CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON

Shadowing the Shadowers

Carnegie Shadowing: an investigation

‘The things you can test are not actually the most important things.’ – Pullman, 2003

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1. Abstract

The study sets out to examine in detail a Carnegie Shadowing Group in a large urban comprehensive school, questioning what the impact may be of participation in such a group. This piece of action research takes place in the context of a wider literature-based enquiry into the nature and benefits of reading for pleasure and what may motivate young people to read in their spare time.

An extensive literature review is followed by original research observing a shadowing group. The observation includes records of group meetings and activities, questionnaires and group interview findings. The research also makes use of library and reading scheme data to illustrate the school context in which the group takes place and observe the impact of participation.

Reading for pleasure is shown by the literature review to impact significantly on academic attainment across the curriculum. It is revealed to be a very powerful means of closing the gap between students from differing socio-economic backgrounds.

Further, the literature review also reveals that reading for pleasure improves social skills and happiness, reducing stress and increasing acceptance of diversity in real life. It is also found to increase empathy, with research cited which shows that this is a causative relationship and not just a correlation. Participation in a reading community is shown to be a highly significant factor in improving attitudes to and engagement with reading for pleasure.

The shadowing group is shown to be effective in broadening and diversifying students’ reading. It indicates that students value the opportunity to share their reading in a way which differs from their lessons. Data also indicates that participation in the group helps to keep students engaged with their school library as they get older, even after the scheme has finished.
The benefits expressed by the students are all echoed in the literature as being part of the wider benefits of reading for pleasure, and so it is concluded that the shadowing group was effective in encouraging reading and fostering a reading community in which the full range of benefits of reading can flourish.
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5. Introduction

The question of how we can encourage young people to read for pleasure is interesting and not easy to resolve. For me personally, reading fiction has always been an important part of my life. In particular I feel that the fiction I read as a young adolescent shaped the landscape of my imagination and inspired me to see the world in new, more interesting ways. Instinctively, therefore, I want to encourage young people to read and enjoy fiction and regard the subject as significant and worthy of research.

Of course it is important for the purposes of this research to set aside my own emotional response to literature, and even to question its validity. This study will therefore question the very nature of reading for pleasure and examine what effects it may have on readers. Questions concerning the emotional, social and academic effects of reading will be addressed through the very extensive research literature on this topic. The study also addresses the question of motivation to read, which is of course the key to success when encouraging young people to read.

One strategy commonly used in schools to encourage students to read fiction is the book group. A popular way of running a book group is to participate in the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme, which focuses on the books shortlisted for the prestigious Carnegie Medal. We can ask how effective groups such as the shadowing groups actually are in terms of encouraging reading.

This study concerns the Carnegie Shadowing Group at a large urban comprehensive school. It sets out to provide insight into this shadowing group, and to identify any effects of participation in the group.
The study will therefore examine the nature of the Carnegie Medal and of the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme through the literature on the subject, before turning to a piece of action research observing a shadowing group from beginning to end of the 2015 Carnegie award process. The group’s meetings and activities will be observed, and responses to participation will be revealed through questionnaires and group interview.

The study will also draw on data from the school library management software, which will place the shadowing group into a wider school context of engagement with the library. The data can then be used to discover whether there is any discernible effect on library engagement. Similarly data from the school’s reading scheme, Accelerated Reader, can be used to show the reading ages of participants and to give a partial indicator of general reading engagement through checking the number of comprehension quizzes completed by students.

To summarise, then, we will be able to see what the effects are of participation in a Carnegie Shadowing Group, and to understand the significance of these effects by reviewing the wider literature.
6. Aims and Objectives

This project aims to examine the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme and consider what its effect may be on reading for pleasure, library use and academic achievement.

Its objectives are:

- To examine the nature of reading for pleasure
- To consider the effect of reading for pleasure on academic attainment and wellbeing
- To examine the nature of the Carnegie Medal
- To consider the nature of the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme
- To consider whether participation in the shadowing scheme increases or widens the scope of reading for pleasure
- To analyse reading level data to compare progress of participants with that of non-participants
- To examine the nature of the Accelerated Reader scheme used in schools, as this is a tool whereby students’ reading levels are assessed
- To compare library borrowing patterns among shadowing scheme participants and the general school population
7. Methodology

7.1 Scope and definitions

This is a small-scale research project. It concerns a single Carnegie shadowing group at a large urban comprehensive school (approximately 1500 students) and sets it within the context of a wider literature.

It is what is termed by Pickard an ‘intrinsic case study’, defined as one which is ‘carried out for no other purpose than to give us a better understanding of the case; the case is studied as much for its ordinariness as for any peculiarities’ (Pickard, 2012, p102). The shadowing group in this research is absolutely typical of shadowing groups across the country, and is therefore a reasonable focus of study to understand the impact of the shadowing scheme.

The literature review aims to define the nature of reading for pleasure more fully, but in brief this is considered to be fiction reading which has no academic or other purpose beyond enjoyment. The project will consider the value of other types of leisure reading for the purposes of comparison with fiction reading.

The topic of gender differences in reading for pleasure is an interesting one but is beyond the scope of this study, being a large area of research in its own right.

The topic of Accelerated Reader, similarly, is an interesting area for a more in-depth study but this is beyond the scope of this study. The current work can only touch briefly on Accelerated Reader in order to clarify its nature insofar as it relates to this research.
It may be useful to clarify the meanings of secondary school year groupings. Year 7 is the first year of secondary school, and students are aged 11-12. Year 8 is the second year, and students are aged 12-13.

### 7.2 Methodology overview

The research takes a mixed-methods approach and fits into what Pickard describes as ‘postpositivist’ thinking (Pickard, 2013, pxviii), incorporating qualitative and quantitative analysis. The intention is to provide in-depth information about the case study group, taking note of personal responses and opinions while contextualising this using quantitative data.

As defined by Pickard, the majority of the research fits the definition of a qualitative research design, including as it does, a literature review and ‘fieldwork in a natural setting, using a human instrument’ (Pickard, 2013, p14).

The study also contains elements of quantitative research. Data is analysed to investigate whether reading groups in school may improve reading engagement and hence improve attainment.

The dual role of the researcher, who also acts as group leader in this case study, is borne in mind throughout the research. Pickard acknowledges that ‘identifying that it is impossible to remove all subjectivity from a qualitative study allows the researcher to be constantly alert to this subjectivity and compensate whenever necessary’ (Pickard, 2013, p21).
7.3 The literature review

Since the intention of this case study was to discover the effects of the Carnegie shadowing scheme on reading for pleasure and library engagement, several questions required examination prior to the case study.

Firstly the nature of the Carnegie Medal and the associated shadowing scheme required clarification through a review of the associated literature. Next, it was necessary to clarify what is actually meant by ‘reading for pleasure’, and what its significance might be academically, socially or emotionally. This was addressed via an extensive literature review.

Since one of the defining features of the Carnegie Medal is its literary shortlist, it seemed relevant to consider the question of whether it is beneficial to encourage young people to read challenging literary fiction, or whether reading has benefits regardless of content. Again, this was addressed via an extensive literature review.

