of reading. You will notice this behaviour around the school too, on the playground, when lining up and over lunch. In richly social reading environments this will involve the adults as well.

Optional resource

For more
practical classroom strategies to refine and shape your reading environment and all four strands of RfP pedagogy visit The Open University's Reading for Pleasure website.

Knowing how to track the impact of your four stranded RfP pedagogy is essential, as you will consider next.

9 Monitoring the impact of RfP pedagogy

As in all other areas of the curriculum, when teachers introduce new RfP pedagogic strategies, careful documentation of the impact on young readers is essential. Ensuring children's voices and views are listened to from the outset is also important. For example, teachers can gather children's views of reading time, their previous experiences and attitudes towards this, alongside other adults' perspectives. Combining children's and staff voices with observational notes over several sessions, alongside analysis of the young people's discussions on what makes a 'a good reader' for instance, will help to establish a baseline and a reference point following the reshaping of provision.

This guidance document on children's RfP offers strategies to help you notice and track the impact of your renewed RfP pedagogy. Working through this document is not part of the allotted time for the course, but nonetheless you may find it useful to peruse, save and return to later. By using a mixture of tools that always includes observation, you can reflect on shifts in the ways children position themselves as readers over time.

If teachers merely change their provision and hope this will have the desired impact, this is likely to reinforce the 'Matthew effect' whereby good readers benefit the most from interventions (Stanovich, 1986), and less assured readers are caught in a circle of disadvantage. Instead, a focus on disaffected readers is important as these 'can but don't' readers (Moss, 2000), are often not intrinsically motivated and may seek to avoid reading. Some may be 'RfP disadvantaged' and some may see reading as a chore. Altering this perspective, if it has been ingrained over many years, will be a challenging process.

In order to support less engaged readers, teachers need to attend to subtle shifts in their attitudes, behaviours and identities. To do so it is valuable to notice, document, reflect and act.
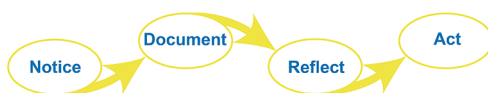

Figure 4 Notice, document, reflect and act

Activity 4 Taking action to support less engaged readers

Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Read the teachers' documentation and initial reflective questions below. Then decide what action you might take to support the child, either immediately or later. All the children are able to read at their grade level, but almost never choose to do so, at school or at home.

Lucy, aged 6 years old. It's reading aloud time. Lucy seems to be listening, her head directed towards Mr B, but when they're invited to predict in pairs what will happen to the mouse, she turns slowly towards Farrah, lets her share her views and just shrugs in response. They sit in silence for a few moments before Mr B starts reading again. Is Lucy listening or taking a break? How can I help?

Ellis, aged 8 years old. It's free choice time and most unusually he's not gone to the maths table but to our core text box and taken *Ruby's Worry* by Tom Percival which I read aloud yesterday. He has settled near Gus (who also has a copy) and appears to be reading it aloud, his intonation is similar to mine. How can I capitalise upon this?

Aafiya, aged 10 years old. It's library time and he's chatting to Cassius about the football. When reprimanded, he looks at the display, selects Dahl's *The Witches* and walks slowly to a spare chair, looking around all the while (for friends?). After a few minutes he goes back, whispering something to Cassius and grabs a *Horrible Histories* magazine. What can I do to support him?

Comment

Each act of noticing affords the educator an opportunity to reflect and act, but it is important to note there is never only one right response. Each action taken needs to be thoughtfully evaluated and its impact on the child tracked. For instance, the teacher might go to join Ellis who is re-reading the class read-aloud to himself and explore what he likes about the book. Equally they might ask Ellis if he'd like to take the book home, or borrow another Tom Percival book. Much will depend on their wider knowledge of Ellis and his interests.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the impact of RfP pedagogy enables teachers to respond to individual readers and to flexibly and subtly shift their practice to ensure that, as effectively as possible, it motivates all the children and draws them into the classroom community of readers.

10 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 5, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 5 quiz.

11 Summary of Session 5

In this session you have read about the value and nature of RfP pedagogy which encompasses reading aloud, reading time, book talk and recommendations in a highly social reading environment. These interrelated aspects of provision need to be Learner-led, Informal, Social and with Texts that tempt (LIST), whilst also professionally nuanced and responsively shaped.

You are now in a position to identify your strengths, enrich your provision, and document its impact on children's volitional reading. This will help as you seek to develop engaged communities of readers, which is the focus of Session 6.

By continuing to understand yourself as a reader, your own practices and preferences and the places and people involved (which vary according to text and context), you will be developing a richer understanding of the social, affective and relational nature of being a reader. Such an enhanced personal and professional awareness will help you nurture engaged, self-motivated and interactive young readers.

You should now go to Session 6.

Further resources

- **Reading Aloud in Britain Today (RABiT)**.
  This project highlights the diverse range of texts that adults read aloud, who they read to and why (Duncan, 2019). Do you recognise yourself?

Session 6: Building reading communities in school

Introduction

To create rich reading cultures and communities of engaged readers, the involvement of all children, staff and parents is crucial. Developing a school reading ethos and community is not an instructional package that can be delivered overnight, it is always a journey, one that, if carefully planned and evaluated, will constantly shift in response to new members, new texts and new interactions.

Although reading is literally undertaken by individual readers, it is a highly social practice. Families, friends and teachers, past and present, shape our reading lives and impact on the kind of readers we are, might have become and are still becoming. Reader relationships and networks both motivate and sustain children as readers and if you can build communities of engaged readers in your classroom and school this supports the habit of reading in childhood, making a difference to children's lives.

By the end of this session, you will have:

- considered the key characteristics of reading communities
- reflected on what it means to be a Reading Teacher
- explored why reader-to-reader relationships matter and how to build them
- examined the significance of the school reading environment and library
- been introduced to ways of involving others beyond the school community.

1 Characteristics of reading communities

Before looking at the different characteristics that make up a reading community, complete Activity 1 to help you reflect on the reading community in your school.

Activity 1 Review your school reading community

Allow approximately 5 minutes to complete this activity

To help you consider your understanding of reading communities, complete this self-review.

Reading for Pleasure: self-review.

Make a note of areas of strength and areas for possible development.

Comment

Teachers recognise that valuing individual children and encouraging them to voice their views about what they are reading is important. However, time and the pressures of the curriculum often mean that the sorts of relationships that exist between children and teachers are founded on more formal exchanges, focused on reading instruction, phonics practice and set texts being studied as part of the literacy curriculum.

Research indicates that when teachers come to recognise, value and understand more about the social nature of reading (examined in Session 2) and develop as Reading Teachers, their practice shifts and new opportunities for interaction around texts develop (Cremin, 2021a). Other studies have also highlighted the significance of teachers as explicit reading role models and the value of readers interacting socially with one another in school (Tonne and Pihl, 2012).

Reading communities are typically characterised by reciprocity and interaction and in summary encompass:

- a shared concept of what it means to be a reader in the 21st century
- considerable teacher and child knowledge of children's literature and other texts
- pedagogic practices which acknowledge and develop diverse reader identities
- new social spaces that encourage choice and child ownership of their own Reading for Pleasure
- spontaneous text-talk on the part of all participants
- a shift in the locus of control that fosters reader agency and independence.

(Cremin *et al.*, 2014, p. 155)

Within such communities, Reading Teachers play a crucial role, to which you will now turn.

2 Reading Teachers

Reading Teachers are teachers who read and readers who teach, and who explore the interesting and potentially fruitful connections between these two stances. These reflective professionals hold a mirror up to their own everyday reading practices, preferences and habits and reflect on what it means to be a reader. They seek to understand more about reading in order to support their children as readers. They also frame their classroom practice in responsive ways that recognise diversity, desire and difference. So, Reading Teachers do far more than simply share a positive attitude towards reading.

The idea of Reading Teachers was originally coined by an American research team (Commeyras *et al.*, 2003) and has been further researched and developed in UK classrooms (Cremin *et al.*, 2014; Cremin *et al.*, 2018; Cremin, Williams and Denby, 2019). The work shows that Reading Teachers are well positioned to develop genuinely shared reading communities, to influence children's perception of themselves as readers and, significantly, to impact upon young people's engagement as readers.

Activity 2 Developing as a Reading Teacher
Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

Figure 1 Reading Teachers may...

1. **Notice:** Take a look at Figure 1. Make a note of all the reading habits and practices you recognise or may engage in sometimes.

2. **Document:** Are there any more you can add? For example, you may turn down pages, make notes in the margin, be oblivious to all else while reading, skip long passages, etc.

3. **Reflect:** Select one of your habits and consider what it might mean for child readers. For example, if you can relate to seeing the cover of an old book and being transported back to a time in your past, might children value being re-connected to their past reading lives in the same way?

4. **Act:** Plan to undertake an activity or discussion in school to build on what you have noticed. For example, to explore being 'transported back' could you borrow picture books from a younger class to browse and re-read? Or might you invite the class to create PowerPoints of their reading histories to share and consider their earlier engagement? Could this help give some children a stronger sense of identity as readers, even a shared identity?

Comment

Such activities, based on the behaviours and habits of reflective adult readers, bring an authenticity to reading experiences and help to build communities of readers. The action taken will be adjusted according to the age of the children, but even when doing this activity with six-year-olds, you are likely to find that re-reading their favourite books from nursery is an engaging, collaborative experience for them.

Nonetheless, challenges exist for teachers who wish to teach from a reader's point of view, especially in countries where the standards agenda and reading proficiency take centre stage, and reader relationships and Reading for Pleasure are positioned backstage. In spite of this, by becoming more aware of your own and the children's identities as readers, you will begin to recognise diversity and difference and take responsibility for shaping what counts as reading in your classroom.

In the next section you'll watch a Reading Teacher in action and see what she did to support her class to become motivated and engaged readers.

3 A Reading Teacher in action

One teacher, Claire Williams, in reflecting upon her tendency to enjoy a hot chocolate whilst reading at home and in the garden, wondered if by occasionally offering children drinks and biscuits, by reading outside and by enabling them to choose where to sit and with whom, this might support their own engagement with reading. Although Claire thought the novelty might wear off quickly, instead she found that as she gave her class increased autonomy as readers, the amount of book sharing, talk and engagement increased.

Watch this 2-minute video of Claire and her class of eager readers.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1

As well as recognising the importance of creating relaxed reading spaces in the classroom, Claire also developed her knowledge of the children as readers through reading conferences. This enabled her to make tailored book recommendations to individual children. Over time, a community of readers emerged, of which Claire was a full member.

Through ongoing reflection, Claire continues to develop as a Reading Teacher with an enhanced personal and professional awareness of what it means to be a reader and shapes her practice in responsive ways. She reflects on what she does as a reader.
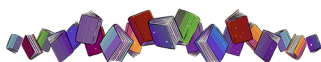
Optional resource

This article offers you more detail on being a Reading Teacher.

Cremin, T. (2021b)
'The red thread of reading for pleasure: Reading Teachers', *Books for Keeps*

4 Reader relationships across the school

Reading Teachers do not need to be classroom teachers. Headteachers, teaching assistants, reading volunteers, librarians, and parents – all adults – can reflect upon and share their engagement in texts as fellow readers. However, headteachers have a particularly important role to set the tone and lead by example as authentic, engaged readers.

In reflecting upon both their print and digital reading lives, adults are likely to widen their conceptions of reading and what it means to be a reader in the 21st century. This will help to create more inclusive reading communities, where all texts are valued and where all adults share the value, pleasure and satisfaction in being readers. In this way they can instil a love of reading in the young.

Children benefit from seeing their teacher and other adults as recreational readers, but, crucially, this needs to made very visible to them (Merga, 2016). Displays can help, but children are also helped by seeing and hearing adults discussing what they're reading and observing the swapping/loaning of texts genuinely reader to reader. There are multiple ways for adults and children to share their reading lives together in class, at home or in assembly, some of which are shown in Box 1. Using these ideas can help to showcase the delight to be found in reading and also demonstrate the differences and commonalities in reading, with many text types and readers.

> ## Box 1 Ideas for sharing and showcasing readers' lives, preferences and practices
>
> - **Who reads in our homes?**Everyone is invited to take photos of themselves and family members reading at home.
> - **Why bother?**Readers from across the school share their views on why they read and their favourite text type/s.
> - **Old, gold and never sold**Readers share books they adore and cannot be parted from, from childhood or more recently and explain why.
> - **Readers in disguise**Staff take photos of themselves reading, but in disguise. Children then guess who they are, based on the text and knowledge of staff.
> - **Guess the shelfie**Staff take photos of a bookshelf (bedside table, pile of texts from home, etc.) and get the children to guess whose shelf is whose, based on knowledge of staff.
> - **Reading histories**Readers create posters/PowerPoints of beloved reading from the past.
> - **24-hour reads**Everyone creates a collage of what they read across a 24-hour period.

- **Extreme reading**Everyone takes photos of themselves or family members reading in unusual places.

Within a school-wide focus on building reader relationships and communities such opportunities, like those listed in Box 1, are invaluable. Alongside work on staff knowledge of texts and readers, and RfP pedagogy, such wider sharing is essential to help build reader-to-reader relationships across the school.

Activity 3 Sharing reading lives

To be completed in the classroom

Choose one of the ideas listed in Box 1 and try it out in your class or school. Make a note of what happened, then respond to the questions below.

- How many different kinds of texts were evident?
- Could your class categorise these? E.g. magazines, comics, social media, non-fiction, fiction, emails, etc.
- What did the experience of participating reveal about the readers? What differences and commonalities were evident?

Comment

Everyone's reading life and identity are unique; everyone has different interests in life and often you read in relation to these, to serve your own goals. Nonetheless, there will be areas of commonality and connection, which can trigger sharing amongst staff and children, and between children.

Research suggests young people are motivated by a desire to belong, and that social and relational support for reading is particularly beneficial to less engaged or reluctant readers. Such readers may become disheartened if reading is positioned as a competition, with gold stars or stickers being awarded (Orkin *et al*., 2018). Unenthusiastic readers need support to build their assurance, texts to tempt them and opportunities to engage socially with adults and children. Social motivation, as noted in Session 2, influences reader engagement, and can be supported by volunteer reading helpers.

5 Reading volunteers

Reading volunteers can play an important role in developing less-engaged children's pleasure, assurance and ability as readers. Often drawn from the local community, they may be parents or grandparents, community members or adults from the corporate sector linked to reading volunteer organisations. There is relatively little research evidence on the benefits of such reading partnerships, although some, such as the US based volunteer tutoring programme HOSTS (Burns *et al*., 2008) and the Experience Corps (Morrow-Howell *et al*., 2009), indicate short and long-term effects for reading skills, including fluency and comprehension.

Volunteers are frequently motivated to help children directly (Tracey *et al*., 2014), however this can result in doing too much for the child and reducing their agency as a reader. To avoid this and ensure helpers develop children's confidence to voice their views and become active meaning makers, training is necessary. In the UK, the reading charity Coram Beanstalk not only requires volunteers to complete focused training before offering one-to-one support, but it also includes ongoing support and clarity about the focus of the work. Schools, too, invite parents and local community members to volunteer and support readers, this work often prioritises listening to children read and helping them use their reading skills, but volunteers also need help to nurture choice-led read and the child's desire to read.

Activity 4 Supporting reading volunteers
Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity.

Imagine you are going to run a short support session for reading volunteers whose remit is to support children's Reading for Pleasure. Make a note of the key elements you want to highlight that will help them in their one-to-one or small group sessions.

Comment

A key element will be getting to know each reader well. This includes learning about their interests, attitudes and skills, finding texts which have relevance for the child and sharing these enthusiastically, but always offering choice. Developing strong reciprocal reader relationships, focused support that responds to needs and making the experience personal and pleasurable is also important.

RfP training also needs to focus on the impact of nurturing children's desire to read, on developing the adult's knowledge of children's texts and of readers, and on RfP pedagogy (read-aloud, book talk, recommendations, and time to read in a social reading environment). Understanding the need to notice, document, reflect and act upon the child's response is key (recall Session 5, Section 9 which explores this process).

Volunteers often work in available spaces around school, which also need to showcase the power and pleasure of reading. It is this wider school reading environment that you will look at next.

6 The school reading environment

In your mind's eye, open the door to your school in the position of a visitor. Walk into the school, down the corridors and into any communal spaces.

- What do you see and hear as you walk around?
- Does a reading ethos and culture welcome you?
- What messages do the displays carry about reading?
- Is there a sense of an interactive school community of readers?

The social fabric of every school's reading environment will be evident in the corridors, on the playground, outside the head's office, in the staffroom, as well as in the classrooms and library (Cremin, 2019). In vibrant reading communities – in schools and elsewhere – reading aloud, conversations between readers, book swapping and reciprocal recommendations will be commonplace interactions. Books will be seen in readers' hands, in piles, in displays and in boxes. Additionally, displays of all kinds that promote reading will be evident.

Other ways to help build a reading community in the school include creating book doors (classroom doors decorated with the covers of class 'books in common' or artwork of one book), sharing staff and parents' bookshelves, working on 'I'm a reader' displays, and encouraging book nooks on the playground where children and adults can share books, comics and magazines from the outdoor reading box. These will all serve to trigger talk. Some schools assign an adult to read regularly on the playground next to the outdoor box. This can often result in children quickly gathering around to browse the box, which then leads to small groups of readers reading to one another or hearing more stories. 'Story squads' of older children can also read with younger ones in the library or in a playground book nook.

