Reading for Pleasure Matters: Improving reading attitudes of disadvantage pupils

Abena Appiah

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Reading *for* Pleasure Matters: Improving reading attitudes of disadvantaged pupils

ABSTRACT

Research explains that as children get older, they read less and, as a result, have poorer attitudes to reading (Clark and Osborne 2008; Topping, 2010; Clark and Douglas, 2011). This poor attitude is especially pertinent to the context of Langston High (pseudonym) as its current Ofsted report outlined that most of the students who come from low socio-economic backgrounds are poor readers.

This research sought to explore the impact of curated fiction excerpts on disadvantaged students to improve their attitude towards reading for pleasure. Research also clarifies that teachers are essential in improving students' attitudes to reading (Cremin et al., 2008). As a result, this research project also explored ways of supporting teachers to enhance their knowledge of children's literature and their reading habits through CPD facilitated by the Open University.

Findings show that although students found some of the curated fiction excerpts 'boring', most students felt that it had allowed them to explore texts they would not usually read, thus taking them out of their comfort zones which they identified as positives. This research also suggests that disadvantaged pupils' attitude towards reading for pleasure can be improved by providing a protected space within the curriculum to expose them to various texts by authors that celebrate diversity and explore pertinent themes. Furthermore, teachers expressed that their knowledge of young adult fiction had increased in evaluating the Reading for Pleasure CPD in conjunction with the Open University and UKLA. Subsequently, they felt more confident recommending texts to their pupils.

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Introduction

"All reading makes a difference, but evidence suggests that reading for pleasure makes the most"

(Department of Education, 2015, p.1)

Reading is an essential skill and by extension, reading for pleasure is invaluable. Historically, much emphasis has been placed on the mechanics of reading (Rose, 2006) rather than reading for pleasure which has recently become a focus for policymakers, researchers, and governmental reports. This recent focus is supported by governmental reports, which note that once children develop decoding skills, effective reading skills are "best developed by instilling in children a love of literature" (Department Of Education, 2015, p.4). Reading for pleasure has been defined as the "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.5). This type of reading generates the most impact on children's learning (Depart of Education, 2015).

Given that Sullivan and Brown's (2013) longitudinal study highlights the important correlation between fostering a love of reading and the positive impact it has on learning both in childhood and adult life and the possible repercussions it can have on intellectual development, it is concerning to see that there is a decline in this type of reading among young people. There is accumulating research that indicates that children are not reading for pleasure (Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Clark and Osborne, 2008; Topping, 2010; Clark and Douglas, 2011).

Findings from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2006) confirm this decline. Reports from their international surveys suggest that fewer children have positive attitudes towards reading (Twist, Schagan, & Hogson, 2007). In addition to this, international research reports that children in England read less for pleasure than their counterparts in other countries (Twist et al., 2007). Furthermore, the National Literacy survey (2016) results explain that 45per cent of children do not enjoy reading or only enjoy reading a bit (Clark, 2016). Research also clarifies that as children get older, they are less likely to have positive attitudes regarding reading for pleasure (Topping, 2010; Clark and Osborne, 2008; Clark and Douglas, 2011). For example, Topping (2010) reported that both boys and girls selected less challenging books to read once they

were 11 years old (secondary school age). This finding is supported by Clark and Osborne (2008), who also report that as children transition from primary to secondary school, a smaller percentage continue to see themselves as "readers".

Although developing positive attitudes towards reading for pleasure can be difficult for students, it is more challenging for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Clark (2011) reports that disadvantaged pupils' with low socio-economic status are less likely to read outside of school. Furthermore, the impact of having a low socio-economic status negatively affects the reading proficiency of pupils (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, hereafter, OECD, 2010). These findings from the OECD supports research by Clark and Rumbold (2006) and Clark and Douglas (2011). They postulate that children from lower socio-economic backgrounds engage less in reading for pleasure than children from more privileged backgrounds. To underpin the importance of reading for pleasure, the OECD (2010) predicts that on average, socio-economically disadvantaged boys could perform on the same level or even higher than socio-economically advantaged girls if they are equipped with effective summarising strategies and if they enjoyed reading as much as socio-economically advantaged girls. The OECD (2010) findings are pertinent to this project's focus. The literature posits that reading for pleasure is more paramount and essential in improving students' life chances and educational successes than their family's socio-economic background (OECD, 2002).

Teachers are significant in developing children's attitude to reading for pleasure (Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell and Safford, 2009). Research suggests that primary teachers rely on books they explored during their childhood with pupils rather than current texts (Cremin, Mottram, Bearne and Goodwin, 2008). The reliance on books explored during childhood is a similar phenomenon with secondary school teachers as Cremin, Mottram, Powell, Collins and Safford (2014) highlight the importance of teachers developing their knowledge of children's books and their reading for pleasure habits to support them in developing their preferences and reader identities effectively.

I intend to explore the efficacy of using fiction excerpts from various authors and genres and their impact on improving disadvantaged students' attitudes towards reading for pleasure. Students will explore 12 excerpts by multiple authors and aim to expose them to different genres. The literature asserts that teachers are essential stakeholders in improving the reading attitudes of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, teachers will be participating in reading for pleasure CPD sessions as part of this project. The CPD is informed by Cremin et al.'s (2008) research which explored the impact of

developing teachers' knowledge and practice of children's literature and its effect on children's reading identities as readers. The findings indicate that when teachers broaden their knowledge of children's literature, not only do they gain an awareness of their reading practices and the reading practice of children, but they can build strong reading communities within their school (Cremin, 2019).

School Context

Langston High is a comprehensive school located in a deprived area in London. Many students arrive at attainment levels lower than national expectations; most are eligible for pupil premium support. The impact of this is captured in the school's Ofsted inspection report, which identified many students as weak readers.

The Ofsted report contributed to the school advertising for a Reading Lead, for which I was appointed. Subsequently, it became apparent that attitudes towards reading had consistently decreased through analysing book loans, staff and student voice. In a recent reading test undertaken by Year 7 students, 74 per cent of students were below their reading age; the lowest reading age was five years six months. This result, coupled with a stark decline in the borrowing of books and students struggling to make the expected level of progress in KS3, indicates that reading is a crucial issue at Langston High.

In addition to this, partial closures of schools during Covid-19 resulted in the closure of the school library. The closures, coupled with an inadequate system of issuing books outside of school, meant that students could not borrow books from the library. To combat this, we acquired an online eBook and audiobook subscription to support students' reading for pleasure. However, book borrowing data analysis indicated that only 20 per cent of the students used this service.

The factors explored above inspired me to pursue this research as a teacher of English and as a whole school Reading coordinator in a comprehensive school in a deprived area. I felt that the significant impact reading for pleasure has on personal development and educational purposes (Holden, 2004; Clark and Rumbold, 2006), attainment (Clark 2011; Clark and Douglas, 2011), and vocabulary development (Sullivan and Brown, 2013) will be instrumental in improving the life chances and educational experiences of our students as reported by the (OECD, 2002).

This research will provide insight into our students' attitudes towards reading for pleasure and support developing an evidence-informed intervention that will help address some of the barriers hindering our students from developing a love of reading. Furthermore, in line with our school's vision of developing students into members of society who show courage, commitment and compassion, it is paramount that our students are supported to develop positive reading attitudes. As Green (2004) suggests, exposure to fiction texts can develop students' attitudes towards various societal issues. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2003) argues that "people cannot be active or informed citizens unless they can read. Reading is a prerequisite for almost all cultural and social activities" (p.8).

In addition to this, the International Reading Association (Moore et al., 1999) warns of the literacy demands placed on adolescents integrating into the adult world in the 21st century. They explain that they will need to write and read more than any other time in human history due to the advanced levels of literacy required to perform their jobs and manage their personal lives. In fact, "they will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future" (p.3).

Based on the ideas explored above, my literature review is framed around these key questions:

1. What is reading for pleasure, and what benefit does it have on student learning?
2. What factors inhibit disadvantaged students' attitudes to reading for pleasure and what impact does it have on student learning?
3. What are teachers' attitudes to reading, and does it influence children's reading habits?

Literature Review

1. What is reading for pleasure, and what benefit does it have on student learning?

"I am concerned that in a constant search for things to test, we're forgetting the purpose, the true nature, of reading and writing; and in forcing these things to happen in a way that divorces them from pleasure, we are creating a generation of children who might be able to make the right noises when they see print, but who hate reading and feel nothing but hostility for literature"
(Pullman in Powling, et al., 2003:10)

Reading for pleasure is termed differently in other countries; for example, in the US, it is referred to as independent reading (Cullian, 2000), voluntary reading (Krashen, 2004), leisure reading (Greaney, 1988) and recreational reading (Manzo and Manzo, 1995) all cited in Clark and Rumbold (2006). It is important to note that reading for pleasure is not restricted by location as it can occur anywhere; it can also include any kind of texts such as magazines, graphic novels, novels, non-fiction - in any given form such as print or electronic (Cremin et al., 2014). The clarification above is significant as it differentiates it from other types of reading, such as reading for assessment purposes.

For this research, I am congruent with Clark and Rumbold (2006), who define reading for pleasure as the "reading that we do of our own free will, anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading" (p.5) as it epitomises the nature of reading for pleasure. Likewise, Cremin et al. (2014) concur with Clark and Rumbold's (2006) definition by explaining that reading for pleasure is typified by reader choice, and it is a practice that has reader volition at its core. Duncan (2010) also observes reading for pleasure is reading that is not succeeded by activities or tasks as a result of the reading. This suggests that readers are not obligated to engage in activities that assess their reading but rather engage in discussions that allow them to express their thoughts and feelings about what they have read.

What 'pleasure' do readers get in reading?

To further understand the term reading for pleasure, attention must be placed on the word 'pleasure' and consider the different types of "pleasure" it can bring to a reader. Nell (1998) explains that reading for pleasure allows readers to experience and interact with other worlds, which presents pleasure in the form of escapism (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). Similarly, Holden (2004) also observes reading for pleasure as a creative activity that allows readers to use their imagination. This type of reading is also typified by materials that reflect the readers' choice; this helps create the opportunity for readers to connect with texts in a meaningful way (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). Subsequently, this connection allows children to get "hooked on books" (Karshen 1993, p.85).

Bruner (1996, cited in Bruner 2006) observes that:
``We get interested in what we are good at. In general, it is difficult to sustain interest in an activity unless one achieves some degree of competence" (p.188).

Thus, relating Bruner's comments to reading for pleasure, children may find it challenging to maintain an interest in reading if they have poor literacy competence. However, this is also not to posit that if children have a high reading ability, they will enjoy reading for pleasure (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). For example, an international study of literacy and reading (Twist et al., 2003) found England third when assessing reading achievement among 35 countries. However, within the same study, 13 per cent of students from England disliked reading compared to 6 per cent, which was the international average. From this, it is clear that there is no direct correlation between high reading skills and increased reading enjoyment. This further highlights the complex relationship between reading skills and reading for pleasure. Farshore's (2021) research indicates that both parents and schools do not always differentiate between reading for pleasure and reading skills and commonly propel the teaching of reading skills above pleasure. Despite low literacy skills, if stakeholders within schools focus on improving reading engagement in schools, this will encourage more children to read, and as a result, develop their literacy skills (Farshore, 2021)

A decline in reading for pleasure

There is a decline in children reading for pleasure nationally and internationally (Clark and Rumbold, 2006; OECD 2010). Findings from the OECD (2010) report a five per cent decline in children who read daily for enjoyment between 2000 and 2009 across OECD countries. The 2002 and 2006 PIRLS study results show a persistent stark decrease in positive attitudes towards reading enjoyment in England; in 2002, 13 per cent of children expressed disliking reading. In 2006 15 per cent of children expressed unfavourable attitudes towards reading for pleasure. Furthermore, in 2007, out of 45 countries and provinces, England was ranked thirty-seventh concerning having favourable attitudes towards reading (Twist et al., 2007).

Although data has been drawn from PIRLS to understand international reading trends, reviewing the systems that inform such conclusions is salient. A strand of the PIRLS study employs questionnaires for children, their teachers, and parents to understand young people's wider literacy experience. The questionnaire may aim to ascertain the frequency of students reading; however, in the statistical analysis of the data, PIRLS may also constrain what constituents read (Cremin et al., 2014). The large-scale nature of this international study has been observed as being reductive in its approach in ascertaining an accurate picture of children's relationship with texts either at home or at school (Maybin 2013). Furthermore, it can be argued that the plausibility of understanding reading attitudes through such large-scale surveys can be skewed as more attention is given to measurable results rather than seeking to understand young people's lived experience of reading (Cremin et al., 2014). Nonetheless, PIRLS is invaluable in gaining an insight into the changing trends of children's reading habits over time.

The findings from the National Literacy's annual survey contextualises the data PIRLS 2002-2006 data. Their 2019 questionnaire surveyed 56,906 children aged between 9 to 18 between January to March 2019. It is clear from the data that there is a decline in children's and young people's reading for pleasure habits. The report notes that children's reading enjoyment decreased between 2016 and 2017; the first decrease in six years. Furthermore, this decline has continued to spiral downwards. The 2019 survey indicated that 53 per cent of children expressed that they enjoyed reading; interestingly, this was the same percentage of children who said they enjoyed reading in 2013. The lack of enjoyment children experienced was also evident in their daily reading habits, which is at its lowest level since the National Literacy Trust started reporting on children's reading habits in 2005. Furthermore, this stark decline in positive reading attitudes from the 2019 survey suggests that at least 47 per cent of children and young people are not benefitting from the whole experience

of reading for pleasure. They are excluded from many benefits such as the relaxation and entertainment reading can bring (Nestlé Family Monitor, 2003) and developing a reflective perspective on themselves and the world. Although there are many factors contributing to this decline, the report notes the increasing pressure placed on children and young people's time as a catalyst to this decline.

Benefits of reading for pleasure

A growing number of studies highlight the importance of promoting reading for pleasure due to the impact on children and their future. The OECD (2002) measures socio-economic status using parents' occupation status as a key component; they assert that reading for pleasure is a more important measure of a child's future success than their socio-economic background.

This ideology is supported by researchers who also concur that reading for pleasure can combat social exclusion and raise educational standards for children who otherwise will be limited due to their socioeconomic backgrounds (Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Clark 2011; Clark and Douglas, 2011; Sullivan and Brown; 2013). This is further exemplified by Guthrie and Wigfield (2000); they explain that reading for pleasure "may substantially compensate for low family income and educational background" as it provides "self-generated opportunities that are equivalent to several years of education" (p.4.)

Reading for pleasure is also a significant contributor to attainment and achievement for children and young people (Clark 2011; Clark and Douglas 2011; Nestle Family Monitor, 2003). It is important to note that although solely reading for pleasure will not guarantee high levels of attainment, "it will at least ensure an acceptable level. Without it, I suspect that children simply do not have a chance" (Krashen 1993:85).

Clark and DeZoya (2011) investigated the complex relationship between reading for pleasure, behaviour, attitudes, and attainment by surveying 17,000 pupils from 112 England, Wales, and Scotland schools. They reported a positive correlation between reading enjoyment and attainment, indicating that reading frequency creates better readers. Clark and DeZoya (2011) did not make inferences regarding the causality between reading enjoyment and attainment due to its complex nature; thus, reading for pleasure could lead to higher attainment or having high attainment levels may lead to more enjoyment in reading. As such, they suggest a change in methodology to fully

explore the causal relationship in this interplay of complex variables; they posit that a future study utilising longitudinal data will be helpful in this endeavour.

Here, it is pertinent to explore Sullivan and Brown's (2013) longitudinal study, which investigated the impact of personal reading in the home environment on maths, spelling and cognitive scores of vocabulary. The study was based on the 1986 longitudinal British cohort study analysis, which had a sample size of around 6,000 16-year-olds. This study also builds on Clark and DeZoya's (2011) work exploring the links between reading for pleasure and attainment. Sullivan and Brown (2013) reported that reading for pleasure frequently had a positive impact on achievement. For instance, children who often engaged in reading for pleasure at the age of 10, read books and newspapers more than once a week at 16 achieved total scores which were the same as a 14.4 percentage point advantage in vocabulary, 8.6 percentage points in spelling at age 16 and 9.6 percentage points in maths. To further highlight the impact of reading pleasure on attainment, the study-controlled variables such as parental social background and parents' reading habits. The findings indicated that reading for pleasure had a higher impact on attainment than having parents with a degree; this resulted in a 4.2 advantage point for vocabulary. This is a notable study into reading for pleasure and attainment as it controls many of the independent effects that can affect equivalent scores in cross-sectional samples.

