

OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

**FINAL REPORT ON THE OTLA PHASE 7 (ENGLISH) PROJECT –
READING INFLUENCER
Northampton College**

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For further information regarding the OTLA Phase 7 (English) programme and this project go to <https://ccpathways.co.uk/practitioner-research/otla-7/>.

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Final report - Reading Influencer

Northampton College

This project was a collaboration between English teachers, academic coaches and vocational staff to boost the reading confidence of GCSE English Language students using audio extracts. It enhanced English teaching methodology, had a proven impact on student reading ages, highlighted a focus on reading and brought together college staff from a number of disciplines.

Summary

Northampton College is the leading further education provider in the South East Midlands with approximately 1200 students enrolled to GCSE English Language. In 2021 the college decided to move its provision for 16 -19 year old study programme students, with no GCSE or a grade 1 to 2, from Functional Skills to GCSE English Language. Some of these students are doing GCSE for the first time but the majority are resitting the qualification. The groups are split into GCSE (with a qualification on entry of grade 3) and GCSE + (with a qualification on entry of a grade 2 or below).

The project was run with the cohort of students who had primarily achieved a grade 2 or below in GCSE English (approximately 400). The initial idea was for vocational tutors to read extracts and to use those with the relevant vocational students.

Stakeholders involved in the project included an Assistant Principal, a governor, vocational teachers, English teachers and students (see Appendix 1).

Rationale

For those students with a grade 2 and below who would now be studying GCSE English Language an alternative approach to delivering the curriculum needed to be developed, one that was engaging and accessible to all, building confidence in the basics, enabling students to improve by at least one grade. This cohort is already demotivated by not achieving the government-approved 'pass' of a grade 4 and often have additional support needs not addressed in previous educational settings.

The Project Lead has a background in Specific Learning Difficulties and after teaching the GCSE specification since its introduction, it was clear that reading confidence was an area that needed addressing using a variety of methods. The project narrowed its focus to encouraging reading and understanding by using audio recordings of texts.

According to a study conducted by audiopub.org: 'Reading while listening improves comprehension by 76%' (Audio Pub, 2016) which can significantly help students with SpLD and those with recognised differences in learning.

'Listening to an audio ... while following along with the text can actually help bridge the gap between decoding words and assigning meaning Receiving information both visually and audibly reinforces word recognition, improves fluency, builds

vocabulary and supports the development of higher-level comprehension skills.’
(www.learningally.org, 2004).

To gain even further engagement from the students it was thought that the audios should be delivered by familiar voices, from vocational areas, demonstrating that it is not only English teachers who read but also people who have a background in music, catering, science, etc.

Approach

There were three main phases with activities scheduled to take place throughout the life span of the project. The three phases were coincided to start at the beginning of each half term in September 2021, October 2020 and January 2021; every six weeks.

An email was sent to all staff at Northampton College on 1st July 2020 asking for volunteers to record an audio extract. Suitable extracts (see Appendix 2 & 3), together with comprehension, vocabulary and extension writing tasks (see Appendix 4) were sourced.

After posting a tweet on Twitter, the Project Lead was approached by the editor of Times Educational Supplement (FE) and asked to write an article about the project. The article was published in the TES outlining the project on the 18th September 2020 (see Appendix 5).



A Google form (see Appendix 4) was created for each of the extracts/audios from the sourced booklet and posted onto a Google Classroom page for teachers to then post as an assignment to their own classroom pages.

A small group of L1 IT students was identified to use as a study group for the project.



Two vocational teachers (a drama teacher and a music teacher) were recruited from the original list of volunteers to record two fiction extracts from previous AQA GCSE papers. These extracts were: AQA GCSE English Language 8700 Specimen paper from 2016 City of the Beasts by Isabel Allende (see Appendix 7) and AQA GCSE English Language 8700 paper from June 2018 Jigs and Reels by Joanne Harris (see Appendix 8). The audios created from these extracts were used in the classroom as part of English lessons. Additional vocational teachers were approached but all declined due to time constraints or uncertainty about reading out loud.

A Baseline Toe by Toe Reading Age Test was undertaken by an Academic Coach with a small group of IT Level 1 students on the 16th November 2020 (see Appendix 9).



Students were to be recruited to read non-fiction extracts from previous GCSE English papers and used as part of English lessons. Only 1 student volunteered so volunteers were sourced from the English department and a teacher who also ran a Guide group, volunteered two teenagers to record an audio.

This period was during national lockdown three and so the audios were used remotely by playing through Google Classroom with students reading the extracts online while listening.

The project was shared with other English and maths teachers at an ETF Collaborative Practice event on the 5th February 2021 and at a Practice Development Group event on the 3rd March 2021.

A discussion took place with the pilot group of students on the 18th March 2020 (see Appendix 12).

The second Toe by Toe Reading Age Test undertaken by an Academic Coach on 22nd of March 2021 (see Appendix 10).

A podcast interview has been booked with FE Research Meet on 26th May 2021 to share the project (see Appendix 18).

Professional learning: Evidence of changes in teaching, learning and assessment practices

The project encouraged the Project Lead to undertake academic reading in the area of reading development which deepened her understanding of the internal processes involved in reading and how teachers can develop them in reluctant readers. It helped the team to reflect on what would work for the diverse needs of the students.