In addition, many schools have developed outdoor reading areas, and some seek to combine Forest school with outdoor reading by having a story circle with logs the children can sit on, or a story garden or tent. In planning for reading in such spaces, staff will want to use their RfP pedagogy checkLIST and ensure the time there is learner led, informal, social and with texts that tempt, as you learnt about in Session 5.
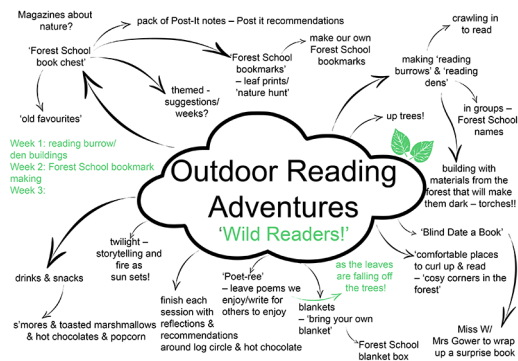
Figure 2 Possibilities for outdoor reading adventures

Figure 2 shows a poster of the possibilities for outdoor reading adventures in teacher Claire Williams' school. It highlights how there are multiple ways of taking the school reading environment outside, beyond the classroom and school library. In this example, Claire listened to the book club members' recommendations for how they would like the outdoor reading to be shaped and gave them the freedom to read in pairs or small groups, as well as in solitary spaces. Initially, the dens distracted the children from reading, but over time members returned to their spaces (up trees, under trees and on log piles) and read, as the adults did likewise. Both children and adults then often came together before the close for a drink, a biscuit and a good book blether. In attending to the creation of a living community of readers through offering outdoor reading, Claire helped enhance the children's engagement and commitment as young readers.

There is a danger, however, that schools become involved in 'performing reading' in public ways, through, for example, purchasing expensive buses, wigwams and reading sheds, and spending time creating displays that may become empty demonstrations for parents or inspectors. This needs to be guarded against. Reading environments are there to be used and need to be shared and shaped by children, as this supports the reading habit. One such environment is the school library, which you will look at next.

7 The school library

School libraries make a rich contribution to Reading for Pleasure. They offer access to a range of books and resources and provide another learning environment, as well as a safe space to read and talk about texts.
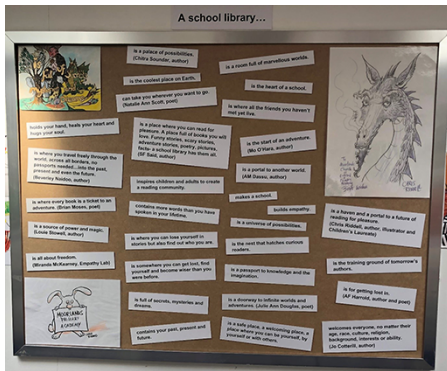
Libraries and librarians support and help create reading cultures by curating the book selection for readers, making books visible, offering programmes to excite readers and creating enticing spaces for reading (Loh *et al*., 2017). Consistently, international research, both large scale and case study, has demonstrated the benefits of school libraries (Teravainen and Clark, 2017; Gildersleeves, 2012; Williams, Wavell and Morrison, 2013). In particular these indicate:

- a strong relationship between reading attainment and school library use
- libraries are motivators of independent choice-led reading
- libraries foster personal development and positive attitudes to learning.

In the UK there is no statutory requirement for primary schools to have libraries, and there are few full-time trained librarians. Many schools devolve the work to reading leaders, teaching assistants and parent helpers, who can sometimes open the library before or after school or on Saturday mornings. Some schools also involve children as reading ambassadors. Rudkin and Wood (2019) found that enabling young people to help curate their library collections can have a positive effect on their engagement with library services and Reading for Pleasure.

Activity 5 Let's love the library

Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

Read Karen's Robertson's case study *Let's Love the Library*. As you read, make notes on the strategies Karen used to involve children.

Comment

Seeking to ensure that the school library was shaped and 'owned' by the children, Karen listened to their ideas when offered through the suggestion box. Strategically, she involved the children in categorising the books in ways that suited them and also bought in more fiction as requested.

By timetabling library use and creating a comfortable atmosphere in which staff and children could browse, select, read, and chat about books, Karen succeeded in creating a buzz about reading in the library and beyond. Which strategy could you reshape for use in your context?

Now listen to the advice of Marilyn Brocklehurst, a children's librarian who runs the Norfolk Children's Book Centre. She offers tips on reviewing and developing school libraries, which will be applicable to your own classroom collection. As the English government's Reading Framework (DfE, 2021) highlights, such areas need to be regularly refreshed and replenished and dull, dog-eared books removed.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

Where local library services exist, schools can work to make maximum use of them, as they offer a wide range of books that can entice young readers and not just boxed sets related to subjects or topics across the curriculum. Linking to the local school library service or public library and helping children become members enables them to access a wider range of texts that may tempt and inspire them.

Despite the overwhelming benefits, disparities in library provision exist. In the UK, the Great School Libraries Campaign revealed that schools serving the most disadvantaged communities are almost five times less likely to have a designated library area than schools serving the least disadvantaged communities (44% vs 9%) (GSLC, 2019). School budgets are not as commonly augmented in areas of high economic challenge and furthermore, a recent National Literacy Trust libraries survey revealed that over a quarter (26.9%) of respondents expressed a need for more diversity within their current book stock (Todd, 2021).Without an inclusive book collection all children cannot see themselves in books. Looking internationally, concerns about the state of school libraries and the demise of public libraries in some countries significantly constrain efforts to develop the habit of Reading for Pleasure in childhood. At the time of writing, the challenges created by Covid-19, with library closures and concerns about transferring the virus, has exacerbated the difficulty some schools face in offering a range of high-quality texts in an enticing school library.

Another challenge is that some digital library systems, which have becoming increasingly popular recently, tend to position reading as a competition, an extrinsic motivator (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2017). Viewing reading in this way does not sustain readers in the longer term, as they read to compete, to gain points and rewards, not for the sake of the pleasure involved. As discussed in Session 2, considerable research evidence suggests that intrinsic motivation is more closely linked to developing a love of reading than extrinsic motivation (Orkin *et al*., 2018). However, digital library systems still hold value, not least because the use and accessibility of e-books can enlarge library stock and enable children to swap books, thus supporting a reading culture and widening children's repertoires of known authors.

Children's authors and illustrators can also play a valuable role in encouraging readers, as the next section examines.

8 Involving authors, illustrators and poets

Meeting an author in person or online can be an exciting and valuable experience for young readers and can increase their interest in books and reading. Many writers speak passionately and personally about their work. Author visits, if carefully planned and prepared for in partnership with the visitor, can shift young people's relationships to books and support their journeys as readers. Visiting authors and illustrators tend to read to children from their work, run writing workshops and promote reading. Many organisations exist which broker author visits, some of which can be found in the Further resources section at the end of this session.

Classes also connect with authors on social media, which can increase children's enthusiasm for their work and, by association, reading. For example, the Patron of Reading scheme in the UK focuses on fostering a Reading for Pleasure culture by an author, poet, storyteller or illustrator developing a relationship with a school to build reader-to-reader and writer-to-writer relationships over a sustained period of time. Whilst relatively few studies have tracked the impact of these arts and cultural opportunities, those that exist tend to focus on the impact on young writers. However, in relation to inspiring readers, anecdotal evidence is frequently positive. Arts Council subsidies are available to support funding visits and some charities offer free children's literature festivals, such as Pop up Education. These opportunities enable larger numbers of children to access authors online. A Book Pen Pal initiative in which postcards with book recommendations are exchanged, also connects children with authors. These connections are part of wider community-building partnership work.

9 Parents and wider community partners

Building and sustaining a school reading community that encompasses parents, carers, families and other members of the wider community, locally and nationally, takes time. It is enriched by strong staff knowledge of texts and readers, and a flexible RfP pedagogy.

Figure 3 Grandma's snug

Figure 3 is of Grandma's Snug: a community reading space created by Clare McGreevy, staff, parents and children in a Rochdale school. Opened by the mayor, Grandma's Snug has hosted numerous local reading events and also offers children a cosy space to read.

By broadening their reading network, schools can get involved in a range of initiatives to which parents and other adults are invited, both virtually and in person. Session 7 is dedicated to exploring parent partnerships around reading, and you will examine multiple ways to listen to, learn from and involve parents, carers and families that extend far beyond simply sending home a reading record for nightly sign off.

In this final section of Session 6 though, the focus is more on connecting to organisations that provide projects which seek to nurture a love of reading in the young. Seeking out opportunities to work with other schools, connecting to your local library and participating in multiple reading initiatives are all beneficial. Such initiatives, for example the English government endorsed Reading Together Day (2020), or their Summer of Reading initiative (2021), can help widen the scope and reach of the school's reading community. They cannot, however, replace the local work needed to build a reciprocal and interactive reading community in each classroom and across the school.

In England, organisations and subject associations offer continuing professional development (CPD), reading resources and projects in which schools can get involved. Such organisations include for example: UKLA, National Literacy Trust, Book Trust, The Open University, The Reading Agency, the Reader Organisation, Read for Good, The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, and Book Clubs in Schools. Schools can also connect to local initiatives, such as Morrisons' Little Library in partnership with The Open University, as well as local businesses, secondary schools, churches and charities, which may sponsor books for the library, offer buddy readers or fund an author visit. Moreover, the creation of an annual reading newsletter (produced by staff and children) can showcase to supporters and members of the local community, the range of reading activities happening in school, whilst a termly newsletter (as in Figure 4) can offer simple book reviews to help keep the profile of reading high.

Figure 4 St Matts' Reading for Pleasure newsletter

Celebrating reading locally can take many forms, and might include, for example, special reading assemblies, poetry performances, World Book Night Sleepovers, a school 'booknic' or even a mini-Hay Festival. Across the globe, organisations such as World Book Day (a UK-based charity) and the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA), bring children and books together for a designated Book Week. During this time schools are encouraged to celebrate books and connect to children's authors and illustrators. Multiple events are planned and resources are offered to highlight the importance of reading. Such large-scale events play an important role in bringing the pleasures of reading into the spotlight by amplifying the message and drawing in others from the wider community.

However, in schools with communities of engaged readers, every day is a book day! Two such UK schools are Sneinton Primary in Nottingham and Sayes Court Nursery and Primary school in Surrey. These are award-winning schools that have been recognised for the vibrancy of their reading communities in the Farshore (previously Egmont), Open University, United Kingdom Literacy Association Reading for Pleasure Award. You will read about them in the next activity.

Activity 6 Building a reading community
Allow approximately 15 minutes to complete this activity

Choose and read one of the two case studies listed below. As you read, reflect on how the school built its reading community.

Developing a Reading Community by Sayes Court Nursery and Primary School

Where every day is Book Day! Sneinton Primary

Comment

Schools who work to develop a welcoming ethos and culture of reading, often initially seek to engage all the staff and children, before reaching out to parents and other members of the local community. For instance, in Sayes Court Nursery and Primary School, following the success of the children's reading sleepovers and local library visits, parents were invited to make family reading rivers (as discussed in Session 2).

Both Sneinton Primary School and Sayes Court Nursery and Primary School found that home school reading records and inviting parents to regular reading assemblies was not enough. Their work instead looked to engage parents, local businesses and others after they had attended to building communities of conversation around reading and being a reader with the children.

---

10 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 6, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 6 quiz.

11 Summary of Session 6

To build communities of engaged readers, teachers need to take a broadly social view of being a reader and offer appropriate support based on their own knowledge of children's texts and of their children as readers. Through combining this with their responsive RfP pedagogy, reader agency and positive reader identities will be nurtured. Reading Teachers who reflect upon their own experiences as readers play a key part in building reader-to-reader relationships and making the experience of choice-led reading authentic and informal.

Alongside the school environment and library, reader relationships between children and adults will serve to kindle children's interest, excitement, and pleasure in being readers. Creating reading communities is energy intensive and arguably never fully 'achieved'; they need constant nurturing. In these communities, children, parents, reading volunteers and teachers interact around reading in a manner which is reciprocal and shared. Wider support networks and opportunities to work with authors are also capitalised upon.

Building communities of engaged readers is essential in order to support children's pleasure in reading. Involving parents is crucial in such communities and this is the focus of Session 7.

You should now go to Session 7.

Further resources

The following links are to organisations supporting schools to build relationships with authors.

Organisations such as Authors Aloud and Virtual Authors UK work to organise author, illustrator, poet and storyteller visits and virtual visits to schools.

The Patron of Reading scheme pairs a children's author, poet, storyteller or illustrator with a school. This Patron of Reading then helps to develop a Reading for Pleasure culture in the school.

Pop up Education provides educational programmes in schools.

The Book Pen Pal initiative pairs schools with authors and illustrators who can exchange book recommendations via postcards.

Session 7: Supporting children as readers at home

Introduction

In Session 6, you considered the importance of reader relationships and building communities of engaged readers in classrooms and schools. This session sharpens the focus on children's reading outside the classroom and school environment and includes attention to parents as partners.
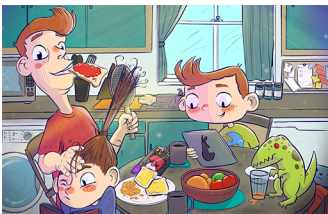
Data from the 5-yearly international Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) showed that children who are motivated to read outside of school achieve higher scores on reading assessments (McGrane *et al*., 2017). Indeed, the textual environments in which children are immersed outside of the classroom play a critical role in shaping their engagement with, and attitudes toward, reading (Levy, 2011). When educators recognise and value children's home reading practices, foster positive home–school relationships and develop shared understandings of reading with parents and children, they can make a real difference to children's reading lives.

In Session 4, you read about why it is important for educators to find out about children's home reading practices and their interests and preferences in order to make appropriate recommendations and offer children texts with personal resonance. This session delves deeper into the nature of children's home reading and considers how such reading differs from, and interconnects with, school reading. It then explores how reciprocal relationships with parents can support children's pleasure in reading.

By the end of this session, you will have:

- an understanding of the differences and connections between children's reading at home and reading at school
- explored research on shared reading in home environments
- considered how to foster reciprocal partnerships with parents
- reflected upon children's access to books and other reading materials at home and how to enhance it.

1 The nature of children's reading at home

Ensuring children learn to read is one of the primary goals of the first few years of school. However, this initial emphasis on decoding and then later focus on reading attainment can give the impression that school-sanctioned reading and school reading materials are of greater value than reading that involves different, 'lower-status' types of texts. There is a danger that educators, parents and, indeed, children do not recognise their everyday encounters with a wide range of texts as legitimate reading. Children who do not consider themselves accomplished readers in school, may devour digital texts or comics, for example, at home. When educators and parents acknowledge and celebrate all the reading that children do at home, it can shape children's self-perceptions and self-confidence as readers and have a profound and positive impact on their reader identities.

You may recall the 'Reading Treasure Hunt' (Session 2) and 'Reading Rivers' (Session 4) activities described in previous sessions, which exemplify that reading is an integral part of children's everyday lives and experiences. Whilst some reading at home is more formal and imposed by teachers or parents, a great deal of home reading is voluntary, self-generated and spontaneous. Sometimes this reading is a fleeting engagement with a text that serves a purpose and achieves a specific goal, such as making a selection on a take-away menu. At other times, home reading is sustained over longer periods and may continue over days, weeks or even months, such as reading a novel or following a sports team. Much of the reading children do at home is free from the expectations and requirements of school and is not controlled or sanctioned by adults. As such, this reading is highly flexible and opens up different possibilities and potentials; sometimes, children's home reading may be intentionally oppositional to, and subversive of school practices (Maybin, 2007).

Personal reflection 1

What do you remember about your own reading at home as a child?

- What memories come to mind when you think back to reading at home as a child?
- Who did you read with?
- Where did you read?
- What sorts of media and reading materials did you have access to?
- To what extent was the reading you undertook at home your own choice?

Comment

Your reflections may highlight a wide range of reading experiences or very few. Perhaps a parent read to you as a child, but that might not have been the case. You may have had library books, or books that you owned. You might have read magazines or catalogues, and your reading material may have been in English or other languages. Depending on your age, you may not have read 'on-screen' at all as a child. Did you recall reading on the sofa, in bed, in the garden or somewhere else? Reflecting on your own childhood reading and your personal reading journey will help you to recognise and appreciate children's unique reading journeys.

2 Choice and agency at home

A key feature of children's reading at home is the potential for choice and agency. Much of their home reading is not timetabled, hence there is greater scope to sustain reading that is highly engaging with no requirement to continue reading when they have lost interest. Home environments offer comfy spaces for reading; children might read in bed, lying on the floor, hanging off the end of the sofa, or snuggled up with a parent or grandparent. Moreover, they are not confined to one space, they can move and change position at will. Whilst it is difficult to replicate these exact spaces in the classroom environment, it is important to recognise that place and space are crucial aspects of the affective dimensions of reading and to consider adapting your school environment as discussed in Session 6, Section 6.

Choice of reading materials for children at home is a complex issue. Some homes are filled with a wide range of reading materials and children may have access to texts that they would not necessarily encounter at school. For example, texts available in bi-lingual / multi-lingual households offer more choice and enable children the opportunity to read in their mother tongue.

The internet also widens the choice of reading materials for older children. With information at their fingertips, they can spontaneously explore a topic of interest through a search engine; finding information about a celebrity or a new video game, for instance. Fanfiction (fictional writing authored by fans of an existing work of fiction, such as *Harry Potter* or *Star Wars*) is an increasingly popular genre which is exclusively available online and varies in length from a few paragraphs to entire novels. A study for the National Literacy Trust (Picton, Clark and Judge, 2020) found that four out of five teenagers who play video games, read related materials, such as in-game communications, reviews, blogs, books and fan fiction. These sorts of highly motivating texts are not usually encouraged in school.

However, not all children have equal access to reading materials, nor technology and the internet and so schools, libraries and educators have a crucial role to play in providing access to a wide range of texts. Indeed, many school libraries and classroom bookshelves include a different genre, such as comics, magazines and digital texts, as well as books. Educators also play a vital role in widening children's repertoires, which is why getting to know children as readers and learning about families' reading practices is so important.