An attempt was made to find everything possible on the subject of the Carnegie Medal and reading for pleasure. Searches were conducted using the City University library catalogue, Google and a combined search of the following bibliographic databases:

- British Education Index;
- Child Development and Adolescent Studies;
- Education Abstracts;

The main search terms used were ‘reading’, ‘pleasure’, ‘empathy’, ‘school’, ‘Carnegie’ and ‘shadowing’, and searches were limited to ‘secondary education’ in the British Education Index, and to scholarly (Peer Reviewed) journals in English in all databases.
Use was also made of The Reading Agency’s literature review (Reading Agency, 2015).

Titles were assessed for relevance and authority. Literature from peer-reviewed journals and published books was included, as was research conducted for private companies by academics holding university posts. This was not a comprehensive literature review, but it aimed to include the most influential research from the last ten years, and other smaller studies which touched on the key topics of this study. It also included seminal work published as long ago as 1988 on the basis that this work is still significant today.

Besides this academic literature, opinion pieces by significant authors writing for young people were included where this seemed helpful in creating a picture of current thought and opinions.

The resulting collection of texts were then searched for content relevant to the study’s key questions. All relevant content was incorporated into the literature review.

The tool used by the school to motivate students to read and to assess their reading is Accelerated Reader. A brief literature review was also conducted to examine the nature of this scheme and confirm that it is a valid means of testing reading ability, focusing on the most recent research and the literature produced by Renaissance Learning, the company behind Accelerated Reader. This recent work is not only more thorough than the earlier studies, but also more relevant as the Accelerated Reader scheme has developed over the years.
7.4 Action research

7.4.1 Observation

The case study concerns a Carnegie shadowing group at a large urban comprehensive school. The researcher was in this case also running the shadowing group. This meant that a great deal of informal observation was possible and the group members were quite unselfconscious about their contributions. The intention was to observe without affecting outcomes, despite the dual role as group leader and researcher. Since any group leader would naturally be encouraging debate and discussion, promoting books and trying to encourage enthusiasm for reading, the dual role did not seem to be problematic and this was not a reason to hold back from discussion with the students. At the end of each group meeting notes were immediately typed up to record any points of note from the meetings.

7.4.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used at two points during the research (see Appendices 5 and 6). The first questionnaire aimed to discover the reason why none of the Year 8 students invited to participate in the shadowing group were willing to do so. The questionnaire was mainly a set of multiple choice questions, but included space for participants to add any extra information. This questionnaire was not followed up by any interviews, as it was important not to make the students feel that they were under any pressure to change their minds. The aim was to be a neutral observer and not to influence the proceedings. In the event, the very act of completing a questionnaire seemed to be enough to change the minds of three participants.

The second questionnaire was given to members of the shadowing group at the end of the group’s sessions. It aimed to discover what, if anything, members of the shadowing group felt they had gained from the experience. This questionnaire included some multiple choice questions, but also included more opportunities for participants to use their own words and expand on answers. This seemed appropriate and useful as the questionnaire was being
completed by a small sample group and aimed to gain depth of knowledge and insight rather than statistical information. It was also hoped that allowing participants to expand on their written answers might lead into a more interesting discussion in the group interview which followed immediately.

**7.4.3 Group interview**

When participants had completed and returned their questionnaires, a semi-structured group interview was conducted. There were a couple of pre-determined questions, but then the discussion was allowed to develop in whatever way the participants wished. This was in order to uncover, as far as possible, the things that felt particularly significant to the participants rather than exploring the preconceived ideas of the researcher.

A decision was made to interview students in a group rather than individually because it seemed likely that the resulting debates would stimulate the articulation of ideas more effectively. Some students can become self-conscious and reticent when questioned individually, and since this group knew each other well and had been enjoying group discussions for the duration of the shadowing group, this proved to be effective.

**7.5 Quantitative data collection**

To place the findings of the qualitative elements of the research in context and to establish whether there was any measurable impact of participation in the shadowing group, data on library borrowing was extracted from the school library management software, Eclipse. Thus it was possible to compare students’ borrowing by year group, to show patterns of student engagement with the library throughout the school.

It was also possible to compare the borrowing of students in the autumn term of Year 8 with their borrowing during the autumn term of the previous year, their first term at the school,
to see whether the impression that students become less engaged as they grow older was in fact valid. Equivalent data was extracted for the Year 7 shadowing group members to make a direct comparison and see whether participation in the group affected library engagement by the end of their first term in Year 8.

The school uses Accelerated Reader software to test students’ reading ability and chart progress in reading. This data was also extracted to show the reading ages of the shadowing group members and to compare their progress with the progress of their peers. Accelerated Reader quiz data was also used as a partial indicator of students’ involvement with reading, and was used alongside borrowing figures for the autumn term to highlight the decline in engagement and indicate any effect of participation in the shadowing scheme.

7.6 Ethics

This research involved under-18s, and the researcher was scrupulous in providing them with information about the research. Informed consent was obtained in line with the instructions regarding ethical research from the British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC): ‘Subjects must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research’ (Silverman, 2013, pp162-3). All students involved were provided with an information sheet explaining the research, and were informed both verbally and in writing that there was no obligation to participate.

The head teacher’s permission was also obtained prior to conducting any research.

The ESRC instructs that ‘the confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents must be respected’ (Silverman, 2013, pp162-3), and the study fully complied with this.
The ESRC also says that it is essential that ‘research participants must participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion’ (Silverman, 2013, pp162-3). The questionnaires and group interview were, like the group meetings themselves, conducted at break or lunchtimes. There was therefore no question of the participants feeling obliged or coerced to participate. This is the practice recommended by Pickard (2013, p91) for research in a school setting.
8. Literature Review

8.1 The Carnegie Shadowing Scheme

8.1.1 What is the Carnegie Medal?

The Carnegie Medal is a children’s book award which is ‘awarded annually to the writer of an outstanding book for children’ (CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Book Awards website).

Unlike many other children’s book awards (for example the Red House Book Award), the Carnegie Medal is not influenced by children’s choices. It makes no concessions to popularity, with its own stringent judging criteria relating to plot, characterisation and style (see Appendix 1), and is widely seen as a highly literary award.

The list of winners since the award’s inception in 1936 contains an impressive number of books which remain among the most important and best-loved children’s literature today (see Appendix 2). Medal winners clearly stand the test of time.

8.1.2 What is the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme?

CILIP, who organise this award, also run a very popular shadowing scheme. Under this scheme, school reading groups across the United Kingdom register to participate and read the shortlisted books, submitting reviews and other material via the shadowing scheme website.

Group leaders rate the scheme very highly, commenting that it is ‘the highlight of the year ... something that everyone involved looks forward to immensely’, and ‘the Carnegie Medal,
and our participation in shadowing scheme, is the highlight of my year’ (CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Shadowing Site).

There is regularly debate among school librarians as to the suitability of its shortlist for younger readers, particularly since the core readership tends to be Year 7 and Year 8 students. For some years there has been a concern that Carnegie shortlisted books are becoming more ‘sophisticated’ and ‘complicated’, and ‘more suitable for older readers’ (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p42).

Comments from the School Librarians’ Network, a forum on Yahoo! where librarians share information and advice, include opinions such as ‘again, I need to make the decision whether to only shadow certain books... I really think that I might have to reconsider whether to shadow the Carnegie for future years based on this situation’, to which responses include, ‘I had similar concerns about the books that tend to get shortlisted for Carnegie’, and ‘It's always difficult with Carnegie as it's an aspirational award looking at the best book and not age-related’ (Yahoo! School Librarians’ Network, 2015).

