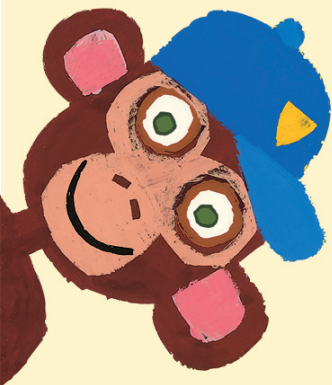


The Reading Classroom: guidance for teachers



Recent research has drawn teachers' attention to the need to review how children become engaged in reading for real purposes and pleasure, to ensure that they not only acquire reading competence but also the motivation to read. The following guidance considers some of the elements of the 'Reading Classroom'.

- PIRLS research: http://timss.bc.edu/pirls2001i/pdf/P1_IR_F.pdf
- PISA 2003: www.literacytrust.org.uk/Research/libresearch3.html#third

Book Rich Classroom

Class and school library collections are organised in varied ways. It is important that book displays invite children to browse and to choose their own books, helping them to develop individual tastes and preferences.

For example, teachers working in schools where books are colour banded will want to consider displaying collections of books in complementary ways to ensure that children do not regard reading simply as moving through a set of levels or stages.

These might include:

- Author displays e.g. Spotlight on Michael Morpurgo or Linda Newbery
- Genre focus e.g. a display of mystery stories, humour or family stories
- Our favourite books: a display of children's favourites with children's reviews and recommendations

As children become more independent in their reading, it is essential that you continue to read aloud to them. It is through hearing expressive, experienced readers that children acquire a model of what it means to be a reader. Reading aloud to them will impact on both their independent reading and the quality of their writing.

Is the class book collection suitably diverse? Does it cater for the needs and interests of all children in the class? Is there a good spread of genres? Are there books with boy and girl appeal? Is there a range of material for children reading both above and below the average expected for their age? If you are new to the school or class a quick audit will help you identify any gaps that need filling. Further information about auditing your class collection can be found in Gamble and Yates (2007) *Exploring Children's Literature* (2nd edition) Paul Chapman.

Towards Independence: Children Making Choices

To support children in making choices:

- Find out about children's interests and hobbies, making sure that the book collection caters for these needs
- Provide guided choices –perhaps offering two or three books that you think a child might enjoy
- Encourage children to self-monitor by using the five finger test (for double pages of around 100 words or more). If they are struggling with a book this will help them understand whether this is due to the complexity of the vocabulary:





- ◇ THE FIVE FINGER TEST
- ◇ Open the book somewhere in the middle and select a full page of text
- ◇ Read the page (aloud if possible)
- ◇ Put one finger up for every word you cannot pronounce or do not know
- ◇ If you get five fingers up on one page, the book is probably too difficult for you to read independently
- ◇ If you do not hold up any fingers but are reading very slowly because you are having to decode every word, you may not enjoy reading this book.

Keeping a Record

You may want to give some consideration to the ways in which children are invited to record their reading.

- In reception children can be encouraged to maintain a pictorial record, perhaps adding a simple smiley, neutral or frowning face to indicate their feelings about the book
- Older children can be introduced to the idea of keeping a reading journal in which they record their thoughts, feelings, questions, and connections to other things they have read
- Provide guidance for what to read next

Keeping up-to-date with children's books

Good teachers of reading keep themselves up-to-date with knowledge of recently published books and trends in children's reading interests.

Sources of valuable information include websites such as:

- Write Away: www.writeaway.org.uk
- Booktrust: www.booktrusted.co.uk
- Love Reading: www.lovereadng.co.uk
- Reading Zone: www.readingzone.com
- Magazines such as Carousel: www.carouselguide.co.uk/ or Books for Keeps: www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/ are excellent sources of reviews, features and interviews



Reading Across the Curriculum

Fiction, non-fiction, poetry and plays can be used to support reading across the curriculum. For example, historical stories such as *Friend or Foe* by Michael Morpurgo provide a personal perspective on history allowing children to experience historical events from the point of view of a character, thus developing empathy and emotional engagement.



Talking about Books and Reading in Groups

- Provide opportunities for children to talk about the books they read and enjoy. These will include teacher-led guided reading sessions, paired reading, literature circles and book swaps.
- Develop a reading community in the school: after school book clubs, reading groups, book events, parents events can contribute to a vibrant reading community

Further Reading

Daniel Hahn and Leonie Flynn (2004) *The Ultimate Book Guide*
A & C Black (Ultimate Book Guide for 3 – 7 year olds forthcoming)

Nicholas Tucker (2002) *The Rough Guide to Children's Books 0 – 5 Years*
Rough Guides

Nicholas Tucker (2002) *The Rough Guide to Children's Books 5 – 11 Years*
Rough Guides

Angela Hobsbaum et al (2003) *Book Bands for Guided Reading*
University of London, Institute of Education

Angela Hobsbaum, Shirley Bickler, Suzanne Baker (2003) *Bridging Bands*
University of London, Institute of Education

Nikki Gamble, Angel Hobsbaum and David Reedy (2006) *Guiding Reading at KS2*
(2nd edition) University of London, Institute of Education

Nikki Gamble & Sally Yates (2007) *Exploring Children's Literature* (2nd edition)
Paul Chapman

Aidan Chambers (1995) *The Reading Environment*
Thimble Press

Aidan Chambers (1995) *Tell Me*
Thimble Press

Reading Websites for teachers

UKLA (United Kingdom Literacy Association): www.ukla.org

NATE (National Association for the Teaching of English): www.nate.org.uk

CLPE (centre for Literacy in Primary Education): www.clpe.co.uk

National Centre for Language and Literacy: www.ncll.org.uk

