LET'S PLAY TRACTION MAN OUTSIDE!
SCAFFOLDED OPPORTUNITIES TO GENERATE ENGAGEMENT IN READING.

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During my PGCE course at UCL Institute of Education I conducted a short action research project as part of an M level specialism module on children’s literature.

I was working with a Year One class in an inner city school in West London.

I worked with a group of five boys, over 11 sessions. The boys chosen were below the national average in reading and lacked engagement in reading activities.
OU RESEARCH INSPIRATION AND RATIONALE

My study reflects the following findings from the Teachers as Readers (TARs) research in relation to reading for pleasure:

The importance of:

1. *(My own) knowledge of children’s literature* and other texts

3. A *reading for pleasure pedagogy* which includes:
   - Social reading environments
   - Reading aloud
   - Inside-text talk
RESEARCH CONTINUED
MY PROJECT WAS ALSO INFORMED BY THE FOLLOWING THEORY AND RESEARCH:

- Characteristics of engagement in reading (Lutz et al, 2006):
  - Affective
  - Cognitive
  - Behavioural
  - Social

- I used this framework as a way of assessing children’s changing levels of engagement.
RESEARCH CONTINUED
MY PROJECT WAS ALSO INFORMED BY THE FOLLOWING THEORY AND RESEARCH:

- That boys’ engagement is closely related to a sense of achievement (Logan & Medford, 2011).
- That there is a positive association between attitude to reading, reading for pleasure and reading attainment (Warner, 2013).
- That if reading is seen as a pleasurable and satisfying activity this promotes engagement & has personal benefits (Meek, 2012).
- That children entering the world created by the author increases motivation (Bromley, 2000).
- That some books are ‘transformational’ and creative approaches and strategies increase motivation (O’Sullivan & McGonigle, 2010).
AIMS

- To promote engagement with reading, to a greater extent than children were currently experiencing or showing in the classroom based on my observations: reading is more than words on a page (Perkins, 2015).

- To provide opportunities for inexperienced boys to engage with books in a greater depth than they were currently experiencing or showing within the classroom.

- To find different ways to approach reading
# OUTLINE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session:</th>
<th>Aspect of intervention:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Reading Aloud</strong></td>
<td><em>Read aloud, without showing them the pictures, discuss as reading - curiosity.</em> \n(Martin, 2010; Waugh, Neaum &amp; Waugh, 2016)</td>
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<td><strong>3. Visual Arts</strong></td>
<td><em>Drawing what they can remember from the book</em> \n(O’Sullivan &amp; McGonigle, 2010)</td>
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<td><strong>4. Re-read and recap</strong></td>
<td><em>Read the book again, showing the pictures, discuss and revisit predictions.</em> \n(Meek, 2012)</td>
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<td><strong>5. Re-enactment &amp; storytelling</strong></td>
<td><em>Drama and role play: act out the story as I am reading to them.</em> \n(O’Sullivan &amp; McGonigle, 2010; Bromley, 2000; Flewitt et al. 2016)</td>
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<td>Aspect of intervention:</td>
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<td>6. Hot seating (Bunting, 2008)</td>
<td>Role play: Imagine selves as Traction Man, ask key questions.</td>
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<td>7. Character analysis (Bunting, 2008)</td>
<td>Literature Circle: What makes a superhero?</td>
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<td>9. Part 2 of Traction Man (Lockwood, 2008)</td>
<td>What could happen next?</td>
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<td>10. Action toy open day (Bunting, 2008)</td>
<td>Why do you think it is a hero?</td>
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<td>11. Likes, dislikes, favourite part, letter (Bunting, 2008)</td>
<td>Shared writing</td>
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IMPACT

1. Affective Engagement (Lutz et al., 2006).

- Children showed greater affective engagement through their level of participation and effort – connectedness with task.

“\(I\) predict that the baddy will be a goblin and Traction Man is going to save the world”

Child O

IMPACT

1. Affective Engagement (Lutz et al, 2006).

   Participation and effort – connectedness with task, (session 1 - predictions)

   “He is a superhero, he can do anything. I predict that Traction Man can fight everything and save the world. He is strong and can climb up stuff with a rope”

   Child A

Children showed greater affective engagement through their questioning and way they responded to each other: genuine enquiry to further their knowledge and understanding (Logan & Medford, 2011).