But again, CILIP makes no concessions and despite annual complaints about the depressing, challenging, shocking or inappropriate material shortlisted, it remains a very popular award with the number of Shadowing Groups testifying to its success. By the time the 2015 winner was announced, there were 11,636 reviews on the Shadowing site (CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Shadowing Site).

### 8.1.3 CILIP’s report on their shadowing scheme

In 2011 and 2012, CILIP commissioned research into their shadowing scheme. Phase 1 of the research, conducted in 2011, ‘provides evidence of the impact of shadowing on those participating, in particular identifying:
- benefits to group members and impact on their reading habits and lives
- benefits to group leaders managing reading groups
- the potential effectiveness of shadowing as an advocacy tool for school and public librarians

(Cremin and Swann, 2012, p7).

Phase 2 of the research, conducted in 2012, aimed to ‘provide an in-depth exploration of shadowing practices within six case study shadowing groups working in diverse contexts, including groups identified as ‘hard-to-reach”, and ‘focus particularly on the further investigation of significant aspects of shadowing identified in Phase 1, including the potential benefits of group discussion, potential benefits of shadowing on young people’s writing, the role of group leaders, and the relationship between shadowing and English/literacy lessons’. It also aimed to offer guidance to CILIP for the future direction of the scheme (Cremin and Swann, 2012, pp7-8).

The research indicated that unless Carnegie Shadowing was embedded into the curriculum, it tended to involve many more girls than boys (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p16). It is unclear whether this is because the demands of the Carnegie reading require high-ability readers to take part, and there are more high-ability readers among girls of this age than boys, or whether boys are reluctant to take part for other reasons.

The majority of participating students are aged 11-14, so are in Years 7-9, and a large majority of them report that participation led them to read and enjoy books which they would not otherwise have selected (Cremin and Swann, 2012, pp21-22). We will consider later what the significance may be of broadening children’s literary horizons in this way.
As indicated by the anecdotal evidence mentioned earlier, group leaders are concerned about the difficulty and suitability of the shortlisted books for the age group reading them (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p22).

Since shadowing groups register on the website and are unlikely to de-register, even if the group is inactive, it is hard to be sure of the numbers of active groups at any one time. However the 2011 research identified 1423 groups whose leaders had at least logged in once that year (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p25).

8.1.3.1 Shadowing group activities

Almost all Shadowing Groups (92.8%) are in schools, and on the whole (74.7%) are run by librarians (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p28). The average size of a group was found to be 20 but this figure was arrived at by discounting groups of over 300 and under 2, so it is likely to include whole year-group efforts as well as dedicated discussion groups. The vast majority of children involved are in Years 7, 8 and 9 (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p30).

To break this down further we can look at the data for students’ questions to authors via the website. The two largest groups of students volunteering questions are primary-aged (32%) and 11-12 years old (35%) (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p36). With only 24% of students aged 13-14 years volunteering questions, we can begin to form a picture of a typical Carnegie shadowing group being comprised of Year 7 and Year 8 secondary students, led by their school librarian.

The Shadowing Site offers groups the facility to create their own home page where group members may post reviews, blogs and videos, as well as rate the books and create online polls.

The only information about non-web-based activities carried out by the groups is drawn from information provided by group leaders at the time of registration. It therefore reflects
only their plans at the time of setting up the group. However, Cremin and Swann were able to draw on data from the site to determine actual use of the web-based activities.

‘As predicted by group leaders when completing the survey, posting reviews of the short-listed books is a particularly popular activity. However, numbers of reviews varied considerably: of the 932 groups posting reviews, most posted fewer than 30 and over half posted fewer than ten.’ (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p32).

No information was collected to connect number of reviews to group size. Given the wide variety in size and type of group mentioned above, this makes it hard to know for sure how engaged children are with the scheme. But the fact that more than half of the groups posted fewer than ten reviews is very striking, especially in the context of the group leaders’ plans. ‘Sending/reading reviews’ was planned by 949 group leaders. When compared with the figure of 82 group leaders planning the next most popular activity (creating their own Group Home Page on the Shadowing Site), it is clear that group leaders perceive writing reviews to be very much a core activity of shadowing the Carnegie Medal. There appears to be some mismatch between group leaders’ plans and the actual activities of the children involved.

This reflects the opinions of children in a previous study of reading for pleasure. Here, pupils were asked what activities they would like to do to ‘help themselves and others read more’. Designing websites or magazines, meeting authors and reading games were the most popular choices, while rating books and writing reviews were the least popular (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p23).

8.1.3.2 What is special about Carnegie Shadowing?

Although many of the schools participating in the shadowing scheme also run other reading-related initiatives such as World Book Day events, author visits and readathons, librarians seemed to feel that the Carnegie offered something different. There was a common concern
that reading for pleasure was ‘side-lined, as in their view the ‘standards’ agenda took precedence’ (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p43).

This is a widely discussed concern, well-articulated by the author Philip Pullman: ‘I recently read through the sections on reading in key stages 1 to 3 of the national literacy strategy, and I was very struck by something about the verbs. I wrote them all down. They included "reinforce", "predict", "check", "discuss", "identify", "categorise", "evaluate", "distinguish", "summarise", "infer", "analyse", "locate"... and so on: 71 different verbs, by my count, for the activities that come under the heading of "reading". And the word "enjoy" didn't appear once.’ (Pullman, 2003).

It was felt that, even while some of the reading-related events might be high-profile within the school, they did not ‘develop young people’s deep pleasure in reading in the way that the shadowing scheme does’, and that in the day-to-day activities of a school librarian there was ‘limited time for talking about texts... This time to debate and discuss books was seen as a central feature of the CKG shadowing scheme, by both group leaders and young people.’ (Cremin and Swann, 2012, pp43-44).

8.1.3.3 What are the benefits of Carnegie Shadowing?

Some key themes emerged from the report. These included ‘shadowing as a means of developing and supporting young people’s reading for pleasure; the broadening of young people’s reading repertoire; the development of young people’s cultural and historical knowledge and understanding; and certain social benefits, such as creating a sense of belonging, and providing a safe environment in which to voice opinions’ (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p47).
Other areas for consideration were the impact of the informal nature of the book discussions, ‘development of literary appreciation and literary argument’, and ‘the impact of shadowing on young people’s writing’.

A theme which keeps emerging from the students’ comments in the report is ‘fun’. Students value the experience as being enjoyable, although those engaged in shadowing as a curricular activity report less positively on it. Perhaps this is inevitable, as extra-curricular groups are entirely voluntary and self-selecting.

Another aspect which emerged was the group leaders’ sense of the importance of broadening the children’s reading. The shadowing scheme is widely seen as a way to challenge students who may otherwise get stuck in a single author or genre fiction rut. Children’s responses, too, led Cremin and Swann to conclude that ‘the scheme is stretching young readers, providing access to new voices and different styles of writing’ (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p49). We will examine the significance of reading more broadly and at a more challenging level later.

But the group leaders were not only concerned with challenging the children. Shadowing was also seen as a way of introducing ‘worthwhile contemporary literature outside the traditional literary canon’ – i.e., literary fiction which would not appear on the curriculum.

The shadowing group was also found to be a sort of safe-haven for readers to discuss and enthuse about books without being labelled as geeky or uncool (Cremin and Swann, 2012, pp50-53), and a way to increase confidence (p55).