When asked whether the audios helped, one student stated: 'Yes they did help a little more because if I got lost reading it would help me pick up where I might have left off.' (see Appendix 12).

English teachers involved in the project have said they will be using audios in class in the coming year as it has helped bring a lively pace to the lesson and allows for all students to participate equally. One teacher said: "Less confident students feel that they are not left behind and are more equal to their peers in this setting." (see Appendix 14). Whilst another said: "I have asked almost all of my classes and there hasn't been any negative feedback!" (see Appendix 14).

Alongside The Reading Influencers Project there has been an improved focus on reading for meaning by using the fiction extracts, including the audios, in funded intervention sessions run by Academic Coaches within the maths and English department as well as in the School of Additional Learning Support department after the project was shared by a Vice Principal.

After presenting a Literacy and Dyslexia session to students on the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) course at Northampton College in February the Project Lead held discussions with the ITT course leader about teaching and leading on the action research unit from May 2021 and will be sharing knowledge gained from the ETF OTLA project.

As a result of the positive feedback from students and teachers, audios of extracts were used with all GCSE students for the Paper 2 Reading assessments that were completed in early May 2020 as part of the teacher assessed grades assessments.

Evidence of improved collaboration and changes in organisational practices

The project has encouraged discussion with vocational teachers about GCSE English. Vocational teachers are still volunteering to read for the next academic year. New extracts will be sourced and sent out to new volunteers for recording.

Reading Influencers enjoyed taking part in the project. One vocational teacher said: "I think I've found my new vocation ...", whilst it encouraged another to read more: "It's broadened my horizons, too; I found a cut-price copy of '100 years of Solitude' and I'm halfway through." (see Appendix 13).

The project will continue to be used as part of a skills lesson that will be run in parallel to GCSE English in 2021/22.

Additional Learning Support have adopted elements of the project which have been, and will continue to be, used in funded intervention sessions.

Being part of the project has allowed the Project Lead to encourage other English teachers to take part in other ETF activity such as teach meets, digital collaboration programmes and to start thinking about how they can develop their own action research projects.

Following an external review of the maths and English provision, where the project and the TES article were shared with the reviewer, the Vice Principal is now keen to encourage teachers to take part in action research projects.

An idea for CPD for vocational staff was emailed to the Curriculum Manager for English and the Assistant Principal for maths and English. The CPD included an idea for a fun voice coaching lesson leading to further confidence for teachers to read out loud which may, again, lead to more vocational teachers volunteering for the Reading Influencer Project in 2021/22.

Evidence of improvement in learners' achievements, retention and progression

The Toe by Toe Reading Age tests that were undertaken with the small study group showed an increase of at least one reading age year in all students and, in some cases, two years (see Appendix 15).

The GCSE starting points and predicted end points of the student study group has shown that each student's results should increase by at least 1 grade (see Appendix 16).

Students with SpLD and those with dyslexic traits could keep up with the extract and it also helped ESOL students with understanding words that they may heard before but did not know how to read as one student stated: 'They helped me a lot so that I can learn the pronunciation.' (see Appendix 12). Another student explained: '... they did help a little more because if I got lost reading it would help me pick up where I might have left off.' (see Appendix 12).

Some students did not realise that they could access audios for texts and may use them in the future with one saying: 'I think it will be eas[er] to listen to some audios, that will make me more focused.' (see Appendix 12).

Learning from this project

The main constraint on the project was the impact of lockdown three in January 2021. Reading Paper 2 was meant to be taught during this period which involves a lot of reading alongside the lessons. After trialling the reading at home during the first week of remote learning, it was found to be too overwhelming for many students, so extracts were cut down into shorter paragraphs.

Student involvement in recording extracts at an earlier stage would have helped with recruitment of volunteers.

It was difficult to recruit vocational teachers after August as their commitments were focused on their own teaching. It was interesting to note that a few of the vocational teachers who were approached to take part in the project disclosed that they did not feel confident about reading out loud. These disclosures spurred on the idea for the cross college CPD session mentioned in the '*Improved Collaboration*' section above.

Students really enjoyed being read to and find it immensely helpful to aid understanding. One student said: "When I had to highlight the text I could find the answers easier because we had listened to the text first." (see Appendix 11 & 12).

Teachers also loved the idea of audios as it allowed all students to work at the same pace (see Appendix 14).

The project has encouraged discussions with the Additional Supported Learning department and has really brought reading, and reading for meaning, to the forefront of the English agenda.

Discussions are ongoing with the manager of the college library to see if students can access more audio books as the ones currently in the library are on CD and the range is limited.

The Project Lead has done extensive wider reading on how reading can be encouraged in an educational setting. This has led to professional discussions on Twitter and to a podcast review of *Closing the Reading Gap* by Alex Quigley (see Appendix 17).

A podcast interview took place on the 26th May with FE Research Meet to discuss the project and will be available towards the middle of July (see Appendix 18). The interview inspired reflection on how the impact of the project could have been demonstrated further with more focused student feedback and how students could have been encouraged to play more of a collaborative part in the process.

Next year the teaching in English will focus on reading for meaning and it is envisaged that The Reading Influencer Project will be extended to include audios of extracts used in weekly 'Skills Focus' lessons together with complimentary audio reviews of some of the books to entice students to read further. Students will also be encouraged to do audio reviews of books they have read and pick their favourite section to share on a centralised easily accessible system.