3 Understanding shared reading in homes

The impact of shared reading in the home environment on children's holistic development is well documented. A research study by Hall, Levy and Preece (2018) examined data from in-depth interviews with 29 parents of pre-school children to investigate their shared reading practices at home. They found that the parents perceived shared reading as a way to develop children's literacy skills, but that it was not always linked to school literacy and argued that it should be understood as a family practice rather than an educational endeavour. As another research study in the USA has also shown, parents often view shared reading as enjoyable and a social time to spend with their children, a time to bond around reading (Hindin, Steiner, and Dougherty, 2017).

Whilst shared reading is often thought of as part of the practices of 'middle-class' families, the study by Hall *et al*. (2018) found that it was also an important aspect of daily routines in communities with a lower socio-economic status. In addition, parents who did not consider themselves good or engaged readers reported having very positive reading relationships with their children. The study illustrated that shared reading also nurtured choice as children tended to select the books to be read, that it was highly social and that it motivated discussion around the books. This important study challenges stereotypical ideas about which families engage in shared reading at home. However, data also highlights that not all children experience this sort of shared reading. A consumer insight survey of parents in the UK reported by David (2020) found that:

- 45% of 0–2-year-olds are read to daily or nearly every day.
- 58% of 3–4-year-olds are read to daily or nearly every day.
- 44% of 5-7-year-olds are read to daily or nearly every day.

These findings suggest that the decline in shared reading at home between the ages of 5 and 7 is due, in part, to parents perceiving reading as something learnt in school.

Activity 1 Designing a shared reading poster for parents
Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity.

Imagine you are designing a poster or a PowerPoint to encourage parents to continue to read with their children as they get older. Make a note of some of the key points that

---

you would include to persuade parents of the benefits. You might like to think back to Session 3 on the power of narrative and Session 5 on reading aloud.

Comment

You might have included some of the following.

Shared reading:

- is an opportunity for relationship building – it is a relaxed social time, an opportunity to talk, share ideas and listen to your child

- is an opportunity for parents to position themselves as readers and convey the message that reading is valued

- provides a supportive environment to discuss 'tricky topics' or talk about difficult circumstances in a supportive environment

- ignites children's curiosity and gives them the opportunity to chat and ask questions. It supports their perspectives, knowledge and understanding of the world

- allows children to engage with challenging texts that are beyond their current reading ability

- supports and encourages independent reading

- develops children's knowledge of narrative structure (e.g. how stories begin and end, plot, characters)

- supports children's language development, vocabulary, word recognition, and comprehension.

Working in partnership with parents to support reading at home is crucial to promoting Reading for Pleasure. The next section explores the ways in which you might support multiliterate children's reading at home.

Optional resource

These book chat videos and other resources can be shared with parents and staff. The videos and their accompanying poster explain how to make shared reading at home – both with and to children – child-led and engaging.

4 Supporting multiliterate children's reading at home

Approximately one fifth of children in British primary schools are described as being speakers of English as an additional language, and so when considering children's Reading for Pleasure at home, it is important to consider those children who are bilingual/multilingual (speakers of two or more languages) and biliterate/multiliterate (readers and writers in two or more languages).

However, these children are far from a homogenous group and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to understanding or supporting multilingual children as readers. Much of the research on multiliteracy focuses on newly arrived immigrants and those children in the very early stages of learning English, yet there is some evidence to show that by upper primary years, many multiliterate children in the UK have switched to reading predominantly in the language of the school (Worthy, Nuñez and Espinoza, 2016). One element of promoting children's multiliteracy is to foster and enable Reading for Pleasure in their heritage language.

Research carried out by Little (2021) took an in-depth look at the reading lives of seven children aged 8–13, across six multilingual families in England over nearly a year. This study illustrated that children expressed very different perceptions of and preferences for reading in English or in their heritage language. Little (2021) explains that most of the children 'mentioned at least some frustration, at some point, in their multilingual reading journey' (p.11). However, children with personal migration histories showed strong emotional connections to heritage language books, particularly those books that had

journeyed with them. Two of the children explained that they might choose to read a book in heritage language if they had firstly read and enjoyed it in English.

Many multilingual children, however, experience issues of access to heritage language reading materials and the role of supporting multiliteracy and facilitating Reading for Pleasure in heritage language tends to fall to parents.

Whilst it may not be possible to offer an extensive collection of books and reading materials in every child's heritage language, there are ways in which schools can support multiliterate children. Working in partnership with parents and the local community can help to build a bank of resources, and companies such as Mantra Lingua and Letterbox Library offer a collection of dual language books and eBooks. Most importantly, by using and adapting strategies to find out about children's home reading practices (see Session 4), you can celebrate children's multilingual reading and community languages and support multiliterate children's reader identities.

Optional resource
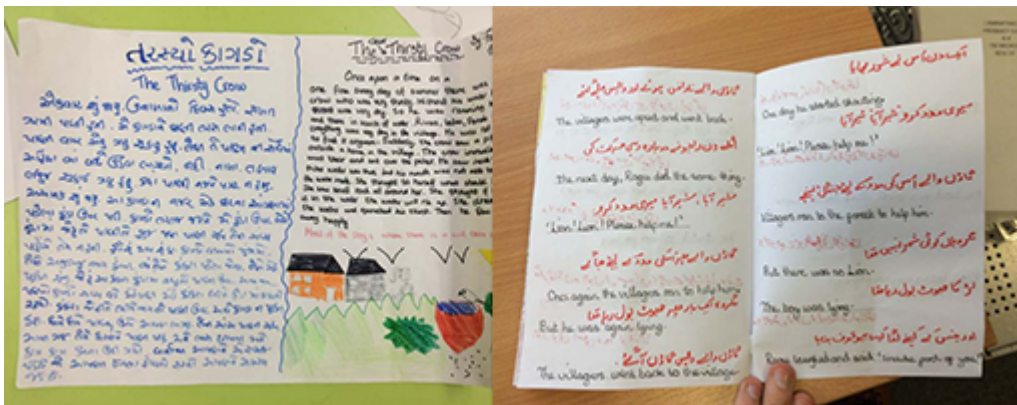
In this example of practice, Jonny Walker, Assistant Headteacher at Park Primary school in East London, describes how children, staff, parents and the local community co-created a shared library of homemade bilingual books of stories that the children's older relatives had passed down in their first language. The enthusiasm and enjoyment that the project engendered among children and their families was inspiring.

5 Reading at home: mirroring RfP pedagogies

In Session 5, you read about the RfP pedagogy, which encompasses reading aloud, reading time and book talk in a social reading environment. This is also key, as Figure 1 denotes, for supporting readers at home.
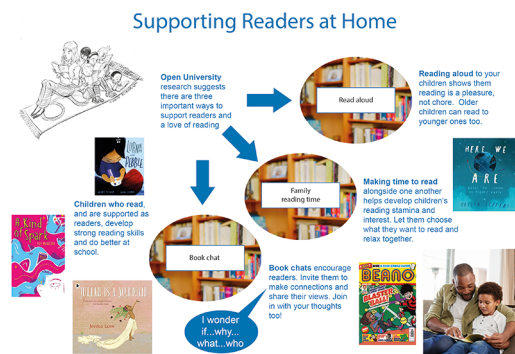

Figure 1 Supporting readers at home

In Session 5, you also read about the RfP pedagogy checkLIST which can help teachers ensure their practice is planned with the goal of developing children's desire and motivation to read (Cremin, 2019). Pedagogies and practices in school that are learner-led, informal, social and with texts that tempt (LIST), have been found to be effective in motivating young readers by promoting positive attitudes and inspiring children to read more frequently.

It is noteworthy that the checkLIST model that is promoted in the classroom, is often implicitly discernible in children's Reading for Pleasure at home. Their reading might involve a hobby magazine, a recipe, a video game blog or a novel, but it is clear that children's home reading tends to be learner-led, informal, social and with texts that tempt.

Activity 2 Reflecting on reading at home

Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Listen to Audio 1 of an adult–child book chat in which 10-year-old Bruce talks about his reading at home. As you listen, make a note of the ways in which the reading Bruce describes is learner led, informal, social and with texts that tempt this young reader.

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 1

Discussion

You might have noticed that Bruce has a clear understanding of his own reading preferences and explains why Marcus Rashford and Bear Grylls' books appeal to him

---

so much. At this point in time, he seems to prefer non-fiction and is motivated by books that might not be available to him at school. So, Bruce's reading at home is clearly 'learner -led' and with 'texts that tempt'. His motivation to read these books appears to be intrinsic, in that his personal interest in the subject matter is evident. He is not reading for the purposes of an assessed piece of work or a book report, this is 'informal' Reading for Pleasure. Bruce talks about reading with his dad at home and his enthusiasm in this book chat is clearly apparent, exemplifying the social nature of reading.

6 Developing two-way traffic between home and school

While educators recognise that parents and the home environment are essential to fostering a love of reading, the traffic between home and school is frequently one way, with reading materials moving from school to home (Marsh, 2003) and with teachers expecting parents to induct their children into the school's reading routines and practices.
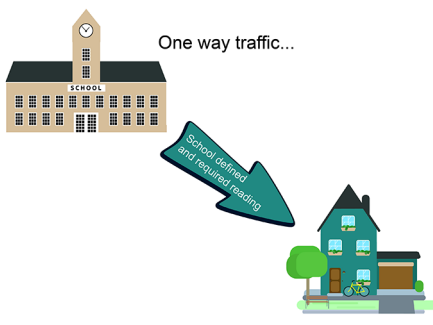

Figure 2 One way traffic between school and home

Despite best intentions, much of the communication between home and school centres around children's reading progress and the skills of reading. Parents are often expected to hear their children read and practise word decoding, ask questions, and sign and comment in their child's reading record. This can be valuable, but parents also need to be supported to understand the importance of their child *choosing* to read, the value of being a childhood reader and how they could nurture this habit to support their child.

Activity 3 Home–school reading connections
Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

Make a list of all the home school reading connections you offer, or opportunities you experience, e.g. sending books home (what kind: book banded books, phonically regular books, free-choice books), home–school reading record, book bags, parents' evenings, reading assemblies, etc. Then make a note of your responses to the following questions.

1. How two-way are these?
2. What information from home are you building on in school?
3. Do these connections encompass supporting an RfP culture at home?

Comment

Individual schools develop their own approaches to building partnerships with parents and engaging parents in their children's education. Whilst all schools commit to this, it is critical that these partnerships become two-way dialogues. With a high emphasis on reading tests and targets and an ongoing pressure to raise reading standards, it is possible that the messages or books being sent home implicitly position reading as a daily routine or task to be undertaken. If reading homework is seen as a chore, by parent or child, then this will inevitably constrain the potentially pleasurable, emotional

---

> and shared nature of the experience. Looking at your notes on home–school connections and practices, do you consider you are part of a genuine partnership, which includes full attention to choice-led Reading for Pleasure?

To foster genuinely equivalent reading relationships with families, and to explore the possible interaction between teachers', children's and parents' reading lives and practices, the shared social space noted in the model for the development of shared reading lives shown in Figure 3, deserves development and attention.
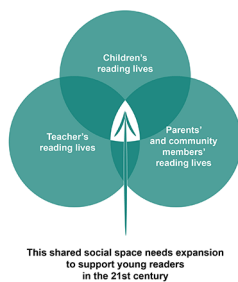
Figure 3 A model for the development of shared reading lives: diversity and collaboration (Cremin *et al.*, 2014:159)

This model moves the partnership far beyond parents completing home–school reading records 'for' their child's school and attending parents' evenings to be 'told' what they must do to support their child. It creates a new set of possibilities to work together, ones that recognise differences and commonalities, are shaped in each context, and are supported by the continuous commitment to the school's reading culture. This may, over time begin to blur the boundaries between home and school reading.

7 Parents' understanding of what counts as reading

In working to enrich the partnership between teachers, children and parents, you will want to understand more about parents' attitudes and beliefs about reading, as these influence their children's experience and identities as readers. Some parents, like some teachers, may see reading as an optional hobby and may not yet appreciate the considerable impact of regular choice-led reading on children's futures. To help parents come to value choice-led reading both in their own lives and that of their children, they will benefit from opportunities to experience the pleasure of being read to themselves from children's books. This could happen in a parents' evening for instance, to remind them of the engaging power of children's literature and the sense of togetherness that is built through hearing stories. Parents will also benefit from knowing more about the positive impact of choosing to read regularly and widely on their child's cognitive, social and emotional development.

Research indicates that homes influence children's reading frequency and enjoyment, both 'actively' through parent–child book reading and library visiting, and 'passively' through parental beliefs about the importance of reading and the provision of reading-related materials (Wiescholek *et al*., 2018). Siblings can also be important reading role models by sharing reading material; talking about texts; reading aloud and so forth (Knoester and Plikuhn, 2016).

In Session 4, we highlighted that adults who know children's interests and preferences are better able to help them find texts that interest them, satisfy their curiosity and are
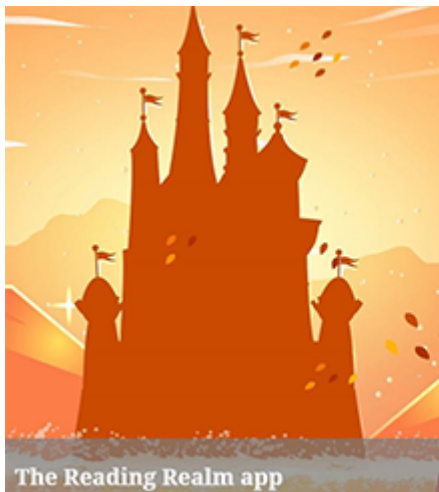
intrinsically satisfying. Involving parents in reflecting on what counts as reading in their own lives and those of their children is also valuable. You could try one of the strategies listed below. Open the links given in a new tab by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you select it. You can then bookmark them to come back to at a later time.

1. You might invite parents to go on a 'reading hunt' with you and the class in the local community to take photos of the wide range of texts available and make a montage. Walking with parents and creating the display can help everyone register, recognise and value the rich diversity in children's reading lives.

2. The 'Summer Reading Adventure' involves ticking off the range of texts that children encounter on the Adventure Map across a weekend or summer holiday. In reading multiple high street shop signs, bus timetables, adverts and park notices, for example, parents may well appreciate that much of this reading will be in the form of a short 'dip' but may still be interesting and enjoyable for their child.

3. The 'Reading Treasure Hunt' can be used on or offline and involves children hunting for reading materials such as advertising, messages, takeaway menus, comics, reading that makes you laugh or is precious to you and much more. During the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, the Treasure Hunt board proved popular as a tool for classes to connect around reading and it consistently received positive feedback from parents. Many reported coming to appreciate a wider range of reading and a more open partnership stance developed in some schools about reading in the real world.

7.1 On-screen reading

Time spent reading on screen is increasing for everyone in the 21st century but, according to research, parents still prefer print as opposed to digital books for their children. Studies from Australia (Nicolas and Paatsch, 2018) and the UK (Kucirkova and Littleton, 2016) indicate parents purposefully choose print books and consider digital books unsuitable for bedtime reading. In spite of this, data from a consumer survey of parents' attitudes and practices highlights that the number of 0–2-year-olds spending between one and three hours a day on screen grew from 11% in 2014 to 42% in 2019 (David, 2020). While this may feel like a cause for concern, David observes that 'when used appropriately with a parent, technology can provide an important route in to reading'. The key to this is parental support, however, worryingly, children from lower income families are reported to spend more time with digital media and are also more likely than children from wealthier families to use them without adult support or guidance (Kinzer *et al.*, 2016). Given there are serious quality issues about the design of digital book apps, their inbuilt cause and effect model of teaching and limited nature, this is a cause for concern.

To discern the best quality book apps, parents and teachers can turn to the UKLA annual Digital Book Award. In 2020, the award was shared between The Reading Realm and Just Imagine's The Reading Journey. You can also use the six criteria the teacher judges deploy for assessing the quality of book apps.

Figure 4 The joint winners of the UKLA Digital Book Award 2020

8 Building home–school reading partnerships

Regular opportunities to engage and support parents and families in nurturing Reading for Pleasure need to be offered. The chance to come and read with children in a #BookNic – a reading picnic – as pictured in Figure 5 at Carglaze Primary School in Cornwall, or join in regular 'Reading Together' sessions, in person or virtually, are invaluable. Such non-threatening, relaxed contexts can trigger informal, reading-related conversations between parents and children, and between teachers, teaching assistants and parents. You will want to build in time and space to model the power and pleasure that comes from sharing stories, from making connections and will want to welcome the laughter, surprise, shock and other emotions that will arise. These will signal the highly social and affective nature of reading and are worth highlighting to parents.

Figure 5 A #BookNic at Carglaze Primary School

Creating shared social spaces in which adult and child readers interact, can help parents become more involved with their children's reading in a manner which supports pleasurable engagement. You could offer 'Boys and Biscuits' sessions to engage dads, a half-hour online bedtime story, invite parents to join you in making reading dens with their children (in school and at home), or create Families' Reading Histories – large collages of significant texts that each family member recalls. The children could even interview their grandparents to find out about a text they remember enjoying in order to add to the collage.

These ideas and the list of shared reading spaces noted in Activity 4 below, all offer opportunities for parents, children and teachers to gather together informally around reading. There is no hidden school agenda to 'teach' the parents, but instead an authentic and open attitude is in evidence.

Activity 4 Developing a shared reading space
Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

Choose one of the examples of the shared reading spaces listed below that intrigues you. Read it and make a few notes in relation to the following prompts.

• What underpinning principles of involving children and parents were in evidence?

• Were children's and parents' views sought and if so in what ways?

