

Everyone's An Expert

The Writing For Pleasure Centre – Ross Young

@WritingRocks_17

Principle(s) in focus:

1. Building a community of writers
2. Personal writing projects.
3. Every child a writer

Having read Frank Smith's *Joining The Literacy Club*, we wanted all children to write from a position of strength and expertise by using their existing 'funds of knowledge'. We also wanted children to understand the true nature of writing information texts and so we set out to discover our classroom's secret (or not so secret) literacy clubs!

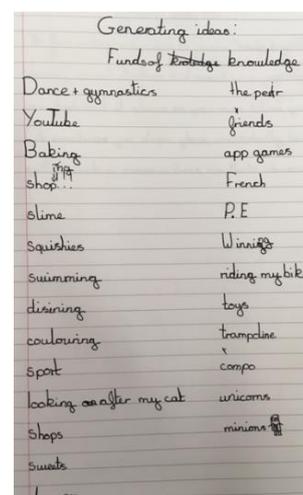
Aims:

We aimed to find out whether children felt more confident (self-efficacy) when they were given agency to write on topics they were 'expert' in. In addition, did writing about their own expertise, and sharing this with their classmates, increase their writer identity? Finally, I wanted children to see that there is great pleasure and satisfaction in sharing your expertise with others and that through knowledge sharing, everyone can benefit.

Description:



Early on in the year, once personal project writing time had been established, we had a mini-lesson where we looked to discover what 'literacy clubs' – special interest groups - made up the writing community that is our classroom. The children described what they were experts in, what they were excited by and the things that interested them most outside of school. We created a class poster and placed it proudly on our working wall.



Impact:

Creating a community of writers – children began getting together in little clusters and writing with and for one another about their special interest. They also wrote about their special interests to inform, explain, discuss, promote/persuade and otherwise entertain the rest of the class. **Every child a writer** – all children were able to find 'writer friends' within the classroom and felt that their interests and expertise were something worth reading about. **Reading, sharing and talking about writing** – it was wonderful to watch children read the texts of their peers and discuss with the author what they had learned. **Personal writing projects** – this short and simple mini-lesson was able to provide children with enough material to last many months. **Pupil conferencing** – children would often seek the advice of their fellow experts, or discuss their pieces with their less knowledgeable peers to see what they wanted to know about the subject. Children were giving each other genuine writerly advice and sharing their knowledge openly with one another.

Reflection:

I hope to turn this into a whole class writing project with the ultimate goal being to create a class encyclopaedia. To be even more ambitious, I'm wondering about the potential for a whole-school encyclopaedia or Wikipedia which children could access and contribute to. Finally, I wonder what sort of expertise and knowledge is within the parent community and whether they could contribute too.

References:

- Smith, F., (1987) *Joining the literacy club* USA: Longman