Empathy

"When we read, we become Anna Karenina or Harry Potter. ... We understand them from the inside."
Kaplan (2016, p.1)

Reading for pleasure has been correlated to developing readers' social and emotional benefits (Mar et al.,2006; Mar et al., 2009; Oately, 2016; Willard and Buddie, 2019). Empathy is fundamental to the functioning of society as people who effectively demonstrate it can consider the perspective of the other while showing consideration and understanding for the emotions of others (Oately, 2016)

It is widely believed intuitively and experientially that reading for pleasure develops readers' empathic ability. The National Endowment for the Arts (2007) explains that this intuition provides the "privilege of understanding and appreciating the outlook of others while enlarging their own identity" (p.90). Fundamentally, through this appreciation, readers engage in active empathy, which

in turn contributes to their personal development. Similarly, Oately (2019) concurs with the NEA by explaining that reading for pleasure supports readers in developing their understanding of others.

Oatley (2016) asserts that readers' ability to empathise with others is developed through reading fiction as it allows readers to interact with the other. Oatley (2016) further contends that people who engage in fiction reading can understand others more effectively than other people who do not. It is the idea that fiction allows readers to go on a journey of engagement as they are introduced to complex characters and situations that they may otherwise not encounter in their everyday lives. Oatley (2016) further clarifies that "the complexity of literary characters helps readers have more sophisticated ideas about others' emotions and motives" (p.15).

In congruence with Oatley (2016) is Mar et al. (2009) who investigated the relationship between reading for pleasure and empathy. This research built on their earlier work Mar et al. (2006), which concluded that reading fiction is a predictor of empathy. However, the researchers noted that the relationship between reading and empathy might not be directly correlated to variables such as having a strong ability to empathise with others may make such people naturally drawn to reading. Thus, in Mar et al. (2009), a later study, they decided to control personality traits such as openness – a tendency to be drawn to fiction. However, even when this trait was statistically controlled and other variables such as gender and the tendency to be drawn to stories naturally, they found that exposure to reading fiction was still a strong predictor for empathy.

One of the main arguments for fiction being a vehicle for propelling empathy is the process of transportation (Green et al., 2012; Johnson, 2012). Transportation explores how emotionally, and imaginatively immersed readers are within a story (Oately, 2016). Johnson (2012) further clarifies that the vivid imagery embedded in fiction reading supports readers with transportation, making them more empathetic. Support for fiction developing empathy is explored in Walletin et al. (2011) study, which investigated strong responses to emotions evoked by listening to a story. Some participants listened to a fictional story; they were rated on the intensity of their emotions whilst listening and reading. A second group was subjected to reading only the sections of the texts in which the first group had the most significant changes in their heart rate and the greatest changes in brain activities. The investigation findings revealed that narrative intensity propelled changes in parts of the brain responsible for emotional and empathy responses. Furthermore, this also provides empirical evidence demonstrating the impact of reading fiction on empathy.

Although an argument has been made demonstrating a link between empathy and reading for pleasure, empathy is a phenomenon that is less discussed in the literature as Douglas (2010) explains the difficulty in the measurability of such factors. This is partly because empathy is inherently multifaceted and complex, which does not always have a shared understanding among researchers (Gerdes, Lietz & Segal, 2011). Additionally, its subjectiveness adds to its intricate nature. Having said this, when analysing the data from Howard's (2011) study which investigated the role of pleasure reading in the lives of 12–15-year-olds, it is clear the role reading for pleasure has on empathy. For instance, Howard (2011) was able to draw parallels between social conscience and empathy. Many of the young people who took part in the study expressed how reading for pleasure had supported them in developing their social conscience whilst enhancing their ability to connect with others meaningfully. A student explained how she was encouraged to spend more time with her grandparents after reading a book that explored the challenges older people face. Likewise, another student recalls reading a novel about their perception of giving and poverty, which entreated them to reflect on their actions. Howard's (2011) study does give credence to the causal link between reading for pleasure and empathy. However, it should be noted that this study is over a decade old and, more importantly, based on research such as that of Radway (1983), which is even older; thus, careful consideration should be given when generalising its findings.

2. What factors inhibit disadvantaged students' attitudes to Reading for Pleasure and what impact does it have on student learning?

Book Ownership

Dymoke and Griffiths (2010) explain that "ownership of texts, both in the literal and in the metaphorical sense, is a significant element in the process of becoming and perceiving oneself as a reader" (p.53). Thus, if students are to develop their reader's identity, book ownership is essential (Clark & Poulton, 2011; Handley, 2013; Roberts et al., 2017).

Between January to March 2019, the National Literacy Trust explored the relationship between book ownership, reading attitudes, reading skills and reading enjoyment through their annual survey. The survey findings highlighted the importance of book ownership as one of the prerequisites to developing a love of reading. Compared to children who do not have a book of their own, children who own books are three times more likely to enjoy reading (56.2 per cent versus 18.4 per cent). This also influenced their attitude to reading as children who were book owners were more than twice as likely to agree that reading is "cool" compared to children who do not own books of their own. The impact of this is detrimental on disadvantaged children as the survey suggests that they are more likely than their peers not to own a book (9.3 per cent vs 6 per cent). However, it should be acknowledged that the book ownership gap between disadvantaged children and their peers is gradually closing as it has halved in the past six years (6 per cent in 2013 to 3 per cent in 2019). Attention should be given to the impact of lockdowns on reading for pleasure due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Disadvantaged children would probably have experienced significant barriers in developing their reading for pleasure as they are less likely to own books themselves; thus, the closure of institutions such as local libraries and schools would have negatively affected their access to books subsequently impacting their attitude to reading.

The National Literacy Trust gifted books to children from disadvantaged backgrounds in an effort to address the 'book ownership gap' identified in their research. However, the literature is not always congruent with book gifting as the most effective approach in developing reading for pleasure among disadvantaged children.

For example, the Education Endowment Foundation (2014) aimed to improve reading skills by raising children's enjoyment and engagement in transitioning from primary school to secondary through book gifting. A key aim was to address the book access gap experienced by disadvantaged

students. The trial reported positives, such as participants making slight progress with reading comprehension than those who did not participate. However, what is interesting is that the trial reported that book gifting harmed reading for pleasure for disadvantaged students. In contrast, the report showed a positive impact on their wealthier peers. Similarly, a trial by Roberts et al. (2017), labelled "The Letterbox Club" explored the effect of book gifting for children in foster care. They reported that there was no significant improvement in children's literacy skills and enjoyment of reading. Through their qualitative approach with interviews, it was clear that some children felt uneasy in receiving gifts whilst others felt "book burdened" in some instances.

The authors acknowledged that their implicit assumption that children from disadvantaged backgrounds will be grateful for receiving a free book was not always evident in their findings. They reflected that their hypothesis did not consider other factors such as motivation, confidence or parental influence, as explained by (Hedin, Höjer & Brunnberg, 2011). Although both the Education Endowment Foundation book trial study (2014) and "The LetterBox Club" by Roberts et al., (2017) aimed to address book access through the gift of books, due to the multifaceted nature of reading for pleasure, a simple gift of a book will begin to address some of the core issues but not solve it entirely. Perhaps book gifting needs to be part of a multi-stranded approach to develop reading for pleasure and literacy for disadvantaged pupils.

A more successful book gifting initiative is "Booked Up", a national programme promoting reading for pleasure to Year 7s as they transition from primary school. Students were given the opportunity to choose a free text to read from a selection of 12 selected titles. An evaluation of the initiative showed that 71 per cent of children had either completed or had at least started to read the book they had selected. Interestingly, 68 per cent of children who claimed that they seldom read had begun to read some of their chosen texts (Hope-Stone associates, 2008). A critical difference between this programme and the Education Endowment Foundation (2014) and the Roberts et al., (2017) is the element of choice. In the "Booked Up" reading programme, students were allowed to choose their free book out of a curated selection which subsequently increased their intrinsic motivation in completing or at least engaging with the book.

Reading Materials

According to Clark and Phythian-Sence, (2008), reading interest correlates to improving reading pleasure among young people. They expound that these reading interests can be categorised into individual/personal interest and situational interest. Individual interest refers to a student's interest, which is relatively stable; situational interest is ephemeral and, as such, is context dependent. However, both types of interests are essential in creating intrinsic motivation, which is vital in developing positive reading for pleasure habits (Gurthrie and Wigfield, 2000). The literature also suggests that reading for pleasure is more likely to happen in response to intrinsic motivation (when it is self-directed) than in an extrinsic manner where reading is for objectives (Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Gurthrie and Wigfield, 2000)

Guthrie, Wigfield & You (2012) explain that students' engagement levels increase when reading texts that are relevant to themselves. However, Burns and Myhill (2004) contend that texts chosen in schools do not always reflect real-life context as they are often decontextualised passage extracts and not whole texts. They stipulate that extract-based reading tends to be utilised for students to develop their analytical skills. Lockwood (2008) is in congruence with Burns and Myhill (2004) by clarifying that reading and textual analysis of excerpts limits the time children spend exploring the text; this subsequently does not promote reading for pleasure.

A salient factor in developing reading for pleasure is choice (Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Sanacore, 1999; Krashen, 1993). Choice is essential as it helps young people develop a sense of ownership; a key prerequisite to developing positive attitudes toward reading. Krashen (1993) furthers this by explaining that when children are given autonomy over book choice, they are likely to read more and show greater language and literacy development. Despite this, there is a difference between the books children choose to read at home and what they are required to at school (Gregory and Williams 2000). Ergo, it is essential to explore the impact choice has on reading for pleasure. In a survey in which students were asked which books they enjoyed the most, 80 per cent of students selected books they had chosen personally (Gambrell et al., 1996). Similarly, Casey (2010) reported that children actively wanted more agency over the books they read and sought meaningful discussions about those texts. Schraw, Flowerday and Reisetter (1998) also reported a positive relationship between choice and improving reading for pleasure. Furthermore, research also shows that struggling readers are more likely to read less for pleasure (Garbe et al, 2006). Research indicates that children show more resilience to comprehend complex texts if the text explores a topic they enjoy (Wigfield et al., 2008). Tompkins and McGee (1993) capture this clearly when

they posit that “some books may be very difficult to read, but because they are so interesting students decide to read them anyway” (p. 278)

Giving children more autonomy over their choice of books is fundamental in developing children’s reader identity, which is paramount in cultivating positive attitudes towards reading for pleasure (Bang-Jenson, 2010). The reasons mentioned advocate for the inclusion of the children's book selection process. Thus, the skill of book selection needs to be explicitly taught and practised to foster this sense of agency when it comes to book selection. Contending this is Ross (2006), who notes that historically book selection is not an overt skill practised by the school. As a result, if children are not taught the skills of book selection both at home and at school, they are unlikely to select texts which will foster positive reading for pleasure habits. Saliently, Moss and McDonald (2005) concluded that when children were given agency over their book selections and not monitored, this helped build stronger positive reader identities, which is crucial for developing children's attitudes towards reading for pleasure. Likewise, Clark and Phythian-Sence (2008) concur that choice is an essential catalyst in developing children’s love of reading as children may show perseverance with books of their choice. Despite the demands of the curriculum, it is paramount that students are encouraged to explore different methods and approaches of book selection if reading engagement is to be improved (Pachtman and Wilson 2006).

Representation

Representation in children’s books and curriculum is essential for children from all backgrounds. It provides insight into different cultures and lives, which is key in developing reading for pleasure (Ramdarshan Bold, 2019). However, the curriculum does not always provide effective representation within literature, which reflects today’s society (Elliot, Nelson-Addy, Chantiluke & Courtney, 2021). This is confirmed through memoirs by Black British and Asian British authors such as Eddo-Lodge (2017) who argue that the current curriculum promotes the message that “neutral is white” (p.85) and has “imbued white male writers with the power and authority to speak for everyone” (Olufemi, 2019, p. 58).

Furthermore, texts which are selected in the curriculum to promote representation often have a myopic focus on the “dehumanising experience” of “slavery, colonising, lynching” (Ogunbiyi, 2019, p.70). Hence why Serroukh (2015) argues that representation must show true diversity in the community. For instance, if most texts explored in classrooms feature ethnic minority characters

who are poverty-stricken, readers could inherently associate poverty with ethnic minorities. The author further expounds that children are invited to consider the differences in society and the shared humanity when books represent experiences beyond a young child's point of reference. This is supported by Bishop (1990) who argues that literature can help us "see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience" (p. ix). Similarly, Guthrie, Wigfield & You (2012) explain that pupils increase engagement when they explore texts concerned with the real world and when the reading material is relevant to them. Lack of representation fosters a negative relationship of reading for pleasure (Ramdarshan Bold, 2019). To explore this further, the Booktrust, in conjunction with University College London, investigated the representation of authors and illustrators of colour by examining children's books in the United Kingdom (UK) written between the years 2007 to 2017. The research utilised interviews as a means to understand the complex barriers in becoming book creators. This is an effective research method as it provides authors of colour the opportunity to share their challenges when searching for an agent or a publisher.

The data analysis revealed that there is an under-representation of people of colour among young people's texts. The data indicate that white children's book creators had around twice as many books published than creators of colour between 2007 and 2017. Interestingly, fewer than 2 per cent of children's authors were British people of colour. The research also reveals that this has led authors and illustrators of colour to publish their work outside the UK; the same conclusions cannot be made for their white counterparts.

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education report titled 'Reflecting Realities' (2018) explored ethnic representation within UK's children's literature. They reported that out of the 9115 children's books published in the United Kingdom in 2017, only 391 featured Black or Asian characters. Interestingly, out of the 391 published, only 1 per cent were the main characters in the text. This is startling as the report clarifies that the demographic makeup of the UK does not correlate with the presence of characters of colour in books in 2017.

A more recent study (Elliot et al., 2021) into the representation of children's literature and the British curriculum report similar findings to CLIPE 'Reflecting Realities' (2018). A key finding was the lack of representation in the General Certificate of Secondary Education examination; only 0.7 per cent of students answered a question on a novel by a writer of colour, and only 0.1 per cent of pupils responded to a question on a novel written by a woman of colour. This is pertinent as within the selection of texts in the English Literature section, there are only two full prose texts by authors of colour – Anita and Me by Meera Syal and Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro are

featured in the post-1914 between the years 2017- 2019 (Elliot et al., 2021). The report calls for children to have greater access to literature that represents them and society.

Screen versus Print

Over the years, there has been an increase in the accessibility of portable electronic devices; this has allowed more children and young people to read digitally on screens (Mangen, 2008). Clark and Picton (2015) reported that their 2012 annual survey was the first-time young people had reported being more likely to read more online than in print outside school. ITheir2015 research explored the impact of ebooks on pupils' reading motivation, reading enjoyment, and reading skills in an academic year. A key finding was that reading enjoyment had increased significantly when students read using technology. The number of pupils who enjoyed reading increased from 59 per cent to 64 per cent. Furthermore, the study positively influenced students' attitude towards reading for pleasure, as more pupils' thought reading was "cool" after the project. The impact of the study was more significant for boys overall. They experienced positive attitudinal changes towards reading for pleasure as there was an 11 per cent increase in the number of boys who enjoyed reading using technology (60.9 per cent pre-study, 67.9per cent post-study); a 25 per cent increase in the number of boys who read daily using a digital device and a 22 per cent increase in the length of time boys spent reading using technology. It is worth noting that although boys started the project with the lowest levels of reading enjoyment, this increased from 49 per cent to 64 per cent throughout the study. However, boys' preference for reading using technology could be due to their familiarity and comfort with computer games; as a result, they are more likely to be at ease with navigating texts digitally (OECD, 2015). Reviewing findings in the subgroup of disengaged boy readers, show that reading engagement and length of time spent reading had increased both on paper and using technology. However, given a choice, boys from this subgroup would prefer reading using technology. Similar to Clark and Picton's (2015) findings, research by Scholastics US (2012) reported that one in five children viewed reading as more fun when they read in an ebook format. Over 2 years, the number of children who read an ebook increased from 25 per cent to 46 per cent; this also had a positive effect on their reading motivation.