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Appendix 1 – The project team

Project Role	Name	Job Role
Project Lead	Angie Lenton	English Teacher/Co-ordinator
Deputy Lead	Christina Gamble	English Teacher
Project team	Linden Hale	Music Teacher
	Nicola Osborne	Drama Teacher
	Robert Mayall	Science Teacher
	Lesley Stevens	Science Teacher
	Sam Simmonite	Maths and English Academic Coach
	Laura Marsh	English Teacher
	Michelle Green	English Teacher
	Hayley Davies	English Teacher
Project Mentor	Dianne Robinson (ccConsultancy)	
Research Group Lead	Bob Read (ccConsultancy)	

Appendix 2 – List of fiction extracts used in phase 1

Title	Author
100 Years of Solitude	Gabriel Garcia Marquez
American Pastoral	Philip Roth
Brooklyn	Colm Toibin
Catch 22	Joseph Heller
Great Expectations	Charles Dickens
Hunger Games	Suzanne Collins
Jigs and Reels	Joanna Harris
Life of Pi	Yann Martel
Never Let Me Go	Kazuo Ishiguro
Northern Lights	Philip Pulman
Of Mice and Men	John Steinbeck
The Bloody Chamber	Angela Carter
The Curious Case of Benjamin Button	F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time	Mark Haddon
The Hate U Give	Angie Thomas
The Kite Runner	Khaled Hosseini
The Lonely Londoners	Cormac McCarthy
The Man With The Twisted Lip	Arthur Conan Doyle
The Road	Cormac McCarthy
Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achebe
White Teeth	Zadie Smith

Appendix 3 – Example fiction extract in phase 1

‘The Hate U Give’ by Angie Thomas

‘The Hate U Give’ is a young adult novel inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement in the USA. In this extract, Starr is sitting in a car with her friend Khalil. All of sudden, they are stopped by the police.

When I was twelve, my parents had two talks with me.

One was the usual birds and bees. Well, I didn’t really get the usual version. My mom, Lisa, is a registered nurse, and she told me what went where, and what didn’t need to go here, there, or any damn where till I’m grown. Back then, I doubted anything was going anywhere anyway. While all the other girls sprouted breasts between sixth and seventh grade, my chest was as flat as my back.

The other talk was about what to do if a cop stopped me. Momma fussed and told Daddy I was too young for that. He argued that I wasn’t too young to get arrested or shot.

“Starr-Starr, you do whatever they tell you to do,” he said. “Keep your hands visible. Don’t make any sudden moves. Only speak when they speak to you.”

I knew it must’ve been serious. Daddy has the biggest mouth of anybody I know, and if he said to be quiet, I needed to be quiet. I hope somebody had the talk with Khalil. He cusses under his breath, turns Tupac down, and manoeuvres the Impala to the side of the street. We’re on Carnation where most of the houses are abandoned and half the streetlights are busted. Nobody around but us and the cop.

Khalil turns the ignition off. “Wonder what this fool wants.”

The officer parks and puts his brights on. I blink to keep from being blinded. I remember something else Daddy said. If you’re with somebody, you better hope they don’t have nothing on them, or both of y’all going down.

“K, you don’t have anything in the car, do you?” I ask.

He watches the cop in his side mirror. “Nah.”

The officer approaches the driver’s door and taps the window. Khalil cranks the handle to roll it down. As if we aren’t blinded enough, the officer beams his flashlight in our faces.

“License, registration, and proof of insurance.”

Khalil breaks a rule—he doesn’t do what the cop wants. “What you pull us over for?”

“License, registration, and proof of insurance.”

“I said what you pull us over for?”

“Khalil,” I plead. “Do what he said.”

Khalil groans and takes his wallet out. The officer follows his movements with the flashlight. My heart pounds loudly, but Daddy's instructions echo in my head: Get a good look at the cop's face. If you can remember his badge number, that's even better. With the flashlight following Khalil's hands, I make out the numbers on the badge—one-fifteen. He's white, midthirties to early forties, has a brown buzz cut and a thin scar over his top lip.

Khalil hands the officer his papers and license.

One-Fifteen looks over them. "Where are you two coming from tonight?"

"Nunya," Khalil says, meaning none of your business. "What you pull me over for?"

"Your taillight's broken."

"So are you gon' give me a ticket or what?" Khalil asks.

"You know what? Get out the car, smart guy."

"Man, just give me my ticket—"

"Get out the car! Hands up, where I can see them."

Khalil gets out with his hands up. One-Fifteen yanks him by his arm and pins him against the back door. I fight to find my voice. "He didn't mean—"

"Hands on the dashboard!" the officer barks at me. "Don't move!"

I do what he tells me, but my hands are shaking too much to be still. He pats Khalil down. "Okay, smart mouth, let's see what we find on you today."

"You ain't gon' find nothing," Khalil says.

One-Fifteen pats him down two more times. He turns up empty.

"Stay here," he tells Khalil. "And you." He looks in the window at me.

"Don't move."

I can't even nod. The officer walks back to his patrol car. My parents haven't raised me to fear the police, just to be smart around them. They told me it's not smart to move while a cop has his back to you. Khalil does. He comes to his door. It's not smart to make a sudden move. Khalil does. He opens the driver's door.