The report also raised the possibility that shadowing group participation might be of direct educational benefit and improve curriculum work. The group leaders mentioned that book group discussions generated a ‘transferable skill’, developing listening skills, oral
communication and the ability to develop and defend a view. However this was not actually an area of research focus, so while the views of the group leaders may be valid it should be remembered that they are naturally biased and may be inclined to defend library activities as being of direct relevance to the classroom.

While claiming that the shadowing group develops classroom skills, group leaders appear simultaneously to be arguing that the contrast between reading for English lessons and reading for the Carnegie shadowing group is beneficial. The target and assessment focused nature of studying literature in English lessons is described as a threat to reading for pleasure (p65). Reading for the shadowing group, on the other hand, is purely for pleasure.

The added difference of allowing choice of reading matter is also significant and valued by group members, as well as the fact that there is no obligation to finish reading a book if it is not being enjoyed.

More time is given to discussion in shadowing groups than in English lessons. The freeform nature of the discussion is contrasted with the more directed and structured discussion of texts that may take place in an English lesson (p77). It is unclear what the impact of this is on participants, but there is a suggestion that it may result in more confident and articulate expressions of opinions. Cremin and Swann have produced a table to clearly show the perceived contrasts between shadowing group discussions and English lessons (see Appendix 3).

8.1.3.4 A note on bias

When considering the evidence presented by Cremin and Swann of the benefits of the shadowing scheme, it is probably worth bearing in mind that the research was commissioned by the Carnegie Trust and CILIP, who organise the award. While the work was conducted under the aegis of the Open University, it is very possible that there is some bias.
in the reporting of the scheme’s worth. A large part of the report is dedicated to recommendations on how the scheme might be improved, so this is not (nor is it purporting to be) an entirely neutral piece of work.

### 8.2 Reading for pleasure

#### 8.2.1 Introduction

It is obvious, and a fact supported by a considerable amount of research (Dugdale and Clark, 2008, p11), that basic literacy is vital for a successful life and that the consequences of poor literacy skills are devastating. Indeed, literacy has been shown to affect not only a person’s success but also their happiness (Dugdale and Clark, 2008, p5). Reading ability strongly correlates to success in Mathematics and Science (Kirsch et al, 2002, p15), and is therefore not only a goal in itself but an essential part of a student’s learning toolkit.

But beyond this basic level of competence, it may be that reading for the sheer pleasure of it confers some further benefits. Foster, discussing the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report, suggests that encouraging students to read for pleasure will be a mechanism for ‘effecting social change’, continuing, ‘We are teaching the mechanics of reading well, but need to look for more ways to make reading accessible and fun’. (Foster, 2003, p15).

The 2011 UK national strategy for secondary English tended to focus on the mechanics, intending that ‘pupils will engage with, and respond to, a rich variety of print, electronic and multi-modal texts, developing analysis and awareness of the forms and purposes of writing, and the contexts and cultures within which they were written’ (Department for Education, 2011).
By way of contrast, the Irish national strategy for literacy and numeracy lists among its aims: ‘Foster an enjoyment of reading among children and young people’ (Department of Education and Skills, 2011, p17). This document notes (pp30-31) that ‘successful literacy policies and interventions’ in other countries include ‘encouraging young people to read for enjoyment,’ and further declares (p43) that all learners ‘should benefit from the opportunity to experience the joy and excitement of getting ‘lost’ in a book’.

Why is reading for pleasure considered by some to be so important? And what exactly do we mean when we talk about reading for pleasure?

8.2.2 Defining reading for pleasure

‘Reading for pleasure’ is also known as leisure reading, pleasure reading, ludic reading, voluntary reading, spare time reading, recreational reading, reading for enjoyment, independent reading, reading outside of school, free voluntary reading and self-selected reading (Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, 2007, p22; Nell, 1988; Krashen, 2004; Laurenson et al, 2015). It has been variously defined and described as:

- ‘reading that we do of our own free will anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading’ (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p5);
- ‘reading students choose to do on their own, as opposed to reading that is assigned to them’ (Mellon, cited in Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, 2007, p22);
- ‘reading because you want to: no book reports, no questions at the end of the chapter… the kind of reading most of us do obsessively all the time’ (Krashen, 2004, p1);
- ‘a form of reading that is not tied to particular curricular tasks or learning objectives, or used to practise a set of prescribed skills or identify textual features… It is simply reading for the sake of reading’ (Laurenson et al, 2015, p8);
- involving ‘personal choice, choosing what one wants to read, and reading widely from a variety of sources’ (Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, 2007, p22); and
‘a form of play. It is free activity standing outside ordinary life; it absorbs the player completely, is unproductive’ (Nell, 1988, p7).

Although some have argued that the definition of reading for pleasure should be expanded to include the reading of magazines, websites, blogs and video games (Tarulli, 2014, p298), for the purposes of this study we will concern ourselves with the narrower and more traditional idea of reading for pleasure as involving a text narrative. The wider picture is something which may be partially considered later when we discuss the question of whether the nature of the reading matter is significant.

Pullman, (cited in Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p7), describes the pleasurable nature of reading as ‘like a conversation’. He considers it an active process in which the reader chooses how to engage, at what speed, and ultimately ‘we can assent or we can disagree’.

Nell’s seminal 1988 study of the psychology of reading for pleasure examines the physiological effect of ‘ludic’ reading. It focuses on light reading, which the subjects largely consider to be ‘trash’ of no intellectual worth. The findings are counterintuitive in that the subjects are more aroused by light fiction than by ‘hard’ reading or arithmetic. Nell compares the absorbed state of the ludic reader to hypnosis (Nell, 1988, p40).

A recurring theme here is ‘choice’, to which we will return later. Other key elements are the lack of assessment or goals. This may seem at odds with the idea of reading for pleasure being itself an educational goal. It is worth considering whether there is a tension between the methods schools employ in their drive to encourage reading, and the very nature of reading for pleasure.
8.2.3 Motivation

Schools are keen for students to read for pleasure because they perceive there to be academic benefits (discussed later). But evidently there is an issue with encouraging an activity which by its very nature has no other purpose or goal, when one does so with the actual goal in mind of improving academic attainment. So what does motivate people to read?

Cremin and Swann’s report on the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme cites Woods in identifying what makes people want to read: ‘It must be reading you do for yourself, at your own pace, in your own way, and that has a bearing on your own background, interests, values, beliefs and aspirations’ (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p41).

For those who read for pleasure, ‘the intrinsic reward is so great that it will stimulate additional reading’ (Krashen, 2004, p116). There is no need for reward schemes of any sort. Clark and Rumbold discuss the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to read (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, pp15-16). Self-evidently, extrinsic motivation (i.e. being motivated by fear of getting into trouble or by desire to achieve grades or rewards) is not linked with pleasure. Intrinsically motivated readers genuinely read for pleasure.

In fact, attempts to motivate reading extrinsically may be counterproductive. A 1979 study by McLoyd (cited by Krashen, 2004, p117) asked three groups of primary school children to read 250 words of a book and then share their opinion of the book. One group was not offered any reward for doing this, while the other two groups were offered an impressive reward and an unimpressive reward respectively. The two rewarded groups behaved in the same way; the nature of the reward made no difference. They read as much as required to earn their rewards. But the unrewarded group behaved in a strikingly different way, reading much more and in some cases more than double the amount of those children in the rewarded groups.
As we might expect, there is a relationship between reading ability and motivation to read. There is a ‘circular relationship between practice and achievement’ (Kirsch et al, 2002, p126), whereby able readers enjoy reading, so read more, thereby improving vocabulary and reading skills – and hence increasing their motivation to read. This naturally leads to a widening in the gap between good and poor readers, a particular problem for England, as we shall see below.

