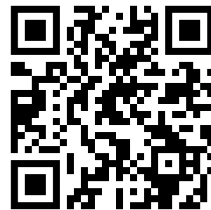# Love to Read

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Literacy Lab

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EURead, September 2023
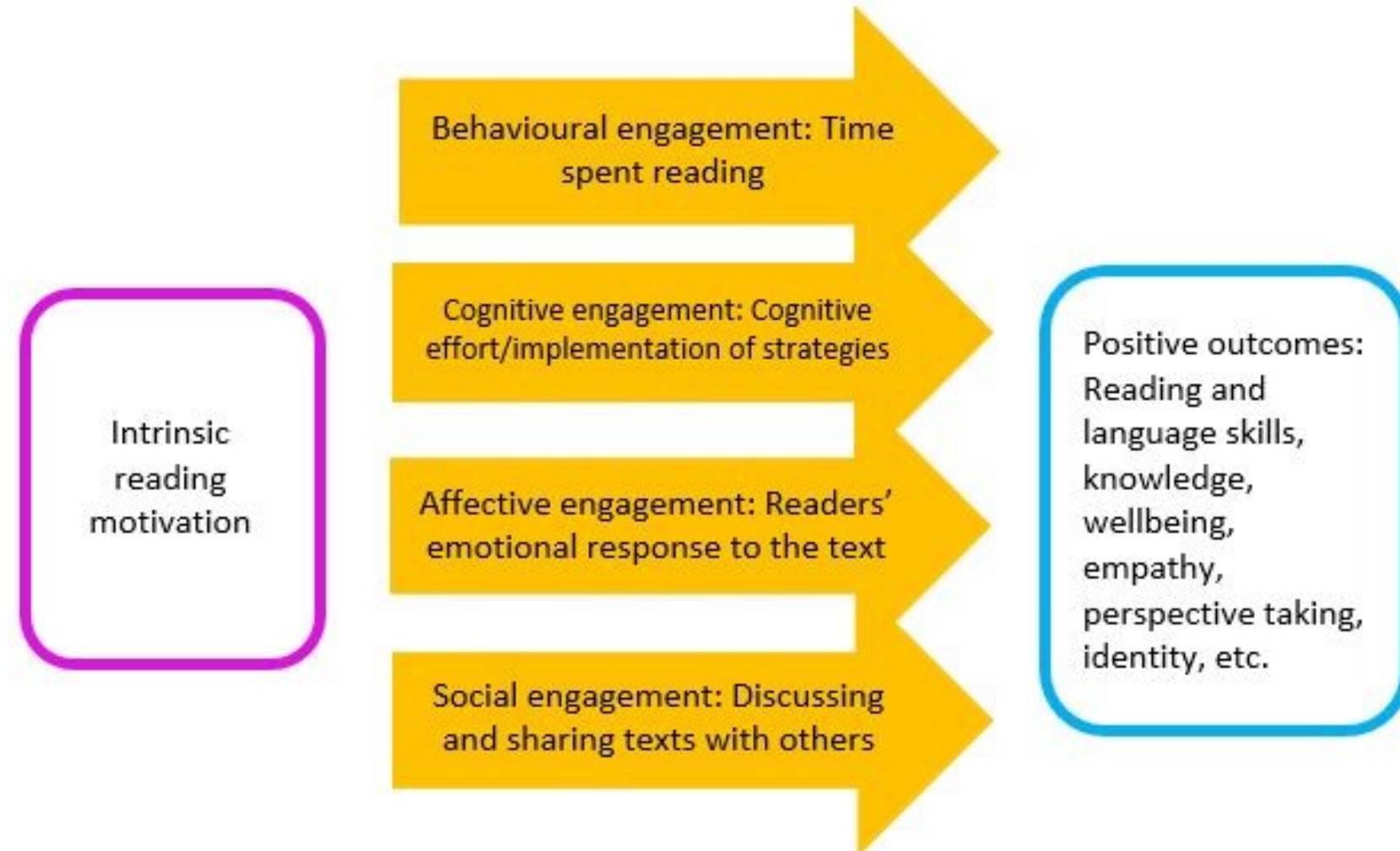
UK context

Issue

- Children's reading attitudes and engagement are at an all time low (Clark et al., 2023).

