# Developing Reading for Pleasure: engaging young readers

# Learning journal

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## Session 1: The importance 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. |
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| 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? |
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| Activity 1 Reflecting on your reading curriculum In the table below, note the activities in your reading curriculum that are:   1. oriented toward developing children’s *skill* to read 2. oriented toward developing children’s *will* to read. |
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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Developing children’s skill to read** | **Developing children’s will to read** | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |

| Activity 2 Thinking about motivation in practice After reading the vignette about Logan, 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? |
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| 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. |
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| 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? |
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| Personal notes (optional) Record any additional thoughts on the learning this session and note down anything you want to follow up at a later date. |
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## Session 2: Being a reader

| Activity 1 24-hour reads Spend a few minutes now making a note of the different sorts of texts you have read over the past 24 hours, then answer the following questions.   * 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? |
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| 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? |
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| 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? |
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| Activity 2 Observing personal resonance in text in classroom practice After reading the account of one reluctant reader, make a note of:   * the personal resonances which surfaced * the subtle shifts in the boy’s sense of self as a reader * the moves his teacher made to nurture his engagement. |
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| Activity 3 Identifying the key principles of book chat 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? |
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| 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? |
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| 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? |
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| Activity 4 Nurturing young children’s reader identities Make a note of the ways the interaction in the video 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. |
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| Personal notes (optional) Record any additional thoughts on the learning this session and note down anything you want to follow up at a later date. |
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## Session 3: The power of narrative

| 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? |
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| Activity 1 Constructing narrative to understand the world Having read the words in the word cloud (Figure 2), did you read seven individual words, or did you start to piece together a narrative that tells of a prehistoric event? Did you feel any connection with the characters in your story? Did it evoke empathy or feeling of injustice?  What about the words in the second word cloud (Figure 3)? Does the narrative you create affect you differently? |
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| 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? |
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| Activity 2 Reviewing representations of equality, diversity and inclusion in your texts 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.   * 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?   (Adapted from Persiani-Becker, 2011). |
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| Activity 3 Working with texts to address sensitive issues Read the synopses for Luna’s Red Hat, Lubna and Pebble and Wonder and think about specific situations in which you might use these texts 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. |
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| 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 the three following ways.   1. Agency through discovering the familiar in stories 2. Agency in the actual engagement of reading and becoming informed 3. Agency through entering the story, becoming a character, and extending the story |
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| Personal notes (optional) Record any additional thoughts on the learning this week, and note down anything you want to follow up at a later date. |
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## Session 4: Knowing your texts, knowing your readers

| Activity 1 Audit your knowledge of children’s texts After naming three children’s authors, three picture fiction creators, three poets, three non-fiction texts for children and three children’s comics or magazines, make a list on the following points.   * Did you struggle with any of the categories more than others? If so, which ones? * Did you find you could name book titles but not authors? * Did your lists include authors/illustrators/text from your own childhood reading? * Did your lists include celebrity authors, or exceptionally well-known authors that have become celebrities? * Do your lists reflect social and cultural diversity? |
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| Activity 2 Selecting appropriate texts for young readers 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.   * Ruby says that she doesn’t like to read, but if encouraged 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. * 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. * 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. |
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| 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 a scale from Disagree to Agree.   * 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. |
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| Activity 3 Reviewing your knowledge of children’s reading practices 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? |
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| Activity 4 Learning from reading rivers Read the case study, 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. |
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| Activity 5 Focusing on two less engaged readers 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 [Session 4, Section](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=113691&section=5) 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? |
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| Personal notes (optional) Record any additional thoughts on the learning this session, and note down anything you want to follow up at a later date. |
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## Session 5: Reading for Pleasure pedagogy

| Activity 1 Considering the value of reading aloud 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. |
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| Activity 2 Reading aloud in your childhood 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? |
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| 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? |
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| Activity 3 The pedagogy checkLIST in action during reading time Having watched the video of Becky Thomson and her class of 10-11-year-olds during enriched reading time, 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? |
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| 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? |
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| 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? |
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| Activity 4 Taking action to support less engaged readers Read the teachers’ documentation and initial reflective questions, 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. |
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| Personal notes (optional) Record any additional thoughts on the learning this session, and note down anything you want to follow up at a later date. |
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## Session 6: Building reading communities in school

| Activity 1 Review your school reading community To help you consider your understanding of reading communities complete the self-review, then make a note of areas of strength and areas for possible development. |
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| Activity 2 Developing as a Reading Teacher *Notice:* Take a look at Figure 1. Make a note of all the reading habits and practices you recognise or may engage in sometimes.  *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.  *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?  *Act:* Plan to undertake an activity or discussion in school to build on what you 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? |
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| Activity 3 Sharing reading lives Choose one of the ideas listed in Box 1 and try it out in your class or school. Then make a note of what happened and 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? |
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| Activity 4 Supporting reading volunteers 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. |
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| Activity 5 Let’s love the library 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. |
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| Activity 6 Building a reading community Choose and read one of the two case studies given. As you read, reflect on how the school built its reading community. |
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| Personal notes (optional) Record any additional thoughts on the learning this session, and note down anything you want to follow up at a later date. |
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## Session 7: Supporting children as readers at home

| 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? |
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| Activity 1 Designing a shared reading poster for parents 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. |
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| Activity 2 Reflecting on reading at home Listen to the adult–child book chat and 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. |
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| Activity 3 Home-school reading connections 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? |
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| Activity 4 Developing a shared reading space Choose one of the examples of the shared reading spaces listed in the activity 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? |
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| Activity 5 Doorstep Library: community reading volunteers Watch the video about the work of Doorstep Library and 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. |
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| Personal notes (optional) Record any additional thoughts on the learning this session, and note down anything you want to follow up at a later date. |
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## Session 8: Enticing reluctant readers and addressing challenges

| 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, 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? |
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| Activity 1 Overcoming challenges to developing a Reading for Pleasure culture In your learning journal, 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.  Then, after watching the video of Shahed Ahmed, reflect on the need to retain a balance between the will and the skill and how he achieves this in his school. 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. |
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| Activity 2 How has your view of RfP changed? What was your perception of Reading for Pleasure at the beginning of the course? 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. |
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| Activity 3 Responding to RfP dilemmas Listen to the 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. |
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| Personal reflection 2 Using a scale from Totally unaware to Highly aware 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? * After engaging with this course, how aware are you? * 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? |
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| Personal notes (optional) Record any additional thoughts on the learning this session, and note down anything you want to follow up at a later date. |
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