- They displayed positive emotions especially about re-enactment. They were enthusiastic, imaginative and creative (Warner, 2013) and asked to repeat activities:

  Child K: “Can we do the catwalk again?”

  T: “What is the catwalk?”

  Child A: “Yeah like when we did it like this (acts out) and you read it to us?”

- They responded positively and there was a lack of oppositional behaviour: involvement and enthusiasm (all sessions) (Warner, 2013, O’Sullivan & McGonigle, 2010).

- Children showed deep thinking about what could happen in the story – when they made predictions (Bromley, 2000).

- There was a willingness to go beyond what was initially asked of them (session 6 – hot seating) (Meek, 2012).

- T: “What would your super power be?”

Child O: “I would have a shooter Like this… (shows action) because yeah then he would fight off the bad guys and protect his friends”

- They showed mental investment in learning: making logical connections with their own knowledge and experience (What makes a superhero?) (Bromley, 2000).

“saves lives” “strong” “fierce” “punching” “kicking” “fight the bad guys” “special powers” “cool outfit” “nice to people” “they protect you” “they aren’t scared of anything!” “like Traction man, he saved the spoons and protected the scrubbing brush”

- Children were asking questions: when reading aloud, enquiring about language and vocabulary (O’Sullivan & McGonigle, 2010).
3. **Behavioural Engagement** *(Lutz et al, 2006)*.

- Active participation: all sessions  
  *(O’Sullivan & McGonigle, 2010; Meek, 2012)*.

- Paid attention, always on task, followed instructions, ideas/suggestions/input relevant to questions/topic  
  *(Lutz et al, 2006; Flewitt et al, 2016)*.

- Actively moved to be more involved

- **Session 10**: all brought in own toy  
  *(Rijk et al, 2017)*.
IMPACT


- Listened, responded and helped one another
  (Flewitt et al, 2016; McGeown et al, 2015).

Child O: “What’s a sieve?”

Child M: “It’s like this thing with holes in, like a bowl (showing with hands) and you pour the food through”

Child A: “like pasta!”

Child M: “yeah like pasta, like after you cook it right you pour it through and the water is gone yeah”

- Group work, collaboration and communication (session 4 acting) (Flewitt et al, 2016; McGeown et al, 2015).

Child K: “You be Traction Man and we’ll be buried and you have to save us”

There was an open dialogue between students and teacher (McGeown et al, 2015; Lutz et al, 2006).

Child K: “Is Traction Man real?!”

T: “Do you think he’s real, or is he a toy?”

Child O: “no he’s a toy, like our toys you know like superman remember”

T: “How do we know it’s a toy?”

Child M: “yeah like the boy yeah he got him for Christmas because at the beginning he was wrapped up and then they went to the grandma’s house”
They collaborated on the idea of who to write to.

I wrote the letter with ideas they expressed verbally: spoke one at a time, listened to one another and followed on accordingly, remembered key details of the story to include and expressed opinions.

(Bromley, 2000; Lutz et al, 2006)

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Dear Trachin Man,

In the story, I loved your story because I love superheroes. I loved it when you saved the space from the broom sweeping them outside.

I liked it how you saved the animals.

I liked it when we did a catwalk.

showing off your green suit.

I liked it when you saved the pizzas because it was so funny and I liked it when you wore the green suit.

We can’t wait to read chapter 2!

Love from Omar
Michael D Nicolas

Khatim Ali

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IMPACT

- This project generated engagement: children were actively investing in learning (Fredrick, 2004).

- Scaffolded opportunities: retold story, shared opinions, independent thinking, collaboration, respectful relationships, detailed discussion, linked knowledge across sessions (Lutz et al, 2006).

- Thinking about the book outside of sessions—and at playtime:

  Child A: “Let's play Traction Man outside yeah, you can be him and I’ll be the person who needs saving.”

- Children were enthusiastic, creative and imaginative (Logan & Johnston, 2009)

- Behaviour beyond that exhibited in classroom
REFLECTIONS ON IMPACT THE TARs RESEARCH HAD ON PRACTICE

- To continue to develop aspects of TaRs in my practice

- Further develop this particular project by:
  - Incorporating the approaches in my whole class teaching

- Consider the impact in guided reading

- Include groups of children with a more diverse range of needs – mixed ability, mixed gender and the application with different age groups