The findings reported by Clark and Piction (2019) strongly advocate for the use of technology as an effective approach to promote and develop reading for pleasure among pupils, in particular for disengaged boys. For instance, this subgroup of boys reported that they were more likely to read

outside of school using the ebooks platform utilised in the study after participating. This suggests that utilising technology could be "another tool in the toolbox for schools keen to encourage all children to read for pleasure", as clarified by Picton and Clark (2015, p.34). Similar findings are reported for disengaged boy readers developing positive attitudes towards reading when reading with technology. (Scholastics, 2012). A key reason for the advocacy of technology in promoting reading for pleasure is the immediate access to a range of text (Picton and Clark 2015). This empowers pupils to easily navigate book choice, which is essential in developing reading for pleasure (Gambrell et al., 1996; Casey, 2010). A student from Clark and Picton (2015) study captured this clearly when they remarked, "sometimes when you're reading on a screen you think of another book you want to read straight after and you can just do that" (p, 52)

In contrast to the discussion above favouring reading on screens, in Schugar and Schugar's (2013) research, they found that children could comprehend more effectively when reading in print than using ebooks. One of the reasons for this is explored by Reich et al. (2016) who explains the negative implication of on-screen reading. Their report focused on using tablet-based eBooks with children (1-2 years). They noted that the animations, sound, and games could distract and skew the original purpose of reading. Furthermore, in Morineau, Blanche, Tobin and Gueguen's (2005) comparative study of reading and electronic books, they found that ebooks could be a barrier to students' recalling assimilated information. In contrast, printed material tended to support students with the process of recalling. The researchers expound that one of the reasons contributing to this is a disconnect between the text content and the digital device, as a myriad of content can easily be altered with a click. In contrast, they observed that the physical form of books connected the text content with the material part; this led them to conclude that the e-book "does not serve as an unambiguous index to indicate a field of knowledge on the basis of its particular physical form" (Morineau et al., 2005, p. 346). Mangen (2008) also concluded that reading texts using technology resulted in students performing less in a comprehension test than students who read on paper. This conclusion led the researcher to speculate that reading on paper may be less cognitively taxing for students as it creates space for comprehension.

Although the discussion above explores the impact of screen and print on reading for pleasure, it is also important to consider how these two modes of reading impact children from different socio-economic backgrounds. Clark and Picton (2015) also analysed their findings in relation to socio-economic backgrounds; Free School Meals (FSM) was used as a proxy to measure low socio-economic disadvantaged children in their study. They concluded that pupils on FSM were 25 per

cent more likely to say they read fiction on screen compared with 17 per cent non-free school meals. Interestingly, pupils who are non-FSM are more likely to read a variety of texts on paper. For example, 3 in 4 non-FSM pupils are more likely to read non-fiction text on paper than FSM pupils who were 7 in 10. Clark and Picton (2015) observed that reading on paper and on-screen is highly associated with reading attainment and high levels of engagement which positively contributes to reading for pleasure. Firstly, their conclusion also implies young people who are frequent confident readers coupled with having a positive attitude with reading are most likely to read across a range of formats. Furthermore, this may suggest that although students need to be given the opportunities to engage and read a wide variety of texts, they should also be allowed to access texts in different formats. This could be beneficial for young people who are less engaged by print reading, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

3. What are teachers' attitudes to reading and does it influence children's reading habits?

"Teachers who are engaged readers are motivated to read, are both strategic and knowledge readers, and are socially interactive about what they read. These qualities show up in their classroom interactions and help create students who are in turn engaged readers."

(Dreher, 2003, p.3)

It is common knowledge that teachers are instrumental in improving students' reading attitudes and raising the profile of reading (Cremin, et al., 2008; Cremin et al., 2009; Cox & Schaetzel, 2007; Commeyras et al., 2003; Dreher, 2003; Gambrell, 1996). This is because the role of the teacher can enhance students' school reading experience by "shap[ing] the subject's perception of reading in adulthood" (Belzer, 2003, p.104), which helps to produce lifelong readers. In congruence with Belzer (2003), Gambrell (1996) argues that "one of the key factors in motivating students to read is a teacher who values reading and is enthusiastic about sharing a love of reading with students" (p. 20). Arguably, this enthusiasm helps develop positive reading attitudes from students (Daisey, 2009; Gambrell, 1996). Furthermore, as important social agents, scholars believe that teachers in a school are environmentally positioned to positively influence their students' learning habits (Bussey & Bandura, 2004). For example, Morrison, Jacobs and Swinyary (1999) investigated the

relationship between teachers' reading habits and the impact on their instructional practices by surveying 1874 teachers. They found a positive correlation between teachers who identified themselves as readers and their literacy instructional practices. Drawing on their findings, Morrison et al. (1999) concluded that students enjoy reading when their teachers are enthusiastic readers and utilise a myriad of activities to raise the profile of reading and engagement.

The discussion above establishes teachers as important agents in developing children's reading for pleasure. It assumes teachers know the importance of discussing texts with their students while exploring their students' reading experiences (Commeryas et al., 2003). Yet, when Rieck (1997) investigated secondary school students' perception of their teachers as readers; the study reported that only 20 per cent of students believed their teachers enjoyed reading. Similarly, Rasinik's (1992, cited in Daisey, 2009) study found that teacher trainees also identified their secondary school teacher as having the most negative impact on readers. In fact, teachers can pass on their perception about reading to their students; Bintz (1997) references a mathematics teacher who questioned, "How do I get [my students] more involved in reading when I don't read much myself?" (p.17). From this, there is a disparity between what we expect teachers' readers' identity to be and what it could be in actuality.

A reason for the findings above could be the type of reading that dominates the secondary school environment; for instance, textbook book reading can make students disengaged and create negative memories of reading due to its non-negotiable nature (Bean, 1994). Similarly, Schwartz (1996) also argues that the school reading experience does not inspire students to love literature as it is usually a process of "looking for something, rather than allowing something to happen" (Schwartz, 1996, p. 111). This could be due to the perception that centralised systems and school cultures can impose on teachers' creative use of literature (Marshall, 2001). Greenleaf, Jimenez and Roller (2002) also offer insight by commenting on the time pressures secondary schools experience due to curriculum, which results in young people having restricted moments to develop reading for pleasure in a meaningfully. Cremin et al, (2008) build on Schwartz's (1996) ideas by arguing that comprehension and assessment tend to dominate the reading and responding in schools, leading to children experiencing reduced pleasure in reading.

Teachers Modelling Reading

In both Rieck (1977) and Rasink's (1996, cited in Daisey, 2009) study, participants believed that their teachers did not positively influence their reading enjoyment. From these findings, it is important to acknowledge that teachers' personal foundational experiences with reading influence their attitudes towards reading instruction (Bean, 1994). This is pertinent as "teachers don't just appear out of thin air. They are products… of the worlds from which they came" (Greenleaf et al., 2002, p.487). For teachers to effectively influence children's reading practices, they must model their love of reading as it motivates students to read for pleasure (Cox and Schaetzel, 2007; & Cremin et al., 2008). This is also echoed by Ramakresinin (2017) and Cremin et al. (2008), who explain that an effective way to motivate students to read for pleasure is when teachers model reading. The causal effect of teachers modelling reading to their students is succinctly expressed when Dreher (2003) observes:

"Teachers who are readers convey their love for reading to their students, that this love for reading provides a role model, and that it makes a difference in classroom practice" (p. 338)

Furthermore, through effective modelling of reading, it reinforces the idea that books are valuable and important (Perez, 1986, cited in Ramakresinin, 2017).

Although an argument has been made for teachers to model reading to support the development of reading for pleasure, it is undoubtedly a challenging task for teachers to effectively model if they are not engaged readers (Cox & Schaetzel, 2007). Furthermore, extensive research into teachers' knowledge of children's literature posits that teachers need to expand their repertoire of teaching reading beyond comprehension, reading skills and cueing systems if they are to improve children's attitude to reading (Cox & Schaetzel, 2007; Cremin et al., 2008; Cremin et al., 2014; Daisey 2009). Likewise, Cremin et al. (2008) explains that teachers' knowledge of children's literature is a prerequisite to improving reading attitude among readers if teachers create a positive environment that nurtures the love of reading. However, without implementing educational systems and national policies to support teachers in developing this area of their practice, teachers may not be able to

effectively develop their students' reading habits. It is interesting to note that such knowledge is rarely included in the Teachers Standards overview; there is no statutory requirement demanding for teacher trainees, either primary or secondary, to widen their knowledge of children's literature. Instead, the guidance requires teachers under the heading of demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge' that teachers" teaching early reading, [should] demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics". This directs teachers to give attention to the mechanics of reading (Rose, 2006) rather than reading for pleasure which has been associated with a myriad of benefits such as attainment, comprehension, empathy and vocabulary (Clark & Rumbold, 2006; Howard, 2011; Sullivan and Brown, 2013).

Teachers Knowledge of Children's literature

It has been argued that teachers' knowledge of children's literature and their knowledge of children's reading attitudes may be limited (Cremin et al., 2008; Cremin et al., 2014). This could be due to a lack of time teachers have to read for pleasure (Arts Council England, 2003). Cho (2013) explores this issue in a study where trainee teachers were given protected time to read for pleasure and engaged teachers in pedagogical research about the value of reading. The study reported that teachers read an average of 10 books within the two weeks. Cho (2013) observed that teachers were engaged in reading during the sessions, and some even requested for additional reading time. In a six month follow up study, Cho (2014) reports that participants had increased their commitment to reading for pleasure; they had also dedicated more time reading in their instruction. This led Cho (2014) to conclude that "a short (two-week) personal pleasure reading experience … had a dramatic effect on teachers' own reading behaviour (p. 15). This shows the positive effect of protected reading space and time on reading research on developing teachers' personal reading habits.

Beers (2003) postulates that more needs to be known about teachers personal reading needs. Hence, Cremin et al. (2008) undertook research to ascertain primary teachers' personal and professional reading practices to contribute to the conversation about teaching reading. The extensive research explored teachers' reading practices, their pedagogic use of literature in the classroom and their knowledge of children's literature. The study focused on 1200 primary school teachers in 11 local authorities in England and five Initial Teacher Training institutions.

When teachers were asked to name six ‘good’ children’s writers, it was clear that teachers struggled to do so. 48 per cent of teachers were able to name six. Most teachers named Roald Dhal (744), Michael Morpurgo, Jacqueline Wilson, J.K. Rowling and Anne Fine; it is important to note that these are some of the texts that student’s study in Key Stage 3. From this, it is clear that teachers hold a narrowed perspective of children's literature as the authors mentioned are well known and established authors. It is also evident that there is a lack of diversity in the authors that teachers mentioned. The same pattern was clear when teachers were asked to name six good poets. Teachers found it challenging as only 58 percent were able to name two poets.

Furthermore, a majority of 744 teachers named Roald Dahl as a ‘good’ writer. This is similar to the Roehampton Reading Surveys (undertaken in 1996 and 2005), which aimed to explore children’s reading habits of children aged 4-16 in England. In both surveys, teachers identified Roald Dahl as one of the top three writers (Maynard et al., 2007). In addition to this, in the National Literacy Survey, Dahl was the second most-read author by Key Stage 2 pupils. From this, whilst there is a need for students to have deep knowledge of works from particular authors, it is also important that their exposure to different works is not stifled but rather allowed to develop the deepness in literature, which encourages diversity. The researchers from Cremin et al., (2008) did not qualify what constitutes ‘good’ in questions such as “list 6 good children’s poets” in their methodology. Thus, it is possible that teacher’s interpretation of what good authors mean can influence their response.

A Limited Canon

It is unknown if teachers' limited knowledge of children's literature is influenced by a limited canon (Cremin at al., 2008). The National Curriculum (DfE, 1995) explains that literature shared with Key Stage 1 and 2 children should be significant children's authors. The idea of "significant children's author" immediately excludes a group of writers and, as a result, reduces representation through both gender and race for teachers to explore with their students. We can also question what makes a text 'significant' and what are the prerequisites for this? Additionally, the idea of a 'long-established children's fiction' suggests that children are ushered to study specific works by specific authors, which promotes prescriptivism and narrows the choices students can explore. Further initiatives such as the English National Literacy Strategy (1998) reiterated the same ideas of promoting the texts by "significant authors". Furthermore, researchers such as (Benton, 2000; Maybin, 2000) have warned that the term 'significant authors' aids in promoting a system that institutionalised a cultural heritage in schools. As a result, primary school children may only explore "the work of a restricted number of children's authors"; these works, in turn, become "established as a classic set of texts" (Marsh, 2004, p.255).

The same prescriptivist approach is evident in the recent reforms in GCSE English Literature curriculum where older texts are prioritised; for example, students are given a choice to respond to eight of William Shakespeare's play and eight British authored nineteen-entry novels (Goodwyn, Durrant, Sawyer, Scherff, & Zancanella, 2019)

Arguably, with the prescription of a traditional canon, pupils are forced to connect to "a version of the past which is intended to connect with and ratify the present" (William, 1997, p.116). Furthermore, the new educational reform by Gove (2013), which propagated every "child's birth right", disregards the cultural backgrounds of the many pupils, which this reform is tasked to improve their life chances (Goodwyn et al., 2019). This limits the opportunity secondary school teachers have to expand their repertoire of children's literature beyond the curriculum as they experience the dilemma of teaching texts such as *Checking Out Me* by John Agard which reflect their own experiences with diverse texts or the canonical texts which will increase students' chances of examination success.

Teacher Training Programmes

Cremin et al., (2008) argue that professional development is required to support the widening of teachers' knowledge of children's literature. This will help them reflect on the role of literature in the growth of their young readers. Furthermore, as Lesesne (1991) clarifies, "Lifetime readers are made, not born" (p.61); thus, it is imperative to explore meaningful ways to support teachers to develop this aspect of their practice.

Teacher training programmes have been identified as an effective avenue to support teachers to read more, enjoy reading, and reflect on pedagogical research on reading for pleasure (Cremin et al., 2008; Cremin et al., 2014; Commeryras et al., 2003; Cox and Schaetzel, 2007). For example, Cox and Schaetzal (2007) explored the reading habits of pre-service teachers in Singapore. Their findings concluded that a review into their teacher education programs was needed to incorporate more reading into their courses. However, they also noted the demands of time pressure on teacher trainees and resolved to make the reading aspect of the teacher programs more personable than clinical. Similarly, Cremin et al. (2008), in conjunction with the United Kingdom Literacy Association, developed the "Teachers as readers: Building communities of readers", which aims to develop children's pleasure of reading by supporting teachers to expand their knowledge of children's literature and their reading habit. A secondary initiative is to support teachers in building meaningful relationships with librarians and parents as they're also important social agents in children's developing reading for pleasure. Bailey, Hall and Gamble (2007) also concur with utilising teacher training programmes to support teachers in developing their practice on reading for pleasure. A two-year national programme in England aimed to support trainee teachers by promoting partnerships between school library services and teacher training institutions. The project reported positive effects on student teachers, library staff, and teacher educators in a short time; however, the researchers noted that relationships between school libraries and teacher training institutions would need to be collaboratively developed over time to ensure a long-lasting impact on teachers' reading pleasure habits.

Following this research, I have decided to explore these following research questions:

1. How does creating a baseline for reading for pleasure aid in understanding disadvantaged pupils reading attitudes?

2. How does the curation of fiction excerpts improve pupils' attitude to reading for pleasure?

3. How does improving teachers' knowledge of children's literature and their reading practice impact disadvantaged pupils' attitude to reading for pleasure?