- Absence of robustly evaluated research-informed pedagogy designed to increase children's reading motivation and engagement.

theguardian.com
More than half of UK children do not read in their spare time, survey r...
National Literacy Trust says families and schools need resources to help disadvantaged children develop vital literacy skills

"Just 2 in 5 (43.4%) 8- to 18-year-olds told us in early 2023 that they enjoyed reading in their free time. This is the lowest level of reading enjoyment we have recorded since 2005."
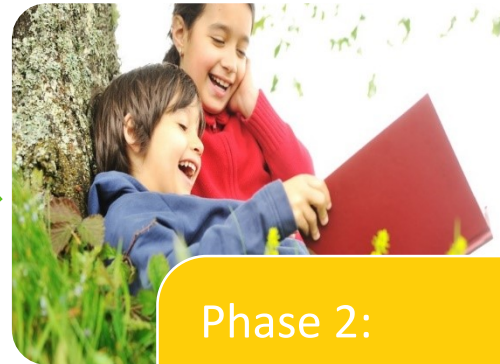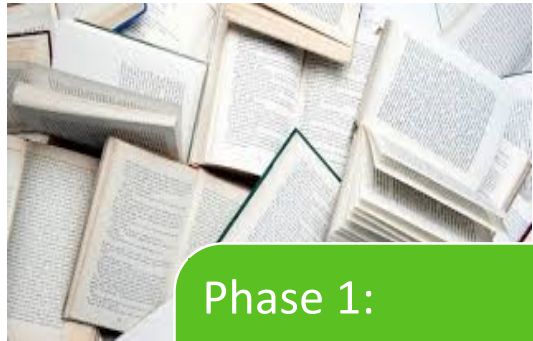
Based on n = 64,066, aged 8-18

Reading motivation, engagement and positive outcomes

Intrinsic reading motivation

Behavioural engagement: Time spent reading

Cognitive engagement: Cognitive effort/implementation of strategies

Affective engagement: Readers' emotional response to the text

Social engagement: Discussing and sharing texts with others

Positive outcomes: Reading and language skills, knowledge, wellbeing, empathy, perspective taking, identity, etc.

References: Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2018; Eekhof et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2022; McGeown et al., 2020; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021; Mol & Bus, 2011; Miyamoto et al., 2019; Schiefele et al., 2012; Taboada et al., 2009; Torppa et al., 2019; Toste et al., 2020; Vezzali et al., 2015

Love to Read: Development and Evaluation

Development

Evaluation

Phase 1:

Research input

Literature review:
- Relevant theory/research
- Links with curricula

SIX PRINCIPLES

Phase 2:

Child input

Individual and group interviews (n = 59, 4 UK schools) to seek children's perspectives and experiences.

Phase 3:

Teacher/expert input

- Recruitment of 6 teachers
- Co-design online
- Practice partner input
- PROGRAMME DEVELOPED

Phase 4:

Evaluation

- 6 week feasibility study, 4 schools, 425 pupils
- Mixed methods
- Implementation and effectiveness

Open research:

Preregistration: https://osf.io/5ztjk

Preregistration: https://osf.io/xsjhc

Preregistration: https://osf.io/qvuka

Love to Read: Programme

Activities: Fidelity / flexibility

Unit 3. Access

Teacher definition:

Children have regular and easy access to books at school which reflect their interests, preferences, abilities, lives and experiences

Child definition:

I can access books I enjoy

Research insights:

Children are more motivated to read when they have access to a wide range of reading materials (Gambrell, 2011), but specifically reading materials which reflect their lives, interests, preferences and abilities (McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021). However, inequalities in access to books persist. For example, in the UK, a quarter of disadvantaged primary schools in England do not have a library and 40% of primary schools reported having no dedicated school library budget (Tyler Todd, 2021). Furthermore, inequalities in access to books are reflected in children's homes; children from higher income families are more likely to have books at home (Clark et al., 2021) than children from lower income families. In addition inequalities are reflected across different communities (Neuman & Celano, 2001) as are the use and availability of public libraries to support children's reading practices. Therefore, good knowledge of resources to freely increase access to books is important (see Access classroom activities section and McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021, for suggestions).