Class partnership reading spaces

1. Blind book tasting
2. A class/home reading book shared with parents

Wider school partnership reading spaces

1. Read around the campfire
2. Pop up reading picnics

Comment

Each parent–teacher–child shared reading space will be unique, shaped by those involved. Letting the young readers lead and make their own choices about where to sit or how to make their den will help, as will keeping the experience fairly low key. This will enable parents to feel relaxed and not put on the spot.

Providing opportunities to read, listen and talk informally with their own child and others is another key principle of shared reading spaces that successfully support readers. The texts themselves will also impact upon the space created, so be sure there are enough texts to tempt everyone involved in the pop up picnic or blind book tasting. Such spaces can create a sense of collegiality, belonging and mutual engagement, as well as increased interaction amongst children, families, and staff. Do involve your local library staff as well, since being a library member is one way to enhance text access, as discussed in the next section.

9 Text access

Access to books is vitally important. A 20-year international study reveals that the presence of books in the home is a significant predictor of children's future academic success (Evans *et al.*, 2010). This is likely to be as a result of role modelling on the part of parents and the related talk about texts in the home. Parents and families who have books in the home are indicating to their children that reading matters, and through sharing their pleasure and engagement in all kinds of texts, they will be demonstrating the value of reading in their lives (Mackey, 2021). Furthermore, the presence of books in the home will trigger conversations which support children's wider understanding of the world.

> Books, which bring new ideas, new experiences, new vistas, and new information into the home, extend possible conversational topics beyond what the family members can directly experience in their lives.

> (Mallette and Barone, 2016, p. 480)

However, for some children and families, access to books is not an easy option. Perhaps you know children who do not have ready access to books at home. In the UK, a survey suggests that over 380,000 children and young people do not have a single book of their own (NLT, 2019). Reasons for this are varied, including for some families financial constraints.

Globally, due to school closures in 2020–2021, around 214 million children (1 in 7) missed at least 75% of their in-person learning (UNICEF, 2021). Internationally, the innovations that followed to enrich book access were phenomenal and show what is possible and needed. Schools, libraries, literacy organisations and charities redoubled their efforts to bridge the gap, to offer books, to give hope and re-ignite *all* young people's interest in reading. Schools found creative ways to increase access, for instance running book swaps, and many now hold these regularly. Local libraries increased their e-book loans and widened their digital offer and events. They also supported digitally-excluded families by working in partnership with health and social care services, delivering home library

services and books through foodbanks. The supermarket chain Morrisons, working with the author Rebecca Smith and The Open University, launched a book donation and exchange scheme called Morrisons Little Library.

Recent research indicates it is not just access to books that makes a difference but also ongoing support (de Bondt, Willenberg and Bus, 2020). The research found that book gifting programmes had a statistically significant effect on children's literacy-related behaviour and skills, and that when book sharing was demonstrated multiple times with supporting information, this made more impact, particularly on those families from low socio-economic groups.

Activity 5 Doorstep Library: community reading volunteers
Allow approximately 10 minutes for this activity

In London, the charity Doorstep Library is committed year-round to sharing the joy of reading with children living in some of the capital's most economically deprived areas. Volunteers, with backpacks full of books, visit homes to read stories to children on their doorsteps, and support parents by connecting them to cultural, social and support services.

Watch Video 1, an award-winning video about the work of Doorstep Library. As you watch make a brief note about:

- the key features of the support the volunteers offered to this family
- what tempted the girl to find pleasure in reading.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

Comment

The Doorstep Library volunteers visited the children in their home, shared information about free opportunities in the wider community with the mum and supported her in taking an active role in Reading for Pleasure with her children. Perhaps the visitors

were also helped by not being framed by school as an institution. The key volunteer took time to get to know the girl and then hunted for books on space to tempt her. Some of these the girl could read to herself and some needed to be read to her, enabling the volunteer to model reading in front of her mum. The books not only triggered talk about the girl's long-term ambitions, but also prompted imaginative book play which she clearly enjoyed.

In responding to educational inequalities that arise from issues of book access, other charities such as Reach Out and Read in the USA promote children's book ownership through various schemes. Another example is the Boston-based charity and network Little Free Library, which aims to be a worldwide catalyst for building local communities and making books widely available.

The annual Summer Reading Challenge run by the UK Reading Agency, which through its digital offer is now more internationally accessible, is another opportunity to get children reading. Children read what they choose during the holiday (e.g. audio books, e-books, non-fiction, graphic novels) and are supported by the online book sorter, the website, and/ or their local library. Children who are blind, partially sighted or with a print disability, can borrow books through the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

Optional resource

This resource Finding and Funding Quality books offers advice on how to seek external income and source new books to support Reading for Pleasure.

10 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 7, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 7 quiz.

11 Summary of Session 7

In this session, you have explored the nature of children's reading at home. In many respects, reading at home differs from, and interconnects with, reading at school; the different texts, practices and expectations in each environment are mutually supportive. However, there is a danger that school reading materials and reading practices are seen as the 'official' type of reading and that the everyday reading that occurs in family homes goes unnoticed and unrecognised.

The principles that underpin Reading for Pleasure pedagogies in school are often implicit in children's home reading, insofar that it tends to be LIST (learner-led, informal, social and with texts that tempt). When educators learn about and celebrate the reading that children do out of school, and recognise multiliterate learners, it can have a positive impact on children's reader identities, especially for those children who do not excel in standardised reading assessments or who are on lower bands on the reading scheme.

Developing broader and shared understanding with parents about what counts as reading, and forging positive reciprocal relationships are the cornerstones of building communities of readers that extend beyond the school gate; this is key to fostering children's life-long love of reading. However, not all families enjoy access to a diverse range of appropriate books and other texts, which can constrain children's capacity to develop as readers. By partnering with, and signposting families to libraries and other organisations, schools can play a vital role in levelling-up children's access to books. This is particularly vital for children who are reluctant and less engaged readers, which is part of the focus in Session 8.

You should now go to Session 8.

Session 8: Enticing reluctant readers and addressing challenges

Introduction

Throughout this course, you have read about the theoretical and practical dimensions of nurturing children as readers. It is clear that no two readers are the same, and that when it comes to nurturing children as engaged readers, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' to classroom practices and pedagogies. This became even more apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic, when some children became less, and others more, engaged with reading. Data suggests that disadvantaged pupils were disproportionately affected to a much larger extent than first predicted. A report published by the Education Endowment Fund (Rose *et al*., 2021) into the impact of school closures, refers to a 'large and concerning gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils' (p. 11), due, in part, to differential support at home and unequal access to resources.

In this final session you will read about some of the challenges of supporting reluctant readers, balancing RfP with reading instruction and recognising the distinction between reading *for* pleasure and pleasure *in* reading. The session then tackles some of the 'myths' surrounding Reading for Pleasure in schools before inviting you to reflect upon your own development as a Reading Teacher.

By the end of this session, you will have:

- reconsidered how to support reluctant readers
- explored in more detail the challenges and myths involved in volitional young readers
- reflected on your awareness of your own reader identity
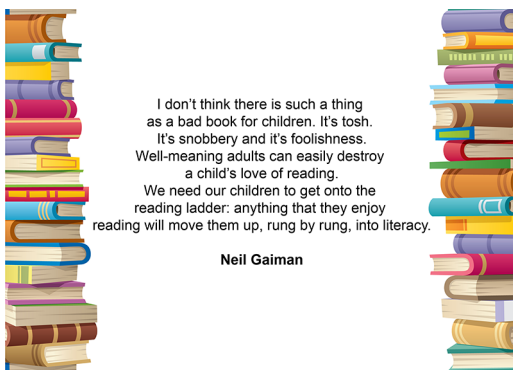- considered further what it means to be a Reading Teacher.

1 Reluctant readers

> I don't think there is such a thing
> as a bad book for children. It's tosh.
> It's snobbery and it's foolishness.
> Well-meaning adults can easily destroy
> a child's love of reading.
> We need our children to get onto the
> reading ladder: anything that they enjoy
> reading will move them up, rung by rung, into literacy.
>
> **Neil Gaiman**

Figure 1 Quote by Neil Gaiman on childhood reading

As Neil Gaiman, the author, asserts in the quote in Figure 1, well-meaning adults shape children's love of reading by framing reading in various ways. He suggests that creating an implicit hierarchy of reading materials can hold learners back, by profiling the enduring tradition of classic, approved, or significant authors in school and not recognising that what matters is each young reader's choice and interests. Gaiman's views are underscored by research into less engaged readers, who are often perceived by their teachers as 'reluctant' despite enjoying reading at home, in part perhaps because they haven't found texts of interest to them in school (Hempel Jorgensen *et al*., 2018).

Children perceived as reluctant readers may appear to lack enthusiasm for reading, which means that even though they can read, they do not choose to do so in school. In assigned reading time they may appear unfocused, flick the pages, and keep getting up to swap their books. During reading aloud time, these children, who are likely to have low self-efficacy as readers, may pay limited attention to the text being read. When opportunities arise for talking about texts, such readers often play a subtle listening game, or seek to ensure that they are not noticed. If these young people have positioned themselves or have been positioned as 'reluctant' and disinterested for many years, this represents a real challenge. No one can make children find pleasure in reading or choose to read voluntarily and if it is perceived as 'required' this will put off those who are less confident or disengaged. Nonetheless, educators can entice, invite, model and share their pleasure in volitional reading and over time, with focused determination and skill, positively influence children's engagement in reading. You will look at the ways in which to do this in more detail next.

1.1 Engaging RfP 'disadvantaged' readers

The reasons for children's underachievement and lack of engagement in reading are always complex and it is beyond the remit of this course to examine readers challenged by dyslexia or other reading difficulties. Instead, the focus here is on those readers who, for complex reasons, have not yet found what 'reading is good for' (Meek, 1998). They may even be striving readers (a term increasingly used in Singapore to describe 'reluctant' readers), who are waiting to or wanting to experience the excitement found in reading. However, without the driving force of affect and deep emotional engagement in the subject matter, they may never gain the satisfactions or benefits that reading offers.

Labelling children 'reluctant' or 'unwilling' is unhelpful as terms hold significance and tend to place the onus on the child. In fact, developing readers is a responsibility shared between the school community, the teachers, families, parents and the child.

Some children are arguably Reading for Pleasure 'disadvantaged'. The term 'disadvantaged' is often understood to mean those children who are eligible for additional funding, free school meals and so on, but this is not a key criterion for Reading for Pleasure. Those who are Reading for Pleasure 'disadvantaged' are the children who:

- are not often read-to and do not share books with others beyond school
- do not show that they are engaged or interested in reading
- may be falling behind in their reading skills (including phonics)
- may be capable readers who choose not to read.

These children may hide their lack of assurance and negative attitudes by avoidance tactics or by messing around when it is time to read. However, if they can encounter the enjoyment to be had in reading, and can achieve their own goals as readers, they could become striving readers.

Personal reflection 1

Reading Teachers who reflect on their own childhood reluctance to engage in particular areas of the curriculum will understand the emotions and disaffection involved.

Think back to your own childhood and make a note of the area of education in which you were least assured. Perhaps you were reluctant to engage fully in mathematics, geography, history, science, drama, dance, art, RE or PE. How did that subject make you feel? What were your attitudes towards it? Do you still feel that way? What did you do in school or at home that characterised your reluctance?

Comment

You may have noted a lack of confidence in sport for instance, and recall trying but not succeeding at running or gymnastics. Over time, you may have begun to think 'I can't do this, so I don't really care about it' and gradually distanced yourself from the subject due to your low self-efficacy. Disheartened and lacking the assurance to give it another go, this pattern towards sport may have lasted several years, even a lifetime thus far perhaps?

Disengaged readers need considerable support to alter the status quo, particularly before they leave primary school. Without such support they will not be able to fully access the secondary curriculum. They will not achieve as highly as their peers who read recreationally (Sullivan and Brown, 2015) and as a result their life chances are likely to be short-changed.

Less engaged readers need additional opportunities to hear stories, to read with and to others, as well as a space to talk about the texts they are reading in an informal low-key manner, without assessment or judgement. As they may also perceive reading as book-bound, you will want to broaden what counts as reading in their eyes and get to know

them well as readers (as discussed in Session 4). This will include offering relaxed opportunities and sensitive scaffolding that seeks to pique their interests and improve their self-esteem and attitudes towards reading. It will also involve ensuring they have access to books and activities that are relevant to them and their reading goals. Your RfP pedagogy needs to be finely tuned to these readers and you will want to monitor their response and engagement. Box 1 lists five tips on how to engage disadvantaged readers.

Box 1 How to engage RfP 'disadvantaged' readers

Follow these five simple tips:

- Get to know your striving/'reluctant'/RfP 'disadvantaged' readers well: take time to notice, document, reflect and act.

- Let them choose what they want to read and offer support. Books or magazines linked to films and computer games may prove popular with some, comics, graphic novels or non-fiction with others, depending on their interests. Each reader is unique.

- Offer them additional relaxed opportunities to hear stories.

- Draw them into reading and talking about texts in common in small groups.

- Ensure successful engagement in reading by supporting their skills and the will to read and avoiding any sense of reading being a competition.

In summary, 'reluctant'/striving/'disadvantaged' readers need what all readers need, but in every case they need much more of it. They need to be:

- supported by teachers who have a good working knowledge of children's texts, and who enable and support children's access to texts

- supported by teachers who make the time to get closely acquainted with their personal interests and practices beyond school, and help them choose texts that tempt

- invited into the engaging world of reading by a rich RfP pedagogy and Reading Teachers who are determined to find ways to motivate them.

The Further resources section at the end of this session provides a link to more guidance and resources to help you support readers who have fallen behind due to reluctance or other reading difficulties.

2 Balancing RfP with reading instruction

It represents a genuine challenge to balance nurturing the will and the skill to read, to raise educational attainment and to create engaged communities of readers. In accountability cultures, the backwash of assessment places pressure on teachers, reducing the time available to support RfP. This often constrains the experience of struggling or less engaged readers, particularly boys (Hempel Jorgensen *et al.*, 2018). Early phonics instruction and the development of children's comprehension are essential elements of quality provision, but your reading curriculum also needs to encompass dedicated time to foster RfP.

The reading instruction and Reading for Pleasure agendas are not, however, incompatible. Far from it, they are complementary and both require careful planning to ensure a rich reading curriculum.

High-quality phonics teaching involves a structured, systematic approach that is consistently applied. High-quality comprehension teaching involves instruction in the use of a range of strategies so that children have the skills and the knowledge of how to apply them independently. The RfP agenda is more open and less structured than the reading instruction agenda, but it is no less rigorous. When undertaken seriously, responsibly and with strong staff knowledge, a rich pedagogy and sustained commitment over time, children will reap the benefits.

Activity 1 Overcoming challenges to developing a Reading for Pleasure culture

Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Make a bullet point list of the key challenges you have encountered and that your school faces in fostering a rich RfP culture and ethos.

Next, listen to Shahed Ahmed, executive head teacher of four schools in Multi Academy Trust in Newham London, reflect on the need to retain a balance between the will and the skill and how he achieves this in his school. As you listen, make a note of the key strategies Shahed has put in place to develop a Reading for Pleasure culture, and in particular his attention to sustaining a focus on children's choice-led reading.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

Comment

While the goal of reading instruction is for each child to achieve the 'expected' standard set by policy makers, the goal of RfP is not only for each child to develop positive attitudes and dispositions towards reading, but for them to become lifelong readers. There is no need to polarise these agendas, but it is vital that headteachers, like Shahed, and classroom teachers recognise their significantly different orientations, the interplay between the skill and the will, and the necessity of working towards a balance between them. In order to assess the efficacy of your finely tuned balance, it is important to monitor and track the impact and influence of your reading curriculum on young readers.

If your goal is to ensure that you develop children who not only *can* but *choose* to read, widely and frequently, then addressing the challenges of leadership, staff knowledge of texts and readers, funding and ensuring quality book provision in attractive library spaces are all essential. It is also crucial to allocate ample time for this.

With a clear understanding of the educational and wider social and emotional value of recreational reading, you will want to design your curriculum accordingly and allocate space within the timetable to all four strands of RfP pedagogy as discussed in Session 5. Timetabled spaces can be called: Reading Aloud, Drop Everything and Read (DEAR time), Book Blether, or Relaxed Reading time. But, avoid naming them as 'Reading for Pleasure', as this tends to 'require' pleasure and suggests this will only occur at that time. In working to create a rich reading ethos and culture across the school, you will find space and time in assemblies, on the playground, in the corridors, in the library and so on where Reading for Pleasure and being a reader can be shared and celebrated.

3 The concept of pleasure

The distinction between reading *for* pleasure and pleasure *in* reading needs to be recognised. The former is a 'purposeful volitional act with a large measure of choice and free will' (Powell, 2014) and the latter involves pleasure in the act, regardless of whether or not the reading was self-chosen or required within the curriculum.

The extract below from the Department for Education RfP Audit for the English Hubs (2020) reminds us that, as you explored in Session 5, there are four interrelated practices which motivate and support choice-led reading.

Reading for Pleasure Provision

There are four specific practices that, combined, motivate children to choose to read and become frequent readers.

1. **High quality reading aloud for pleasure.** This is in addition to reading aloud as part of literacy teaching. Reading aloud for pleasure enables children to access rich, challenging texts, offers a model for silent reading, prompts affective engagement and creates a class repertoire of 'texts in common' to discuss.

2. **Talking about texts reader to reader.** Talk about texts is essential to all literacy teaching, but this reader to reader talk is more informal, often spontaneous, and includes reciprocal book recommendations between children and teachers.

3. **Choice-led independent reading time.** Children need time to read and support for making informed choices from a range of texts that tempt.

4. **Social reading environments in and around school.** These are key to creating a strong reading culture. Successful environments invite readers to engage and share the pleasures of reading.

