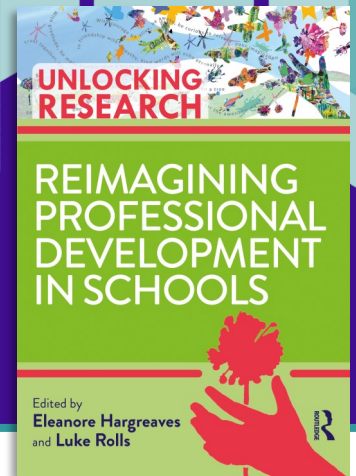


Reading for Pleasure

CHAPTER 9 | CREMIN & DURNING: INSPIRING A LOVE OF READING



Building and nurturing a culture of reading for pleasure: Beyond the classroom walls

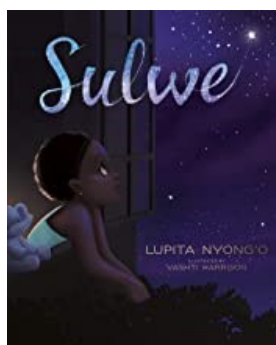
'Whether children read for pleasure-that is choose to read-within and beyond school matters.'
(Cremin, 2021)

Educators continue to work tirelessly to promote the benefits of reading for pleasure (RfP) and to encourage children to want to read as a worthwhile activity. This period of global pandemic may have caused a slight halt in the crusade to enthrall children in imaginary fictional worlds or tempt them to want to know more about endangered animals, pollution or homelessness, but it is only a slight pause. Never before have we been afforded the opportunity to 'zoom' into our children's homes at bedtime to discuss our own and their favorite books, make recommendations or share our latest reads in a breakout room.

This article, offers an update to our chapter on RfP in the Unlocking Research series (2021), and was written 18 months later. In that chapter (in *Reimagining Professional Development in Schools*) we outlined the valuable journey that one school took when immersing itself in a sea of research (e.g. Cremin et al., 2014; Moses and Kelly, 2018; Wilhelm et al, 2016) and continuing professional development. And how that school, University of Cambridge Primary School (UCPS) maintained the momentum of their RfP community building during lockdown, with support from friends at The Open University.

Reaching young readers and educators new to a research-led reading for pleasure agenda requires a Headteacher who reads and an willing audience. James Biddulph, headteacher at UCPS, during many of his assemblies in this last eighteen months has shared his love of children's fiction, which led to much parent book buying! These lockdown books have kept so many company on those long days and nights when only essential shops were open and one could only leave the house daily to exercise. Books also excited and offered refuge to educators during the weeks that their schools were homes to key worker and vulnerable children only. Naturally, when RfP is at the heart of all you do, there is a need to reach our families at home. We now had the will and the skill to continue to share our knowledge of children's literature with the whole community virtually.

On the eve of school closure under the direction of our Headteacher we set in motion our plan to educate our children in their homes via a weekly booklet. Each week a different book would feature and the learning was constructed around these stories texts. Stories such as *The Fox and the Star*, *How to Catch a Star*, *Asha and the Spirit Bird* and many others. We shared our remote RfP strategy with our partner schools in Paris, Germany and Vienna. Our hope being that children would either wish to read more by the featured author or that we'd trigger a desire to read more at home. As a result we were keen to discover what the children were choosing to read at home without their teachers' daily input or encouragement. We were hoping that our parents would continue our drive for independent, choice-led reading. So we organised several community book events.



Online community book events, one would imagine might be quite tricky. But not so! For those attending community virtual book events, the experience could be imagined as entering an unknown bookshop where the books are only revealed to you when the children choose to do so. There were to be many surprises revealed, plenty of commonality and new titles too. On one occasion the hosts were unable to contain their excitement over a new title reveal, *Sulwe*. Their excitement continued into the morning assembly where the newly discovered book and others were shared with the children and their families at home via Microsoft Teams.

During this time educators have continued to meet, share and discuss the impact of their own RfP knowledge and practice. Over a hundred OU/UKLA Teachers' Reading Groups across the country have continued to meet virtually. Group leaders have worked to support their members and others in schools to develop a reading for pleasure culture. As we have discovered, whilst nurturing our own RfP culture at UCPS, the adults in school have to invest their own time in discovering and reading children's literature in order to be able to make the crucial book recommendations to those vulnerable readers. The majority of our team have moved beyond the Dahl or celebrity authors, so we shared our knowledge and remote RfP strategies and Rob Drane (English Lead) led the session and as Learning lead, I facilitated the informal book bletcher. We were surprised that a virtual platform could draw in so many teachers and students new to the RfP research-led CPD. This session coincided with the launch of the Literacy and Social Justice Centre at the OU 2021 which highlights RfP as a tool for social justice.

Might you be interested in joining an OU/UKLA Teachers' Reading Group? <https://ourfp.org/schools-teachers/teachers-reading-groups/> CPD for RfP- and fun to boot- find one near you!

Or maybe you want ideas to nurture and develop your school's RfP culture? Then do read our chapter and check out the research informed OU RfP site <https://ourfp.org/>