"You okay, Starr—"

Pow!

One. Khalil's body jerks. Blood splatters from his back. He holds on to the door to keep himself upright.

Pow!

Two. Khalil gasps.

Pow!

Three. Khalil looks at me, stunned.

He falls to the ground.

Appendix 4 – Example questions to go with extract and audio in phase 1

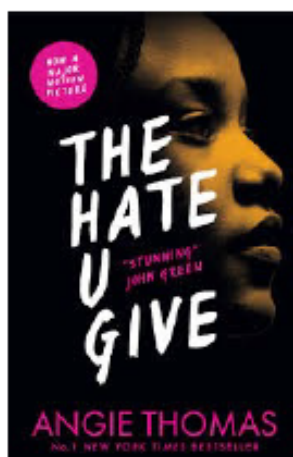
Source:

http://www.kentchildrensuniversity.co.uk/media/381433/extract_reading_booklet__1__1_.pdf

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

'The Hate U Give' is a young adult novel inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement in the USA. In this extract, Starr is sitting in a car with her friend Khalil. All of sudden, they are stopped by the police.

*Required



1. Your first name: *

2. Your last name: *

3. Your English teacher's name: *

4. How would you describe the atmosphere between the police officer and Khalil? *

5. How does Khalil respond to the officer? *

6. How does Starr respond to the officer differently? *

7. Whose response do you think is correct? Why? *

8. What words AND sentence structures does the writer use to create dramatic tension at the end of the extract? *

Vocab Builder

This section will check your understanding of the words in bold from the text.

9. Match this word taken from the text to one of the definitions below: **visible** *

Tick all that apply.

- sudden breath in
- can be seen
- movement in a car
- begs

10. Match this word taken from the text to one of the definitions below: **manoeuvres** *

Tick all that apply.

- sudden breath in
- can be seen
- movement of a car
- begs

11. Match this word taken from the text to one of the definitions below: plead *

Tick all that apply.

- sudden breath in
- can be seen
- movement of a car
- begs

12. Match this word taken from the text to one of the definitions below: gasps *

Tick all that apply.

- sudden breath in
- can be seen
- movement of a car
- begs

Your interpretations (Extension Task)

Complete the paragraph opening. Include these words in your answer: CRITICISE, EXPOSE, WARN



13. I think the author has written this extract in order to ...

14. To answer these questions did you: *

Tick all that apply.

- Just listen to the audio extract?
 Just read the extract?
 Both listened to and read the extract?

15. Which helped you the most?

Tick all that apply.

- The audio extract?
 The written extract?
 Both?

16. Has listening to or reading this extract encouraged you to read any more of the book? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Appendix 5 – TES article

<https://www.tes.com/news/gcse-resits-how-reading-influencers-can-help-inspire>

GCSE resits: How 'reading influencers' can help inspire

Showing learners that people truly read for fun can help inspire them at all ages, writes this English teacher

Angie Lenton

18th September 2020 at 10:02pm

Share this



"OK, so who reads regularly?" is the eternally optimistic question on every [English teacher's](#) lips around the middle of September. The wait for that all-important positive response is only too often followed by the heart plummeting mumbled response of: "Um ... does Snapchat count?"

We chime on to our students about how important it is to [read for pleasure](#) ("What, because you want to?"), how it can help a young person in their vocational area, improve their future career prospects and financial stability, give them the ability to meaningfully interact and express themselves as adults in an ever-changing society AND, who knows, it might even help them win a pub quiz one day!

Sadly, it will probably come as no surprise that 46 per cent of our young people (aged 16 to 24) don't read in their spare time (Taylor, 2011) or even that 5.8 million adults read at or below Level 1 (OECD's 2013 Survey of Adult Skills). But figures like these should really shake us to our core.

Bringing a horse to water

As an English teacher in a large FE college, these statistics and the thought of regurgitating the same old question about reading this coming September have spurred me on to re-think the old "you can bring a horse to water" approach.

Just think: wouldn't it be incredible if level 1 plumbing students, foundation catering students or level 2 health and social care students heard the familiar reassuring tones of their vocational teacher reading *The Hate U Give* extract that we're focusing on this week in class or listening, at home, to their personal tutor reading the opening of *The Bloody Chamber* that has been set as part of their remote learning with some self-marked comprehension questions?

The answer is: yes, it would!

But would this stealth teaching pedagogy, one of my personal favourites, encourage those reluctant readers to access the material and to listen and read more?

At my college, we are testing that theory with a new reading project.

I used to be a great proponent of only reading out loud to my classes up until the end of December and then "making" them read the extract in silence every week from then on. This was to help "build their reading independence", as I used to tell myself – and them.

Yes, I know they need to "do it" in an exam situation, but surely we have to encourage their interest and confidence and take away their fear and anxiety to enable them to "do it". Having worked with a large number of dyslexic students over the years and as a mum of a dyslexic 10-year-old and a 15-year-old reluctant fiction reader, I now understand how awful an experience that must be.

Reading is fundamental

The core ethos of the reading project is to show students that people do actually read, that their level 1 plumbing teacher reads, that the college community is coming together to read, that you don't have to actually "read" in order to read (listening to reading is just as powerful a spark) and that it can be a fun, or at least not a painful, thing to do.