The practices noted not only comprise the four strands of RfP pedagogy and support choice-led reading, they also happen regularly in English lessons and right across the curriculum. So, teachers need to be sure *why* they are using reading aloud, for instance. For example, a teacher might read aloud an extract on endangered species, expect children to answer questions and discuss this, and then set reading from other texts in

order for each child to produce a written summary. The purpose of such teacher-framed and led work will be developing children's comprehension and knowledge about the impact of habitat loss and poaching. It will involve the children listening, answering the teacher's questions, discussing habitat loss and then practising the skills of skimming, scanning and summarising key facts. This is not a pedagogy focused on Reading for Pleasure or choice-led reading, however there may be pleasure in this reading, especially for those children who are fascinated by tigers, pangolins or orangutans.

Equally, children may enjoy listening to their teacher read aloud the class novel *The Last Wild* by Piers Torday, prior to answering comprehension questions about the characters, setting or plot. Again, the teacher will be trying to make the teaching and learning about the text a positive, pleasurable experience and some children, particularly perhaps the higher achievers in terms of reading and writing, will experience it as such.

By definition, however, this is not Reading for Pleasure or choice-led independent reading undertaken voluntarily in anticipation of some intrinsic satisfaction from the experience.

Nonetheless, the pleasure experienced in such teacher-led work, may lead to recreational free-choice reading. For instance, in the first example, children may seek out other information texts about endangered species or choose to read fictional texts such *The Last Rhino* by Nicola Davies as a consequence. Or in the second example, children may hunt for their own copy of the class reader or the next book in the series by Piers Torday. Developing Reading for Pleasure is not guaranteed though and these possibilities will depend upon text availability, access and staff planning. Teachers need balanced provision, time and space to develop a rigorous Reading for Pleasure pedagogy, as discussed in Session 5.

3.1 Different forms of pleasure associated with reading

The notion of pleasure in relation to reading is complicated by the fact that reading may induce feelings of sadness, irritation, anger, and even discomfort. Different forms of pleasure and satisfaction exist. Reading for Pleasure does not merely lead to laughter and joy. Readers choose to read for diverse personal purposes, and may find satisfaction in understanding more about dinosaurs, pets, space, sport, women in history and so forth. Additionally, their goals may be less content focused; they may be seeking different emotional states (e.g. a desire to laugh and be entertained), want to sustain their delight in a series and find out more about the character's lives, or they may wish to read the book in order to discuss it with their friends.

A recent three-year study suggests that teenage readers think free reading brings them five distinct kinds of pleasure (Wilhelm, 2016).

1. **Immersive pleasure of play**, e.g. getting lost in a book and living through the text.
2. **Intellectual pleasure**, e.g. finding out about issues of interest in the world and solving problems in narratives.
3. **Social pleasure**, e.g. belonging to a community of readers and connecting to others through reading, as well as identifying as a reader.
4. **The pleasure of functional work**, e.g. using reading to learn, think, and act in different ways, and using reading to shape one's writing.
5. **The pleasure of inner work**, e.g. using reading to learn about oneself, to imagine oneself in different situations and consider options.

Wilhelm argues that only intellectual pleasure was directly fostered in the young people's schools and that educators need to recognise the central role of pleasure in developing competent lifelong readers. Synonyms for pleasure include: desire, preference, wish, choice and liking – all of which speak to the Reading for Pleasure agenda, and to children's agency as readers.

Activity 2 Has your view of RfP changed?
Allow approximately 5 minutes for this activity

Have a look at the statements below in Figure 2 by primary phase teachers involved in a yearlong Open University project on developing a whole school ethos and culture of RfP. Their views, noted in 2021, have changed radically since. Might you have agreed with any of their statements at the start of this course? What was your perception of Reading for Pleasure at the beginning?

Figure 2 Initial thoughts about RfP

Make a note of two things you used to believe and two things you now know and understand about Reading for Pleasure and how to foster it.

Comment

Everyone's learning journey is unique, and there are many points you might have included about developing the habit of reading in childhood. You may have noted:

- RfP is choice-led and associated with intrinsic motivation
- RfP is social, affective, and relational
- Teacher knowledge of children's texts and of readers is essential
- A planned RfP pedagogy is needed to motivate, engage and sustain readers
- The impact of RfP pedagogy should be monitored and evaluated
- Reading Teachers make a difference on children's desire to read
- Creating a school RfP culture and community is an ongoing journey not a programme to deliver.

4 Myth busting

Primary National Curricula for Literacy and English in England, Scotland and elsewhere make reference to, or set out a statutory requirement to encourage children to read literature, or a variety of texts for enjoyment and for information. However, when teachers become accountable for children's enjoyment of reading, some misconceptions can arise about what Reading for Pleasure is and how it is promoted within a curriculum framework in school.

Throughout the course you have read about what Reading for Pleasure is, and how to foster it. In the following sections, you will read eight myths about Reading for Pleasure in the classroom and explore why they are fallacies.

4.1 Myth #1 - Reading for Pleasure is an optional extra in the literacy curriculum

Statutory requirements of curricula around the world differ, however, in England and Scotland, Reading for Pleasure is mandated in curricula framework. Just as it is not 'optional' to teach fractions or punctuation, it is not optional to develop children's enjoyment of reading. Reading for Pleasure tends to be side-lined when its significance is not well understood by teachers, parents or school governors, but in England, school inspectors assess how well staff develop children's love of reading

4.2 Myth #2 Reading for Pleasure is a standalone

activity

Ensuring children find enjoyment in reading cannot simply be timetabled for one afternoon a week. It is through fostering a culture and ethos of Reading for Pleasure and building communities of readers in school and beyond, that children are supported to become keen and engaged readers.

4.3 Myth #3 Girls enjoy reading more than boys

The gender gap in reading attainment continues to be highlighted in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study as an international issue (OECD, 2019) with girls outperforming boys in most countries in the study. Yet boys are far from a homogenous group and their attitudes toward reading vary greatly. It is important that you do not overgeneralise or oversimplify your perceptions of boys and reading.

In an Australian study of 8–10-year-old boys' perceptions of reading, Scholes (2017, 2021) found that boys were well represented in higher achieving and 'avid' reader groups, with only 13% of the male cohort describing reading negatively. Boys in this study expressed enjoyment of a range of genre and reading materials, citing comics, magazines as well as books, and many expressed a preference for fiction.

4.4 Myth #4 Technology is killing children's Reading for Pleasure

Children's and young people's activities using digital technology is often portrayed negatively in the press. There can be a tendency to take a dichotomous view of printed and digital texts, yet it is clear that children move fluidly and often effortlessly between different media, depending on the purpose and their preference (Kucirkova and Cremin, 2020).

Both print and digital texts can be well authored, engaging and evoke interest and enjoyment; both formats can also be badly written and unengaging. What matters is that children have access to a wide range of reading materials, develop broad repertoires of textual knowledge and build positive reader identities.

4.5 Myth #5 Engaged reading is solitary and silent

At times, Reading for Pleasure is a quiet, solitary activity – the reader might be absorbed in a book for hours; yet reading is also a social and relational activity. Talk allows children (and adults) to order and articulate their thinking. Through dialogue, you co-construct ideas, feelings and opinions about the issues presented in a text. The process also allows children to express and affirm their reader identities.

Oftentimes, when children are inspired, excited or curious about a text, their need to talk about it cannot be contained. Making time for informal book chat is crucial for children's meaning making and Reading for Pleasure.

4.6 Myth #6 Children's progress in Reading for Pleasure cannot be measured

Children's Reading for Pleasure cannot be assessed in standardised tests, but there are many indicators of progress that teachers can document by using a compendium of tools. Over time, this will offer a rounded picture of children's development as readers and provide good evidence of progress. Reader-to-reader conferences, observation, surveys, parent consultations and so forth, will all give a sense of children's changing attitudes toward reading, changes in preference and whether reading repertoires are expanding.

Library or book borrowing records provide further information about changing reading habits. Some children may not make giant leaps, but these tools and careful documentation can capture subtle, but significant steps on a reader's journey and enable teachers to plan responsive support. Schools may not see the impact in reading attainment tests immediately, but over time, impact on standards will become evident.

4.7 Myth #7 Children must learn to decode before Reading for Pleasure

Learning to read and developing the desire to read are interdependent. The Early Years Framework in England (DfE, 2021) stresses that 'It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading' (p. 9), recognising that developing children's *will* to read is necessary to develop the *skill* to read.

When children reach statutory school age, educators and parents should continue to maximise opportunities to read a wide range of texts and genres with children. In addition, exploring picture storybooks, non-fiction, comics and digital texts of their choice independently, or with peers, enables children to draw on a wealth of emerging skills and knowledge to make meaning from and connections between texts.

4.8 Myth #8 Some families just don't read

In western societies, all families interact around texts, yet each family is unique and engages in different reading practices. As societal understandings of what counts as reading are shaped by educational policy, parents themselves may not recognise some of their shared reading practices as legitimate reading.

It is vital that educators avoid making assumptions based on deficit views of families or limited notions of what counts as reading. That being said, families do not have equal access to a wealth of reading materials and reading support varies. It is therefore important to forge positive relationships with parents and respect and value the uniqueness of each family, so you can work together with parents to enhance access to texts and support children's reading at home. As highlighted in Session 7, promoting children's Reading for Pleasure is a shared responsibility.

5 Applying RfP pedagogy

By now, you will have developed a sound understanding of RfP pedagogy, which encompasses reading aloud, reading time, informal book talk and recommendations in a highly social reading environment. Using this knowledge, have a go at helping the educators in Activity 3 with their RfP dilemmas. You will then move on to focus further on how to develop yourself as a Reading Teacher.

Activity 3 Responding to RfP dilemmas

Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity

Listen to these three short audio clips, in which three educators briefly talk about a dilemma they have encountered in fostering a culture of Reading for Pleasure in their schools and classrooms. Select one educator's dilemma and use the knowledge you have developed through this course to write a letter, or just some bullet points, offering advice to them.

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 1

Comment

You might have started by reminding Emily that the will to read influences the skill to read and vice versa, so it is important that children have access to decodable books and a range of books and other texts that will inspire them to want to read.

By reading aloud every day and introducing children to a wide range of books, they might be inspired to revisit those texts and begin to expand their repertoires. You might have suggested that Emily makes the reading environment comfortable and a social space. Children will find books in common to re-read, discuss with friends and recommend to one another. By including clear sections for decodable texts, picture fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics and so forth, Emily will ensure children have a rich and varied reading diet, encouraging them to become both keen and proficient readers.

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 2

Comment

It seems that one of the main issues for Michael is the misconception that engaged reading is an individual and silent activity. His dilemma highlights that building communities of readers and developing a shared understanding of Reading for Pleasure pedagogies are vital parts of whole school development, which includes school governors and parents too.

You might have suggested that Michael offers to speak to the Governing Body about research-informed Reading for Pleasure pedagogies and how they are being implemented in the school. He may have to explicitly point out the links between the pedagogies being developed and the National Curriculum. It might also be helpful if Michael invited the Literacy Governor back to take part in independent reading time and join in the discussions, rather than observe from the door; they might be quite surprised at the depth and sophistication of children's conversations. Furthermore, Governors could be directed to The Open University Reading for Pleasure website, or to some of the research informed literature around Reading for Pleasure.

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 3

Comment

There is no doubt that developing knowledge of a wide range of children's literature takes time and commitment; knowing where to start can be tricky. Book recommendations do not only help children choose appropriate texts, but they are also crucial for all adults working with children. You might have suggested a staff book club, or staff room book recommendations shelf (similar to the peer recommendation shelf in Jon Biddle's case study in Session 5).

There is sometimes a misconception that children should be moving toward chapter books as soon as possible, so you might have stressed the significance of picture books. Another good starting place is looking at the short lists and winners of various children's book awards, such as the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards or United Kingdom Literacy Association Children's Book Awards. You might have suggested that Charlotte spends sometime in the school library, as long as it is well stocked and well presented. Well organised libraries are important for children to find texts that tempt, but are also important for teachers, teaching assistants and parent helpers to find great books to read with children.

6 Developing as a Reading Teacher

In the final sections of this session, you will reflect on what on you have studied so far in this course by reviewing some of the core principles of Reading for Pleasure, and looking in more detail at what it is to be a Reading Teacher – a term you first came across in Session 6.

Research by Cremin *et al*. (2014) indicates that Reading Teachers have a good understanding of what it is to be a reader in the 21st century, have a rich subject knowledge, and know their children as readers. Crucially, as Cremin (2019, 2021) also showed, Reading Teachers have a good understanding of themselves as readers. By looking inward and reflecting on your own reader identity, you will be able to nurture children's emerging reader identities and will be able to support them to become engaged readers.

Personal reflection 2

Use the scale below to reflect on how your awareness of your own reading practices and reader identity has developed as you have progressed through the course.

Before studying this course, how aware were you of your own reading habits and reader identity?

Figure 3 A scale from Totally unaware to Highly aware

After engaging with this course, how aware are you?

Figure 3 (repeated) A scale from Totally unaware to Highly aware

---

Do you feel that your awareness of your own reading practices and of being a reader can help you as a teacher make children's reading experiences more authentic and engaging ? If so in what ways?

Comment

Reading is something we all do every day; we all have a reader identity. However, this identity is something that we don't tend to think about until our attention is drawn to it and it is something that will shift and change in different contexts. Regardless of your awareness prior to the course, it is likely that you now have a better understanding of yourself as a reader and a Reading Teacher.

Through reflecting on your journey as a reader, you will appreciate that the nature of reading continually evolves. In part, this is due to advances in technology, particularly digital technology, yet the ways in which people engage with reading has always adapted and changed. At one point in time, the printing press was new technology that revolutionised the way people read. Today, reading on screens has become the norm, information is at our fingertips, and we all encounter a wide range of printed materials in our daily lives.

However, some things about reading remain constant – it has always been an affective process, people have always engaged more deeply with subject matter that resonates with them personally, have always had a desire to connect with others and have always had a quest for knowledge. For millennia, humans have made sense of the world through narrative. Stories have played, and continue to play, a powerful and transformative role in the lives of individuals and of societies.

6.1 Seeing reading and readers in a new light

As a Reading Teacher, you should now recognise the wide-reaching benefits of childhood reading. Whilst reading plays a pivotal role in supporting children's academic attainment, when you observe children's reading from the stance of a reader, the affective, social and emotional dimensions of reading come more clearly into view. You may notice children beginning to express broader perspectives when talking about issues encountered in texts, or that they recognise the emotions of characters and show empathy.

As you view children's reading as more than literacy skills, you will become aware that some texts resonate personally with particular children, as they show a greater depth of engagement, or a rise in their level of excitement or curiosity. Through your understanding of children as readers and your knowledge of children's literature and other texts, you can act upon your observations to enhance their reading journeys and enable them to develop the life changing habit of reading.

6.2 Developing your knowledge of children as readers

As a Reading Teacher, you will recognise that your own reading habits and preferences evolve and change over time and differ from those of your colleagues, family and friends; therefore, it stands to reason that in your class, 'no two readers are the same' (Cliff Hodges, 2010). Reading practices of some sort or other occur in every family home in almost every society – but in some homes, those reading practices are closely matched to school-type reading, while in other families, reading practices are very different. It is crucial that you do not view different as deficit.

As you look beyond book-bound conceptualisations of reading, you might find you are surprised by the wealth and breadth of the texts children engage with. As a Reading Teacher you will recognise children's unique journeys as readers and cultivate those journeys so that every child's reading repertoire grows in depth and breadth.

It is also important as a Reading Teacher to make your own reader identity visible to children. By modelling your reading and talking about your own out-of-school reader preferences with children, you legitimise those broader reading practices. When you share your enjoyment of travel brochures, car magazines, a particular genre of literature, or cookery websites, for example, you will help children to recognise and nurture their own reader identities. Over time, children will be encouraged to discuss their own reading habits, which in turn, enhances your knowledge of their reading tastes and choices. Keeping a note of your conversations and observations will capture subtle changes in children's reading practices, motivation, and attitudes to reading.

As a Reading Teacher you will also constantly reflect upon your own reading practices and habits and consider the possible consequences for your classroom practice. Using this alongside the range of tools you read about in Session 4, Section 5, such as reading rivers, reading treasure hunts, reading conferences, surveys, book blanket activities and parent conversations can help you get to know children as readers.

6.3 Developing your knowledge of children's texts

In addition to developing positive reader-to-reader relationships with children, as a Reading Teacher you should have a well-developed knowledge of children's literature and other texts. A Reading Teacher's repertoire will include the works of celebrity authors and classical children's literature, but you will also have a good knowledge of contemporary children's books, comics and magazine series and online texts. Whilst new technologies and wider access offers children greater choice, they will not necessarily find appropriate texts without your support and expertise.

As you develop your subject knowledge, you will find that you can engage in deeper, reciprocal interactions with children around texts. You will quickly find that you know texts that might help support a child who is living through difficult life circumstances, supporting them to recognise that others have felt what they feel and experienced what they are living through. Be aware though that this is not about being on a 'Reading Teacher pedestal', but simply being a thoughtful, authentic and interactive reading role model.

You will also be able to recommend books and authors which will help children to 'catch the reading bug'. Reading Teachers are uniquely placed because:

> To be able to put the right book in the right child's hands at the right moment can change a child's relationship with reading forever.

> (Collins and Safford, 2008)

As your knowledge of children's texts expands, you will be able to introduce children to stories told by a wider, more diverse range of authors, encouraging them to embrace plurality and multiple different ways of knowing the world. You can offer children texts which challenge stereotypes and counter racism, sexism, ableism and heteronormativity in society.

It is, of course, a genuine challenge for many busy educators to find time to expand their repertoires of children's literature and other texts, and it is something which requires passion and commitment. However, there are steps you can take to fuel your journey, such as:

- Set a personal reading goal. For example, you might commit to reading a poem a day for a fortnight or buy a different children's magazine every month.
- Read around a theme or topic (e.g. refugees or empathy).
- Read books that have won, or been shortlisted for children's book awards.
- Ask children to recommend books for you to read.
- Run a monthly staff book club where staff share recommendations.