Research Methodology

"They [books] freed us from the limitations of having just one life with one point of view; they let us see beyond the horizon of our own circumstance"
Spufford (2002, p.10)

Introduction

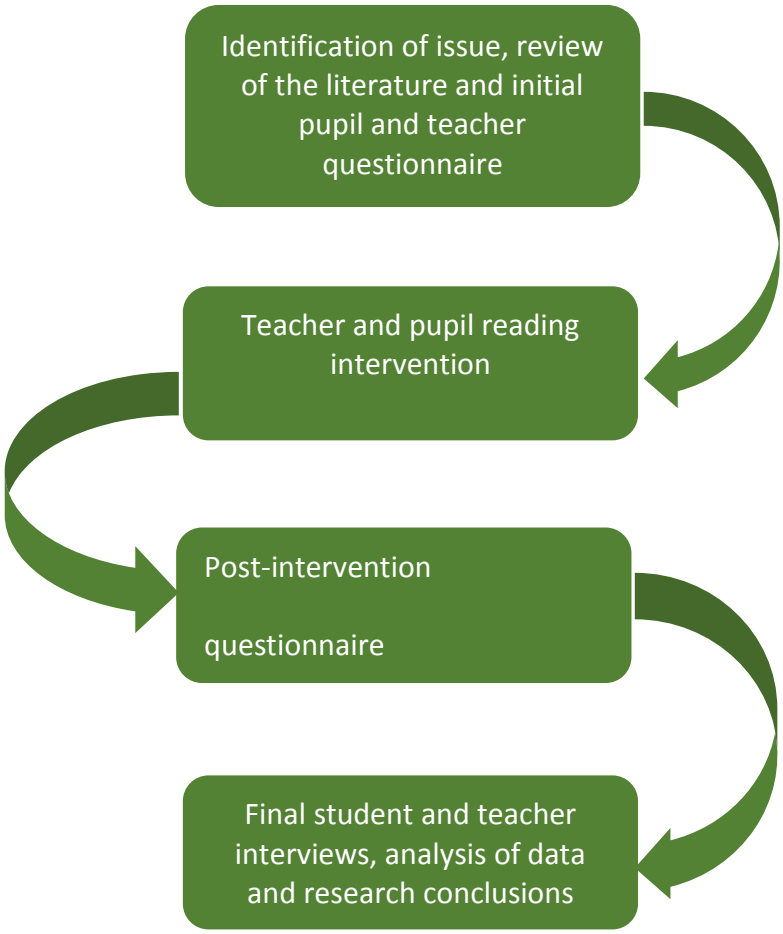
Against the background of the literature explored, which reviewed the benefits of reading for pleasure, examining the factors that inhibit students from developing positive reading attitudes, and exploring the role teachers occupy in developing their young readers, I conducted a practitioner's research (Edwards and Talbot, 1997) intending to improve disadvantaged pupils' attitudes towards reading for pleasure.

Practitioner research attempts to bridge the growing gap between academic research and classroom practice. Thomas (2015) clarifies that one of the core ideas of this type of research centres on developing practice, empowering other practitioners whilst committing to change. This research is pertinent as, over the years, teachers have been challenged to engage meaningfully with research to inform their practice and broaden their understanding of how teaching and learning influence student outcomes (Hargreaves, 1996). This is supported by Campbell and Jaques (2003), who notes that teachers have engaged in practitioner research to improve, refine, and evaluate their practice over the years. Furthermore, practitioner research allows collaboration with other practitioners whilst gaining a deeper insight into students' attitudes towards reading for pleasure (Thomas, 2015).

One of the criticisms of practitioner research, especially when it is qualitative, is its subjective nature. For instance, Foster (1999) remarks that findings are "personal descriptions of, or justifications for, their practice; or accounts of their efforts to improve pupil achievement, or of their involvement in staff development activities" (p. 383) rather than actual research. Similarly, Gorard (2002) criticised practitioner research as being descriptive. Despite this challenge, this type of research strongly aligns with my ideologies and thinking of effective professional development. As such, I am motivated to pursue this research approach in this project. Its reflective nature will be paramount to the success of this project as the intervention requires both students and teachers to think meaningfully about their relationships with texts (Thomas, 2015).

The Research Design

Figure 1: The Action Research Design based on Lewin's (1946) 'spiral of steps' (p.206)



The Outline of the Design

I chose to design my research to include pupils and teachers. The pupils who participated in my school were in Year 9 whereas the pupils in the collaborating school were in Year 12. Before beginning the intervention, I conducted a preliminary questionnaire for both pupils and teachers to gain insight into their attitudes towards reading for pleasure; this created a reading for pleasure attitude baseline, which informed the planning of the intervention. I curated a fiction reading for pleasure excerpt booklet for the intervention, influenced by the literature review and preliminary questionnaires. Pupils explored the booklets weekly with teachers; pupils also responded to post-reading questions after exploring each excerpt. Their response for each excerpt was collated as part of data collection. Teacher's facilitating the intervention along with teachers in the English department participated in a reading for pleasure CPD facilitated by the Open University and UKLA. The CPD is grounded on the research of Cremin et al. (2008) and Cremin (2019) which aims to develop teachers' knowledge of children's literature and to support them in gaining a deeper insight into reading habits of their students. Teachers were required to present a mini case study at the end of the five sessions, showcasing how they have used the pedagogy from the CPD sessions to support student(s) to develop their reading for pleasure. Pupils and teachers engaged in questionnaires and interviews at the conclusion of the project.

Data Gathering and Materials Used

Questionnaire

During the pre- and post-intervention stages of this project, questionnaires were used with both pupils and teachers to gain insight into their attitudes towards reading for pleasure. Questionnaires were used to gather this data due to its reliability and validity (Cohen et al. ,2013; Thomas, 2015). Pupils' responses would inform the intervention of the curated fiction excerpts; hence a research method that promoted anonymity and honesty needed to be utilised (Cohen et al.,2013) to encourage pupils to respond openly. Furthermore, as Cohen et al. (2013) explains that timewise, questionnaires are economical. Due to the current restrictions enforced in schools because of Covid-19, questionnaires were suitable in maximising participants' inclusion. The questions for all questionnaires used in this research were constructed within the guidance of Sellitiz, Wrightsman

and Cook (1976). Their detailed guidance, which covers decisions about question content, wording, and sequencing of the question, was a valuable and reflective tool in creating robust questions and served the purpose of the questionnaire.

The Use Of interviews

Interviews were the method of data collection used in this research project. As Kvale (1996, cited in Cohen et al., 2013) notes, interviews propel data towards generating ideas between people through conversations. However, these 'conversations' differ from everyday conversations as it is often question-based and constructed (Dyer, 1995, cited in Cohen et al., 2013). It is also through these conversations that allow participants to express views on a wide range of issues that they otherwise may not be able to do (Walford, 2001). The 'conversations' are essential to this research as the subject of reading for pleasure is complex. As such, interviews allow teachers to express their ideas, allowing me to press for complete responses (Cohen et al., 2013). Researchers also provide caveats about the use of interviews in data collection. For instance, Cohen et al. (2013) posit that interviews can be expensive in time; this is especially pertinent to this research given the restriction Covid-19 has placed on teachers and schools. Thus, as a researcher, it is imperative to maximise interviewing time with teachers through effective questions planning (Kitwood, 1977, cited in Cohen et al., 2013). Walford (2001) also warns that external factors can negatively impact the interviewee.

Research Journal

Teachers were encouraged to keep a Research Journal for each session they explored the reading excerpts with their students. This journal supported teachers to reflect on salient details such as student engagement during class reading, factors affecting the success of the intervention and any thoughts they may have. Furthermore, the use of the Research Journal allowed in-the-moment reflections as Campbell and Jaques (2003) explains that "field notes based on classroom interactions and observations are central to teacher research" (p.4)

Research plan and schedule

Step Taken

Gain Ethical Approval

Preliminary questionnaire

Curation of reading excerpts

Teacher Reading for Pleasure CPD

Post-intervention data collection

Participants

Collaboration

Step 1. Ethics

Ethical issues can arise from conducting social science research; it was essential for me to gain ethical approval before any form of data collection (BERA, 2018). My research project gained CUREC approval from the University of Oxford Ethical Committee (see appendix 1).

I also wrote a letter to the headteacher detailing the aims and proposed outcomes of the study. The letter included the study's aims, an outline of what staff and student involvement would entail, an assurance of the anonymisation of both staff and students throughout the research and how data will be collected. Importantly, as the reading for pleasure intervention was part of the class's reading curriculum, students did not have the option of opting out of participating. Thus, the headteacher acted in loco parentis. However, from the onset, I made it explicitly clear to students that if they did not want to participate in any post-reading questionnaire and interviews, they would not be obliged (BERA, 2018).

I informed all classes involved that they were participants in a research project for reading; however, I did not inform them that I was looking to improve their attitude towards reading for pleasure as they are disadvantaged. I predicted that informing them might influence students' responses. Additionally, teachers taking part in the Open University reading for pleasure CPD were asked to do 5 CPD sessions. However, I made it clear that if they wished to discontinue their participation in this part of the research, they were entirely at liberty to do so. Additionally, I have kept the details of students, teachers and institutions involved in the research anonymised by pseudonyms (BERA, 2018). The pseudonyms used for teachers are Anna, the teacher I have collaborated with at my school and Sarah, the teacher I have collaborated with at the participating school. The pseudonym for my school is Langston High and Bethel High for the participating school.

A questionnaire was deemed the most ethical approach to collecting data from students due to the questions asked. For example, one of the questions required students to choose the most accurate scale reflecting their reading now compared to their reading in primary school. All the participants were aware of my status as an English teacher and as a Reading Coordinator. As such, they may have felt uncomfortable expressing negative albeit truthful ideas about their reading for pleasure habits in a face-to-face interview, whether in groups or individually. Sarah in our collaborating school is an English teacher; hence she would have had similar reactions from participants. Before completing the questionnaire, students were reminded that the questionnaire was anonymised and informed that I was researching reading for pleasure habits. Students were not deceived during the study, and importantly, students were reminded and assured that no follow-up questions would be asked based on their responses (BERA, 2018). All data collated was stored on the school system as the school's security programme protects it (BERA, 2018).

Similarly, for the teacher interviews, I was conscious that teachers were aware of my status as a reading coordinator and may feel under pressure to produce responses that show a positive relationship with reading for pleasure. As such, a face-to-face interview would not have been as useful as it may have heightened the pressure for teachers. An anonymised questionnaire effectively collated their perspectives during English faculty time to not infringe on their teaching time.

Step 2. Students' Preliminary Questionnaire

The use of the preliminary questionnaire to ascertain students' attitudes towards reading for pleasure pre-intervention utilised a mixture of open and closed questions. Opting to use closed items in the preliminary questionnaire solely may not support me in gaining a broad understanding of students reading attitudes. Additionally, employing only open-ended items could discourage students from writing their responses due to reasons such as limited literacy issues (Cohen et al., 2013). As children with a poor attitude to reading are more likely to have literacy challenges (Clark and Rumbold, 2006), I thought it would be better to employ a mixture of questions to support all students to respond to the questions adequately. The closed questions had an ordinal scale that helped students in deciphering and articulating their attitude to reading for pleasure. For instance, a scale ranged from 'I read less now, 'I read more now' and 'I read the same' to the statement 'compare your reading to primary school reading' (see appendix 4). An example of an open question used was 'what would you change about reading in our school?'; this allowed me to gain a deeper insight into students' perception of reading in our context. Preliminary questions were created based on the Open University's 'Reading for Pleasure' resources and research (Cremin et al., 2008). The questionnaire was fundamental in ascertaining a baseline in pupils' attitude to reading for pleasure. I deliberately employed statements within the questions as I did not want to pose questions that students could find intrusive on a potentially sensitive topic such as their reading habits. Overall, 60 pupils completed the pre-intervention questions (30 pupils in my class, 30 in Anna's class and 14 pupils from the collaborating school).

Step 2. Teachers' Preliminary Questionnaires

The literature review makes it clear that a teacher's knowledge of children's reading habits and their knowledge of children's literature is essential in improving students' attitudes to reading for pleasure (Cremin et al., 2008; Cox and Schaetzel, 2007; Dreher 2003; Daisey, 2009). Thus, it was useful to gather their perspectives on their understanding of children's reading habits and their knowledge of children's literature. In addition to this, the preliminary questionnaire would help gain insight into the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards reading for pleasure and the school's role in influencing this. I devised the questionnaire based on the Open University and UKLA's research in developing a teacher's practice within reading for pleasure (Cremin et al., 2008)

Like the preliminary questionnaire for students, the statements used in the questionnaires utilised ordinal scales. Some ranged from 'always' to 'never' in questions such as 'how often do you recommend books to your students?' and 'how often do you read aloud to your class during a lesson?'. Open questions were also utilised, such as 'how would you describe our library lessons, pre-Covid-19?' and 'how would you describe the reading culture in our school?'. The open questions were helpful for teachers to express their ideas and perspectives on the subject matter qualitatively. The questions provided them with the opportunity to expand on their response to the closed questions. Cohen et al. (2013) explain that there is a need to pilot questionnaires to refine their contents; however, it would have been proved challenging to pilot the pre-intervention questionnaires as the questions are specific to teachers' current practices and attitudes. As a result, it was necessary to ask another colleague on the master's course who understood the nature of my research and my supervisor to aid in reviewing the questions. The purpose was to ensure that questions were comprehensive and appropriate for my research aims. To further ensure anonymity, both teachers and students completed the questionnaire on Google Forms as it has the function of not collating names or emails, which makes participants unidentifiable. This was effective in improving the anonymisation of the data (BERA, 2018). In total, 8 English teachers completed the questionnaire.

Step 3. Curating of reading excerpts

As aforementioned, the findings from the pupil preliminary questionnaires informed the curating of the excerpts. One of the key findings from the preliminary student questionnaire was that students identified finding the 'right' text as a factor that negatively impacted their reading for pleasure habits.

Initially, I wanted students to read whole texts during the intervention for the following reasons. Firstly, it would give them the experience of starting and completing a class novel (Burns and Myhill, 2004) as they would be able to invest meaningfully in the plot and form personal ideas and opinions on character development which is essential when students develop their reading for pleasure. It would also provide continuity for the reading lessons and potentially feed into main English lessons. However, prescribing a blanket text to students would have underpinned the challenge in the findings where students may not have been interested in the chosen text. Thus, upon reflection, I decided with my collaborating colleagues to curate fiction excerpts from various

authors. Having the experience of reading a variety of excerpts would expose students to a range of genres and texts by a diverse range of authors. This will encourage students to read a whole book inspired by the excerpts they were interested in, hence experiencing the benefits as outlined above.

Moreover, reading different texts would also improve the research design as it is directly informed by data and not what I presumed would benefit students. This approach created a low stakes environment whereby if students did not enjoy an excerpt, a character or an author's writing style, they were not obliged to read more of the same extract or read the whole text. However, suppose students did enjoy and engage with a particular excerpt, they might find it frustrating as they would not have the opportunity to develop their interest in the session by reading further. As a result, I ensured that all the books in the booklet were available to borrow via our school library and e-platform. The decision for students to read fiction instead of non-fiction as part of this intervention is supported by the literature; research shows that reading fiction is more effective in developing positive attitudes towards reading (Green et al.,2002; Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Mar et al., 2006)

When curating the excerpts, it was imperative to be guided by the literature review. As a result, I created and shared the framework below with my collaborating colleagues to guide our thinking and decisions. Based on the literature review, I created the framework below:

- Some excerpts had to feature diverse authors
- Some excerpts to feature different types of genres
- Some excerpts had to feature a Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) main character
- Some excerpts had to explore social issues

In total, the booklet had 12 excerpts **(see appendix 1).**

The next stage in the intervention planning was to discuss what followed the reading of the excerpts. In my meeting with my collaborating colleagues, we discussed creating comprehension questions for all the extracts, such as 'why did the main character leave home?' We also explored the idea of having questions that developed students' analytical and meaning-making skills, such as 'why do you think the writer used the word 'sobbed' to show what Jack was feeling? What can you infer from this?'. However, we realised that such questions were similar to the English GCSE assessment and echoed concerns expressed by teachers in the preliminary questionnaires. Teachers posited that the texts studied in the English curriculum and the skills taught do not directly support students in developing their positive attitudes towards reading. Lockwood (2008) also expresses this by

concurring that textual analysis leads to less enjoyment of texts. Hence Duncan (2010) explains that it is essential that analytical activities do not follow reading for pleasure. Against this background, we decided that the post-reading questions would be generic and non-specific (see appendix 5).

Another critical finding students identified as hindering them in reading was accessing vocabulary. Thus, we discussed how to incorporate vocabulary focus into the booklet's design as a post-reading activity. Challenging vocabularies from the excerpts were highlighted; after reading, students will have to deduce the meaning of the highlighted vocabulary by using the information in the text. They will then have to match the words to the corresponding definition. (**See Fig 3**)

Step 4 Teacher Reading for Pleasure CPD

The preliminary teacher questionnaire showed that teachers did not feel confident in their knowledge of children's literature. The data also made it clear that teachers lacked an understanding of children's reading for pleasure habits. As the literature review clarifies, teachers are a crucial catalyst in making this feasible if students truly foster a love of reading.

