

Context



I am a Year 3 NQT and apart of the basic skills team at Duxford C of E Community Primary School in Cambridgeshire.

OU Research inspiration and rationale

The TaRs research highlights that children’s reading for pleasure is greatly influenced by relationships including teachers and families. It also explains the importance of getting books into homes and supporting parents into making a mental transition from reading as an instruction- to achieve certain stages or levels (e.g. reading scheme)- to reading for pleasure, reading for oneself and choosing to read.

Aims

- To understand that different types of reading can be equally valuable
- To encourage parental involvement at home with children’s reading for pleasure
- To build a community of readers beyond the school

Outline

With the help of Roald Dahl Day, where children dressed up as their favourite Roald Dahl characters, the creation of the book bags began. The children helped raise money to fill our bags with some fabulous books. To decide which books would go into the book bags, we held a class vote for our favourite Roald Dahl novel. It was very important that a Roald Dahl novel was in each book bag, since Roald Dahl Day was the reason we were able to create these! To develop teacher confidence in the choice of texts, we discussed as year groups other inspirational texts. Additionally, we used various text types from non-fiction texts to comics, poetry and novels to ensure our book bags promote reading for pleasure.

Our book bags were kindly handmade and so they all look different. On the front of the book bag, the class name is displayed as well as a list of books which are in the bag. Inside the book bag are texts, a letter explaining what it is all about and a writing book so that pupils can begin to write their own blog. The blog enables children to write about their experiences and recommend books to other children.



Impact

After 10 weeks of starting the book bags, children have been really excited about taking the books home to share with their families. When children leave with the book bag for the week, I can see the eagerness they have to share the book bag with their parents/carers and to pick a book that they are going to read together. Moreover, I have even heard discussions in corridors and on the playground about the different books each class has.

Comments in the reading blogs from parents and students showed that both the children and parents had enjoyed reading the range of books together. So much so, parents have commented on their child's enjoyment of and motivation to read certain books in the book bag, that they have had to purchase it and other books by the same author for their household!

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

The TaRs research emphasises how children's reading for pleasure is greatly influenced by relationships, including those between children and families. It also highlights the importance of bringing in a range of books into the homes which are not solely focused on reading levels or stages.

These findings inspired me to explore the impact the 'book bags' had on bringing families and friends together, developing a shared enjoyment for reading and increased parent involvement. This has developed stronger connections between home and school reading worlds and increased reciprocal and interactive relationships between the children and their parents.

Additionally, the research enabled us to fill the book bags with a range of texts, which are not focused on levels but the enjoyment pupils would get out of reading these. As a result, children have begun to explore a variety of books for pleasure and explore authors with older children and adults which they may not have been given access to before.