I hope to have a bank of audio recordings for each extract, by the start of term which teachers can then pick and choose from to target specific cohorts. I'm already buzzing with ideas to expand the project further so that it continues to grow and develop and it will form the basis of my ETF OTLA action research project this year.

And that is just one of many new approaches we're trying this year to reach our [GCSE resit students](#). In late June, I sent an all-staff email to around 900 teachers, admin, SLT, and business support staff asking for their help by recording themselves reading from a selection of GCSE English type extracts that we could then use with our students in English lessons.

To those who reply I then forward breathtakingly un-in-depth instructions, such as "I'm looking for expressive readings that don't sound like you're in a toilet", some extracts for them to choose from and even my own recorded extract of *The Life of Pi* (after about 20 attempts). Then, I wait patiently.

My emails have started pinging constantly as recordings roll in from my new team of "reading influencers": LSAs, academic coaches, library staff, vocational teachers (I'm still trying to persuade more), English teachers, an assistant principal, and even a governor!

I am listening, loving and laughing. I have been moved by and given feedback to every single one of our amazing reading influencers who have volunteered their time (some have even volunteered their families, too). Your contribution may be the reason why a reluctant reader will want to find out what happens next or to listen to another reading, and I can't wait to share them.

Angie Lenton is an English teacher and coordinator at Northampton College. She tweets @EnglishFE3

Appendix 6 – Google Classroom layout

Apps Google Classroom Century Tech MAE 2020-21 Exam... Seesaw e-AQA Home OTLA 7 – Teaching... 2020-21 Additional... OTLA 7 English and... Online forms

G+ Teachers ONLY Stream **Classwork** People Marks

Reading Comprehensions for Remote Learning

	American Pastoral - by Philip Roth (Reading ...	Posted 19 Oct
	'The Circle' by Dave Eggers	Posted 24 Sept
	White Teeth by Zadie Smith	Edited 25 Aug
	'Brooklyn' Reading Comprehension	Edited 28 Aug
	'One Hundred Years of Solitude' by Gabriel ...	Edited 28 Aug
	'The Hunger Games' by Suzanne Collins	Draft
	'Great Expectations' by Charles Dickens	Draft

G+ Teachers ONLY Instructions **Student work**

'Life of Pi' by Yann Martel

Angela Lenton • 28 Jun (Edited 3 Sept)

- 1 Watch the Learn with Louis YouTube video and complete the tasks
- 2 Open the audio file and then open the extract. Read the extract - you can run the audio file at the same time
- 3 Complete the comprehension tasks in Google Forms
- 4 Complete a few nuggets on Century

	Is it There, Their or They're? YouTube video 5 minutes		Life of Pi Extract.docx Word
	Life of Pi sample.m4a Audio		Life of Pi Comprehension Google Forms

Appendix 7 – GCSE English Language Extract 2016

Source A

Alex Cold lives with his parents and two younger sisters, Andrea and Nicole, in a small American town, but when his mother becomes ill, family life changes beyond recognition.

1 Alexander Cold awakened at dawn, startled by a nightmare. He had been dreaming that an enormous black bird had crashed against the window with a clatter of shattered glass, flown into the house, and carried off his mother. In the dream, he had watched helplessly as it clasped her clothing in its yellow claws, flew out the same broken window, and disappeared into a sky heavy with dark clouds.

6 What had awakened him was the noise from the storm: wind lashing the trees, rain on the rooftop, and thunder. He turned on the light with a sensation of being adrift in a boat, and pushed closer to the bulk of the large dog sleeping beside him. He pictured the roaring Pacific Ocean a few blocks from his house, spilling in furious waves against the rocks. He lay listening to the storm and thinking about the black bird and about his mother, waiting for the pounding in his chest to die down. He was still tangled in the images of his bad dream.

Alexander looked at the clock: 6.30, time to get up. Outside, it was beginning to get light. He decided that this was going to be a terrible day, one of those days when it's best to stay in bed because everything is going to turn out bad. There had been a lot of days like that since his mother got sick; sometimes the air in the house felt heavy, like being at the bottom of the sea.

16 At breakfast Alex was not in the mood to applaud his father's efforts at making pancakes. His father was not exactly a good cook; the only thing he knew how to do was pancakes, and they always turned out like rubber-tyre tortillas. His children didn't want to hurt his feelings, so they pretended to eat them, but any time he wasn't looking, they spit them out.

20 'When's Momma going to get better?' Nicole asked, trying to spear a rubbery pancake with her fork.

'Shut up, Nicole,' Alex replied.

'Momma's going to die,' Andrea added.

'Liar! She's not going to die!' shrieked Nicole.

25 'You two are just kids. You don't know what you're talking about!' Alex exclaimed.

'Here, girls. Quiet now. Momma is going to get better,' his father interrupted, without much conviction.

Alex was angry with his father, his sisters, life in general – even with his mother for getting sick. He rushed out of the kitchen, ready to leave without breakfast.

30 Except for his father's pancakes and an occasional tuna-and-mayonnaise sandwich, no one in the family had cooked for months. There was nothing in the refrigerator but orange juice, milk and ice cream; at night they ordered in pizza or Chinese food. At first it was almost like a party, because each of them ate whenever and whatever they pleased, mainly sweets, but by now everyone missed the balanced diet of normal times.