A key element in motivation to read is the influence of peers. Research into ‘Sustained Silent Reading programs’ indicated that students who discussed their books with their peers made more progress than students who had weekly meetings to discuss their reading with their teacher (Manning and Manning, 1984, cited by Krashen, 2004, pp89-90).

Peer recommendations are very significant in encouraging reading. In America, the National Assessment of Educational Progress showed that ‘students who engaged in frequent discussions about their reading with friends and family were more motivated and had higher reading achievement scores than did students who did not have such interactions’ (Mullis, Campbell and Farstrup, 1993, cited by Gambrell, 1996, p22).

This picture is repeated in many different research contexts (Almasi, 1995, Slavin, 1990, Wood, 1990, all cited by Gambrell, 1996, p22). It is clear that a reading community, through which students have the opportunity to discuss their reading, can play a powerful role in motivating students to read for pleasure.

A child’s family will have the greatest part to play in this. The most powerful force for encouraging a love of reading is a family which regularly reads aloud to young children, offers appropriate reading matter to older ones and visibly enjoys reading and discussing books (Strommen and Mates, 2004, p189). As far as schools are concerned, the area they
can hope to influence is the creation of a community of readers and a culture of reading in which students may recommend and discuss books.

The picture of what motivates children to read is not completely clear. The overall picture, however, does not appear to be that children are primarily reading for ‘fun’. They are more often motivated by skills-based or informational reasons. (Education standards research team, 2012, p17).

**8.2.4 Reading for pleasure – the current landscape**

The finding that most children are not on the whole reading for pleasure chimes with the findings from the 2001 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Twist et al looked closely at the fact that, while children in England were able to read well in comparison with the other 34 countries involved in the study, their attitudes to reading were worse than in most of those other countries (Twist et al, 2004, p387). While the 2011 PIRLS report shows a slight improvement in attitudes to reading (Twist et al, 2012), it nevertheless shows the UK as ‘ranked 47th out of 65 nations based on how many children read for pleasure’ (Libraries All Party Parliamentary Group, 2014, p19).

The latest PISA report indicates that the gap between England’s lowest and highest scoring pupils in reading is relatively large compared with most other countries. The overall picture for England at the moment is not good, with the number of countries outperforming England in 2012 having steadily increased from 7 in 2006 to 12 in 2009 and finally 17 in 2012 (Wheater et al, 2014, p64).

But returning to reading for pleasure rather than attainment, the picture is not completely clear. In 2002 Coles and Hall set out to replicate a large-scale national study of children’s reading for pleasure, conducted in 1971. They found that there had been no decline in the amount that children were reading, apart from in the specific group of 14-year-old boys (Coles and Hall, 2002, pp99-100).
Not every study has found this to be the case, and Clark (2012, cited by Laurenson et al, 2015, p10) suggests that although young people may be reading less than in the past, this is not because they actually enjoy it less. She suggests that the other, competing, demands in their lives may lead them to spend less time on books despite the fact that they actually do enjoy reading. Certainly students are expected to read increasing amounts of required material for school as they get older, besides all of the other exciting opportunities afforded by new-found levels of independence (Laurenson et al, 2015, p10).

However this suggestion is countered by Strommen and Mates’ research with older children and teens. Surveys over the years have shown that ‘young people across all age groups devote very little time to recreational reading, and this has been true since the 1940s’ (Strommen and Mates, 2004, p189).

They found that although young people who did not regularly read for pleasure would say that this was because of other demands on their time, and might even say that they wished to read more, those who did actually read for pleasure would find the time no matter what. It is often concluded that entertaining distractions such as television or computer games are leading children away from books, but in fact there have been several studies (Greaney, 1980, Neuman, 1986, 1995, Searls, Mean and Ward, 1985, all cited by Strommen and Mates, 2004, p189) which have ‘failed to find a significant relationship between time spent reading and time spent watching television for any age group.’

It appears to be a matter of degree when it comes to the desire to read and choices about how to spend leisure time – does one flip through a magazine, or sit down with a book? The authors conclude that ‘it does not appear that the demands of school assignments and activities dictate the choices young people make about reading. Rather, attitudes about reading determine these choices’ (Strommen and Mates, 2004, p188).

Similar contradictions are found in research on adult reading habits, even within a single report. Billington, reporting for Quick Reads, writes that ‘one in three adults in the UK do not read for pleasure’ (Billington, 2015, p3), and yet on the next page finds that ‘just over
half of the UK adult population regularly reads for pleasure’. Evidently this is the finding from her own research, but she does not cite the original and less encouraging statistic.

Several reports do suggest that there is no waning of reading for pleasure among Britain’s adults. Clark and Rumbold, writing in 2006, found that book sales had risen by 30% since the mid-1990s. And a survey in 2006 indicated that ‘82% of adults enjoyed reading’ (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p6).

What does appear clear is that there is a class divide when it comes to reading for pleasure. Reading, along with playing sports and playing a musical instrument, is less likely to feature among the preferred activities of ‘young people from poorer families’ (Chowdry et al, 2010, p37) in comparison with ‘children from more privileged social classes’ (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p7).

Similarly a gender divide has long been apparent and shows no sign of diminishing (Clark and Foster, 2005, cited by Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p7), with boys much less likely to read for pleasure than girls.

**8.2.5 Why doesn’t everyone read?**

In some cases, low reading ability is clearly linked to lack of motivation. Reading is not a pleasure when it is a struggle and, where students arrive at secondary school without the necessary skills to enjoy a book, some intervention will be required.

But this is not the whole story. It is not the case that all good readers are active readers in their leisure time.

Often students who say that they enjoy reading simply do not do it. They may feel that they are too busy with other activities, but that they do in fact enjoy reading when they do it (Laurenson et al, 2015, p10).
In their 2015 study, Laurenson et al found that children tended to be very engaged with reading at primary school, where there was often a genuine culture of reading for pleasure. Primary children were given time to read books of their own choice in class, with ‘no curricular objectives’. There appeared to be a mismatch between the primary experience and secondary expectations. Secondary teachers tended to be surprised by the amount of books children had read at primary, even expressing ‘frustration’ that they had already read some of the books that they planned to use as set texts. Primary children’s expectations of what ‘reading’ at school meant involved independent free reading, while secondary teachers planned teacher-led activities in which the whole class focused on a set piece of text. (Laurenson et al, 2015, pp11-12).

The teachers involved this study expressed a feeling that they had not felt that encouraging reading for pleasure was really part of their remit, rather focusing on exam texts (Laurenson et al, 2015, p13).

Students who cite lack of time as an obstacle to reading are very likely, as mentioned earlier, to be manifesting a lack of motivation to read rather than actually being too short of time. In fact, a keen reader will always find the time to read. In Strommen and Mates’ 2004 study of the reading habits of older children and teenagers, those designated ‘readers’ chose to read for pleasure almost every day – regardless of other demands on their time. This mystified their non-reading friends: ‘Several of the Not-readers we interviewed expressed open admiration for their friends who are voracious readers, claiming to be baffled by how these students find the time to read books of their choice given the pressure of school assignments and after-school activities’ (Strommen and Mates, 2004, pp187-188).