Making a commitment to getting to know children as readers and expanding your subject knowledge is a key ingredient to cultivating an ethos of Reading for Pleasure in your classroom and beyond.

6.4 Building communities of engaged readers

As a Reading Teacher, you understand the nature of reading, are aware of your own and your children's reader identities and are continually extending your knowledge of children's texts. A key piece of the jigsaw, then, is to employ this knowledge and understanding in your pedagogies and practices in the classroom.

In Session 5, you read about the evidence-based Reading for Pleasure pedagogy developed through the Teachers as Readers Research project (Cremin *et al*., 2014), which encompasses reading aloud, reading time, book talk and recommendations in a highly social reading environment. These four strands are interdependent and are underpinned by the principles that Reading for Pleasure is Learner-led, Informal, Social and with Texts that tempt; as a Reading Teacher your professional skills and perception are essential.
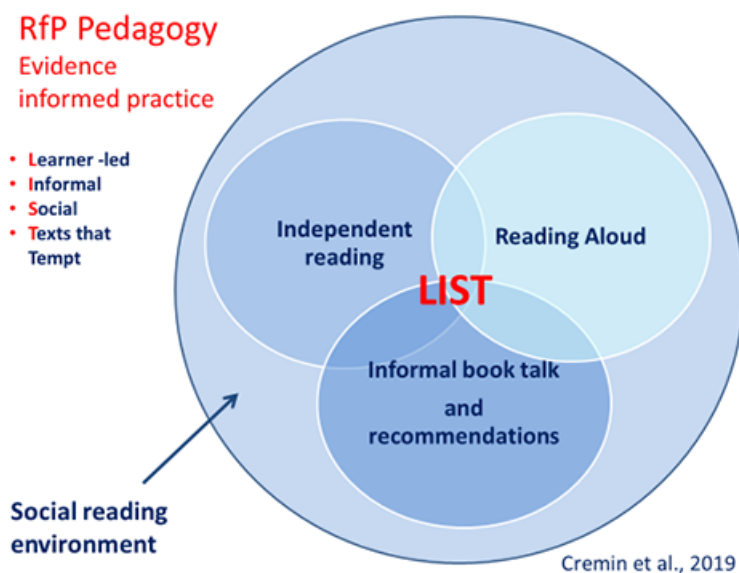
Figure 4 Evidence informed Reading for Pleasure pedagogy

What you do in the classroom matters and makes a difference. However, building communities of readers that include children, parents, all staff and other community members creates a ripple effect and fosters a culture and ethos of reading in the school and wider community. Reading Teachers play a vital role in building social and reciprocal

reading communities in which everyone is valued as a reader, regardless of ability, text preferences or the language they choose to read in.

Promoting a more expansive and shared understanding of what it means to be a reader in the 21st century, deconstructing hierarchies of text types and dismantling ability-based views of readers is undoubtedly a challenge in many educational systems. Yet, there is a progressive Reading for Pleasure community growing worldwide, working to ensure all children have the opportunity to become motivated and engaged childhood readers.

We invite you to join us.

7 This session's quiz

Now that you've come to the end of the course, it's time to take the Session 8 badge quiz. It's similar to previous quizzes but this time, instead of answering five questions, there will be 15.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 8 compulsory badge quiz.

Remember, this quiz counts towards your badge. If you're not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

8 Summary of Session 8

Congratulations, you have now reached the end of the course. Now you have completed your study you will be able to apply the knowledge and strategies discussed to nurture children's reading engagement across schools, homes and communities.

You will now be in a stronger position to:

- discuss the concept of Reading for Pleasure and its significance in children's lives
- understand the nature of reading in the 21st century and the significance of narrative
- consider your own reader identity and your reading preferences and habits
- reflect on your own knowledge of children's texts and knowledge of children as readers and identify areas for development in your practice
- develop strategies to foster keen and engaged readers in the classroom, school, in family homes and in the wider community.

Visit The Open University's Reading for Pleasure website, where you will find free PowerPoints for CPD, videos, innovative examples of classroom practice and a vibrant community of educational professionals committed to nurturing children as readers.

Further resources

- Barrington Stoke offer high-interest low reading age texts, that are often very popular with those readers who have fallen behind due to reluctance or other reading difficulties.

Where next?

If you've enjoyed this course you can find more free resources and courses on OpenLearn . In particular, you may be interested in the following resources:

- Resources for Primary School Teachers
- Resources for Teaching Assistants
- Literacy and Social Justice Hub
- OpenLearn course: What happens to you when you read?

Or you might like to take a look at How stories shape our minds, a collaboration between the BBC and The Open University.

New to University study? You may be interested in our courses on education. You might be particularly interested in our BA (hons) Education Studies (Primary).

Making the decision to study can be a big step and The Open University has over 50 years of experience supporting its students through their chosen learning paths. You can find out more about studying with us by visiting our online prospectus.

Tell us what you think

Now you've come to the end of the course, we would appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete this short end-of-course survey (you may have already completed this survey at the end of Session 4). We'd like to find out a bit about your experience of studying the course and what you plan to do next. We will use this information to provide better online experiences for all our learners and to share our findings with others. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

References

Bishop, R. S. (1990) 'Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors', *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3).

Clark, C. and Rumbold, K. (2006) *Reading for Pleasure: A Research Overview*. London: National Literacy Trust.

Clark, C. and Teravainen-Goff, A. (2018) *Mental wellbeing, reading and writing: How children and young people's mental wellbeing is related to their reading and writing experiences*. Available at:
https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Mental_wellbeing_reading_and_writing_2017-18_-_FINAL2_qTxyxvg.pdf (Accessed: 27 July 2021).

Clark, C. and Teravainen-Goff, A. (2020) *Children and young people's reading in 2019: Findings from our Annual Literacy Survey*. Available at:
https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Reading_trends_in_2019_-_Final.pdf (Accessed: 27 July 2021).

Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Powell, S., Collins, R. and Safford, K. (2014) *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure*. London and NY: Routledge.

Hempel-Jorgensen, A., Cremin, T., Harris D. and Chamberlain, L. (2018) 'Pedagogy for reading for pleasure in low socio-economic primary schools: beyond 'pedagogy of poverty'?', *Literacy*, 52(2), pp. 86–94.

Department for Education (DfE) (2013) *The national curriculum in England: Key stages 1 and 2 framework document*. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf (Accessed: 17 August 2021).

International Literacy Association (2018) *The Case for Children's Rights to Read*. Available at:
https://literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/resource-documents/the-case-for-childrens-rights-to-read.pdf (Accessed: 27 July 2021).

Kalb, G. and Van Ours, J. C. (2014) 'Reading to young children: a head-start in life?', *Economics of Education Review*, 40, pp. 1–24.

McGeown, S. P., Osborne,C., Warhurt, A., Norgate, R. and Duncan, L. G. (2015) 'Understanding children's reading activities: reading motivation, skill and child characteristics as predictors', *Journal of Research in Reading*. doi:10.1111/1467-9817.12060.

McGrane, J., Stiff, J., Baird, J., Lenkeit, J. and Hopfenbeck-Oxford, T. (2017) *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS): National Report for England*. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664562/PIRLS_2016_National_Report_for_England-_BRANDED.pdf (Accessed: 19 October 2021).

Mo, J. (2019) 'How does PISA define and measure reading literacy?', *PISA in Focus*, 101, Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/efc4d0fe-en (Accessed: 27 July 2021).

OECD (2010) *PISA 2009 Results, Learning Trends: Changes in Student Performance Since 2000, Volume V.* Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932360024, Figure V.5.10.

OECD (2011) 'Reading for enjoyment, by gender and background', in OECD (ed.) *PISA 2009 at a Glance*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD (2021) *21st-century readers: Developing literacy skills in a digital world*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Orkin, M., Potts, M., Wolf, M., May, S. and Brand, E. (2018) 'Beyond Gold Stars: Improving the Skills and Engagement of Struggling Readers through Intrinsic Motivation', *Reading & writing quarterly*, 34(3), pp. 203–217. doi: 10.1080/10573569.2017.1387834.

Sullivan, A. and Brown, M. (2015) 'Reading for pleasure and progress in vocabulary and Mathematics', *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(6), pp. 971–991.

Whitten, C. Labby, S. and Sullivan, S. (2016) 'The impact of Pleasure Reading on Academic Success', *The Journal of Multidisciplinary Graduate Research*, 2(4) pp. 48–64.

Britton, J. (1970) Language and Learning. London: Penguin.

Cliff-Hodges, G. (2010) 'Rivers of reading: Using critical incident collages to learn about adolescent readers and their readership', English in Education, 44(3), pp. 181–200.

Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Powell, S., Collins R. and Safford K. (2014) Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure. London and NY: Routledge.

Crum. M. (2019) 'Sorry, Ebooks. These 9 Studies Show Why Print Is Better', *Huffington Post*.Available at: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/print-ebooks-studies_n_6762674 (Accessed: 17 August 2021).

European Commission (2012) *EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy: Final Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union*. Available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/96d782cc-7cad-4389-869a-bbc8e15e5aeb (Accessed: 17 August 2021).

Hempel-Jorgensen, A., Cremin, T., Harris, D. and Chamberlain, L. (2018) 'Pedagogy for reading for pleasure in low socio-economic primary schools: beyond "pedagogy of poverty"?' Literacy, 52(2) pp. 86–94.

Hempel-Jorgensen, A. and Cremin, T. (forthcoming) 'An intersectionality approach to understanding 'boys' engagement with reading', International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education.

Iser, W. (1978) The Act of Reading. Baltimore, MD,:Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kuzmičová, A. and Bálint, K. (2019) 'Personal Relevance in Story Reading: A Research Review', *Poetics Today*, 40(3), pp. 429–451.

Kucirkova, N. and Cremin, T. (2020) Children Reading for Pleasure in the Digital Age: Mapping Reader Engagement. London: Sage.

Kuzmičová, A. and Cremin, T. (2021) 'Different fiction genres take children's memories to different places', Cambridge Journal of Education. doi: 10.1080/0305764X.2021.1937523.

Littleton, K. & Mercer, N. (2013) Interthinking: Putting talk to work. London: Routledge.

McGeown, S., Norgate, R. & Warhurst, A. (2012) 'Exploring intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation among very good and very poor readers', Educational Research, 54(3), pp. 309–322. doi: 10.1080/00131881.2012.710089.

Moss, G. and McDonald, J. W. (2004) 'The borrowers: library records as unobtrusive measures of children's reading preferences', Journal of Research in Reading, 27, pp. 401–412.

Munzer, T., Miller, A., Weeks, H., Kaciroti, N. and Radesky, J. (2019) 'Differences in Parent-Toddler Interactions With Electronic Versus Print Books', *Pediatrics,* 143 (4), e20182012. doi: https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2012

O'Donnell, B. and Hallam, S. (2014) 'Read for my school: digital versus paper books', *London book fair conference*. London, 2 April.

Orkin, M., Pott, M., Wolf, M., May, S. and Brand, E. (2018) 'Beyond gold stars: Improving the skills and engagement of struggling readers through intrinsic motivation', Reading and Writing Quarterly, 34(3), pp. 203–217.

Rosenblatt, L. (1994) The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press.

Ross, C. S., McKechnie, L. and Rothbauer, P. M. (2006) Reading Matters: What research reveals about reading, libraries and community. Westport: Libraries Unlimited.

Strouse, G. and Ganea. P. (2017) 'A print book preference: caregivers report higher child enjoyment and more adult-child interactions when reading print than electronic books', *International Journal of Child Computer Interaction*, 12, pp. 8–15. doi: https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.ijcci.2017.02.001

Topping, K., Duran, D. and Van Keer, H. (2016) Using peer tutoring to improve reading skills: A practical guide for teachers. London & New York: Routledge.

Therman, C. (2008) 'Remindings, understanding and involvement: a close reading of the content and context of remindings' in Auracher, J. (ed.) New beginnings in literary studies. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 352–371.

Torday, P. (no date) 'Author spotlights – Piers Torday'. Interview with The Open University Reading for Pleasure. Available at: https://ourfp.org/author_spotlight/piers-torday/ (Accessed: 17 August 2021).

UNESCO (2017) *Literacy Rates Continue to Rise from One Generation to the Next: Fact Sheet 45*. Available at: http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs45-literacy-rates-continue-rise-generation-to-next-en-2017_0.pdf (Accessed: 29 July 2021).

Bishop, R. S. (1990) 'Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors', *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3).

Boyd, F., Causey, L. and Galda, L. (2015) 'Culturally Diverse Literature: Enriching Variety in an Era of Common Core State Standards', *The Reading Teacher*, 68(5) pp. 378–387.

Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of Meaning Cambridge*. MA: Harvard University Press.

Engle, S. (2005) 'The narrative worlds of what is and what if', *Cognitive Development*, 20, pp. 514–525.

Hardy, B. (1977) 'Towards a poetics of fiction: an approach through narrative', in Meek, M.,, Warlow, A., and Barton, G. (eds.) *The Cool Web*. London: Bodley Head.

Mathis, J. (2016) 'Literature and the Young Child: Engagement, Enactment, and Agency From a Sociocultural Perspective', J*ournal of Research in Childhood Education*, 30(4), pp. 618–629.

Persiani-Becker, K. (2011) 'Gender, Sexuality, and Equity', in Gopalakrishnan, A. (ed.) *Multicultural Children's Literature: A Critical Issues Approach*'. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 101–126.

Potter, J. and Cowen, K. (2020) 'Playground as meaning-making space: Multimodal making and re-making of meaning in the (virtual) playground', *Global Studies of Childhood*, 10(3), pp. 248–263.

Rosen, H. (1988) 'The irrepressible genre', in Maclure, M., Phillips, T. and Wilkinson, A. (eds) *Oracy Matters*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Rutsch, E. (2010) *Empathy Documentary - Barack Obama Promotes Empathy from Books and Literacy*. 28 August. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tg_qt_P8B40 (Accessed: 27 September 2021).

Ted (2009) *The danger of a single story | Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*. 7 October. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg&t=11s (Accessed: 30 July 2021).

Tsao, Ya-Lun (2008) 'Gender issues in young children's literature', *Reading improvement*, 45(3), p. 108.

Best, E. Clark, C. and Picton, E. (2020) *Diversity and Children and Young People's reading in 2020*!Warning! Calibri Light not supported. Available at: https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/diversity-and-children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2020/ (Accessed: 6 August 2021).

Bishop, R. S. (1990) 'Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors', *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the classroom*, 6(3), ix–xi.

Cremin, T. Mottram, M. Powell, S, Collins R and Safford K. (2014) *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure*. London and NY: Routledge.

Cremin, T. Mottram, M. Powell, S, Collins R and Drury, R. (2015) *Researching Literacy Lives: Building home school communities*. London and NY: Routledge.

Clark, C. and Teravainen, A. (2015a) *Teachers and Literacy: Their perceptions, understanding, confidence and awareness*. Available at: https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/2015_11_03_free_research_-_teachers_and_literacy_2015_0EcH766.pdf (Accessed: 6 August 2021).

Clark, C. and Teravainen, A. (2015b) *Children's and Young People's Reading in 2014. Findings from the 2014 National Literacy Trust's annual survey*. Available at: https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/2015_05_20_free_research_-_children_reading_2014_OSmeOgX.pdf (Accessed: 6 August 2021).

Cliff-Hodges, G. (2010) 'Rivers of reading: Using critical incident collages to learn about adolescent readers and their readership', *English in Education*, 44(3), pp. 181–200.

CLPE (2020) *Reflecting Realities. Survey of Ethnic Representation within UK Children's Literature 2019*. Available at: https://clpe.org.uk/system/files/CLPE%20Reflecting%20Realities%202020.pdf(Accessed: 6 August 2021).

Collins, F. and Drury, R. (2015) 'Developing knowledge about the children', in Cremin, T. Mottram, M., Collins, F., Powell, S. and Drury, R. (eds.) Researching Literacy Lives. London: Taylor and Francis. doi: 10.4324/9781315772820.

Gambrell, L. (2011) 'Seven Rules of Engagement: What's Most Important to Know About Motivation to Read', Reading Teacher, 65(3), pp. 172–178

Griffith, P. E. (2010) 'Graphic novels in the secondary classroom and school libraries', Journal of adolescent and Adult Literacy, 54(3), pp. 181–189.

Guthrie, J. T. and Davis, M. H. (2003) 'Motivating struggling readers in middle school through an engagement model of classroom practice;, Reading & writing quarterly, 19(1), pp. 59–85. doi: 10.1080/10573560308203.

Little, S. (2021) 'Rivers of multilingual reading: exploring biliteracy experiences among 8-13-year old heritage language readers', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2021.1882472

Ng, C. (2018) 'Using student voice to promote reading engagement for economically disadvantaged students', Journal of Research in Reading, 41(4), pp. 700–715.

Roche, M. (2014) Developing Children's Critical Thinking through Picturebooks: A Guide for Primary and Early Years Students and Teachers. Abingdon: Routledge.

Beck, I. L, McKeown, M. G. and Kucan, L. (2002) Bringing words to life: robust vocabulary instruction. New York: The Guilford Press.

Biddle, J. (2019) *Pupil recommendation shelf by Jon Biddle*. Available at: https://cdn.ourfp.org/wp-content/uploads/20210224131424/JonBiddle-recommendations-shelf-HH.pdf?_ga=2.144616957.99607622.1631632154-2042065285.1627299352 (Accessed: 15 September 2021).

Cremin, T, (2019) *Reading Communities, what how and why*. Available at https://cdn.ourfp.org/wp-content/uploads/20210301105855/Reading_Communities_T-Cremin_2019.pdf?_ga=2.134846385.1937271030.1633344484-218333398.1633344484 (Accessed 14 September 2021).

Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Powell, S., Collins, R. and Safford, K. (2014) Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for pleasure. London and NY: Routledge.

Farshore (2020) *Children's Reading for Pleasure*. Available at: http://s28434.p595.sites.pressdns.com/site-farshore/wp-content/uploads/sites/46/2021/03/Reading-for-Pleasure-2020-Farshore.pdf (Accessed: 14 September 2021).

Guthrie, J., Wigfield, A. and You, W. (2012)'Instructional Contexts for Engagement and Achievement in Reading', in Christenson, S. L. *et al*. (eds.) *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*. Springer Science+Business Media, pp. 601-634.

Hall, K. W. and Williams, L. (2010) 'First-grade teachers reading aloud Caldecott Award-Winning books to diverse 1st graders in urban classrooms', *Journal of Research in Childhood Education,* 24(298).

Heibert, E., Wilson, K. and Trainin, G. (2010) 'Are Students Really Reading in Independent Reading Contexts? An Examination of Comprehension-Based Silent Reading Rate', in Hiebert, E. and Reutzel, D. (eds.) *Revisiting Silent Reading: New Directions for Teachers and Researchers.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association, pp.151–167.

Hempel-Jorgensen, A., Cremin, T., Harris, D. and Chamberlain, L. (2018) 'Pedagogy for reading for pleasure in low socio-economic primary schools: beyond "pedagogy of poverty"?', *Literacy,* 52(2)

Hudson, A. K. and Williams, J. A. (2015) 'Reading every single day: A journey to authentic reading', *The Reading Teacher*, 68(7), pp. 530–538. doi:10.1002/trtr.1349.

Kalb, G. and Van Ours, J. C. (2014) 'Reading to young children: a head-start in life?', *Economics of Education Review*, 40, pp. 1–24.

Kuhn, M., Schwanenflugen, P. and Meisinger, E. (2010) 'Aligning theory and assessment of reading fluency: automaticity, prosody, and definitions of fluency', *Reading Research Quarterly*, 45(2), pp. 230–251.

McClure, E. L. and Fullerton, S. K. (2017) 'Instructional Interactions: Supporting students' reading development through interactive read-alouds of informational texts', *The Reading Teacher,* 71(1), pp. 51–59.

McQuillan, J. (2019) 'The Inefficiency of Vocabulary Instruction', *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 11(4), pp. 309–318.

Merga, M. K. (2017) 'What motivates avid readers to maintain a regular reading habit in adulthood?', *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy,* 40(2), pp. 146–156.

Merga, K. and Ledger, S. (2018) 'Teachers' attitudes toward and frequency of engagement in reading aloud in the primary classroom', *Literacy*, 53(3): pp. 134–142.

Merga, M., McRae, M. and Rutherford, L. (2018) 'Adolescents' attitudes toward talking about books: implications for educators', *English in Education*, 52(1), pp. 36–53.

Moffatt, L., Heydon, R. and Iannacci, L. (2019) 'Helping out, signing up and sitting down: The cultural production of "read-alouds" in three kindergarten classrooms', *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 19(2), pp. 147–174.

Moses, L. and Kelly, L. (2018) '"We're a little loud. That's because we like to read!": Developing positive views of reading in a diverse, urban first grade', *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 18(3), pp. 307–337.

Moses, L. and Kelly, L. (2019) 'Are They Really Reading? A Descriptive Study of First Graders During Independent Reading', *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 35(4), pp. 322–338.

Moss, G. (2000) 'Raising boys' attainment in reading: some principles for intervention', *Reading*, 34(3), pp. 101–106.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction (No. NIH Publication No. 00-4769)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Rodriguez Leon, L. and Payler, J. (2021) 'Surfacing complexity in shared book reading: The role of affordance, repetition and modal appropriation in children's participation', *Learning Culture and Social Interaction*. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2021.100496.

Stanovich, K. (1986) 'Matthew effects in reading: some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy', *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21(4), pp. 360–-407.

Sullivan, A. and Brown, M. (2015) 'Reading for pleasure and progress in vocabulary and mathematics', *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(6), pp. 971–991.

Wasik, B. and Hindman, A. (2014) 'Understanding the active ingredients in an effective preschool vocabulary intervention: an exploratory study of teacher and child talk during book reading', *Early Education and Development,* 25**,** pp. 1035–1056.

Westbrook, J., Sutherland, J., Oakhill, J. and Sullivan, S. (2018) '"Just reading": the impact of a faster pace of reading narratives on the comprehension of poorer adolescent readers in English classrooms', *Literacy*, 53(2), pp. 60–68.

Wiseman, A. (2011) 'Interactive Read Alouds: Teachers and Students Constructing Knowledge and Literacy Together', *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 38, pp. 431–438.

Zucker, T. A., Justice, L. M., Pentimonti, J. M., Cabell, S. Q. and Kaderavek, J. (2013) 'The Role of Frequent, Interactive Prekindergarten Shared Reading in the Longitudinal Development of Language and Literacy Skills', *Developmental Psychology,* 49**,** pp. 1425–1439.

Burns, M., Senesac, B. and Silberglitt , B. (2008) 'Longitudinal Effect of a Volunteer Tutoring Program on Reading Skills of Students Identified as At-Risk for Reading Failure:

A Two-Year Follow-Up Study', *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 47(1), pp. 27–37. doi: 10.1080/19388070701750171

Commeyras, M., Bisplinghoff, B. S. and Olson, J. (2003) *Teachers as Readers*. Newark: IRA.

Cremin, T. (2019) 'Teachers as readers and writers', in Bowers, V. (ed.) *Debates in Primary Education*. London: Routledge.

Cremin, T. (2021a) 'Building Reading Communities', in Gill, A., Stephenson, J. and Waugh, D. (eds.) *Developing a Love of Reading and Books.* London: Learning Matters, Sage.

Cremin, T. (2021b) 'The red thread of reading for pleasure: Reading Teachers', *Books for Keeps.* Available at: https://booksforkeeps.co.uk/article/the-red-thread-of-reading-for-pleasure-reading-teachers/ (Accessed: 16 September 2021).

DfE (2021) *The Reading Framework: Teaching the foundations of literacy.* London: DfE.

Gildersleeves, L. (2012) 'Do school libraries make a difference? Some considerations on investigating school library impact in the United Kingdom', *Library Management,* 33(67), pp. 403–413.

Great School Libraries (GSLC) (2019) *Great School Libraries Survey Findings and Update on Phase 1*. Available at: https://d824397c-0ce2-4fc6-b5c4-8d2e4de5b242.filesusr.com/ugd/8d6dfb_a1949ea011cd415fbd57a7a0c4471469.pdf (Accessed: 16 September 2021).

Kucirkova, N. and Cremin, T. (2017) 'Personalised reading for pleasure with digital libraries: Towards a pedagogy of practice and design', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, pp. 1-19.Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2017.1375458 (Accessed: 1 October 2021).

Loh, C., Ellis, M., Paculdar, A. and Wan, Z. (2017) 'Building a successful reading culture through the school library: A case study of a Singapore secondary school', *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*, 43(4), pp.335-347. doi: DOI/10.1177/0340035217732069.

Merga, M. K. (2016) '"I don't know if she likes reading": Are teachers perceived to be keen readers, and how is this determined', *English in Education*, 50(3), pp. 255–269.

Morrow-Howell, N., Jonson-Reid, M., McCrary, S., Lee, Y. and Spitznagel, E. (2009) *Evaluation of Experience Corps: Student Reading Outcomes.*Washington, DC: Center for Social Development.

Orkin, M., Pott, M., Wolf, M., May, S. and Brand, E. (2018) 'Beyond Gold Stars: Improving the Skills and Engagement of Struggling Readers through Intrinsic Motivation', *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 34(3), pp. 203–217.

Rudkin, G and Wood, C. (2019) *Understanding the Impact and Characteristics of School Libraries and Reading Spaces.* Nottingham Trent University.

Teravainen, A. and Clark, C. (2017) *School Libraries: A literature review of current provision and evidence of impact*. London: National Literacy Trust.

Tonne, I. and Pihl, J. (2012) 'Literacy education, reading engagement, and library use in multilingual classes', *Intercultural Education*, 23(3), pp. 183–194.

Tracey, B., Hornery, S., Seaton, M., Craven, R. and Seeshing Yeung, A. (2014) 'Volunteers Supporting Children With Reading Difficulties in Schools: Motives and Rewards', *School Community Journal*, 24(1).

Todd, T. (2021) *The Future of Primary School Libraries*. Available at: https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/The_Future_of_Primary_School_Libraries.pdf (Accessed: 12 January 2022).

Williams, D., Wavell, C. and Morrison, K. (2013) *'Impact of school libraries on learning: Critical review of published evidence to inform the Scottish education community'*. Aberdeen, Scotland: Robert Gordon University.

de Bondt, M., Willenberg, I. A. and Bus, A. G. (2020) 'Do book giveaway programs promote the home literacy environment and children's literacy-related behavior and skills?', *Review of Educational Research*, 90(3), pp. 349–375. doi: https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320922140.

Cremin, T. (2019) *Reading Communities, what how and why*. Available at: https://cdn.ourfp.org/wp-content/uploads/20210301105855/Reading_Communities_T-Cremin_2019.pdf?_ga=2.134846385.1937271030.1633344484-218333398.1633344484 (Accessed 14 September 2021).

Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Powell, S., Collins, R. and Safford, K. (2014) *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure*. London and NY: Routledge.

David, A. (2020) *Reading to children is so powerful, so simple and yet so misunderstood*. Available at:

https://www.teachearlyyears.com/learning-and-development/view/reading-to-children-is-powerful-simple-and-yet-so-misunderstood (Accessed: 16 September 2021).

Evans, M. D. R., Kelley, J., Sikora, J. and Treiman, D. J. (2010) 'Family scholarly culture and educational success: Books and schooling in 27 nations', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 28(2), pp. 171–197.

Hall, M., Levy, R. and Preece, J. (2018) '"No-one would sleep if we didn't have books!": Understanding shared reading as family practice and family display', *Journal of Early Childhood Research*,16(4), pp. 363–377.

Hindin, A., Steiner, L. and Dougherty, S. (2017) 'Building Our Capacity to Forge Successful Home-School Partnerships: Programs That Support and Honor the Contributions of Families', *Childhood Education*, 93(1), pp. 10–19.

Kinzer, C., Leu, D. and Peters M. (2016) 'New literacies and new literacies within changing digital environments', in Peters, M. (ed) *The encyclopaedia of educational philosophy and theory*. London: Springer.

Knoester, M. and Plikuhn, M. (2016) 'Influence of siblings on out-of-school reading practices', *Journal of research in reading*, 39(4), pp. 469–485.

Kucirkova, N. and Littleton, K. (2016) *The Digital Reading Habits of Children: A National Survey of Parents' Perceptions of and Practices in Relation to Children's Reading for Pleasure with Print and Digital Books*. London: Book Trust.

Levy, R. (2011) *Young Children Reading at Home and at School*. London: Sage

Little, S. (2021) 'Rivers of multilingual reading: exploring biliteracy experiences among 8-13-year old heritage language readers', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. doi: 10.1080/01434632.2021.1882472.

Mackey, M. (2021) 'Access, Choice, and Time to Read: A Reader-Driven Perspective on Social Justice'. *OU literacy and Social Justice centre seminar*. 12 May.

Mallette, M. and Barone, D. (2016) 'Unite for Literacy: An Interview with Mark W.F. Condon', *The Reading Teacher*, 69(5), pp. 471–481.

Marsh, J. (2003) 'One-way Traffic? Connections between Literacy Practices at Home and in the Nursery', *British Educational Research Journal*, 29, pp. 369–382.

Maybin, J. (2007) 'Literacy under and over the desk: oppositions and heterogeneity', *Language and Education,* 21(6), pp. 515–530.

McGrane, J., Stiff, J., Baird, J., Lenkeit, J. and Hopfenbeck-Oxford, T. (2017) *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS): National Report for England.* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attach-ment_data/file/664562/PIRLS_2016_National_Report_for_England-_BRANDED.pdf (Accessed: 16 September 2021).

National Literacy Trust (NLT) (2019) *Gift of reading: children's book ownership in 2019.* Available at: https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/gift-reading-childrens-book-ownership-2019/ (Accessed: 7 October 2021).

Nicholas, M. and Paatsch, L. (2018) 'Mothers' views on shared reading with their two-year olds using printed and electronic texts: Purpose, confidence and practice', *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy.* doi: 146879841879261.

Picton, I., Clark, C. and Judge, T. (2020) *Video game playing and literacy: a survey of young people aged 11 to 16. A National Literacy Trust research report*. Available at: https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Video_game_playing_and_literacy_re-port_final_updated.pdf (Accessed 16 September 2021).

UNICEF (2021) *COVID-19: Schools for more than 168 million children globally have been completely closed for almost a full year, says UNICEF* [Press release]. 2 March. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/schools-more-168-million-children-globally-have-been-completely-closed (Accessed: 16 September 2021).

Wiescholek, S., Hilkenmeier, J., Greiner, G. and Buhl, H. (2018) 'Six-year-olds' perception of home literacy environment and its influence on children's literacy enjoyment, frequency, and early literacy skills', *Reading Psychology*, 39(1), pp. 41–68.

Worthy, J., Nuñez, I. and Espinoza, K. (2016) '"Wow, I Get to Choose Now!" Bilingualism and Biliteracy Development from Childhood to Young Adulthood', *Bilingual Research Journal*, 39(1), pp. 20–34.

Cliff-Hodges, G. (2010) 'Rivers of reading: Using critical incident collages to learn about adolescent readers and their readership', *English in Education*, 44(3), pp. 181–200.

Commeyras, M., Bisplinghoff, B. S. and Olson, J. (2003) *Teachers as Readers*. Newark: IRA.

Collins, F. and Safford, K. (2008) '"The right book to the right child at the right time": Primary Teacher Knowledge of Children's Literature', *Changing English*, 15(4), pp. 415-–422. doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/13586840802493068.

Cremin, T. (2019) 'Teachers as readers and writers', in Bowers, V. (ed.) *Debates in Primary Education*. London: Routledge.

Cremin, T. (2021) 'The red thread of reading for pleasure: determinedly sharing the joy', *Books for Keeps*, May, No. 248, pp. 3–5. Available at: https://content.yudu.com/web/1mjdv/0A1mjdx/BfKNo248May2021/html/index.html?pa-ge=2&origin=reader (Accessed: 21 September 2021).

Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Powell, S., Collins, R. and Safford, K. (2014) *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure*. London and NY: Routledge.

DfE (2020) *Reviewing Early Reading Provision: Overview.* The English Hubs, DfE: London.

DfE (2021) *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five EYFS reforms*. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attach-ment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf (Accessed: 21 Sep-tember 2021).

Hempel-Jorgensen, A., Cremin, T., Harris, D. and Chamberlain, L. (2018) 'Pedagogy for reading for pleasure in low socio-economic primary schools: beyond "pedagogy of poverty"?, *Literacy*, 52(2).

Kucirkova, N. & Cremin, T. (2020) *Children Reading for Pleasure in the Digital Age: Mapping Reader Engagement*. London: Sage.

Meek, M. (1998) 'Important reading lessons', in Cox, B. (ed.) *Literacy is not Enough Essays on the importance of reading.* Manchester, Manchester University Press and Book Trust, pp. 116–124.

OECD (2019) *PISA 2018 Results (Volume II): Where All Students Can Succeed*. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/b5fd1b8f-en (Accessed: 8 October 2021).

Powell, S. (2014) 'Influencing children's attitudes, motivation and achievement', in Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Powell, S., Collins, R. and Safford K. (eds.) *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure*. London and NY: Routledge, pp. 128–146.

Sullivan, A. and Brown, M. (2015) 'Reading for pleasure and progress in vocabulary and mathematics', *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(6) pp. 971–991.

Scholes, L. (2017) 'Books are boring! Books are fun! Boys' polarized perspectives on reading', *Boyhood Studies*, 10(2), pp. 77–98.

Scholes, L. (2021) 'Year 3 boys' and girls' enjoyment of reading across economic demographics in Australia. Implications for boys and students from lower SES communities', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2021.1941319.

Rose. S., Twist, L., Lord, P., Rutt, S., Badr, K., Hope, C. and Styles, B. (2021) *Impact of school closures and subsequent support strategies on attainment and socio-emotional wellbeing in Key Stage 1: Interim Paper 1. Education Endowment Foundation*. Available at:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19_Re-sources/Impact_of_school_closures_KS1_interim_findings_paper_-_Jan_2021.pdf (Ac-cessed: 21 September 2021).

Wilhelm, J. (2016) 'Recognising the power of pleasure: "What engaged adolescent readers get from their free-choice reading, and how teachers can leverage this for all", *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 39(1).

Acknowledgements

The material acknowledged below and within the course is Proprietary and used under licence (not subject to Creative Commons Licence). Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following sources for permission to reproduce material in this free course:

Images

Course image: ©The Open University

Developing Reading for Pleasure badge: © The Open University

Course description page: audio/visual

Course introductory video with Professor Cremin: ©The Open University

Week 1

Images and figures

Course image: ©The Open University

Section 1, Young boys reading: ©The Open University.

Section 2, Young girl reading: ©The Open University.

Section 3, Figure 1: from: Clark, C. and Teravainen-Goff, A. (2020) *Children and young people's reading in 2019: Findings from our Annual Literacy Survey in* National Literacy Trust research report.
https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/ media/ documents/ Reading_trends_in_2019__Final.pdf
© National Literacy Trust.

Section 4, Boy smiling with teacher: ©The Open University.

Section 7, Teacher reading to class: ©The Open University.

Section 8, Boy reading with teacher: ©The Open University.