To address this, collaborating teachers and other English teachers in my department were given the opportunity to participate in reading for pleasure CPD; the sessions were facilitated by the UK Literacy Association and the Open University. The sessions aim to support teachers in developing their reading for pleasure to foster children's reading for pleasure **(see appendix 6 for CPD session outline)**

As I facilitated the CPD sessions, it was essential to clarify that I was also developing my reading for pleasure practice as this built a sense of community and shared purpose. Within the sessions, we explored different approaches to supporting children, such as reading aloud, the importance of creating a reading environment, the role of informal book talks and exploring tangible ways knowledge of children's literature could be enhanced (Cremin et al., 2014; Cremin et al., 2019)

Step 5. Post Intervention data collection

Students and teachers participated in a post-intervention questionnaire. The questions for students focused on their experience of the curated fiction booklet and the impact it had on their attitude to reading (see appendix 5). Anna and Sarah also engaged in a post-intervention interview to reflect on their experience in facilitating the reading for pleasure intervention with their students whilst commenting on the impact on students' attitude to learning (see appendix 9). In addition to this, teachers responded to a post-intervention questionnaire after participating in 5 CPD reading for pleasure sessions. The questions were open-ended in nature and encouraged teachers to reflect on all the sessions and the impact it has had on their knowledge of children's literature and reading habits.

Step 6. Participants

I collaborated with Anna, my colleague within Langston High and Sarah, a teacher from Bethel High (a collaborating inner London Sixth Form school).

Bethel High was deemed an appropriate fit for the project as it is among many feeder schools for our students post GCSE. Initially, Sarah wanted to focus the project on A-level Year 13 students as research suggests that they are less likely to be engaged in reading for pleasure (Clark and Osborne, 2008; Topping, 2010; Clark and Douglas, 2011). However, due to curriculum demands, A-level English students could not participate. After discussions with Sarah, we agreed that her English GCSE re-sit class would participate in the project. This decision was informed by the key findings from the *Read all about it; why reading is key to GCSE success* report by GL Assessment (2020); the report concluded that lack of reading for pleasure is one of the key factors which contributes negatively to GCSE outcomes. Thus, we posited that Sarah's students would benefit from the intervention as it would positively impact their attitudes towards reading and literacy attainment levels. In total, 14 pupils participated in the intervention from Bethel High.

Within Langston High, Anna and I initially aimed the project at Year 7s as they were new to secondary school. Furthermore, because of the Covid-19 lockdown, Year 7 students may not have had the opportunity to consistently develop their reading for pleasure whilst making the transition from Year 6. However, findings from the Oxford Language Report (2020) clarify that primary

school children are more likely to have a positive attitude towards reading than their secondary school counterparts. Furthermore, the literature posits that as children get older, they decline in reading for pleasure; hence it was essential to rethink our focus group (Clark and Osborne, 2008; Topping, 2010; Clark and Douglas, 2011). Thus, after discussions with Anna, we decided to review Years 9, 10 and 11 as a possible target for our intervention. However, as Year 10 and 11 do not have a designated reading lesson slot in the timetable, finding a consistent time in an already demanding curriculum would be challenging.

We settled on Year 9 being the focus of the intervention as they have a fortnightly time within the curriculum allocated to reading, making facilitating the intervention more feasible. Even though the intervention would replace their standard reading lessons where they read in silence for 50 minutes, it was still paramount to inform students that post-reading question and questionnaire were optional. Additionally, when analysing book loans across Key Stage 3, Year 9's had borrowed the least. As Clark and Osborne (2008) explain, older children are more likely to have poor attitudes towards reading. Alongside Anna's Year 9 class, I also delivered the intervention to my Year 9 class due to the low uptake in the project from members of the English department. I am aware that facilitating the reading for pleasure sessions has the potential for researcher bias and skew my identity as an independent researcher. To mitigate this, anonymity of participants was maintained throughout the study and the data was collected centrally hence I could not decipher between class responses.

Step 7. Collaboration

Maintaining high-quality collaboration was key to the success of the research. The purpose was not to solely ensure the success of the reading for pleasure intervention but to involve staff and maintain their interest as a worthwhile cause. This section will first explore the two tiers of collaboration with Sarah from Bethel High and Anna in Langston High, my current teaching school. I will then detail the partnership with the Open University and UKLA, which was vital in supporting teachers to develop themselves as readers.

English teachers within the English department participated in the preliminary questionnaire about teachers' knowledge of children's reading habits and their knowledge of children's literature. I then discussed and explored the findings with the department during our team meetings. Likewise, I shared the key results from the student's preliminary data from their questionnaire. Staff felt that this was significant in addressing and gaining insight into some of the ideas they mentioned in the

preliminary staff questionnaire, such as children's reading practice. Furthermore, it was helpful to discuss the data concerning our school context and consider ways to encourage our students to read for pleasure. English teachers contributed to the reading for pleasure booklet by suggesting and recommending texts for selection. After curating the reading for pleasure booklet, it was essential to be transparent with the intervention process and engage in meaningful dialogue during our department meetings. This transparency was imperative as the long-term aim is, if the intervention and research improved students' attitude to reading for pleasure, we will have to consider ways to disseminate the process to other year groups.

In addition to consulting the English department concerning the curating of extracts, another stakeholder to collaborate with was the school's librarian. I held several informal meetings with her to explore the texts I had curated based on the framework. We also used the library booking system to review the genre, text types, and authors students in Year 9 had borrowed most. Utilising the booking system was a helpful exercise as it supported tailoring the booklet to address gaps in students' reading experiences. We made sure all the extracts curated were available within our library system through our e-library booking system or our standard book borrowing system (Oliver). This was an important part of the collaboration as it provided us with a metric to evaluate the project's impact on students' post-intervention.

I consistently communicated with Anna, who collaborated with me at our school. We discussed the project's success thus far in these meetings and evaluated student engagement and participation during the reading session. These fortnightly meetings were essential to the success of the project. For example, in one of the meetings, Anna mentioned the difficulty in managing the consistency of facilitating the reading sessions. She had a trainee teacher who was teaching her Year 9 class. Although the reading lessons are timetabled in a protected 'reading' time slot within the school timetable, it was challenging to consistently read the excerpts in the timetabled slot due to time demands on the PGCE timetable.

Findings and Discussion

"The best teachers of literature are those for whom reading is important in their own lives, and who read more than the texts they teach. Readers know how to trust the text so that it stands in its own right and does not need to be something that is used to get somewhere else. Being a reader of literature gives a teacher the confidence to teach powerfully."
(Martin, 2003:16)

Introduction

This section includes a summary of the findings of the research with a focus on providing answers for the three emerging questions from the literature review. A refection of limitations of the research is also provided along with conclusions reached from the research results.

How does creating a baseline for reading for pleasure aid in understanding disadvantaged pupils reading attitudes?

The findings from the preliminary questionnaire for pupils suggest that there is a decline in reading for pleasure after they transition from primary to secondary school even though they still maintain the view that reading is important and valuable to them. Reading in primary school is sometimes criticised as only supporting students to develop high attainments in reading skills but not necessarily to develop reading for pleasure (Whetton, Ruddock and Twist, 2007). It is apparent that there is a clear focus on the mechanics of reading in primary schools rather than promoting reading enjoyment among disadvantaged students (Rose, 2006). As a result of this, as students get older, they begin to read less and are more likely to have negative attitudes towards reading for pleasure (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). This corroborates with findings from students in Bethel High (collaborating sixth form school); students reported reading less now in the Sixth form than when they were in primary school.

One of the factors influencing this change among older students is their perception of the characteristics of a reader. Primary school children associate positive attributes to a reader such as being popular and happy whilst secondary school children although perceiving readers to be

intelligent they also understand readers to be ‘boring’ and subsequently more likely to identify as ‘someone who does not go out much’ than ‘someone who has a lot of friends’ (Clark and Osborne, 2008, p.4). The effect of this is seen in the findings as to when students were asked if they thought they were good readers, only 9 out of 60 at Langston High pupils selected ‘I’m a very good reader’ whilst 32 pupils selected ‘I’m okay”. Here it is not clear if pupils genuinely believe that they are not excellent readers or if they do not want to associate themselves with being perceived as good readers due to the negative association older children place on readers (Clark and Osborne, 2008). Furthermore, it is also possible that students may have their interpretation of what ‘good’ entails and may respond to the question influenced by these ideas.

Another factor influencing this change among older students is parental involvement in primary school in comparison to secondary school (The Oxford Language Report, 2020). This report suggests that there is stronger communication between parents and schools at primary school level through the medium of “shared reading for homework, invitation to schools such as assembly and general regular communications through newsletters” (p.12). In contrast to this, the report notes that the transition into secondary school is often marked with a “step back in parental engagement” (The Oxford Language Report, 2020, p.12), implying that there is stronger communication between parents and primary schools in comparison to secondary school, which aids in supporting children develop their love for reading.

When students were asked about who they saw reading at home, the most common response was younger siblings, with the second most common response being “no one”. Given the important space parents and caregivers occupy in developing their children’s reading for pleasure, it is concerning to see how limited their involvement is (The Oxford Language Report, 2021). The findings further support this as when students were asked ‘“are you encouraged to read at home” 22 pupils out of 60 selected ‘never’ and 18 pupils selected ‘rarely’. Here, the question posed to the pupil did not distinguish what type of ‘reading’ was to be encouraged, such as reading for pleasure and reading for assessment or curriculum purposes. As a result, students were free to interpret ‘reading’ as they wished. Although the term ‘reading’ was undefined in this question, the findings suggest that regardless of their interpretation of ‘reading’, students reported that they were not encouraged to read at home. It is not clear if parents of disadvantaged students do not read at home due to their generally poor educational outcomes (The Oxford Language Report, 2020) or because

of other barriers such as time pressures or simply discomfort with the act of reading (Logan et al., 2019). However, what is clear is that when parents are merely involved in their children's reading habits, they can positively impact their children's reading despite their levels of parental education, socio-economic status or family size (Kirsh et al., 2002). This finding is also similar to that of Clark's (2013) study of 8–16-year-olds, where over 25 per cent of children reported that their parents were indifferent about their reading habits. In this study, free school meal was used as a proxy for low socio-economic status; students from FSM backgrounds were more likely to have parents who did not care about their reading.

The importance of reading

It is clear from the findings that students value reading and perceive it to be important. This is similar findings to that of the Nestle Family Monitor (2003), which reported that 40 per cent of teenagers aged 11-18 agreed that reading is important. Interestingly, when students were asked to expand on the reasons why they valued reading, it was evident from the findings that strong links were made to the improvement of vocabulary, comprehension, knowledge building and aiding in reading fluency; only three students referred to developing your imagination through reading.

The responses students provided suggest that they may have a different perspective of what reading for pleasure constitutes compared to what the literature posits. Students recognised the impact reading for pleasure could have on their vocabulary development (Sullivan and Brown, 2013) as it was one of the common reasons students identified in the preliminary questionnaire. Students also correlated reading with literacy attainment (PIRLS, 2006). From this, students associate the importance of reading with the mechanics of reading (Rose, 2006) rather than the pleasure they might experience from engaging with reading.

Students' perception of choice

The preliminary findings show that students are more likely to read when they are reading a text of their choice and one that is not assigned by schools (Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Clark and Phythian-Sence, 2008). It was clear that the impact of choice empowered students to engage in reading from the findings as 24 pupils said that they read weekly when it is their choice. However, even when the variable of choice was controlled, only 9 pupils noted that they would read daily.

To gauge the impact of choice on the amount of time students read, students were asked "How often do you read when it is YOUR choice (not assigned by school)?". 13 pupils said they would read for less than 15 minutes, 14 pupils said they would read for 15 – 30 minutes, whilst 22 pupils noted that they would only read if it were compulsory. Based on the literature's importance on choice almost as a precursor to developing positive attitude towards reading for pleasure, these findings are concerning. It is relatively easy to assume a link between choice and reading engagement; however, the evidence here implies that even when pupils are given autonomy over the selection of texts, pupils still have a pejorative attitude towards readings.

Deciphering the reasons why students may not want to read for 30 minutes or more even when it is their choice is multifaceted as developing pupils reading for pleasure is multi-stranded. Suppose students' choice has been influenced by personal interest, which Clark and Phythian-Sence (2008) describe as stable and concrete. In that case, it is interesting to observe why this then does not positively influence their reading engagement. One reason which could explain the low numbers of pupils not wanting to read for longer even when it is their choice could be due to the inability to find the right text. As aforementioned, this is a factor that students identified as barriers to their reading enjoyment. Students must be provided with several text suggestions that meet their personal needs by exploring a variety of themes and author systems which helps in knowing how to choose a book (Schraw, Flowerday and Lehman, 2001). This will support in equipping students with the most effective strategies for book selection as interest and choice are two interlinked salient concepts that supports the improvement of students attitudes to reading (Schraw et al., 2001)

How does the curation of fiction excerpts improve pupil's attitude to reading for pleasure?

The findings from this research suggest that pupils enjoyed reading the fiction excerpts, with one student describing it as 'fun'. When students were asked to decipher which part of the intervention they enjoyed, students noted the impact of exposure to different characters and themes. One student remarked that "you get to explore new stories and characters. It is something different", whilst another noted that they liked "the character exploration". The student's comment here corroborates with ideas expressed by Oatley (2019) that reading for pleasure provides pupils with the opportunity to explore characters that they may not otherwise encounter. Furthermore, through exploring "new stories", pupils are introduced to new worlds and situations (Clark and Rumbold, 2006), which help develop their love of literature. It is also possible that by exploring "new stories and characters" which may be different to that of their own, they gain "a more subtle awareness of human behaviour" (Benton & Fox, 1985, p. 15) which propels them in understanding other people, new cultures and perspectives (Nestle Family Monitor, 2003).

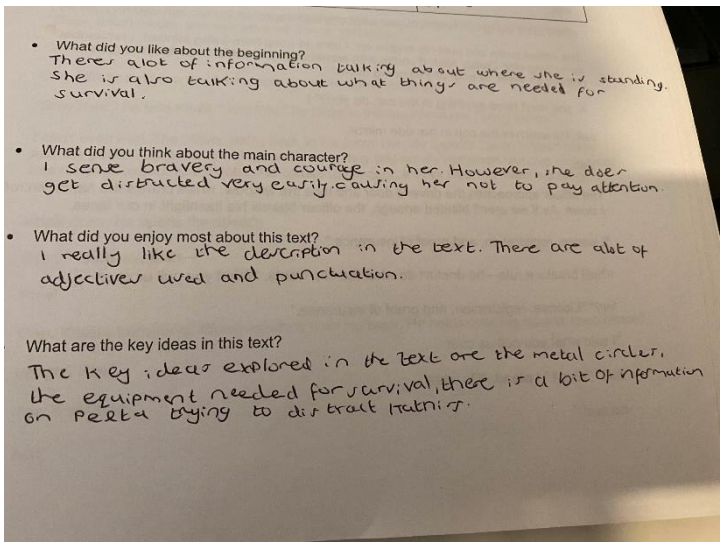
Reading excerpts

The literature advocates for reading whole books in promoting reading enjoyment (Burns and Myhill, 2004); however, in this research, pupils explored fictional excerpts. As aforementioned, the intervention was influenced by the key finding that pupils struggled to 'find the right book'. Against what the literature posits, the data shows that pupils enjoyed exploring the excerpts as they recognised the inclusion of various texts as positive for their love of reading. A student reflected that "I read extracts that I wouldn't normally read", and another noted that "I wouldn't normally read those genres". Here, it is apparent that the framework devised to guide the curation of the excerpts has been effective. Students enjoyed expanding their knowledge of literature through texts that were new to them and those that explored unfamiliar genres.