Reading aloud to children is one way to increase their access to a wide range of reading materials (Gambrell, 2011), exposing children to more diverse books and authors than they would naturally encounter. Furthermore, reading aloud allows children to access more challenging books; books that they may not be able to read independently with the level of fluency required for deep engagement (Cremin et al., 2014). In addition, creating links with the public libraries can facilitate greater access to books for children.

Insights from children:

Seeking children's opinions and experiences is essential to understand each of the Love to Read principles from their perspectives. In the development of the Love to Read

Firstly, children found it easy to access books in school that they enjoy when the school has a **variety of genres** and there is good **availability** of books. They also said that **experience of reading** can enhance access but that **restrictions** in what was available to them and time to chose made it difficult for children to access books they would enjoy. Children suggested teachers can improve access to books by using **pupil voice** to ask children about their reading preferences and purchase new books to reflect this.

"Once you've read a lot, it's in alphabetical order so if you know an author that you like it's easy to just whizz to that section and find a book, so it's kind of easy to find a book but then sometimes it's hard if you don't know what you're looking for"

"Well sometimes it's difficult because we only have a limited time to choose a book ...We have two minutes I think"

"You can't read some other books that are in the year 6 library, and you have to just try to read the books that are on the shelf, even if you don't really like them"

"I think they should do what we're doing now, they should maybe ask a kid's opinion"

"I think [it's] easy because theres loads of books that you can read, and there are loads of different types and other books as well"

Activity A.2. Ask Us Our Opinion

- "Ask Us Our Opinion". Take a class survey on your students' favourite genres, books and authors. This could be extended to a class discussion about the quality and access of books in your class/school and how to work collectively to improve provision. See resource Access2.

Activity A.3. Library Audit

- Carry out a current library audit to evaluate whether school book provision reflects the interests, lives, preferences and abilities students in your school. Ask children to be involved in looking through your library collection, removing outdated books or those in poor condition - old, tattered books can put children off reading – unless they are favourite reads! The school provision of books should look as exciting and inviting as possible.

Read aloud in class (Key Point 3)

Reading aloud a wide range of high-quality books gives children access to books they might not be able to read independently. Reading aloud also gives children access to more diverse books and authors than they would naturally read themselves.

Activity A.4. Whole class read

- Introduce a class vote on the next 'whole class read'. The class teacher selects five books in advance (perhaps based on children's recommendations, but also ensuring diversity/representation) and reads an extract of each one, then the books are left in the classroom and children are encouraged to pick them up and read extracts before the final vote. Allow children to vote anonymously if they wish. Introducing this, alongside teacher favourite reads (i.e., books you know they'll love/think are important for them to access) ensures children also have a say in the whole class reads.

Activity A.5. Online read alouds

- Draw upon external sources of support to access readily available read alouds (e.g., Authors Live, cBeebies). In addition, parents, teachers or people from the community (e.g., lollipop man/lady, local supermarket/shop) may also want to create their own recorded read aloud.

LOVE TO READ

A Programme to Inspire and Sustain a Love of Reading

Nuffield Foundation · THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH · LOVE TO READ

Love to Read: Resources

IT'S *BOOK* TO KNOW YOU!

NAME _____
_____

CLASS _____

My Self Portrait:

ALL ABOUT *ME!*
When it comes to reading,
my teacher should know this about me:

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____

ASK US *OUR* OPINION!

NAME _____

	ALWAYS READ	SOMETIMES READ	MIGHT READ	NEVER READ
ACTION	○	○	○	○
SCARY	○	○	○	○
ADVENTURE	○	○	○	○
FUNNY	○	○	○	○
NON-FICTION	○	○	○	○
ANOTHER GENRE ___	○	○	○	○
ANOTHER GENRE ___	○	○	○	○
ANOTHER GENRE ___	○	○	○	○

Which books have you enjoyed reading this year?
_____
_____
_____

ASK US *OUR* OPINION!

If you could choose books for your school, what would you pick?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Is there anything else you'd like to tell your teacher about the books in school?
_____
_____
_____
_____

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE RANGE OF BOOKS IN SCHOOL?

Access

Children have regular and easy access to books at school which reflect their interests, preferences, abilities, lives and experiences.

Aligns with previous research highlighting the importance of quality book provision for motivation (Gambrell, 2011; Mahasneh et al., 2020; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2020)

Love to Read: Perspectives and experiences

"children loved being able to sort and re-design own class library. It highlighted gaps in genre we have"

"this term we started to go to the library, and the library books I really enjoyed them"

"Organising the class library by genre was incredible. Suddenly my reluctant readers were reading blurbs to try and categorise them!"

