

Love to Read



Hello

Happy New Year! We hope you all had a lovely break. This month we share some good news about a recent research article and discuss the fifth Love to Read principle, Social. Do you have any recommendations about promoting book talk in the classroom and beyond? We'd love to hear them!

New research article!

Working at the Intersection of Research and Practice: The Love to Read project

This research paper, published in the International Journal of Educational Research, summarises the methodological approach underpinning the Love to Read project: teacher-researcher co-design set within the context of a research-practice partnership (RPP). The paper discusses the benefits and methodological considerations associated with RPPs and teachers' perspectives and experiences of co-designing the Love to Read programme. It embodies everything we think is important in research and we are so incredibly grateful for the input of all of our fantastic contributors to the programme and process (listed at end of newsletter).

This paper is open access and can be found here:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0883035522002075>

To download the 1-page poster summarising this paper, please visit: <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/literacylab/publications/>

Working at the intersection of research and practice: The Love to Read project

Sarah McGeown, Emily Ooley, Love to Read Practice Partners, Jessie Ricketts and Laura Shapiro

Background & Aims

Research-practice partnerships (RPPs) are collaborative approaches to conduct research which draw upon the knowledge, experience and expertise from both researchers and practitioners to improve children and young people's educational experiences and outcomes. RPPs recognise two equally important sources of knowledge: that of the researcher and that of the practitioner/educator. Co-design involves researchers and teachers working collaboratively to co-create a new educational programme, intervention or resource. The aim of this study was to evaluate teachers' perspectives of being involved in the co-design of a new programme Love to Read, set within the context of a RPP.

Methods

Five practice partners and four researchers were involved in the RPP, and six teachers and two researchers were involved in the co-design of the Love to Read programme. Following programme creation, all six teachers provided their perspectives and experiences of this process. These are summarised in the results section.

Results

Teachers were generally very positive about the structure, process, their input, and the final programme created. Results are discussed in relation to quality and methods of communication, elements of the co-design process (e.g., online, structure, team composition), general reflections (expectations met, professional development, workload, perceived benefits and challenges, overall experience) and thoughts on the programme developed (quality, use, impact, implementation, whether it reflects teachers' 'contributions'). Researchers' reflections on the process, and RPPs in general, are also discussed.

"It creates a resource that is usable from a teachers' perspective"

"It allows there to be professional input into the program, as well as giving us more professional development"

Discussion & Implications for Education

We offer tentative promises to close the widely recognised gap between research and practice, however we need improved understanding about the factors that lead to successful (and unsuccessful) RPPs, from both researchers and practice partners' perspectives, so that we can learn how to work successfully and productively at the intersection of research and practice.

To access our website go to <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/literacylab/> or scan the QR code

Academic paper
McGeown, S., Ooley, E., Love to Read Practice Partners, Ricketts, J., & Shapiro, L. (2022). Working at the intersection of research and practice: The Love to Read project. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 107, 102655. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2022.102655>

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Love to Read: The principles

Love to Read is underpinned by six research-informed principles, with classroom activities created with teachers, to embed these principles into practice. The principle we'll be sharing this month is Social.

Social

Children have the time, activities, and the skills, to share and discuss books with others.



Providing inclusive opportunities for students to share, recommend or discuss books with each other, and their teacher, creates communities of readers within a school (Cremin et al., 2014). Indeed, the importance of social or collaborative literacy practices is underpinned by relevant theories, research and systematic reviews, in relation to reading engagement (Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie et al., 2007; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Lee et al., 2021).

Social activities can take different forms, for example talking about books with others (e.g., friends, peers, teachers, family, etc.), reading with others, borrowing and sharing books, sharing writing about books, etc (Cremin et al., 2014; Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie et al., 2004; 2007). Recent research suggests that book-talk can also result in deeper reading and understanding of a book, as children may read more carefully and reflect on the book more if they know they will discuss it after (Taboada Barber & Klauda, 2020).

In our discussions with teachers, they have provided various ideas to embed the principle of social into practice:

- Encourage book-talk in your class. It can take different forms, for example, whole class, small group, child-child, teacher-child. Find inclusive ways to introduce this into your classroom and ensure you spend time developing children's skills and confidence to contribute to book-talk, for example, by starting with sentence stems or question prompts.
- Encourage children to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings about books through writing, pictures and recommendations. Some children may prefer sharing their thoughts in this way than through book-talk.
- Recognise that not all children like talking about books – in fact, some may want to avoid talking about specific books as they are worried about spoilers! Encourage feedback from students to ensure social reading activities align with what they want, in addition to the skills and experiences you want to nurture.
- Social reading activities can extend beyond the classroom. Plan activities to involve families and the local community in your own schools' reading community.
- Use online methods (e.g., social media) to share your love of reading and to make connections with other schools, authors, libraries, publishers etc, for example by making videos, podcasts or sharing pictures of favourite books/reading corners etc.

In the final newsletter, we'll focus on the last principle: success, summarising research insights and implications for classroom practice.

The Love to Read team
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