The criticism for using excerpts to develop pupils reading for pleasure is that they are normally subjected to textual analysis, which reduces the time that students get to spend exploring the texts (Lockwood, 2008). Perhaps, one of the reasons which enhanced the enjoyment of the texts was that pupils did not have to engage in literary analysis - a decision influenced by Duncan (2010) who warns against post-reading activities which stifle reading enjoyment. Furthermore, by eliminating the task of textual analysis, students can move away from curriculum objectives which can be skills

focused to the detriment of developing positive reading attitudes (Woods, 2001). This helps students make a clear distinction between reading for pleasure and reading for assessment or curriculum purposes. Instead of textual analysis, students were required to respond to non-comprehension open-ended questions about each excerpt either individually or in groups and engage in discussion. Having said this, whilst reviewing students' responses in their reading for pleasure excerpts, it was evident that students struggled to divorce the idea of textual analysis from simply commenting on their ideas concluded from the excerpt. For instance, when students were asked, 'what did you enjoy most about the text', students included language feature terminology. An example is below:

Figure 2: Responses from reading for pleasure excerpts



It is unclear if language features such as "punctuation" and "adjectives" is what students genuinely enjoyed about the text they explored or if it is the response, they perceive they are expected to write.

The impact of the non-comprehension and textual analysis questions were unclear on students' reading for pleasure. Some students seemed conflicted with their experience of responding to open-ended questions instead of questions that focus on textual analysis. A student reflected that:

"I liked it and I also did not like it because it made it so I could read freely and imagine but it might have also meant that I did not read closely and could have missed out on some important detail"

Here it is clear that students enjoyed the impact of not responding to textual analysis as it allowed them to enjoy the text without the pressure of answering comprehension-like questions (Holden,

2004). However, it is also apparent that without questions that promote comprehension, students felt somewhat misguided and would not gain an in-depth understanding of the key ideas in the text. This is further exemplified in another student's remarks who was concerned that they "didn't have any questions to respond to like about the extract. For example, what did the main character have to do to survive?" It could be probable that as students are used to such questions after reading in their normal English lessons, there is an expectation that the intervention should also adhere to the same format and principles. Students' comments here suggest that perhaps not all students valued this part of the fiction reading booklet. Despite students concerns, it is possible that without explicit comprehension questions, solely engaging in reading for pleasure improves comprehension (Cox & Guthrie, 2001). Other students also felt that the absence of focus comprehension questions supported expressing their ideas about the excerpt. A student reflected that although the post-reading questions were "vague" in nature, it "influenced my reading experience because it was easier for me to talk about other things other than something specified". This student's comment encapsulates some of the key features of reading for pleasure, where students are allowed to express their thoughts and feelings about what they have read (Duncan, 2010). Some students relished the opportunity of discussion without any pressure of providing a correct or incorrect answer; "it made us give feedback and understand the text as opposed to just recalling what happened", remarked a student. Recalling or regurgitating information from a text does not necessarily suggest that students have engaged meaningfully with reading as described by this student; there is a real need for students to discuss their ideas. Through this, students can connect with texts and their ideas in a meaningful way (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). Some students could not comment on the effect this part of the intervention had on their reading enjoyment as some students responded "I don't know" when asked about their experience of the post-reading questions. Talking about reading is complex (Clark and Rumbold, 2006), as such follow-up interviews with students who struggled to comment on the effect of this part of the literature might provide some valuable insight.

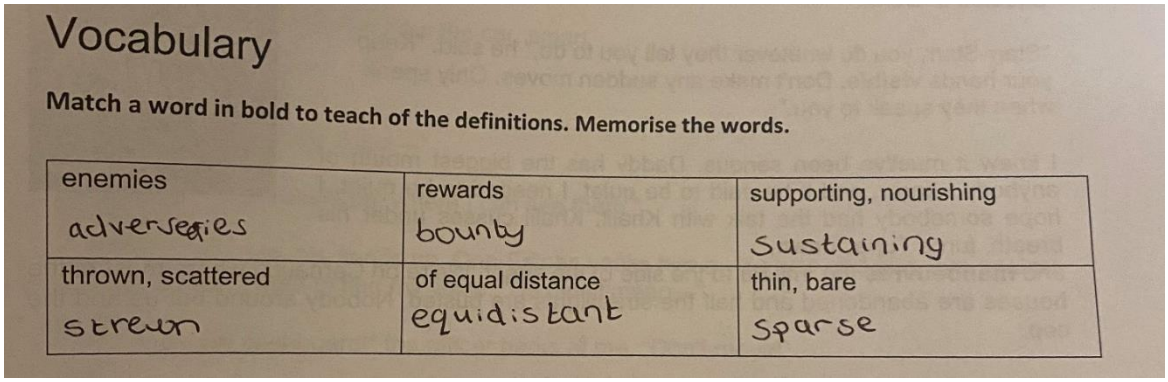
The findings suggest that students enjoyed the freedom the excerpts afforded them. In a typical library lesson, students would either read a whole book individually or as a class; students could be under pressure and burdened to finish reading the whole book before moving on to another text. These ideas are captured in a student's comment who reflected that, "it was better than focusing on one boring extract" in relation to the reading excerpts. The literature explains that choice is important when developing students reading for pleasure habits (Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Wigfield et al., 2008; Gambrell et al., 1996). However, in the design of this research, the choice

was controlled in that pupils could not choose their texts. To reduce this, it was important that there was variety within the excerpts and guided by a framework that promoted a love of literature. The impact of this is evident in the findings as a student noted that "all the extracts are very unique in their own way". This is a pertinent comment as it is paramount that students do not feel that they are not engaging in 'real reading' as they are not reading whole books during the intervention, which is deemed as best practice when developing children's love of reading (Burns and Myhill, 2004). Although some students enjoyed the 'uniqueness of the excerpts, other students felt that some of the excerpts were 'boring' and, as a result, did not interest them. Other students also commented that they generally find reading boring. Students' assertion here corroborates with Clark, Torsi and Strong (2005) findings; they reported a small minority believed that reading was boring in their study. Likewise, in Nestle Family Monitor (2003) study, it was reported that older secondary students similar to the sample of this research were more likely to find reading boring.

The Impact of Vocabulary in reading excerpts

One of the factors that students identified as making the excerpts 'boring' and challenging was the inclusion of challenging vocabulary. Some students felt that "the booklet had a lot of hard vocabulary". This is an interesting finding given the important link Sullivan and Brown (2015) make between reading for pleasure and vocabulary. As those from this research's sample size, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have a vocabulary deficit than their advantaged counterparts; Bradely et al., (2001) reported in their longitudinal study that 40 per cent of parents from low-income families never read to their children. This is relevant to both schools, Langston and Bethel High, as the schools are situated in socially deprived areas, with Langston High located in one of the poorest boroughs in the UK. Thus, to help mitigate the challenge students may encounter in the reading excerpts, I incorporated a vocabulary activity that aimed to help students access the ideas in each excerpt. Students were required to use the information in the text to deduce the meanings of challenging vocabulary.

Figure 3: Vocabulary Activity from reading excerpts



Vocabulary

Match a word in bold to teach of the definitions. Memorise the words.

enemies adversaries	rewards bounty	supporting, nourishing sustaining
thrown, scattered strewn	of equal distance equidistant	thin, bare sparse

Students found this aspect of the booklet beneficial as one student noted, "it helped me develop my vocabulary", whilst another student commented:

"The new discovery of complex words helps me expand on the interesting points that help expand and embrace stories to their full capacity of influence".

This begins to show the interplay between vocabulary and reading for pleasure. When students were supported with vocabulary, this afforded them greater access to key ideas in the excerpts. This finding also suggests that without supporting students in this area of reading for pleasure, they will be less engaged with the text, subsequently affecting their reading enjoyment. The evidence corroborates with other thoughts expressed by students that the selected vocabulary from each excerpt helped them gain an awareness of words to expect from each genre.

How does improving teachers' knowledge of children's literature and their reading practice impact disadvantaged pupils' attitude to reading for pleasure?

As the literature posits, teachers are instrumental in developing and motivating students' positive attitudes towards reading for pleasure. However, the teachers' preliminary questionnaire findings indicated that teachers feel limited and unequipped in supporting their students with reading. None of the teacher participants selected four or five on the ordinal scale when asked, 'how confident is your knowledge of children's literature?'. The same pattern of findings was evident when teachers were asked to rate their knowledge of young people's attitude to reading in their classes on an

ordinal scale; most teachers selected two on the scale, with the highest being five. Similar findings of teachers feeling unprepared with adequate knowledge of children's literature and reading habits are also reported in a large-scale study with 1200 participants across 11 UK boroughs (Cremin et al. (2008). These results recognise that teachers need to be supported to develop this area of their practice. The lack of confidence teachers felt also influenced their teaching practice of not encouraging formal or informal book talk, which is central in reading for pleasure (Cremin, 2019). This translated into 65 per cent of teachers responding that they 'sometimes' talk to their students about the books they are reading, suggesting that reading for pleasure is an area where teachers may not feel comfortable navigating (Cox and Schaetzel, 2001; Cremin et al., 2008). It could also be plausible that most teachers responded with 'sometimes' as they are not readers themselves (Bintz, 1997). This can be exemplified through a teacher's remark, 'I can't speak for the teachers, but I can speak for myself and say I do not talk about reading with my students". This is an interesting remark as teachers are recognised as important social agents in developing pupils' attitudes towards reading (Commeryas et al., 2003). Furthermore, the word "sometimes" can denote a neutral response which teachers may feel protects them from being judged compared to if they selected 'no', albeit the questionnaire was anonymous.

Suppose teachers are to improve their confidence in discussing texts with students, they need to be engaged readers (Wray et al., 1999). The remark by the teacher further reinforces the need for teachers to be supported in "discovering, or rediscovering, the passionate reader and writer within" (Kirby, 2002, p.142). However, in supporting teachers to develop their reader identities, they must be encouraged to explore their past reading experiences with pupils even if they are negative; this begins a dialogue of shared experiences between students and teachers (Daisey, 2009).

Reading and the curriculum

Although the findings above point to teachers having limited knowledge of children's text, one key element teachers identified as a barrier to developing this area of their practice was competing time pressures, making reading and discussing texts with their students less feasible. A teacher remarked," when it comes to KS4, it is even more difficult to have conversations or lessons around reading when the content of what needs to be covered for GCSE is so heavy". Another teacher noted that "there is little room to discuss our favourite texts of the curriculum." These sentiments expressed by teachers corroborates with ideas that knowledge and skills dominate curriculum planning and as such supporting pupils to develop a love of literature may not be a priority in

schools (Marshall, 2001; Woods, 2001). This is a notion also explored by Cremin et al. (2008), who argue that the constant pressures of tests and assessments may stifle the development of reading enjoyment. Having said this, it is also plausible for the curriculum and reading for pleasure to coexist with careful planning (Sumara, 1996, cited in Daisey, 2009). An effective curriculum promotes reading enjoyment by providing protected time for young people and their teachers to expand their reading repertoire (Greenleaf et al., 2002).

The findings also postulate that teachers value reading aloud as part of their practice; however, they are not reserved for supporting reading for pleasure. When teachers were asked for reasons supporting this practice, most teachers opted for the following: providing a role model for expressive reading, support for comprehension and building understanding of context and inference. Interestingly, the least common reasons for reading aloud teachers were enjoyment of texts and the widening of students' vocabulary. Here, although reading aloud supports the development of reading for pleasure (Department for Education, 2012; Gamble, 2013; Lockwood, 2008), teachers' rationale for this practice is not directly underpinned for reading enjoyment but rather for assessment purposes.

Teacher Reading for Pleasure CPD

As mentioned in the methodology, teachers participated in a reading for pleasure CPD in conjunction with UKLA and the Open University (Cremin, 2014). Key findings from the preliminary questionnaire underpinned this. All teachers observed that they would like to improve their knowledge of children's literature and gain a deeper insight into children's reading habits.

The post CPD sessions evaluation findings indicate that teachers found the reading for pleasure CPD was effective in supporting them to review their pedagogical knowledge on reading for pleasure. All teachers selected either "agree or strongly agree" to the statement "I was able to review my knowledge on children's literature". When teachers are supported to reflect on their knowledge of children's literature, they are then able to gain valuable insights into how to motivate their young readers (Cremin et al., 2008; Cremin, 2019). Teachers reflected on their knowledge of children's literature with one teacher observing, 'interesting to see how little I knew about YA fiction and that it's actually common amongst many teachers'. Other teachers also expressed this sentiment; albeit it is not unusual for teachers to feel limited in this area of their practice due to time pressures, which may restrict their personal reading time (Arts Council England, 2003). However, in Daisey's (2009)

study of trainee teachers, it was noted that despite external factors, it was important that teachers were motivated in developing their reading practice; one teacher remarked "It all depends on the teachers' commitment to find readings that grasp the students' attention" (p.684). However, the findings in the preliminary questionnaire as aforementioned suggest that teachers felt that until time pressure is alleviated, it will be challenging for teachers to develop into what Cox and Schaetzel (2007) term as 'reading teachers" (p.302). The concerns of the place of reading for pleasure occupies in an ever-demanding contention of assessment and curriculum is captured with the following:

"Hey, excuse me, but I do have a textbook to get through. I have a curriculum to cover. It is mandated by the district, and I can barely cram it into the school year as it is. My kids have to take a departmental exam and a state assessment. If they don't do well, both the school and I could be in trouble. And even if I wanted to, where would I find the time to bring all these other readings and activities?" (Daniels and Zemelman, 2004: p.13)

The findings also reveal that teachers gained an insight into their pupils' reading habits through the CPD. Teachers must understand and be aware of their students reading habits (Cremin et al., 2008). A teacher noted that "this focused approached allowed me to distinguish which students need further support and the best way in which to intervene". This reflective comment was insightful as it suggests that teachers had started to think about ways to support their students in their reading development. In addition to this, it was also clear that teachers had begun to evaluate different reading approaches to support their young readers. This suggests that teachers recognise their position as important social agents in improving students' reading experience (Ramakresinin, 2008). In gaining an insight into their pupils' reading habits, one teacher recognised the need to "speak with pupils on a one-to-one basis about their reading experience" and "continue reading YA [young adult] fiction to support students' selection of books". Here, it is clear that teachers understand the need to develop their knowledge of children's fiction to effectively recommend texts to their students (Cremin et al., 2008: Cremin et al., 2014; Daisey, 2010). However, the need to continue reading "YA fiction" solely for the purpose of text recommendation for pupils is perhaps reductive and does not aid teachers in becoming lifelong readers. Martin (2003) explains that "the best teachers of literature are those for whom reading is important in their own lives" (p.16). Here it is clear that for teachers to support their students, they need to develop their own reading identity by being engaged readers (Dreher, 2003) and raising the reading profile in their lives. By doing this,

reading for teachers does not become "something that is used to get somewhere else" (Martin, 2003:16) but rather utilised to support teachers into becoming readers.

Limitations and Conclusion

"If I could give you just one gift, leave just one legacy in this world, it would be to infuse in you an absolute passion for the written word… It's a gift to yourself, and to your future" (Burke, 1999, p.18)

The Limitations of the Research Project

Whilst the evidence collated provides valuable insight into how disadvantaged pupils might be supported in improving their attitudes towards reading; it is important to explore factors that could have improved the effectiveness of this research.

Curated Fiction Excerpts

Firstly, pupils exploring the reading for pleasure excerpts with their teachers occurred in their English classrooms. This might have compromised the impact of the fiction excerpts on students as they may not associate reading for pleasure with their English classrooms. The type of reading that usually occurs in English classrooms at Langston High emphasises textual analysis, which Burns and Myhill (2004) explains can stifle the development of a positive attitude towards reading. Perhaps a solution would have been to facilitate the reading intervention in the school library as it is an environment for students to associate with reading. For instance, Lockwood (2008) advocates for the use of libraries as it encourages positive attitudes towards reading by Gamble (2013) concurred this, who argues that the library is the most essential spaces for reading in a school. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the intervention could not have taken place in the school library as it was reserved for other purposes during the academic year. Additionally, although the reading excerpts featured different genres, all the texts were in the same format. It would be effective to include various types of texts such as comics, graphic novels and manga.

Secondly, COVID-19 also impacted the participation of students during the intervention, which resulted in absences. Although the intervention was planned to mitigate absences, students did not have the holistic experience of exploring all 12 fiction excerpts, which impacted the intervention's outcome. Furthermore, due to national lockdowns earlier in the year, due to COVID-19 all learning occurred remotely. However, due to a lack of laptop access, not all students could participate in remote learning. As a result, the intervention could not be facilitated online and was resumed with the opening of schools. The impact of the lockdowns also affected Bethel High; the intervention occurred in the summer term as opposed to the spring term; only four students out of the original 14 participated. Questionnaire has also provided key insights into students' reading for pleasure habits. However, it would have been more effective to interview students to gain further insights into their responses. Due to COVID restriction, students were unable to stay behind after school, so conducting interviews was impossible.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore ways to improve the reading attitudes of disadvantaged students by offering students from both Langston High and Bethel High the opportunity to explore 12 reading excerpts from authors with diverse backgrounds underpinned by different themes and genres.

