

What impact does the implementation of a library app have on children's engagement and enjoyment in reading for pleasure?

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What did you plan to do and why?

I planned to implement the use of the Libby library app with the two upper stages classes within my school during the month of March. Children would have the option to use this during their personal reading for pleasure time each day.

There were several reasons why I thought access to Libby was needed. Firstly, it had been noted that many children in these two classes struggled to engage for an extended period of time on reading. Many children commented that "they found it difficult to find books they enjoyed reading within our school library." Libby would expose the children to a larger bank of literature, including different genres and in a variety of formats (novels, graphic novels, non-fiction, audiobooks).

Secondly, Libby could provide access to inclusive formats (particularly audiobooks) which would be beneficial as across the two classes 30% of children require targeted support with literacy tasks. Audiobooks would give children opportunities to access texts that they can comprehend but may not be able to read independently. This format may encourage reluctant readers as well.

Thirdly, my school attainment data showed that the majority of children are currently working behind expected levels in literacy. Research shows that when children enjoy and engage in reading for pleasure, this can lead to improved attainment levels (Clark and Douglas, 2011).

What has happened in your enquiry?

At the beginning of my enquiry, I explained to the children about the learning I was undertaking and that their comments had led me to investigate ways we could provide more varied literature for them within school.

At the end of January, I wrote to parents to ask them to sign their children up to the Aberdeenshire Library Service (if they have not already done so) to enable children to access online literature within school through the use of the Libby app.

At the end of February, all children in P4-7 completed the learner attitude survey to enable me to understand their current views towards reading.

In March, I introduced the Libby app to all P4-7 pupils, demonstrating its features, the variety of literature available to them and how to use it safely.

Throughout March and April, I monitored engagement and use of Libby within the classroom.

At the beginning of May, I gathered feedback from children on using Libby. Children also completed the survey again to enable me to see any changes in their attitudes towards reading.

What impact has this enquiry had?

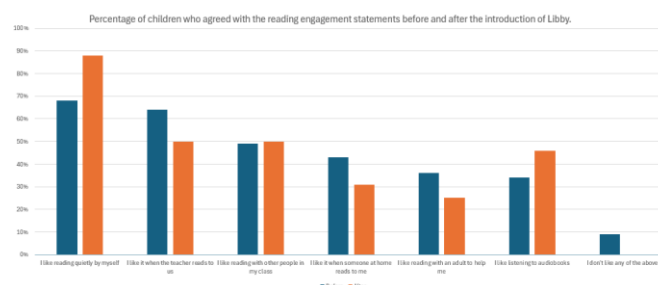
The first challenge with this enquiry was engaging with the parents as it would be their responsibility to sign their children up to access the library service. Fortunately, this is a reasonably simple online process and currently 64% of the pupils have been registered by their parents.

When I introduced the children to Libby, there was a really positive buzz around the room and the children were keen to explore it straight away. Unfortunately, we ran into technical issues on several occasions, and many children have struggled to get logged in to Libby. This has definitely had a negative impact, with some children not keen to give it another try.

Evidence from observations has shown that on a regular basis around 20% of children are using Libby to access a variety of literature, including graphic novels, audiobooks and non-fiction texts. Reluctant readers have been accessing audiobooks as an alternative form of reading. Most children have been demonstrating a higher level of focus and engagement during reading for pleasure times.

Evidence from pupil conversations shows that Libby has had a positive impact on children's enjoyment in reading. Avid readers enjoy using Libby as it provides access to a larger number of texts as well as newly released titles. They particularly enjoy having the opportunity to access a variety of graphic novels. Many children commented that Libby is good because everything is free and can be accessed both in school and at home. However, some noted that when having to put a book 'on hold', the wait time (often of several weeks for newer titles) was often off putting. Children said that they find searching for books by genre, age or author easy which allows them to engage quickly in reading. Several children commented that they found the dictionary feature useful to help them understand new words and use it regularly, whereas they were unlikely to look words up when reading a physical book.

Evidence from the survey showed that prior to the introduction of Libby 68% of children enjoyed reading by themselves, 34% liked listening to audiobooks and 9% didn't enjoy any aspects of reading. Following the introduction of Libby and having the opportunity to use it for two months the data shows a positive impact on children's engagement and enjoyment in reading for pleasure. Now, 88% of children enjoy reading by themselves and 46% like listening to audiobooks. All children now enjoy some aspect of reading.



What are the implications and next steps?

Following my enquiry, I can see that children are enjoying using Libby but technical issues can often be off putting. Also, I have observed that some children who would benefit from using the online literature unfortunately do not have access to the Aberdeenshire Library Service yet. These children have enjoyed using Oxford Owl in the past, however, the variety of content available on this website is limited.

Questions I now have:

- Are there other websites which contain access to literature that are free for children to use?
- Are there any online subscription services that the school could sign up to, to help all children access online literature more readily?
- Would using online texts during lessons help encourage more children to use this form of literature during their reading for pleasure time?

To address the questions above, I plan to continue researching to find more ways for children to be able to access online literature independently. Through liaising with my headteacher, we may be able to purchase a subscription which will benefit children throughout the whole school. I will incorporate the use of online texts in some lessons and gather feedback from the children to find out whether or not they enjoyed using it to support their learning, I will also continue to monitor the use of Libby during reading for pleasure times.

References

Clark, C and Douglas, J. (2011) *Young people's reading and writing: An in-depth study focusing on enjoyment, behaviour, attitudes and attainment*. London: National Literacy Trust.

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