

How can a targeted reading intervention in a secondary school setting improve pupils' attitudes towards reading while also building their reading confidence and ability?

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What did you plan to do and why?

I planned to deliver an intervention to three secondary ASN pupils over 16-20 weeks, with three 30-minute sessions per week. This structured programme aimed to close literacy gaps, build confidence, and foster engagement in reading through high-quality texts and guided practice. The intervention aligns with Scottish education policies, including the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Curriculum for Excellence, which emphasise raising attainment and literacy across learning. Research supports structured reading interventions for struggling readers, however I wanted to emphasise the importance of age-appropriate, engaging materials to ensure pupils developed reading skills alongside an increased desire and motivation to towards reading.

What has happened in your enquiry?

My plan has come to fruition and is working well, though I have adapted my original structure to better meet learners' needs. Initially, I divided sessions equally between word work, reading, and writing, but this limited the quality of differentiated teaching. I adjusted to alternating session structures—one focusing on word work and reading, the other on word work and writing—allowing more time for discussion and engagement. Learners selected their own reading materials based on personal interests and chose writing stimuli inspired by their books. This approach deepened their reading skills and comprehension while enhancing enjoyment. They were also encouraged to revisit familiar texts to improve fluency and reject texts they did not enjoy, fostering ownership of their learning. After reviewing professional research, I introduced a system where pupils kept a previously read book which they had enjoyed with them throughout the school day to encourage reading during free time.

What impact has this enquiry had?

The enquiry has had a significant impact on both pupils' attitudes towards reading and their literacy development. Using a Likert scale to measure attitudes at regular intervals, I observed a gradual shift towards more positive perceptions of reading, with pupils reporting increased enjoyment and confidence. Initially, responses indicated low motivation and engagement, but over time, pupils began to show greater enthusiasm, particularly when reading materials aligned with their interests. Their responses evidenced to me that they were starting to see themselves as a 'reader' for the first time.

Running records provided me with insight into reading development, tracking accuracy, self-monitoring behaviours, and comprehension skills. Pupils also demonstrated a better understanding of texts, engaging in more meaningful discussions and making personal connections to what they read.

Using weekly electronic book graphs helped me to monitor pupils' enjoyment scores throughout the study and respond to their individual preferences.

Allowing pupils to choose their reading materials and revisiting familiar texts played a key role in increasing confidence. Providing them with texts they were able to access during the school day further supported the development of positive reading attitudes.

The enquiry has reinforced the importance of structured, interest-based interventions in improving both reading skills and attitudes towards literacy. By tailoring materials and approaches to learners' needs, I have seen greater engagement, increased fluency, and a more positive relationship with reading that extends beyond the intervention sessions. These findings highlight the effectiveness of motivational, differentiated literacy support in secondary settings.

What are the implications and next steps?

- How do struggling readers in secondary school develop their own identity as a reader, and what factors influence this?
 - What role does confidence and self-perception play in a pupil's willingness to engage with reading independently?
 - How can secondary teachers be supported to explicitly teach strategies to struggling readers to help them apply reading skills across different subjects?
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- How does the ability to self-select texts impact a struggling reader's motivation and reading identity?

References

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