"I liked the Love to Read project because the teacher let us pick stuff for the library"

"Emptying the class library was one of the best things we ever did... now half the size but reflects much more what they want to read"

Choice

Children have choice over their independent reading activities; schools have the structure, and children have the skills, to ensure 'good' (i.e., skill and interest aligned) reading choices.

- Giving children control of their independent reading activities through choice is central to supporting motivation to read (Guthrie et al., 2004; 2007; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021).

Love to Read: Perspectives and experiences

"I liked that we could discover new things what we liked. I found out that I quite like the diary kind of books, which I didn't know I liked before'"

"they weren't necessarily understanding how to choose books... you now see them take much longer to select their books" [and know when to change]

"This was the most useful lesson, the class really didn't have the skills to choose a book and I found children who disengage with reading quickly were finding books they found interesting and reading consistently"

"highlighted that many children did not have strategies on how to select a book.. the weaker children in particular began to make better choice of reading material"

"I used to just like pick up a book and look at the front cover and be like, 'Oh, that's interesting'. But now when I pick up book I look at the front cover... I think about what story could be about..."

"I used to not read books, and I've started to like books more and more ... because I've found books that I like!'

Time

Children have regular quality time to read books they engage with in school and at home.

- Time spent reading books predicts growth in reading skills (Guthrie et al., 1999; Mol & Bus, 2011; Torppa et al., 2019, van Bergen et al., 2020), however depth of engagement is also important (Miyamoto et al., 2019).

Love to Read: Perspectives and experiences

"I used to like never read, I would just like play with like toys before I went to bed and now that I've like, stared reading I read books every night when I go to bed"

"We read a chapter of our class novel as a whole class everyday. I think the class enjoy that protected time, in which there's guaranteed 'calm' and there's always a really nice feeling of togetherness"

"Teachers and TAs say they are feeling more relaxed because they have time to read within their day as well"

"Made us stop and take time to enjoy books – teachers and TA's too... down time was not just for reading but also to de-stress and slow down"

"From the Love to Read now I have a different opinion, now I keep reading books before I go to bed, even though I've never done that"

"I go to the library every Friday now after swimming and get lots of books out"

Connection

Children can access and choose books, and book reading activities, which are personally relevant, and relevant to their reading goals.

- Characters and stories which feel personally relevant lead to enhanced engagement with the text (Calarco et al., 2017; Kuzmičová and Cremin,2021; Oatley, 2016).

- Children are more engaged when reading if the books they read, and the reading activities they participate in, align with their reading goals (Guthrie et al., 2007; McGeown et al., 2015; 2020; 2021).

© Love to Read

Love to Read: Perspectives and experiences

"a child, he said that the music today didn't match what I was reading today, which I thought was really interesting. He said that's too slow, I'm reading a chase scene and that's too slow.And I thought, that's fascinating.He was really reflective after that"

"I feel like you almost like connect more to the characters"

"for me reading isn't just a thing you do anymore, it's sort of like another life"

"Before I just thought that reading was like, you read a book and then you finish the book, but now I feel that you can like think a lot more about the book and like relate yourself to the characters and the storyline and stuff"

"I gave the class the task of finding a book that they connect with and to share it with someone who they think would connect with too. The class really enjoyed this as many children were able to connect and read with people other than their friends"

"I think I'm a lot more into the world of the book, and like the characters, so I think that's probably one thing it's helped me with, cause when I used to read, I never really got into the books"

Social

Children have the time, skills and confidence to share and discuss book with others.

- Social reading environments and informal book talk to create 'richly reciprocal readi communities' (Cremin et al., 2014).

- Social interactions may including talking about books with others (i.e., friends, pee teachers, family, etc), reading or sharing books with others, sharing writing about books with others (Gambrell, 2011; Guthr et al., 2000; 2007).

- However not all children naturally enjoy social reading interactions (Guthrie et al., 2007).