Section 8, Figure 2: My Name by Coral Rumble: used with permission.

Section 11, Three children reading. ©The Open University.

Book covers

Section 5, Activity 2: Football school Epic heroes by Alex Bellos and Ben Lyttleton Walker Books. Text © 2017 Alex Bellos and Ben Lyttleton | Illustrations © 2017 Spike Gerrel. Walker Books Limited https://www.walker.co.uk/

Section 5, Activity 2: Here We Are by Oliver Jeffers. Published by Philomel & HarperCollins 2017. Courtesy Harper Collins https://harpercollins.co.uk/

Section 9: The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family by Ibtihaj Muhammad, Hatem Aly (Illustrator), S. K. Ali (With) published with Andersen Copyright © 2017 Andersen Press; await claim

Section 9: Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds, illustrated by Chris Priestley published by Faber Courtesy Faber https://www.faber.co.uk/

Section 9: The Undefeated by Kwame Alexander, Kadir Nelson (Illustrator) published by Versify 2019 https://www.hmhbooks.com/versify await claim

Tables

Section 4, Table 1: from Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Powell, S., Collins, R. and Safford, K. (2014) (p157) Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure. London and NY: Routledge.

Week 2

Images and figures

Course image: ©The Open University

Section 1, Family on sofa using laptop: ©fizkes/Shutterstock.com; Happy multicultural kids standing in park and holding map: ©LightField Studios/Shutterstock.com

Section 2, Boy reading comic: Photograph ©The Open University

Section 2, Figure 1, The Open University's Treasure Hunt image. Case Study courtesy: Claire Williams, St Andrew's C of E Primary School. Illustration Sarah McIntyre. Note: third party product image content belongs to individual company/publisher and used for illustrative purposes only.

Section 5, Man with child on lap: ©LumiNola/Getty Images

Section 6, Two girls reading outside: ©The Open University

Section 7, Boy showing friend book: Photograph: ©The Open University

Section 8, Three girls reading together: ©The Open University

Section 9, Children outside reading with teacher: ©The Open University

Section 10, Boy with hand up: ©The Open University

Section 12, Boy and girl sharing comic: photograph ©The Open University

Book covers

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Picture storybooks, I am Bat by Morag Hood
I Am Bat by Morag Hood - 9781509834624 - Pan Macmillan

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Picture storybooks, Julian is a Mermaid by Jessica Love published by Candlewick Press. Used with Permission from Walker Books

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Children's and young adult's novels, Armistice Runner Used with permission of Barrington Stoke Ltd. Cover design: Barrington Stoke

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Children's and young adult's novels, 'Boy 87' by Ele Fountain, Katie Everson (cover design), and Kate Milner (illustration), published by Pushkin Press https://pushkinpress.com/

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Graphic novels and wordless picture books, Minecraft Volume One Mojang Studios https://www.minecraft.net/en-us

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Graphic novels and wordless picture books, The Arrival by Shaun Tan (2006) Hodder Children's Books https://www.hodder.co.uk/

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Poetry and verse texts, Poems Aloud by Joseph Coelho (author) Daniel Gray- Barnett (Illustrator) Wide-Eyed Editions (Publisher) The Quarto Group

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Poetry and verse texts, Michael Rosen's A-Z: The best children's poetry from Agard to Zephaniah by Michael Rosen (2009) Penguin UK

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Apps and websites, BBC Children in Need SUPERHERO screenshot © BBC

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Comics and magazines, The Phoenix Issue no 13 Pirate Peril: courtesy: The Phoenix Comic https://thephoenixcomic.co.uk/

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Comics and magazines, Whizz Pop Bang magazine cover: courtesy Launchpad Publishing Ltd https://www.whizzpopbang.com/

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Non-fiction texts, Dinosaur Atlas. Used with permission from Lonely Plant https://shop.lonelyplanet.com/products/dinosaur-atlas-1

Section 4, Figure 3 (interactive), Non-fiction texts, Prejudice to Pride By Amy Lame, Quercus Books courtesy: HACHETTE CHILDREN'S GROUP

Section 5, Felix after the Rain by Dunja Jogan (author and illustrator) Tiny Own Publishing Ltd. https://tinyowl.co.uk/

Section 6, Brock by Anthony McGowan: Used with permission of Barrington Stoke Ltd. Cover design: carrdesignstudio.com.Cover photograph © Piotr Zupan Szupowski

Section 6, Dream Big: Michael Jordan and the Pursuit of Olympic Gold, By Deloris Jordan & Illustrated by Barry Root is published by Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books'

Section 6, Sona Sharma Very Best Big Sister by Chitra Soundar Illustrated by Jen Khatun published with permission by Walker Books https://www.walker.co.uk/

Section 6, The super miraculous journey of Freddie Yates by Jenny Pearson Published May 12th 2020 by Norton Young Readers https://wwnorton.com/nrtyng

Text

Section 9: Optional Resource: Case Study: Developing Whole School Reading Relationships. Courtesy: John Biddle

Audio Visual

Section 8, Video 1, Ben Harris reading One Fox by Kate Read . First published in 2019 by Two Hoots/Macmillan Children's Books. Used under licence with permission Pan Macmillan. MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS INTERNATIONAL LIMITED ©The Open University and its licensor

Section 8, Video 2, Richard Charlesworth reading A House that Once Was First published in 2018 by Two Hoots/Macmillan Children's Books. Used under licence with permission Pan Macmillan. MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS INTERNATIONAL LIMITED ©The Open University and its licensor

Section 8, Video 3, Professor Teresa Cremin reading THE SAME INSIDE, Poems about Empathy and Friendship written by Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Roger Stevens (ISBN: 9781509854509) published on the Macmillan Children's Books list. Used under licence with permission Pan Macmillan. MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS INTERNATIONAL LIMITED ©The Open University and its licensor

Section 10, Activity 4, Video 4: Courtesy Katherine Young for Elmhurst School. https://www.elmhurstschool.org/

Week 3

Images and figures

Course image: ©The Open University

Section 1, Typewriter: ©Nito/Shutterstock.com

Section 2, Girl wearing crown: ©The Open University

Section 3, Girls playing make believe: ©The Open University

Section 3, Child dressed as The Hulk: ©The Open University

Section 5, Boys working together at table: ©The Open University

Section 7, Boys at desk talking: ©The Open University

Section 8, Girl reading alone: ©The Open University

Book covers

Section 5: Julian is a Mermaid by Jessica Love published by Candlewick Press. Used with Permission of Walker Books

Section 5: Ruby's Worry by Tom Percival (author and illustrator) published 2018 Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

Section 5: The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf, Orion Children's Books, Hachette Childrens Group https://www.orionbooks.co.uk/

Section 5: The Girls Text copyright © Lauren Ace, 2018. Illustrations © Jenny Løvlie, 2018. First published in Great Britain 2018. Permission given by Caterpillar Books, an imprint of the Little Tiger Group

Section 6, Activity 3: Luna's Red Hat, Emmi Smid, courtesy: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, UK https://uk.jkp.com/

Section 6, Activity 3: Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour and Daniel Egneus Courtesy: Oxford University Press https://global.oup.com/?cc=gb

Section 6, Activity 3: Wonder by R J Palacio, Text copyright ©2012 by R. J. Palacio Jacket art copyright ©2012 by Tad Carpenter publisher: Alfred P Knopf an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House, Inc., New York.

Session 8, Personal reflection 3: Little Rabbit Foo Foo by Michael Rosen (Illustrator Arthur Robins. Courtesy Walker Books https://www.walker.co.uk/ © Michael Rosen

Text

Section 6, Activity 3: Synopsis for Luna's Red Hat courtesy: Books for Topics to https://www.booksfortopics.com

Section 6, Activity 3: Review: Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour and Daniel Egneus. Oxford University Press. Courtesy Oxford University Press https://global.oup.com/education/product/9780192771940/?region=uk

Section 6, Activity 3: Synopsis for Wonder by R J Palacio courtesy: Books for Topics to https://www.booksfortopics.com

Audio Visual

Section 7, Video 2: Miranda McKearney OBE Founder, EmpathyLab: Courtesy: Empathy Lab https://www.empathylab.uk/

Week 4

Images and figures

Course image: ©The Open University

Section 1, Photograph of children's texts on display in a school. Photograph ©The Open University

Section 1, Figure 1, National Literacy Trust p 7 https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/2015_05_20_free_research_-_children_reading_2014_OSmeOgX.pdf (c)National Literacy Trust

Section 2, Photograph of different children's texts on display in a school: Photograph ©The Open University

Section 4, Reading time in class with teacher ©The Open University

Section 5, Figure 4, Book blanket, Various children's reading texts: Photographed for The Open University.

Section 5, Figure 5, Mrs H's reading river board image: courtesy: Lisa Hesmondhalgh

Section 8, Two boys with teacher sitting on ground outside ©The Open University

Book covers

Section 2, BUNNY VS MONKEY by Jamie Smart published David Fickling Books.
David Fickling Books

Section 2, Hilda and The Troll by Luke Pearson Courtesy: © Flying Eye Books, an imprint of Nobrow Ltd, 2013

Section 2, Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy: A Graphic Novel' by Rey Terciero, Bre Indigo. Little Brown publisher Welcome to Little, Brown Book Group | Hachette UK (littlebrown.co.uk)

Section 3, A kind of spark by Elle McNicoll (2020) Permission granted Knights of http://knightsof.media/

Section 3, El Deafo by Cece Bell (illustrator David Lasky) Published September 2nd 2014 by Harry N. Abrams. Courtesy Harry N Abrams https://www.abramsbooks.com/

Section 3, Too Small Tola written by Atinuke, illustrated by Onyinya Iwu. Reproduced by permission of Walker Books Ltd, London SE11 5HJ. www.walker.co.uk

Section 3, Amazing by Steve Antony courtesy HACHETTE CHILDREN'S GROUP
Hachette Children's Group | Hachette Childrens UK

Section 3, The Undefeated by Kwame Alexander, Kadir Nelson (Illustrator) published by Versify 2019 https://www.hmhbooks.com/versify

Text

Section 5, Activity 4, Reading Rivers by Jon Biddle: courtesy Moorlands School

Week 5

Images and figures

Course image: ©The Open University

Introduction, Figure 1: in Cremin, T. (2019) *Reading Communities, what how and why.* Available at
https://cdn.ourfp.org/ wp-content/ uploads/ 20210301105855/ Reading_Communities_T-Cremin_2019.pdf?_ga=2.134846385.1937271030.1633344484-218333398.1633344484

Section 1, Teacher reading to children on floor: ©The Open University

Section 1, Figure 2, Activity 1: Book cover: Look Up! Text copyright Nathan Bryon © 2019, Illustration copyright Dapo Adeola © 2019, published by Puffin Books. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd

Section 2, Teacher reading to children: ©The Open University

Section 3, Figure 3: book covers (photograph by The Open University): I'm Sticking with You by Smriti Halls (2020) Illustrated by Steve Small courtesy: Simon and Schuster https://www.simonandschuster.co.uk; and Meesha Makes Friends Tom Percival (author), Tom Percival (Illustrator Published by Bloomsbury Children's Books.

Section 4, Two girls reading lounging on floor: ©The Open University

Section 5, Girl reading Big Blue book: © The Open University

Section 6, Children reading excitedly: ©The Open University

Section 7, Teacher and children reading outside: © The Open University

Section 7, Peer recommendation shelf: courtesy: photograph: Jon Biddle Moorlands Primary Academy

Section 8, Classroom with children reading: ©The Open University

Section 9, Children working in class: ©The Open University

Book covers

Section 2, Activity 2: Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by J K Rowling (1997). Bloomsbury Publishing https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk

Section 2, Activity 2: The chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe by C.S.Lewis, HarperCollins Children's Books. https://harpercollins.co.uk/

Section 2, Activity 2: The House at Pooh Corner by A.A. Milne, illustrator E.H. Shepard. Random House, originally published 1928 by Methuen

Text

Section 7, Book Buzz, Casey Lynchey's case study: courtesy: Mrs Casey Lynchey for Holcombe Brook Primary School https://holcombebrookprimary.org.uk/

Section 7, Peer recommendation shelf, Jon Biddle's case study with 9–11-year-olds: courtesy Jon Biddle, Moorlands C of E Primary Academy. Copyright in book cover illustrations rest with the individual publishers and/or authors/illustrators.

Audio Visual

Section 1, Video 1: Teacher reading extract from The Promise by Nicola Davies (Author), Laura Carlin (Illustrator) Walker Books. Video ©The Open University

Section 5, Activity 3, Video 2: ©The Open University

Week 6

Images and figures

Course image: ©The Open University

Section 1, children reading with teacher: Courtesy: Sonia Thompson Headteacher/ Director, St. Matthew's C.E. Primary Teaching and Research School www.st-matthews.bham.sch.uk

Section 2, Teacher and child reading outside: ©The Open University

Section 4, Two teachers discussing a children's book: photograph ©The Open University

Section 5, Young boy and a reading volunteer: Courtesy: Coram Beanstalk https://www.beanstalkcharity.org.uk/

Section 6, The school reading environment: Courtesy: Marilyn Brocklehurst Norfolk Children's Book Centre

Section 6, Figure 2: Courtesy: Claire Williams St Andrew's C of E Primary School

Section 7, 'A school library' board: courtesy: Moorlands C of E Primary Academy

Section 7, Activity 5, Class reading with their head teacher: courtesy: Holbeach Primary School

Section 8, Photograph: ©The Open University

Section 9, Figure 3, Grandma's snug: courtesy: Clare McGreevy Lowerplace Primary School

Section 9, Figure 4, St Matts' Reading for Pleasure newsletter: courtesy: Sonia Thompson Headteacher/Director St. Matthew's C.E. Primary Teaching and Research School. Book covers: Wonder by R J Palacio, Text copyright ©2012 by R. J. Palacio Jacket art copyright ©2012 by Tad Carpenter publisher: Alfred P Knopf an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House, Inc., New York; and The Wide Mouthed Frog (1996) by Iain Smyth (author), Michael Terry (Illustrator) courtesy Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Text

Section 7, Activity 5, Let's Love the Library case study and images: courtesy: Karen Robertson for Holbeach Primary School https://www.holbeach.lewisham.sch.uk/

Section 9, Activity 6, Developing a Reading Community by Sayes Court Nursery and Primary School Courtesy: Sayes Court Primary School https://www.sayescourt.surrey.sch.uk/; (book cover and any third party illustrations ©publishers and other rightsowners)

Section 9, Activity 6, Where every day is Book Day! Courtesy Sneinton St Stephen's C of E Primary School https://www.sneintoncofeprimaryschool.co.uk/ (book cover and any third party illustrations ©publishers and other rightsowners)

Audio Visual

Section 3, Video 1: Claire's Teacher Effect Story https://teaching.blog.gov.uk/2019/06/19/creating-passionate-readers-the-teacher-effect/ https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/

Week 7

Images and figures

Course image: ©The Open University

Section 1, Man reading with children on sofa: courtesy: Hannah Montgomery

Section 2, Parent with children on sofa reading 'The Variety of Life': photograph courtesy: Simon Fisher. Book cover © Author: Nicola Davies Illustrator: Lorna Scobie Publisher: Hodder Children's Books

Section 3, Child holding teddy with parent reading Grandad's Secret Giant: photograph: courtesy Lisa Hesmondhalgh. Book cover Grandad's Secret Giant by David Litchfield (2017) publisher Frances Lincoln

Section 4, Children holding toys reading at home outside: courtesy: Dr Petula Bhojwani

Section 4, Example of bilingual books of stories: from Jonny Walker's example of practice, Bilingual Bookmaking: courtesy: Jonny Walker from Park Primary School

Section 5, Figure 1, Supporting readers at home: Covers: A kind of spark by Elle McNicoll (2020) Permission granted Knights of http://knightsof.media/; Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour and Daniel Egneus Courtesy: Oxford University Press https://global.oup.com/?cc=gb; HERE WE ARE Written by Oliver Jeffers Published by Philomel & HarperCollins 2017. Courtesy Harper Collins https://harpercollins.co.uk/; Beano: 18 September 2021: courtesy: DC Thomson and Co Ltd https://www.dcthomson.co.uk/; Julian is a Mermaid by Jessica Love published by

Week 8

Images and figures

Section 4.5, Book chat between children: ©The Open University.

Section 4.6, Young girl in library: ©ferrantraite/Getty Images.

Section 4.7, Girls reading in classroom: ©The Open University.

Section 5, Teacher reading to class: ©The Open University.

Section 6, Two teachers on bench talking: ©The Open University

Section 6.1, Child reading by herself: ©The Open University

Section 6.2, Adult and child talking: ©The Open University

Section 6.3, Teacher reading children's book: ©The Open University

Section 6.3, Teacher and child reading: ©The Open University

Section 6.4, Boys reading in playground: ©The Open University

Section 6.4, Figure 4: from: Evidence informed Reading for Pleasure pedagogy: Cremin, T, (2019) *Reading Communities, what how and why*. https://cdn.ourfp.org/wpcontent/uploads/20210301105855/Reading_Communities_TCremin_2019.pdf?

Book covers

Section 3, The Story of a White Rhino by Nicola Davies Published September 2020 by Tiny Owl Publishing courtesy Tiny Owl Publishing https://tinyowl.co.uk/

Section 3: The Last Wild by Piers Torday (2013) Quercus Children's Books courtesy Hachette Childrens Group https://www.quercusbooks.co.uk/

Text

Section 3: extract from DfE (2020) *Reviewing Early Reading Provision: Overview*. The English Hubs, DfE: London.

Every effort has been made to contact copyright owners. If any have been inadvertently overlooked, the publishers will be pleased to make the necessary arrangements at the first opportunity.

Don't miss out

If reading this text has inspired you to learn more, you may be interested in joining the millions of people who discover our free learning resources and qualifications by visiting The Open University – www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses.