Assessment without levels

Independent Reading

Motivation

Reading age growth

Twenty months' reading age growth in just ten months at West Midlands primary school

Before the introduction of Renaissance Accelerated Reader™, children leaving Key Stage 1 would move into a 'free reader' scheme, which used very broad banding in terms of ability level, but there was no way to group texts by age-related interest and appropriateness. We were initially interested in the programme because of the ability to identify appropriate ability and interest levels for individual students, but, noting that our reading results declined compared to other subjects as children entered Key Stage 2, we decided to try and improve our KS2 results also.

We had training once we brought the programme in, both online and face to face. The fact that it was broken down into manageable steps was excellent; we could complete one step at a time before the next phase, and we often referred to the initial online training while setting up and using Accelerated Reader™. Every child takes the Renaissance Star Reading™ test at least twice per term, which produces their zone of proximal development (ZPD). Each child then selects a book around the

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low end of their ZPD and continues rising through it until their next Star test, or if a teacher advises them otherwise. We encourage children to quiz on a completed book at least once per fortnight – computers are freely available during morning, break and lunch times for children to quiz on books they have read as soon as they are ready.

As well as identifying children's ZPDs, we use Renaissance Star Reading™ to identify gifted and talented children, support struggling readers and plan intervention. It's proven very useful in tracking the progress of groups, and is reported at progress meetings and shared with parents. We feel that, since the removal of National Curriculum levels, we have the means to demonstrate the rapid progress we have seen since bringing in the programmes.

Our books are now carefully sorted by level, so the programme really has helped us ensure that children are reading books that are appropriate for them. Reading motivation has clearly increased: many children choose to

complete quizzes during break and lunch – and are keen to set themselves targets and deadlines. They are inspired to read, and can independently select books that are suitable for them; we've seen the gap between reading, spelling and grammar, and maths in Key Stage 2 close considerably, and in 2016 the average reading age in the Key Stage increased by twenty months, over just ten!

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