Those who did not read clearly viewed it as impressive that their friends found the time to do so, and many expressed the opinion that those who did so were faster readers. However Nell’s work on the psychology of reading for pleasure indicates that in fact what he terms ‘ludic’ readers will vary their pace considerably, often lingering over particularly enjoyable passages. Pleasurable reading is not rushed (Nell, 1988, pp16-20).
It appears that, as Strommen and Mates contend, it is neither the pressure of school work
nor the lure of electronic diversions that determine whether young people read. It is
determined by their attitudes about reading (Strommen and Mates, 2004, p188).

8.2.6 The social side of reading

As mentioned earlier, peer recommendations and a community of readers are important in
motivating and encouraging reading enthusiasm. Keen readers often see participation in a
reading community as ‘an important part of their identity’ (Strommen and Mates, 2004,
p184).

This is a well-recognised phenomenon, and many studies have found that creating
opportunities for discussion among students about their books can increase engagement.

As we have seen earlier, a recognised benefit of Carnegie Shadowing Groups is that they are
a safe place to express enthusiasm for books without the danger of being labelled a ‘geek’

Strommen and Mates’ study suggests that this is not a real issue, as the keen readers had
friends who did not read for pleasure. ‘Peer group approval was not a big issue with
Readers, even in adolescence’ (Strommen and Mates, 2004, p184). This may be misleading,
however; readers may well have close friendships with peers who do not read for pleasure,
but this does not indicate that there is no negative social judgement on keen readers.

Certainly Clark and Osborne’s investigation into why and how reading for pleasure declines
as children grow older suggests that this is the case. They found that primary-aged children
perceived readers to be ‘happy and have lots of friends’, while secondary students believed
that readers were ‘clever/intelligent’ but were also ‘geeks, boring… people who do not go
out much’ (Clark and Osborne, 2008, p4).
8.3 The benefits of reading for pleasure

8.3.1 General benefits

We have seen that basic literacy is essential and impacts on many other areas of life. But if it is possible to be a technically competent reader without spending leisure time reading for pleasure, and if reading for pleasure is not perceived by teenagers to be socially desirable, why should we encourage them to do it?

Firstly, the pure pleasure of being absorbed in a book is valued by readers. Reading is the most common way for people to achieve the psychological state of ‘flow’, in which a person is ‘so engrossed in an activity that nothing else matters’ (Towey, 2001, p132).

In a study of information discovery through fiction, readers were asked whether any book had ever made a big difference in their lives. Some responded that they read ‘to be entertained, not changed; that what they value is the pleasurable experience of reading itself and not some residue of knowledge or improvement that is left behind’ (Ross, 2000, p4).

On the other hand, one third of those questioned said that there had been a ‘transformative book’, which had ‘opened up a new perspective, helped its reader see things differently, or offered an enlarged set of possibilities’. Books offered inspiration and guidance for the readers’ own lives (Ross, 2000, pp5-6).

Besides the other general benefits such as general knowledge (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, Cunningham and Stanovich cited by Dugdale and Clark, 2008, p11), reading does appear to influence cognitive development (Krashen, 2004, p35). Simonton (cited by Krashen, 2004, p36) observed that ‘omnivorous reading in childhood and adolescence correlates positively with ultimate adult success’, though of course this correlation may not be causative.

Similar correlations have been observed between reading and creativity (Schafer and Anastasi, cited by Krashen, 2004, p36), imaginative thinking (Mar et al, cited by Bal and
Veltkamp, 2013, p2), and career outcomes. In a study by Emery and Csikszentmihayly (cited by Krashen, 2004, p36), men from similar blue-collar backgrounds with very different professional lives were compared. 15 had grown up to become professors, while 15 had grown up to become blue-collar workers like their parents. Reading and access to books in the home was the notable difference in the childhoods of these men.

This finding is strongly confirmed by the much-quoted evidence from the PISA report for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which shows that enjoyment of reading is more influential than the family’s socio-economic status when it comes to a child’s educational attainment (Kirsch et al 2002). We shall return to this later in a closer examination of the relationship between reading and academic attainment.

The Reading Agency’s recent paper reviewing the literature on reading for pleasure includes a map of the outcomes of reading for pleasure for children and young people (Reading Agency, 2015), shown below in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Impacts of reading for pleasure for children and young people** (Reading Agency, 2015, p20)
The benefits of reading for pleasure appear to be not only academic but also social and emotional. We shall examine each area in turn.

### 8.3.2 Emotional wellbeing & social connection

Nell’s study of the psychology of reading for pleasure concludes with a powerful description of the significance of reading and the strength of the experience for the skilled reader. The apparently effortless control of the reader over their chosen text, and the way in which a reader is physiologically aroused and their consciousness is changed by a book, ‘combine to confer on the skilled reader the sovereignty of the reading experience through which, with striking economy of means and precision of outcome, readers transform fear to power, gloom to delight, and agitation to tranquillity’ (Nell, 1988, p46).

Reading for pleasure appears to be strongly connected with happiness. Exploring other worlds in text has been described as something which can ‘nourish teens’ emotions and psyches as well as their intellects’ (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw and Rycik, cited by Strommen and Mates, 2004, p189).

A large-scale study of adults found it to be associated with lower stress and less feelings of depression than are experienced by non-readers. Readers report that it is more relaxing than watching television, spending time on social media or reading magazines (Billington, 2015, p4).

High self-esteem also correlates with regular reading for pleasure. Self-esteem is also improved: ‘readers are 10% more likely to report good self-esteem than non readers and those who read for just 30 minutes a week are 18% more likely to report higher self-esteem’ (Billington, 2015, p7). They therefore find themselves better able ‘to make decisions, to plan and prioritise’. Billington suggest that this may be because they recognise from their reading that setbacks are inevitable; reading gives them perspective on their own lives.
Despite the often negative perception of readers by teenagers, Billington found that ‘people who read regularly feel closer to their friends and to their community than lapsed or non-readers’, and that they have a better understanding of cultural diversity and more respect for the views of others. (Billington, 2015, p4 & p8, Meek, 1991 cited by Dugdale and Clark, 2008, p11).

Readers are more inclined to engage with people beyond their friendship groups. Interestingly, ‘people reading for just 30 minutes a week are 27% more likely to find it easy to start a conversation with a stranger and 50% more likely to enjoy it... Reading for just 30 minutes a week means you’re 52% more likely to feel socially included than those who haven’t read in the last week and 72% more likely to have greater community spirit’ (Billington, 2015, p8). This is particularly notable in the light of the secondary school students’ perception of readers as being socially isolated.

In a study of the emotional effects of reading fiction, it was found to be ‘positively correlated with social support (Mar et al, 2009, p407). Curiously, the reverse appeared to be true regarding exposure to nonfiction, which was associated with loneliness.

Events such as reading groups in school which focus on reading for pleasure can, besides improving reading ability and engagement, aid social skills and development. Readers may come to ‘see reading as a social activity through which they can form and cement friendships’ (Allan, Ellis and Pearson, 2005, p22).

This social side of reading continues to be important in adulthood, as demonstrated in a study of British book buying and borrowing (cited by Dugdale and Clark, 2008, p12). This found that reading offered social connection and interaction, besides being ‘a way of relieving stress, a form of escapism, a means of finding things out and acquiring information, and of improving knowledge/self-development’.
8.3.3 Empathy

We may even look beyond the role of reading as a means of social connection and a mechanism for broadening the mind. There is now some evidence to suggest that increase in empathy is a quantifiable benefit of reading for pleasure.