At the conclusion of this research, I shared my findings with my colleagues, notably the librarian. It was essential to have an open dialogue concerning how best to support students in selecting books that were underpinned by their interests. As a result, we will launch fortnightly theme workshops focused on exploring different genres for students; the workshops will take place in the school library as the reading environment in this study was considered a limitation in improving students reading habits. Importance is given to library usage, not just for the themed workshop but for our usual library lessons. This decision is underpinned by the fact that the library is one of the important spaces for reading enjoyment in a school (Gamble, 2013). The workshops will also build on the impact of the reading for pleasure booklets and help students navigate book selection guided by their choice.

The research also confirmed the findings reported in the literature such as (Cremin et al.,2008; Cox and Schaetzel, 2007) that teachers are important social agents in improving students' attitudes towards reading for pleasure. I intend to continue facilitating the reading for pleasure CPD in conjunction with the Open University and UKLA; the CPD sessions will be available to all staff as all teachers must be given the opportunity to develop their reading for pleasure as this better positions them to support students in developing a love of literature.

Recommendations for future studies

1. Investigate the effect of parental attitudes on reading habits in socially deprived secondary schools.
2. Explore effective approaches to support trainee teachers and teachers to consistently reflect and develop their knowledge of children' literature
3. How can schools support students to foster positive reader identities?
4. How can schools develop reading environment to promote reading for pleasure?

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Appendices

Appendix 1

CUREC Form

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (CUREC)

Form CUREC 1A Checklist for the Social Sciences and Humanities

The University of Oxford places a high value on the knowledge, expertise, and integrity of its members and their ability to conduct research to high standards of scholarship and ethics. The research ethics clearance procedures have been established to ensure the University is meeting its obligations as a responsible institution. They start from the presumption that all members of the University take their responsibilities and obligations seriously and will ensure that their research involving human participants is conducted according to the established principles and good practice in their fields and in accordance, where appropriate, with legal requirements. Since the requirements of research ethics review will vary from field to field and from project to project, the University accepts that different guidelines and procedures will be appropriate.

- Please check **"Where and how to apply for ethical review"** and the **CUREC flowchart** first to see if you need ethics approval.
- Please complete this form using a word processor and email it, together with your supporting documents, to your **Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC)** (**if applicable**). If you don't have a DREC please email this form to **ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk** using your official **ox.ac.uk email** address. **Only type-written, emailed applications will be accepted.**

SECTION A: Filter for CUREC 2 application

This section determines whether your study raises more complex issues requiring the completion of a full application for ethical review, known as the CUREC 2 application. **(Please mark 'X' in the Yes/No column.)**

1.	Are research participants classed as **people whose ability to give free and informed consent is in question**? (This may include under 18s (although see "competent youths"), prisoners, or adults "at risk".) Your attention is drawn to the University's **Safeguarding Code of Practice** and its implications for researchers involving children or adults at risk. This includes the need for the work to be risk assessed and for researchers to undertake related training. (**Note**: If any of your participants are aged 16 or under, answer 'Yes' here **and** also answer question 5 below.)	Yes ☒	No ☐
2.	By taking part in the research, will participants be at risk of criminal prosecution (e.g. by providing information on drug abuse or child abuse)?	Yes ☐	No ☒
3.	Does the research involve the **deception** of participants?	Yes ☐	No ☒
4.	Does your research raise issues relevant to the **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (the Prevent duty)**, which seeks to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism? Please see advice on this on our **Best Practice Guidance web page**.	Yes ☐	No ☒

If you answered 'No' to all the questions above, go to **Section B**. If you answered 'Yes' to any question above, continue to question 5 below.

5.	Is your project covered by a CUREC Approved Procedure (formerly known as "CUREC Protocols")?	Yes ☒	No ☐
	If yes, give the specific Approved Procedure number(s):		

If you answered '**Yes**' to **ANY** of questions **1-4**, **and** answered '**No**' to question **5**, **stop completing this checklist and do not submit it for ethical review**. Instead, complete the CUREC 2 application form from the CUREC website, then submit that for ethical review.
If you answered '**Yes**' to ANY of questions 1-3, **and** answered '**Yes**' to question 5, go on to **Section B**.

SECTION B: Contact details and project description	
Contact details:	
1. **Principal investigator** OR supervisor (if student research) (give title and full name)	[redacted]
2. Name of student (if student research)	[redacted]
3. Degree programme (if student research), e.g. BA, BSc, MSc, MPhil, DPhil	MSc Learning and Teaching
4. Department or Institute name	Department of Education
5. Address for correspondence (if different from above)	Department of Education 15 Norham Gardens Oxford OX2 6PY
6. University (**not** private) e-mail address and telephone number	[redacted]
7. Name and status of others taking part in the project (e.g. third year undergraduate; postdoctoral research assistant)	N/A

Project description:	
8. Title of research project	Reading *for* Pleasure Matter: Improving reading attitudes of disadvantage pupils
9. List of location(s) where project will be conducted	[redacted]
10. If your research involves overseas fieldwork or travel and your department requires a travel risk assessment, will you have completed and returned a risk assessment form beforehand? (This must be approved by your department before you travel. If you are travelling overseas, you are strongly advised to take out University travel insurance.) Please also address any physical or psychological risks for Oxford researchers and local fieldworkers in Section 16 below and discuss with your safety officer.	Yes ☐ No ☐ Not required in this instance ☒
11. Anticipated duration of overall research project	6 months
12.a) Anticipated start and end dates of the part of the research project involving human participants and/or personal data	From: (10/01/21) To: (20/06/21) **Note**: You will need ethics approval **before** you start your research. CUREC 1As may take up to 30 days to

	process. **Retrospective ethics approval cannot be granted.**
12. b) In the case of international or collaborative research, will you submit or have you submitted this project for ethical review or consideration elsewhere (e.g. collaborator's/local ethics committee, or other local approval)?	Yes ☐ No ☒ If 'Yes', please attach ethics or other approvals and give more details below. If 'No', please explain your reasons below. Please also refer to the Best Practice Guidance on Ethical Review of social-sciences based research conducted outside the UK (BPG 16), which includes an Ethics Issues Checklist for International Research (Appendix A)
Please supply further details in response to question 12b here	
13. **External** organisation funding the research (if applicable)	N/A

14. a) Title and brief description of research (about 150 words) in lay language.
When describing the research, include your methodology, how you are applying professional guidelines, and the use to which results/data will be put. **Please also declare any conflicts of interest here.**

Reading *for* Pleasure Matter: Improving reading attitudes of disadvantage pupils

My research will explore ways of improving disadvantaged students' reading attitudes by introducing them to a range of texts in different genres by various authors. The research will aim to develop teachers' pedagogical knowledge of children's reading habits and children's literature. The focus of the project will be Year 9 and a re-sit English Language class in a Sixth Form.

Methodology

I will curate reading excerpts of fiction by different authors

The reading extracts will have a vocabulary focus; students will be encouraged to use context to deduce the meaning of the word.

Teachers will facilitate the intervention; intervention will take place during student's normal English lessons.

Students will complete a pre-intervention questionnaire to explore their reading habits and attitudes to reading

Staff will complete a questionnaire to review their knowledge on students reading habits, attitudes to reading and review their own pedagogical knowledge pre-intervention

Teachers taking part in the study will choose one student from their class to deepen their understanding of students reading habits.

Collaboration is an integral part of this research. teachers taking part will also participate in 5 sessions of reading for pleasure CPD. The purpose of this is to provide a protected space for teachers to review and improve pedagogical knowledge on children's reading and reading for pleasure. CPD sessions will take place online.

During the CPD sessions, teachers will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the progress of the intervention. Their feedback will be used to review the intervention; comments and recommendations discussed during this time will be taken to amend the intervention if needed.

To review the effect of the intervention, students and staff will complete a questionnaire post intervention

Staff and chosen students by teachers will be interviewed mid and post intervention

Ethical guidelines considered

All audio recordings will be stored on a password protected USB.

Pseudonyms will be used for students, staff and schools participating in the study.

I will explain the aims of the study to both teachers and students to ensure that they understand what is involved in the study. I will also inform them on why their participation is important and how data will be shared.

In line with BERA (British Ethical Research Association) guidelines, participant consent will be obtained at the start of the study

I will also communicate to both students and staff that for any reason and at any time, if they wish to withdraw their consent, they may do so.

There are no conflicts of interest.

14.b) Description of participants and how you will **obtain informed consent** to take part in the research (about 200 words in total)

1. Description of participants **and** your criteria for inclusion/exclusion

   Four teachers are participating in the research: three Secondary English teachers (including me) and an English teacher from a local Sixth Form College.

   The study will focus on Year 9 students as they are taught the GCSE curriculum

   The Sixth Form students will be ones that are re-sitting GCSE English language exam

   Four students will be interviewed in total. Students will be selected based on their responses in the pre-intervention questionnaire.

2. Your method(s) of recruitment

   All the Year 9 lessons and the GCSE English language resit classes will have the reading excerpts that I will curate.

   The intervention will take part in normal classroom lessons and be embedded in normal classroom practice.

   Student Interviews

   Students will be chosen to take part in interviews, based on their pre-intervention response.

3. Your processes for obtaining consent from participants

I will give the students information on the research and let them know that they are not obliged to give interviews.

I will reiterate the terms of the research in clear points and allow the students to choose if they agree with all areas of the terms. In this way, I will gain explicit consent.

I will obtain written consent from the head teacher who will be acting in 'loco parentis'.

Before commencing the study, I will share the aims of the study with teachers in a pre-project meeting. I will also provide a consent form for teachers to sign and explain that are free to withdraw from the study at any point they wish.

Please **attach separate supporting documents (in Word)** if appropriate for your research (English language versions only). Tick those you are submitting below. If appropriate supporting documents are not submitted, you will be asked to provide these separately, which may delay the ethical review process.

- ☐ Recruitment and advertisement material (e.g. a poster, social media recruitment text, or brief invitation letter/ email)
- ☐ Information for participants to read (or hear) before they agree to take part (e.g. written information or, if applicable, an outline oral information script).
- ☒ A document to record informed consent. Templates for written consent forms and/or oral information scripts (in case of an oral consent process) are available from the CUREC website
- ☒ Questions to be asked of participants (e.g. interview questions, or a preliminary scope of questions, or a sample questionnaire)
- ☐ (If relevant) debriefing document after participants have taken part
- ☐ If you feel the above approaches are not appropriate for your study, provide details on how you will obtain consent from participants
- ☐ Please complete section 15 if you cannot obtain informed consent

Please add any further details here.

15. If you cannot obtain informed consent from participants according to CUREC guidelines and good practice in your discipline, please give a brief explanation and justification of this decision below.

16. What are the ethical issues connected with your research and what steps have you taken to address them? **Please do not answer 'none'.** We need to see evidence that you have identified potential ethical issues with respect to your research and have taken steps to address them. If applicable, please address:

- Participant burdens and/or risks

I will be occupying a dual role during the research: teacher, and researcher. Issues such as confidentiality can arise from this. Thus, it is important that I make my research role very explicit to teachers.

Due to power dynamics, students and teachers may feel obliged to participate in interviews and research. Thus, I will verbally discuss and include in the consent form that teachers are not obliged to participate or continue in the project through interviews or taking part in Reading for Pleasure CPD.

During the student interviews, I will give students the option to explain their answers and encourage them to respond as honestly as possible. The students will have an option to respond to the questions verbally or in written format. Through mini- group interviews students may feel more comfortable to respond to the questions honestly as they have their peers around them hence may feel more comfortable to speak as honestly as possible.

Students may feel obliged to participate in interviews to please me, as their teacher. I will remind students that they are able to opt out of interviewing at any stage of the process.

- Your own physical and psychological safety as a researcher or of fieldworkers you may employ (see the University's and Social Science Division's Safety in Fieldwork guidance)

  As I am working with a class that I already teach, and the project is taking place in the normal setting of the classroom-there are less likely to be any safety issues.

  The interviews will also take place in the classroom in small groups (socially distanced).

  I will ensure that interviews take place in classroom with more than one student present.

  My school promotes an open-door policy that will be adhered to.

- Data protection/ confidentiality (also see Section 18).

  All types of information will be stored safely, and password protected. Any interviews etc. will be safely disposed when no longer required. All information in digital or hard copy format will be kept confidential and anonymity will be kept in the written part of the research.

  If a student discloses any safeguarding information during an interview, I will make them aware that I have to share this information with the school safeguarding leads.

  Hard copy information will be kept in a locked cabinet.

For more guidance on ethical issues, please see
http://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources

Discuss other ethical issues here		
17. Will your research involve discussing sensitive issues? This could be information relating to race or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, physical/mental health, trade union membership, sexual life or criminal activities.	Yes ☐	No ☒
If you answered 'Yes', make sure you include some supporting information (as directed in Section 14 b.) above, showing the range of questions covering these issues.		

18. Management and handling of personal and other research data	
All information provided by participants is considered **research data** for the purpose of this form. Any research data from which participants can be identified is known as **personal data**; any personal data which is sensitive is considered **special category data**. Management of personal data, either directly or via a third party, must comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, as set out in the University's Guidance on Data Protection and Research. In answering the questions below, please also consider the points raised in the Data Protection Checklist and whether, for higher-risk data processing, a separate Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) may also be required for the research. Advice on research data management and security is available from Research Data Oxford and your local IT department. Advice on data protection is available from information.compliance@admin.ox.ac.uk. a.) **Please mark 'X' against the data you will collect for your research**	
Consent records (written consent forms, audio-recorded consent, assent forms (for research involving minors) including participant name	☒
Online consent (may be anonymous)	☐
Opt-out forms	☒
Contact details for research purposes only (destroyed when no longer needed for this research)	☐
Contact details kept for future studies	☐
Audio recordings (preferably using PIN-protected audio recorder and stored on device's hard drive)	☒

Video recordings	☐
Transcript of audio/video recordings	☒
Photographs	☐
Task results (e.g. paper/online tasks, diary completion)	☐
Questionnaire answers	☒
Field notes	☐
Other (please specify below)	☐

b.) For **each** of the types of data selected above, state how this will be physically transferred from where it is collected to a local secure storage site (and backed up as necessary). This includes paper records and data captured electronically.

All information will be kept in a secure password protected folder on my password protected laptop.

c.) How and where will **each type of data** be stored during the research (until the end of all participant involvement)? Describe the arrangements for ensuring confidentiality, i.e. location of storage (e.g. Nexus 365 OneDrive for Business, SharePoint), security arrangements and de-identification of such data. Do not store unencrypted data in freely available cloud services or unprotected USB drives.

On a password protected USB

d.) Will you use a unique participant number on research data instead of a participant name?

If **yes,** state whether or not you will retain a list of participant names against numbers (i.e. pseudonymisation via a linkage list). Where will the list be stored, and when will it be destroyed?

Yes - the list will be kept in a password protected file or USB drive on my laptop and safely deleted when no longer required and store hard copies in a locked cabinet.

e.) Who will have access to the research data?

My supervisor

f.) If research data is to be shared with another organisation, how will it be transferred / disclosed securely?

N/A

g.) When and how will identifiable data (including audio/video recordings & photos) be destroyed or deleted?

Note: Records of consent should be retained for a **minimum of three years after publication or public release**. Some funders may require longer periods (see http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies). If you wish to retain contact details in order to re-approach participants about future studies, you must detail this in information provided to them and obtain specific consent for this.

