



Reading for pleasure pedagogy: Independent reading time

More research details



At the start of the *Teachers as Readers* (TaRs) project, most teachers did not allocate any time in the curriculum for independent child-led, choice-led reading. Those that did assign time acknowledged it was often sandwiched into registration periods and frequently interrupted or shelved.

In the research year, teachers across all age phases established more frequent and sustained independent reading sessions. This pedagogic practice, embedded in relaxed reading environments with accessible resources, enabled children to develop stamina for reading through choice; they could develop the 'will' to read as well as 'the skill'

(OECD 2002). Teachers reported renewed understanding of the value of independent reading as a planned pedagogic routine rather than something children could do when all other work was completed.

The research revealed that, over time, many teachers began to see talk as a crucial part of their independent reading routines, as children made selections and recommendations to one another, some sharing the reading of a single comic or swapping chosen picture books part way through the time. Talking about the texts being read became the norm.

Additionally, teachers took more active roles. Instead of using this time to get other jobs done, they too engaged at times as readers, recognising that this pedagogical approach offers children a positive model of being a reader and sharing reading. It also forged positive relationships around reading between teachers and children.

"A lot of them are choosing to read in free choice time, like Abdul, he asked me if he could talk to me about the book he was reading. I think a lot of that is just because they know now that I'm interested...I definitely know more now about their reading...."

(TaRs teacher, Birmingham)

The shared experiences of reading aloud and book talk influenced the ways in which teachers organised children's independent reading in the classroom. Teachers began to perceive independent reading as an active opportunity for learning and teaching, rather than a passive 'settling' or 'holding' strategy whilst they were focused on, for example, completing the register. Recognising the value of this time, teachers sought to ensure children were not removed for other activities, and there was evidence that children who were previously reluctant or disaffected readers, became drawn in, increasingly motivated and keen to read and talk about texts.

As Ben-Yosef (2010) argues, authentic independent reading involves thoughtful engagement with the text, and the impact of sustained time to read and to talk about texts more freely was evident in the children's thoughtful comments about the texts they were reading in this time.

Adapted from pages 99-101, from Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Collins, F., Powell, S. and Safford, K. (2014) *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for pleasure*, London/New York: Routledge.

To read more about the research: see the Executive Summaries and related papers on <http://oro.open.ac.uk/>

or the core book at

<https://www.routledge.com/Building-Communities-of-Engaged-Readers-Reading-for-pleasure/Cremin-Mottram-Collins-Powell-Safford/p/book/9781138777484>

