

Lighting the way as literary luminators: Year 6 reader leaders igniting English through literature-based workshops

Abstract:

This presentation shares findings from the Reader Leader Workshops, an innovative English unit of work created within the *Reading Engagement and Differentiation* (READ) research project. In this unit, Year 6 students acted as *literary luminators*, igniting English learning through literature-based workshops with Year 4 peers. The workshops were designed to strengthen students' knowledge, skills and understanding across speaking and listening, reading and writing. Five contemporary picture books served as mentor texts for purposeful learning, offering rich literary content that supported aesthetic, linguistic, critical and creative engagement.

The workshops invited students into shared reading, expressive oral language, literary discussion and guided writing. Using the selected picture books as springboards for meaning-making, the Year 6 reader leaders modelled expressive read-alouds, prompted reflective talk and supported their younger peers as they interpreted and created response texts.

Across the unit, students drafted a new piece of writing in response to each picture book, experimenting with language, voice and idea development. As a culminating task, they selected their favourite draft, refined and edited it for publication and performed a polished read-aloud recording. Analysis of these recordings provides emerging evidence of students' growing fluency, prosody and control of meaning-making, indicating how sustained literature engagement nurtures confident, purposeful young writers.

Drawing on narrative inquiry within the READ research partnership between teachers and a university academic, this presentation investigates: How do peer-led literature-based workshops support students' oral language, writing development, and reading engagement across the modes? We share emerging insights from the collaborative design and refinement of the Reader Leader Workshops and include anonymised samples of students' written responses and read-aloud recordings to illustrate learning across the modes. The presentation aligns with Creating Communities through cross-classroom workshops and a teacher–researcher partnership that position literacy as relational practice, strengthening belonging and shared identities as readers and writers.