Love to Read: Perspectives and experiences

"I like how the Love to Read project made me more like encouraged to talk about reading, because I used to think it was a bit weird to like reading [...] but now, after Love to Read project, it's encouraged me to actually just like, encourage others to read as well"

"I think it made me more confident reading out loud to like my friends and the teacher"

"I felt more confident discussing it with other people, because me and my friend used to talk more about different things than books, but now we talk about what we read"

"Pupils really enjoyed organising the class library, making category signs, and had super conversations about what books they have read and whether they'd recommend"

"I like reading with my friends, and it's helped me find the right book for me"

Success

Children have a range of rich and diverse positive reading experiences, can set meaningful goals and can recognise their growing success as readers.

- Perceptions of success are central to theories of reading motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

- Reading skill has been widely cited as important for reading motivation and engagement (Toste et al., 2020, van Bergen et al., 2020).

- However, a broad conceptualisation of success is important (McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021).

Love to Read: Perspectives and experiences

"The 'what makes a successful reader discussion really hit home for some children. It's not just the kids who read the massive Harry Potter books that are good readers!!"

"What is a successful reader? This activity worked well on post it notes and allowed for anonymity and lots of discussion"

"I think that the love to read just like showed us the better sides of reading not just that you had to do it for your homework, you could actually do it as a like hobby and stuff"

"for our SEN child to really be like I love reading now, I will sit and read, is amazing"

"I used to just think that I wasn't that good at reading and I could only read short stories. But when I started reading bigger books, I realized that you achieve it if you put your mind to it"

"Probably cause I've now like experienced what reading, and how fun reading can be, and it's yeah. It's just been a lot more fun ever since"

Love to Read: Resources
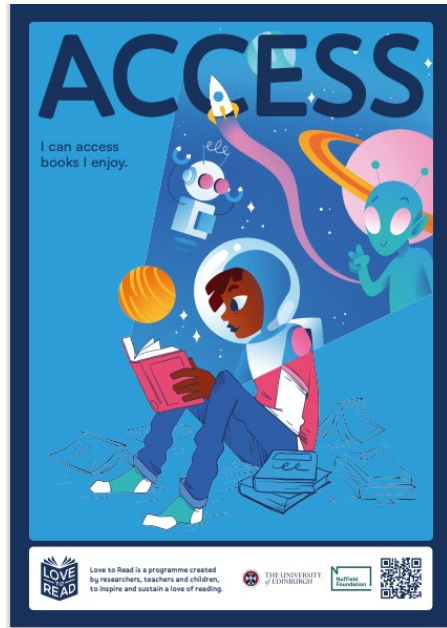
Love to Read: Evaluation

4 UK schools (3 England, 1 Scotland: 18 classes, 425 children)

Aim:

To evaluate the **acceptability and feasibility** of the Love to Read programme in primary school classrooms

Additional aims:

1) To understand teachers and children's **perspectives and experiences** of the Love to Read programme.

2) To evaluate **changes** in children's reading motivation/engagement as a result of the programme

LOVE TO READ
A Programme to Inspire
and Sustain a Love of Reading

Changes in children's reading motivation/engagement

No statistically significant increases in reading motivation or engagement **for entire sample**. However, very little lead-in time/teacher support, short implementation duration and issue with measures.

However, for those with low levels of reading engagement prior to taking part in Love to Read (lowest 15%, n = 59); large statistically significant increase in reading engagement (d = 0.8). However, selecting participants with the lowest starting point exacerbates the chances of observing an increase.

Further work is needed to evaluate Love to Read to advise on use.

Summary

- Love to Read was acceptable and feasible for use in practice.

- Qualitative insights about the programme were generally very positive and evidence of intermediate outcomes.

- No statistically significant increases for the entire sample; however significant increase for those with low engagement prior to programme.

- Further evaluation is required.

University of Edinburgh Literacy Lab

Website: https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/literacylab/

Current projects:

Love to Read: Primary

Reading and Wellbeing

Reading and Narrative Fiction

Augmented Reality Books

Love to Read: Reception

Young People's Reading Project

Neurodiversity and Narrative Fiction

Disability Representation in Picture Books

The Writing Lives of Children and Young People

Previous projects:

Growing Up A Reader

Improving Children's Reading

Move and Read

Reading to Dogs

Sharing Stories

BERA Blog Series:
https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog-series/to-read-or-not-to-read

Thank you for listening

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A huge thank you to the team of researchers, teachers, other professionals and children who contributed to the project.

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