

Whole-Class Texts: The Impact of Teaching Reading Using Full Novels on Student Enjoyment of the Subject

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Introduction

Background

Reading for pleasure has been strongly linked to improved academic outcomes, language development and mental wellbeing in children (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). However, in many modern curricula, reading is often reduced to short extracts or comprehension-based tasks that can weaken pupils' engagement with literature. Within Diera International School, there is a concern that children are not building the same level of excitement or investment in texts as they might through longer-form reading, possibly due to the high proportion of ELL background. Research suggests that engagement with complete novels can increase motivation and deepen comprehension, particularly when pupils are given the time and space to immerse themselves in a narrative (Cremin et al., 2014). With this in mind, there is the theory as to whether teaching full novels could positively impact both pupil enjoyment and academic progress.

Research Questions

- What is the impact of reading full books on children's enjoyment of Reading?
- What is the impact of teaching full novels on pupil progress?

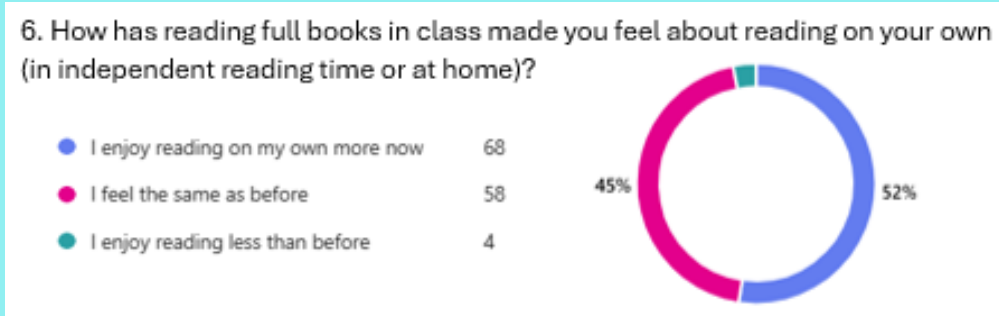
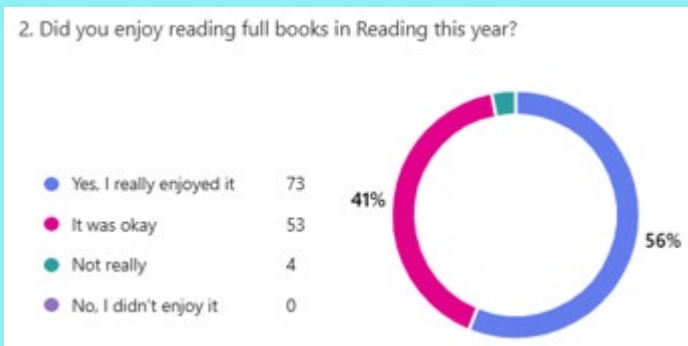
Research

Research Action

The initial stage was to gather teachers' perspectives on teaching reading at school. This fed into adapting the curriculum in Year 5 to focus on three whole-book units within our reading lessons. Following this, a survey was conducted using Microsoft Forms to gather feedback from the students in Year 5 about the effect this had had on their attitude to reading.

Analysis

As seen below, children's responses regarding their enjoyment of reading full books was extremely positive, and it had also had a positive impact on their attitude to reading independently.



Reflecting on the data, although this has not been finalized for the 24-25 school year at this point, currently 76% of children in Year 5 are making better than expected progress, compared to 75% in the cohort's end of Year 4 data.

Methodology

To ensure a relevant sample size (approximately 12% of children in primary) and to measure impact accurately, the whole-book style of teaching reading was trialed with the entirety of Year 5; this helped to gain a proportionate overview within the school context and measured impact accurately, as children were not exposed to this style of teaching in their previous year group. The methodology of this project incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data, in the form of online feedback forms for both staff and students and analysis of summative data. The initial survey was to gain an understanding of teachers' perceptions of teaching Reading; subsequent data collection allowed not only an assessment the impact on children's progress, but also a deeper insight into how the new strategies impacted students' perceptions of reading. The year group's progress data from the 23-24 and 24-25 school was then compared, as well as the children's responses to the survey analysed.

Results

As shown by the results, reading full books has clearly had a positive impact on children's attitudes to reading, with 56% of children selecting they "really enjoyed it" and 52% agreeing that they enjoyed reading independently more now. Although the progress was very similar, the number of children making better than expected progress consistently maintains the KHDA outstanding rating.

Conclusion

Discussion

Overall, the findings suggest that teaching full novels has had a significant impact on pupils' enjoyment of reading lessons and positively influenced their attitudes toward independent reading. While academic progress data was consistent compared to the previous year, it is important to acknowledge, that as with all adjustments to teaching, impact may vary depending on the cohort and text choices, and the limited time frame of the research may impede the ability to make definitive conclusions about long-term impact.

Reflections

Both within my own practice and across the school, this research will be used to encourage a more deliberate and thoughtful approach to text selection, prioritising pupil engagement and depth of study, in order to promote pupil enjoyment, as well as facilitating richer discussion, vocabulary acquisition and understanding of themes and characters. Moving forward, the approach will be extended into other year groups, comparing the impact on progress and engagement in multiple cohorts and over a longer period to gain a clearer picture of the impact, as well as specifically tracking how whole-book teaching affects the development of students' vocabulary acquisition.

References

Clark, C., & Rumbold, K. (2006). *Reading for pleasure: A research overview*. National Literacy Trust.
Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Collins, F., Powell, S., & Safford, K. (2014). *Building communities of engaged readers: Reading for pleasure*. Routledge.