The idea of a link between reading fiction and possession of good empathy skills is not new. Billington’s study shows that ‘two thirds of readers... report strong empathy versus less than half of non-readers... What’s more, people who read for just 30 minutes a week are 23% more likely to understand other people’s feelings’ (Billington, 2015, p8). Other researchers, too, have found that ‘readers of fiction tend to have better abilities of empathy and theory of mind’ (Mar et al, cited by Mar et al, 2009, p407).

In a 2006 study, it was shown that regular fiction readers not only scored better on empathy tasks than non-readers, but also better than readers of ‘expository non-fiction’ (Mar et al, cited by Mar et al, 2009, pp408).

However, as is so often the case with associations of this type, it has been unclear whether this is a causal relationship.

Indeed it has been plausibly suggested that it is false to claim that the act of reading makes people more empathic, and that the data simply reflects the fact that empathic people are more inclined to read fiction (Argo et al, cited by Bal and Veltkamp, 2013).

Mar et al conducted a study which attempted to rule out the role of personality and to identify to what degree reading can be said to affect empathy. They statistically controlled for the trait of Openness, for ‘the tendency to be drawn into stories’ and for gender. They concluded that ‘even after accounting for these variables, fiction exposure still predicted performance on an empathy task’ (Mar et al, 2009, p407).

Their research concluded that it was not the case that people who tended to openness would also tend to enjoy fiction and would perform better on tests of empathy. They found
that, on the contrary, the reading of fiction itself was making these changes (Mar et al, 2009, p421).

Building on a body of research indicating that reading fiction can affect attitudes in a number of ways (Green, Green & Brock, Prentice, Gerrig & Bailis, Strange & Leung, all cited by Mar et al, 2009), the researchers found that reading fiction has far-reaching and lasting effects. Its significance is not limited to its role as a leisure and recreational activity.

This phenomenon has been further studied by Bal and Veltkamp in their ‘Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation’. They found that the effects of reading fiction are not immediate but develop over time. They describe a ‘sleeper effect’ as requiring an ‘incubation period’ during which people rethink what they have read. Spending time on ‘unrelated activities’ may actually increase fiction’s effect on problem-solving and empathy as the reader unconsciously makes connections between what they have read and their real life (Bal and Veltkamp, 2013, pp3-4).

The researchers found that reading fiction in an absorbed, ‘transported’ way can increase empathy. But they also, more surprisingly, found that reading in a less engaged way can actually have the reverse effect, decreasing the reader’s empathy levels (Bal and Veltkamp, 2013, p5). This remarkable finding is entirely new, and may concern schools determined to improve reading ability by insisting that reluctant students read fiction regardless of enjoyment. Bal and Veltkamp suggest that while emotional transportation during reading results in a positive change to the reader, a lack of engagement and possibly frustration may lead to the reader becoming ‘more self-centred and selfish in order to protect the sense of self in relation to others… Hence, their empathic skills may decrease when they disengage’ (pp8-10).

In other words, reading for pleasure increases empathy. When reading fiction is not a pleasure, it actually has a detrimental effect.

Empathy is associated with creativity, performance at work and socially positive behaviour (Bal and Veltkamp, 2013, p10). A web of positive connections begins to appear between
reading fiction, creativity, empathy, social and emotional wellbeing and intellectual achievement.

Finally, in a truly astonishing piece of work, Webhe et al have revealed the different areas of the brain which are active in processing different parts of a text. It emerges that physical motions of characters in a story can be seen to activate the posterior temporal cortex/angular gyrus, which is active in perceiving biological motion. ‘It has been shown that imagined biological motion also activates this area’ (Webhe et al, 2014, p14). In addition, reading dialogue activates several regions associated with language.

But most interestingly, reading dialogue in a piece of fiction also activates the right temporoparietal junction: a region which is important in theory of mind, the ability to attribute to others emotions and perspectives different from one’s own. According to the researchers, ‘this observation raises an exciting hypothesis to pursue: that the presence of dialog increases the demands for perspective interpretation and recruits theory of mind regions. The identities of different story characters can be distinguished based on neural activity in the right posterior superior/middle temporal region’ (Webhe et al, 2014, p14).

8.3.4 Academic attainment

It comes as no surprise to find that keen readers tend to achieve well at school. Reading for pleasure has been shown to be associated with higher attainment in reading, writing ability, text comprehension, grammar, improved vocabulary, increased general knowledge and better understanding of other cultures (e.g. Clark and Rumbold, 2006, pp8-9).

But what is not immediately obvious is the causal relationship. It might be imagined that academically able children will tend to read well and as a result will enjoy reading, rather than it being the case that the act of regular reading itself improves academic attainment.

Nell, writing in 1988, concludes that ‘no causal inferences can be drawn about the strong positive correlations between reading speed, book reading time and quantity and book
reading motivation. High reading comprehension speeds may be a precondition for ludic reading or may develop as a consequence of it’ (Nell, 1988, p14).

Similarly, Clark says ‘higher attainment may lead to greater enjoyment, more frequent reading or more positive attitudes; or alternatively higher enjoyment, more frequent reading or more positive attitudes may lead to higher attainment. Indeed, the relationship might be cyclical’ (Clark, cited by Laurenson et al, 2015, pp19-20).

Krashen, on the other hand, maintains that ‘When children read for pleasure… they acquire, involuntarily and without conscious effort, nearly all of the so-called language skills many people are so concerned about: they will become adequate readers…. Although free voluntary reading alone will not ensure the attainment of the highest levels of literacy, it will at least ensure an acceptable level. It will also provide the competence necessary for dealing with demanding texts’ (Krashen, 2004, pp149-150).

Krashen even argues that direct instruction in English has ‘little or no effect’, and that independent reading is by far the most effective way (in fact, he says, ‘the only way’) that we ‘become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammatical competence, and the only way we become good spellers’ (Krashen, 2004, pp36-37).

Children’s reading engagement has been ‘strongly linked’ to attainment not only in spelling and vocabulary, but also in maths (Sullivan and Brown, 2015, p37). This research shows, having controlled for test scores at age 5 and 10, that it is not simply the case that more able children read a lot, but that ‘reading is actually linked to increased cognitive progress over time’ (Sullivan and Brown, 2015, p37).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the largest effect was found to be on vocabulary – but the effect on other areas was still large. The effect of regular reading for pleasure at the ages 10 and 16 was equivalent to ‘a 14.4 percentage point advantage in vocabulary, 9.9 percentage points in maths, and 8.6 percentage points in spelling’, even after controlling not only for parental social background but also for the parents’ reading behaviour. The well-known positive
effect of having educated parents was far less significant than that of regular reading for 
pleasure, being an advantage of 4.2 percentage points for vocabulary, 3.0 percentage points 
for maths and 1.8 percentage points for spelling (Sullivan and Brown, 2015, p2).