35 Alex had realised during those months how enormous their mother's presence had been and how painful her absence was now. He missed her easy laughter and her affection, even her discipline. She was stricter than his father, and sharper. It was impossible to fool her; she could see the unseeable. He missed her music, her flowers, the once-familiar fragrance of fresh-baked cookies, and the smell of paint. It used to be that his mother could work several hours in her studio, keep the house immaculate, and still welcome her children after school with cookies.

40 Now she barely got out of bed to walk through the rooms with a confused air, as if she didn't recognise anything; she was too thin, and her sunken eyes were circled with shadows. Her canvases, which once were explosions of colour, sat forgotten on their easels, and her oil paints dried in their tubes. His mother seemed to have shrunk; she was little more than a silent ghost.

Appendix 8 – GCSE English Language Extract 2018

Source A

Source A is taken from the beginning of a short story written by Joanne Harris. Mr Fisher, a teacher of English for forty years, works at St Oswald's Grammar School for Boys.

1 Mr Fisher lived alone in a small terraced house in the centre of town. He did not own a car,
and therefore preferred to do as much as he could of his weekend marking in the form room
4 home on the bus.

5 It had been a disappointing term at St Oswald's. For most of the boys in 3F, creative
writing was on a par with country dancing and food technology. Oh, he'd tried to engage
their interest. But books just didn't seem to kindle the same enthusiasm as they had in the
old days.

9 Mr Fisher remembered a time – surely, not so long ago – when books were golden, when
10 imaginations soared, when the world was filled with stories which ran like gazelles and
pounced like tigers and exploded like rockets, illuminating minds and hearts. He had seen
it happen; had seen whole classes swept away in the fever. In those days, there were
heroes; there were dragons and dinosaurs; there were space adventurers and soldiers of
15 fortune and giant apes. In those days, thought Mr Fisher, we dreamed in colour, though
films were in black and white, and good always triumphed in the end.

Now everything was in black and white, and though Mr Fisher continued to teach with as
much devotion to duty as he had forty years before, he was secretly aware that his voice
had begun to lack conviction. To these boys, these sullen boys with their gelled hair and
perfect teeth, everything was boring. Shakespeare was boring. Dickens was boring.
20 There didn't seem to be a single story left in the world that they hadn't heard before. And
over the years, though he had tried to stop it, a terrible disillusionment had crept over Mr
Fisher, who had once dreamed so fiercely of writing stories of his own. They had come to
the end of the seam, he understood. There were no more stories to be written. The magic
had run out.

25 This was an uncharacteristically gloomy train of thought, and Mr Fisher pushed it away.
Not all his boys lacked imagination. Alistair Tibbet, for instance, even though he had
obviously done part of his homework on the bus. An amiable boy, this Tibbet. Not a
brilliant scholar by any means, but there was a spark in him which deserved attention.

30 Mr Fisher took a deep breath and looked down at Tibbet's exercise book, trying not to think
of the snow outside and the five o'clock bus he was now almost certain to miss. Four
books to go, he told himself; and then home; dinner; bed; the comforting small routine of a
winter weekend.

But, gradually sitting there in the warm classroom with the smell of chalk and floor polish in
his nostrils, Mr Fisher began to experience a very strange sensation. It began as a
35 tightening in his diaphragm, as if a long unused muscle had been brought into action. His
breathing quickened, stopped, quickened again. He began to sweat. And when he
reached the end of the story, Mr Fisher put down his red pen and went back to the
beginning, re-reading every word very slowly and with meticulous care.

40 This must be what a prospector feels when, discouraged and bankrupt and ready to go home, he takes off his boot and shakes out a nugget of gold the size of his fist. He read it again, critically this time, marking off the paragraphs with notes in red. A hope, which at first Mr Fisher had hardly dared to formulate, swelled in him and grew strong. He found himself beginning to smile.

45 If anyone had asked him what Tibbet's story was about, Mr Fisher might have been hard put to reply. There were themes he recognised, elements of plot which were vaguely familiar: an adventure – a quest, a child, a man. But to explain Tibbet's story in these terms was as meaningless as trying to describe a loved one's face in terms of nose, eyes, mouth. This was something new. Something entirely original.

Appendix 9 – Toe By Toe Reading Age Test 16/11/2020



TOE BY TOE® Reading Age Test

The purpose of the Toe By Toe Reading Test?

By completing a Toe By Toe reading test prior to starting the manual and then again upon completion, schools and other academic institutions will be able to demonstrate the improvement in student's reading ability i.e. the value added.

TOE BY TOE READING TEST

Name of student:.....

Date of Birth:.....

Actual age of student: (years/months):.....

Name of Assessor:.....

Test date before starting Toe By Toe:

Test date after completing Toe By Toe:.....

Reading age before:

Reading age after:

Improvement in reading age:

Instructions for the Toe By Toe reading test:

Working from left to right ask your student to read each word aloud.

The assessor marks the correct responses with a tick/check and incorrect ones with a dot.

Take the student's first answer. However, if your student makes a mistake and rapidly self corrects then count this as a tick/check.

If necessary please refer to the correct reading test pronunciation.

It is critical that you **DO NOT COACH YOUR STUDENT DURING THE TEST. STOP** the test after **10 consecutive errors.**

How to obtain a Reading Age:

Count the number of ticks/checks (total words read correctly) to obtain a raw score.