Consent forms will be kept safe on a password protected laptop. Hard copies of the research will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

h.) Please confirm that you will store **other research data** safely for at least 3 years after final publication or public release and adhere to any additional research funder policies. For more information about the University policies, please see the University's web pages on research data management.	Yes ☒	No ☐

If '**Yes**', please give details of who will store the data and on storage format, location and security. Note that open science is encouraged. If '**No**', please provide further details below.		
I will store the data on a password protected folder on my laptop.		
i.) Does your research involve the use of secondary (i.e. previously collected) data? Common sources of secondary data include censuses, information collected by government departments, organisational records and data that was originally collected for other research purposes (If "**No**", please go to section **19**.)	Yes ☐	No ☒
j.) Do you have data access agreements for the use of this secondary data? (If so, please attach these.)	Yes ☐	No ☐
k.) Is your use of this secondary data compatible with what data subjects/participants agreed that their data should be used for?	Yes ☐	No ☐
l.) Could this data be linked back to an individual or individuals? If yes, address how securely any personally identifiable data will be transferred to you, and where and for how long it will be stored during or after the research. Who will have access to it?	Yes ☐	No ☐
19. Publication and dissemination of research data		
How will you disseminate and feedback project outcomes at the end of the research?	The research will be written up as part of my Msc Learning and Teaching dissertation I will also share findings with my head teacher, my line manager, the learning resource manager, and colleagues at my school as part of conitnual CPD.	

SECTION C: Methods and procedures to be used	
Method used: Please ensure you have addressed any potential ethical issues related to these methods in Section 14 and in your Participant Information Sheet	**Please mark 'X'**
1. Analysis of existing records	☐
2. Snowball sampling (recruiting through contacts of existing participants)	☐
3. Use of casual or local workers e.g. interpreters	☐
4. Participant observation	☐
5. Covert observation	☐
6. Observation of specific organisational practices	☐
7. Participant completes questionnaire in hard copy	☒
8. Participant completes online questionnaire or other online task	☐
9. Using social media	☐
10. Participant performs paper and pencil task	☒
11. Participant performs verbal or aural task (e.g. for linguistic study)	☒
12. Focus group	☒
13. Interview	☒
14. Audio recording of participant (you will generally need specific consent from participants for this)	☒
15. Video recording of participant (you will generally need specific consent from participants for this)	☐
16. Photography of participant (you will generally need specific consent from participants for this)	☐
17. Others (please specify below)	☐

SECTION D: Professional guidelines and training		
1. In this section, please mark 'X' against at least one of the following professional guidelines you aim to adhere to. You should use the principles listed in your chosen guideline(s) in conducting your own research. **Note**: this is not an exhaustive list.		**Please mark 'X'**
Research specialism/ methodology	**Association and guidance document**	
Anthropology	Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth	☐
Computer Sciences	ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct	☐
Criminology	http://www.britsoccrim.org/ethics/	☐
Education	British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research	☒
Geography	Association of American Geographers Statement on Professional Ethics	☐
History	Oral History Society of the UK Ethical Guidelines	☐
Internet-based Research	British Psychological Society: Conducting Research on the Internet Association of Internet Researchers Ethics Guide ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) Also see our Best Practice Guidance on internet-based research	☐
Law (Socio-Legal)	Socio-Legal Studies Association: Statement of Principles of Ethical Research	☐
Management	Academy of Management's Professional Code of Ethics	☐
Political Science	American Political Science Association (APSA) Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science	☐
Politics	Political Studies Association. Guidelines for Good Professional Conduct	☐
Psychology	British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct	☐
Social Research	Social Research Association: Ethical Guidelines	☐
Sociology	The British Sociological Association: Statement of Ethical Practice	☐
Visual Research	ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper: Visual Ethics: Ethical Issues in Visual Research	☐
Other professional guidelines. Please specify the other guidelines used here:		☐
2. Please indicate what training in research ethics (or research methodology) the researchers involved with this study have received, e.g. the title of the course and date completed (online training available at		

http://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/support/training/ethics), or discussions between researchers and supervisors, if applicable.
I will share the research ethics online training with all teachers participating and I will also have a discussion and run a brief training with all those involved.

SECTION E: Signatures or email endorsements (The SSH IDREC Secretariat accepts either option below. If you have a DREC, check which signature option it prefers.)

- **Option 1:** Email confirmations from a University of Oxford email address can be accepted. Separate emails should come from each of the relevant signatories as outlined below, indicating acceptance of the relevant responsibilities. **Pasted images of signatures cannot be accepted.**
- **Option 2:** Handwritten (wet-ink) signatures. Please scan them and the rest of the checklist pages to create a single PDF document and email to us.

Please ensure this checklist is signed by:

For staff research:	For student research:
1. Principal Investigator	1. Principal Investigator (project supervisor)
2. Head of Department (or nominee)	2. Head of Department (or nominee)
	3. Student researcher

1. Principal Investigator signature/supervisor signature (if student research)

I understand my responsibilities as **principal investigator** as outlined in the CUREC glossary and guidance on the CUREC website.

I declare that the answers above accurately describe the research as presently designed, and that a new checklist will be submitted should the research design change in a way which would alter any of the above responses so as to require completion of CUREC 2 (involving full scrutiny by an IDREC). I will inform the relevant IDREC if I cease to be the principal investigator on this project and supply the name and contact details of my successor if appropriate.

Signature (or email endorsement using the above declaration): [redacted]

Print name (block capitals): [redacted] **Date**:18/11/2020

2. Departmental endorsement signature

I have read the research project application named above. On the basis of the information available to me, I:

(i) consider the principal investigator to be aware of her/his ethical responsibilities in regard to this research;
(ii) consider that any ethical issues raised have been satisfactorily resolved or are covered by relevant professional guidelines and/or CUREC approved procedures, and that it is appropriate for the research to proceed (noting the principal investigator's obligation to report should the design of the research change in a way which would alter any of the above responses so as to require completion of a CUREC 2 full application);
(iii) am satisfied that: the proposed project design and scientific methodology is sound; the project has been/will be subject to appropriate **peer review**; and is likely to contribute to existing knowledge and/or to the education and training of the researcher(s) and that it is in the **public interest**.

Signed by Head of Department or nominee *(example nominees for student research include the Director of Graduate Studies/ Director of Undergraduate Studies)*:

Signature (or email endorsement using the above declaration): .....

Print name (block capitals): ..... **Date**: .....

3. Student signature (if student research)

I understand the questions and answers that have been entered above describing the research, and I will ensure that my practice in this research complies with these answers, subject to any modifications made by the principal investigator properly authorised by the CUREC system.

Signature by student (or email endorsement using the above declaration): [redacted]
.....

Print name (block capitals): [redacted] **Date**: 18/11/2020

Appendix 2

List of curated fiction excerpts

Curated Fiction Excerpts

‘The Hunger Games’ by Suzanne Collins

‘The Hate U Give’ by Angie Thomas

‘The Curious Incident of the Dog In the Night-time’ by MarkHaddon

‘The Power’ by Naomi Alderman

‘The Circle’ by Dave Eggers

‘White Teeth’ by Zadie Smith

‘Brooklyn’ by Colm Toibin

‘Life of Pi’ by Yann Martel

‘The Road’ by Cormac McCarthy

‘Catch-22’ by Joseph Heller

‘The Bloody Chamber’ by Angela Carter

‘The Kite Runner’ by Khaled Hosseini

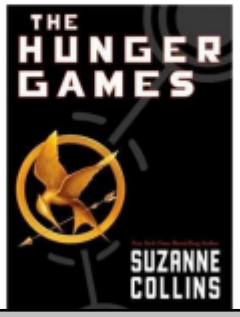
Appendix 3

Curated Fiction Excerpt Sample

Week 1. 'The Hunger Games' by Suzanne Collins

'The Hunger Games' is the first part in the popular trilogy by Suzanne Collins. It is set in a dystopian future, where society has been split up into different districts. Inequality is rife, and the poorer districts revolve around the needs of the selfish rich who live in the Capitol. Each year, the Capitol organises a brutal fight to the death between the districts. Each district must send two Tributes to kill, or be killed. Katniss Everdeen is the chosen tribute from District 12. In this extract, the fight has just begun.

Sixty seconds. That's how long we're required to stand on our metal circles before the sound of a gong releases us. Step off before the minute is up, and land mines blow your legs off. Sixty seconds to take in the ring of tributes all **equidistant** from the Cornucopia, a giant golden horn shaped like a cone with a curved tail, the mouth of which is at least twenty feet high, spilling over with the things that will give us life here in the arena. Food, containers of water, weapons, medicine, garments, fire starters. **Strewn** around the Cornucopia are other supplies, their value decreasing the farther they are from the horn. For instance, only a few steps from my feet lies a three-foot square of plastic. Certainly it could be of some use



The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at 'The Hunger Games' by Suzanne Collins

I hear his instructions in my head. "Just clear out, put as much distance as you can between yourselves and the others, and find a source of water."

But it's tempting, so tempting, when I see the **bounty** waiting there before me. And I know that if I don't get it, someone else will. That the Career Tributes who survive the bloodbath will divide up most of these life-**sustaining** spoils. Something catches my eye. There, resting on a mound of blanket rolls, is a silver sheath of arrows and a bow, already strung, just waiting to be engaged. *That's mine*, I think. *It's meant for me.*

I'm fast. I can sprint faster than any of the girls in our school, although a couple can beat me in distance races. But this forty-yard length, this is what I am built for. I know I can get it, I know I can reach it first, but then the question is how quickly can I get out of there? By the time I've scrambled up the packs and grabbed the weapons, others will have reached the horn, and one or two I might be able to pick off, but say there's a dozen, at that close range, they could take me down with the spears and the clubs. Or their own powerful fists. Still, I won't be the only target. I'm betting many of the other tributes would pass up a smaller girl, even one who scored an eleven in training, to take out their more fierce **adversaries**.

Haymitch has never seen me run. Maybe if he had he'd tell me to go for it. Get the weapon. Since that's the very weapon that might be my salvation. And I only see one bow in that whole pile. I know

the minute must be almost up and will have to decide what my strategy will be and I find myself positioning my feet to run, not away into the surrounding forests but toward the pile, toward the bow.

When suddenly I notice Peeta, he's about five tributes to my right, quite a fair distance, still I can tell he's looking at me and I think he might be shaking his head. But the sun's in my eyes, and while I'm puzzling over it the gong rings out.

And I've missed it! I've missed my chance! Because those extra couple of seconds I've lost by not being ready are enough to change my mind about going in. My feet shuffle for a moment, confused at the direction my brain wants to take and then I lunge forward, scoop up the sheet of plastic and a loaf of bread. The pickings are so small and I'm so angry with Peeta for distracting me that I sprint in twenty yards to retrieve a bright orange backpack that could hold anything because I can't stand leaving with virtually nothing.

Vocabulary

Match a word in bold to teach of the definitions. Memorise the words.

enemies	rewards	supporting, nourishing
thrown, scattered	of equal distance	thin, bare

- What did you like about the beginning?

- What did you think about the main character?

- What did you enjoy most about this text?

- What are the key ideas in this text?

Appendix 4

List of Initial Baseline-Students reading for pleasure habits questions

1. What's your gender?
2. Do you think you're a good reader?
3. Compare your reading experience at Primary school to Secondary School.
4. Do you think reading is important?
5. Do you think reading is important? Why?
6. What do you find difficult about reading? Tick the ones relevant to you
7. Who do you see reading at home? Tick relevant ones
8. How much do you enjoy reading?
9. How often do you read when it is YOUR choice (not assigned by school)?
10. How much time do you spend reading when it is YOUR choice?
11. What motivates you to read?
12. I have read books that feature Black, Asian and minority ethnic characters.
13. Which statements reflect your experience during library lessons? Tick relevant ones
14. Are you encouraged to read at school?
15. Are you encouraged to read at home?
16. What would you change about reading in our school?

Appendix 5

List of student post reading intervention questions

1. Have you enjoyed exploring different types of texts by different genres?
2. What did you like about reading all the different extracts?
3. What was your favourite extract in the entire booklet?
4. Please explain your reason to the question above
5. You did not have to respond to comprehension questions during reading the extracts. How did this influence your reading experience?
6. Has reading the different texts encouraged you to read different genres of texts?
7. You were required to match the definition of challenging vocabulary to the correct meaning.
8. Did this help you to learn new words?
9. What did you like about the vocabulary task?
10. Look through the booklet, which texts are you likely to read as a result of reading the extracts?
11. What did you not like or find challenging about reading the extracts?
12. What could have made your reading experience better?
13. Which books are you likely to borrow from the library or read as a result of reading the extracts?

Appendix 6

List of reading for pleasure post CPD questions (Teachers)

1. I was able to review my knowledge on children's literature
2. I was able to gain some insight into teacher's knowledge of children's literature
3. Can you comment on the some of the research findings that was explored in the session?
4. Which aspects do you wish to work on, individually or as a group?
5. Do you have any comments?

Appendix 7

List of preliminary questions for teachers

1. How confident is your knowledge of children's literature?
2. Rate your knowledge of young people's reading attitudes in your classes. (5 is the highest)
3. On a scale 1-5, how often do you encourage students to talk about the books they are currently reading?
4. Do you talk to your students about what you're reading?
5. Do you talk to staff about what you're reading?
6. How would you describe the reading culture in our school? Please be as descriptive as possible.
7. Do you think we are a reading school?
8. How often do you recommend books to your students?
9. How often do you read aloud to your class during a lesson?
10. What is your core reason for reading aloud to students?
11. How would you describe our library lessons, pre COVID? Please comment on your own experience in the library as a teacher.
12. How would you describe the nature of our library lessons, pre COVID?
13. Please comment on students' experience in the library.
14. Why do you think our students struggle with reading? Please be as detailed as possible.
15. How does our departmental approach to English teaching and the English curriculum contribute to students' attitude to reading?
16. Do we foster a love of reading for our students?
17. Please be as detailed as possible.
18. Would you like sessions to improve your knowledge on children's literature and explore pedagogical focused ideas on reading?

Appendix 8

Post OU/UKLA Teacher's CPD questions

1. To what extent has attending the group influenced your knowledge of children's literature and other texts (Scale of 1-5)? Please expand on your response above
2. How did creating the baseline for your students support your understanding of your students reading habits? Please be as detailed as possible.
3. What are some of the key learning points you have learnt from carrying out your case study?
4. What ideas do you have for possible areas for development?

Appendix 9

Interview questions for teachers post intervention

5. Do you feel that the intervention has helped in improving students' attitude to reading?
6. Do you feel that students are now more confident in their knowledge of different types of texts?
7. Do you think that students have been equipped to decode vocabulary whilst reading?
8. What aspects of the intervention did you feel was most effective and why?
9. How do you think your knowledge on children's literature and reading habits has developed?
10. What aspects of the intervention could be improved?
11. How did COVID influence or impact students' reading experience?

Appendix 10

Letter Seeking Approval from the Head Teacher

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
Tel: +44(0)1865 274024 Fax: +44(0)1865 274027
general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk
www.education.ox.ac.uk

Director Professor Jo-Anne Baird

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I am writing to enquire about conducting research in school this academic year. As you know, I am studying for the Master's in Learning and Teaching at Oxford University, supervised by [redacted] In my final research project, I will explore how to improve the reading attitudes and reading habits of disadvantaged students.

The research will take place with four Year 9 English classes. I am developing ways of exposing students to different genres of texts by different authors. The research will also focus on developing teachers' pedagogical knowledge of children's reading habits and children's literature through the Open University and UK Literacy Association. Two teachers from our English department and a teacher from a Sixth Form has agreed to collaborate with me on this.

By participating in the research, the school would be contributing to a project that will deepen our understanding of our students reading habits and attitude to reading and support teachers in reviewing their Reading for Pleasure knowledge. It will also contribute to research around reading more widely.

I hope to conduct this research between January and April. It will involve a questionnaire for both staff and students. It will also involve audio-recording students and staff whilst conducting interviews.

Oxford University has strict ethical procedures on conducting ethical research, consistent with current British Educational Research Association guidelines. The University also recognises, however, that my study is a piece of practitioner research, and that schools already operate with the highest ethical standards. Therefore only your formal consent as headteacher is necessary, and not that of individual parents or staff. However, throughout the research, students and other teachers will be able to refuse to participate in any research activities at any time.

All participants, including students, teacher and the school, would be made anonymous in all research reports. The data collected would be kept strictly confidential, available only to my [redacted] and me, and only used for academic purposes. It will be kept for as long as it has academic value.

If you are happy for me to proceed with this study, please confirm that using the attached reply form. If you have any concerns or need more information about what is involved, please contact me or my supervisor. Further, if you have any questions about this ethics process at any time, please contact the chair of the department's research ethics committee, though: research.office@education.ox.ac.uk

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]