Divide the raw score by ten and then add five to obtain a reading age.

Example One:-

Raw score = 15

15 divided by 10 = 1.5

1.5 plus 5 = 6.5 therefore the Reading Age is

6 years and 5 months.

Example Two:-

Raw Score = 42

42 divided by 10 = 4.2

4.2 plus 5 = 9.2 therefore the Reading Age is 9 years and

2 months.

Example Three:-

Raw Score = 78

78 divided by 10 = 7.8

7.8 plus 5 = 12.8 therefore the Reading Age is 12 years

and 8 months.

ran		duck		shoot		flee	
bulk		tip		apple		letting	
rich		stay		slight		thing	
track		boat		stable		clown	
plane		someone		future		slower	
warfare		grinned		mountain		stairway	
above		cream		firstly		guilt	
sure		patronage		rarity		curfew	
daughter		ginger		climber		women	
circus		usually		aggressive		gnaw	
sparing		universal		graduated		incinerated	
boulder		crawled		disappoint		flourished	
quixotic		nautical		science		sleigh	
debtor		accuracy		fortunate		carriage	
audibly		reputation		accent		conceded	
easiest		schism		identification		private	
physicist		abysmal		lovelier		unconscious	
genius		stoic		psychologist		administrate	
rogue		sciatica		ogre		terrible	
perception		riotous		guidance		denigrate	
flimsier		syringe		warranty		erroneous	
congenital		anchoring		contagious		deniable	
unique		atmosphere		insubstantial		subtlety	
characteristic		physiology		caricature		archetype	
squalor		synonymous		eccentricity		mendacious	

Score (total words read correctly).....

Reading age given in years and months

Score		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reading Age		5.3	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.7
Score	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Reading Age	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.10	5.11	5.11	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.2
Score	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Reading Age	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.9
Score	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Reading Age	6.9	6.10	6.11	7.0	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.5
Score	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
Reading Age	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.10	7.11	8.0	8.1	8.2	8.3
Score	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Reading Age	8.4	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.8	8.9	8.10	9.0	9.1	9.2
Score	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
Reading Age	9.3	9.4	9.6	9.7	9.8	9.9	9.10	10.0	10.1	10.2
Score	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
Reading Age	10.3	10.4	10.6	10.7	10.9	10.10	10.11	11.0	11.1	11.3
Score	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
Reading Age	11.4	11.5	11.6	11.7	11.9	11.10	11.11	12.0	12.1	12.3
Score	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
Reading Age	12.4	12.5	12.6	12.7	12.9	12.10	12.11	13.0	13.1	13.3
Score	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
Reading Age	13.4	13.6	13.6	13.7	13.9	13.10	13.11	14.0	14.1	14.3

Appendix 10 – Toe By Toe Reading Age Test 22/03/2021

to		is		up		he	
at		for		my		sun	
one		of		big		some	
his		or		an		went	
boys		that		girl		water	
just		day		wet		pot	
things		no		told		love	
now		sad		nurse		carry	
quickly		village		scramble		journey	
terror		return		twisted		shelves	
beware		explorer		known		projecting	
tongue		serious		domineer		obtain	
belief		luncheon		emergency		events	
steadiness		nourishment		fringe		formulate	
scarcely		universal		commenced		overwhelmed	
circumstances		destiny		urge		labourers	
exhausted		trudging		refrigerator		melodrama	
encyclopaedia		apprehend		motionless		ultimate	
atmosphere		reputation		binocular		economy	
theory		humanity		philosopher		contemptuous	
autobiography		excessively		champagne		terminology	
perambulating		efficiency		unique		perpetual	
mercenary		glycerine		influential		atrocious	
fatigue		exorbitant		physician		microscopical	
contagion		renown		hypocritical		fallacious	
phlegmatic		melancholy		palpable		eccentricity	
constitutionally		alienate		phthisis		poignancy	
ingratiating		subtlety					

Score (total words read correctly).....

Reading age given in years and months

Appendix 11 – Student feedback discussion 1

Student feedback:

- “I love his natural style of reading – he reads like us”
Sophie
- “When I had to highlight the text I could find the answers easier because we had listened to the text first.”
Jamie
- “I like to have different people reading to us.” Ellie-



Appendix 12 – Student feedback discussion 2

Q Did you enjoy the audio extracts? Did they help and how?

A They helped me a lot so that I can learn the pronunciation,

A Yes they did help a little more because if I got lost reading it would help me pick up where I might have left off.

A Yes it makes me understand the text better.

A 10/10 would recommend, made us more aware of the text and understood it better, gave us an emotional response to the text giving us a greater meaning of the overall text, Pace of speech can affect the amount of recollection of the text and understand what has been said (depends on the readers / listeners capabilities)

Q What did you think of the voices? What did you think of the speed of reading?

A It could have been a little slower, but not much.

A The reading was paced okay just maybe a little bit slower and the way they read it was good

A Well spoken, clear and understandable, include the option of English teachers reading it / person that we know and understand

Q Would you like to hear your own vocational teachers' voices instead? If so, then who?

A It would be a bit weird.

A It would be disturbing hearing our IT teachers in an English lesson.

A I prefer if we can change the reader. I prefer the English teacher to read.

Do you like being read to? How does it make you feel?

A I feel sleepy when someone reads.

Q Would you like to have audio extracts with your next assessment that is coming up?

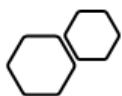
A Wouldn't mind if it was with a paper copy as well as I like to read along.

A Not really. I prefer reading off a screen than being read too unless... that individual's accent isn't irritating

A Yes it would be better read out loud

A I think it will be easy to listen to some audios, that will make me more focused.

Appendix 13 – Reading Influencer feedback



Reading Influencers' feedback:

"I think I've found my new vocation..." Linden

"Great project – I'm happy to have contributed!" Nicky

"... I think this is a fab idea and one that I think the students will enjoy as well." Nicky

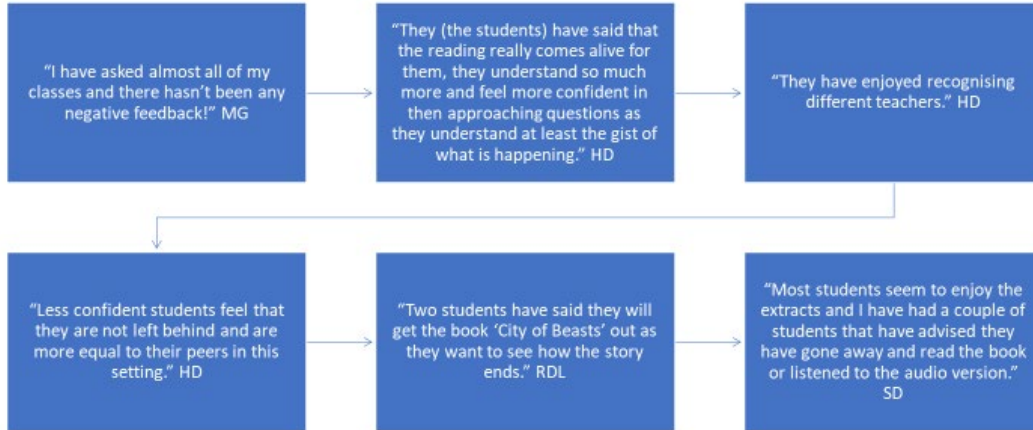
"It's broadened my horizons, too; I found a cut-price copy of '100 years of Solitude' and I'm halfway through." Rob



Appendix 14 – English teacher feedback



English Teachers' feedback:



Appendix 15 – Toe by Toe Reading Age Test data

Reading Age assessments for TRIP

Student	Nov-20	Mar-21
JC	12.3 years	13.7 years
MA	8.10 years	10.10 years
TH	11.00 years	13.6 years
MP	11.9 years	12.9 years

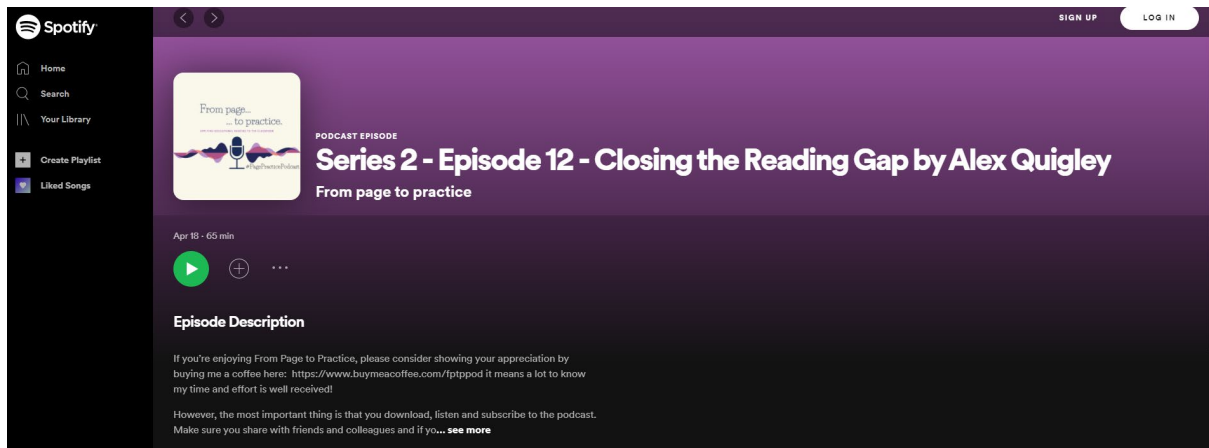
Appendix 16 – TRIP Pilot Group Start and End Data

TRIP Pilot Group start and end data

Student	Qualification on entry English Grade	Predicted End English Grade
JC	2	3
MA	2	2
TH	2	4
MP	1	3

Appendix 17 – Podcast Review of Closing the Reading Gap by Alex Quigley

https://open.spotify.com/episode/6iVly226mkMgPVwdbR5SHC?si=fs0vSJU4TJaOUo8h_Huhyw



Appendix 18 – FE Research Meet Podcast interview

<https://feresearchpodcast.podbean.com/>



Jo Fletcher-Saxon @JFletcherSaxon · 15m



Fab to finally meet Angie @EnglishFE3 to hear all about her inspiring Reading Influencers #OTLA project. @draperel you two should meet. Also tagging @TeamEnglishFE and @EnglishAssoc. Angie's #FEresearchpodcast will be out in July (but here's Elizabeth bit.ly/3fJWOWk)



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