This finding echoes research from 1997 which shows that 13-year-olds with high reading 
engagement achieve higher average reading scores than less engaged 17-year-olds. Indeed, 
engaged readers from low income/education families have higher attainment than less 
engaged readers from more privileged backgrounds (Campbell, Voelkl and Dohahue, cited 
by Kirsch et al, 2002, p107). Engagement in reading provides gains in learning equivalent to 
‘several years of education’ and outweighs the effects of low family income and educational 

The much-cited report on PISA for OECD also shows that reading engagement is more 
significant for academic attainment than parental occupational status. While it will be no 
surprise to learn that students from the highest socio-economic backgrounds who are highly 
engaged in reading score best in reading, nor that students from the lowest socio-economic 
backgrounds who are least engaged in reading score the lowest, what happens in between 
these extremes is more interesting. Very strikingly, teenagers from a low socio-economic 
background who are highly engaged in reading score better in reading than less engaged 
students from higher socio-economic backgrounds (Kirsch et al, 2002, p106). This can be 
clearly seen in Figure 2 below.

Of particular interest for schools may be the finding that, while within each socio-economic 
group there is an obvious difference in achievement between those with low and high 
reading engagement, reading engagement makes the greatest difference to students from 
the lowest socio-economic backgrounds. Reading therefore appears to be an exceptionally 
powerful tool for social change and vital for ‘closing the gap’.
As we might expect, reading engagement and reading ability are reciprocally connected in a virtuous circle. The more a person reads, the better they become at reading, and hence the more they will be motivated to read (Cunningham and Stanovich, cited by Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p8). Conversely, when poor readers lack the motivation to read and hence read very little, they stand little chance of learning (Baker, Dreher and Guthrie, cited by Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p7).

Ultimately, because reading develops vocabulary, general knowledge and verbal reasoning skills, highly engaged readers will achieve better across the whole curriculum than their equally intelligent but less well-read peers (Cunningham and Stanovich, cited by Allan et al, 2005, p5).
8.3.5 Accessing the benefits of reading

Research into the use of small, informal, mixed-ability reading groups found that they were beneficial to reading attitudes and behaviours. The groups resulted in more positive attitudes towards reading in school, and in an increase in reading for pleasure at home. Boys in particular reported that they were recommending books to friends and becoming absorbed in their books. Their receptive vocabulary improved, which is particularly notable because ‘a wider vocabulary contributes to verbal reasoning ability and thus empowers children’s ability to learn across the curriculum’ (Allan et al, 2005, pp3-4).

8.4 Does it matter what children read?

8.4.1 Overview

Having established that it does matter, very much, that children read, the next important question would seem to be whether it matters what they actually read. Some argue that, as long as young people are reading something, it does not really matter what.

In a study on the role of pleasure reading for 12-15 year olds, Howard says: ‘Active critical reading can take place with any text as stimulus; thus, reader’s stance is more important to the reading experience than the inherent quality of the text itself’ (Howard, 2011, p54).

Unsurprisingly, the majority of young people’s reading does not consist of literary fiction. In fact, text messages, magazines, websites and emails are the most commonly read, while fiction is read for choice by only two-fifths of young people (Clark and Douglas, cited by the Education Standards Research Team, 2012). Comics, comic books and newspapers too are becoming slightly more popular (Twist et al, cited by Education Standards Research Team, 2012).
Nell observes that, ‘in keeping with the Protestant ethic, readers perceive literary merit to be inversely related to reading pleasure’ (Nell, 1988, p6). This may very well be the case when it comes to adult opinions of young people’s reading and we should examine its validity.

### 8.4.2 Gender

Given the gender gap in reading attainment (Clark and Burke, 2012), perhaps the difference in boys’ and girls’ reading material is interesting. Girls are twice as likely as boys to read fiction for pleasure. Girls are more likely to read magazines, while boys are more likely to read newspapers and comic books. Even within fiction, there are differences. Girls are more likely to read ‘adventure, horror/ghost, romance/relationship and animal-related books, while boys were significantly more likely than girls to read science fiction/fantasy, sports-related and war/spy related books. Boys also read more comics, joke books and humorous fiction than girls’ (Clark and Burke, 2012, p12).

While it is not necessarily the case, as is commonly believed, that most boys prefer non-fiction to fiction, it is certainly true that most non-fiction readers are boys. Girls are more likely to read series books and periodicals (Coles and Hall, 2002, p103). This means that it is more likely that girls will share the same reading matter, perhaps significant in creating the kind of reading community that we have seen is so important in motivating reading for pleasure.

### 8.4.3 Does it have to be ‘serious’ reading?

Many studies have shown that young people’s leisure reading consists of a very diverse range of materials, which includes a large amount of content not seen as respectable in an educational context. A 2005 survey indicated that the most popular reading matter was magazines, websites, text messages, jokes and books/magazines about TV programmes. Amongst those who read fiction, preferred genres were adventure, comedy and
horror/ghost stories. Only 5% did not read fiction at all (Clark and Foster, cited by Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p13).

In a study of teenagers in a low-achieving American school, both boys and girls preferred magazines. 44% also read comic books and 37% read on the internet. Books made up just 30% of leisure reading (Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, 2007, p25).

It is likely that reading at this level confers little educational benefit. Students who read fiction, poems and non-fiction are ‘more likely to read above the expected level for their age compared with those who read text messages, websites and the like’ (Clark, 2015, p61). Obviously this is not a straightforward causal relationship but is in all likelihood a circular one.

But it would be wrong to make assumptions and over-simplify the picture of all young people’s reading habits. A study of children’s reading choices found that young people very often read a combination of both sophisticated and juvenile texts. ‘For instance, one respondent mentioned The Beginner’s Guide to Feminism alongside Cinderella and another The Rabbit’s New Home alongside a Stephen King horror novel’ (Coles and Hall, 2002, p102).

In a piece of research conducted on behalf of Renaissance Learning, the company responsible for the Accelerated Reader (AR) scheme (of which more later), it was found that both boys and girls tended to choose books that were easier to read once they reached the age of 11 in a ‘marked downturn in difficulty of books at secondary transfer’ (Topping, 2015, p26). This is interesting in the light of the previously discussed research indicating the mismatch between reading expectations in primary and secondary.

Renaissance Learning’s data from their AR programme is interesting as it reveals in detail the reading habits (at least within the limits of full participation in the scheme) of students
at 2,757 schools. Their 2015 report expresses concern that students are not reading books at a high enough level: ‘The average book difficulty rises as students get older, arguably to Year 11, but not in proportion to the rate at which the students should be improving in reading. It peaks in Year 6 then plateaus until Year 11’ (Topping, 2015, p2). Year 7 students are reading at ‘over a year below their chronological age’, and by Year 8 they are reading ‘almost two years below their chronological ages’ (p5).

In the study of urban American adolescents mentioned above, students’ reading scores remained low even when students were reporting that they read in their spare time. It was suggested that this might ‘involve the type of leisure reading they are doing’, and that magazines, their preferred reading matter, do not ‘correlate positively with higher levels of literacy’ (Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, p31).

Krashen, while acknowledging that studies of this area have on the whole been correlational, states that ‘a diet of only light reading will probably not lead to advanced levels of development... reading comprehension and vocabulary development are related to what is read’ (Krashen, 2004, p114).

Studies have found that adults with better vocabularies read more advanced materials such as technical journals, history, literary magazines and science magazines. (Rice, cited by Krashen, 2004, p114). Teenagers with above-average reading ability tend to ‘prefer “complex fiction” (historical fiction, science fiction, mystery, adventure, personal development, personal insight), while “poor readers” (bottom one-half) tended to prefer “how-to-do-it” books, science books, hobby books and books on art, music and history’ (Hafner, Palmer and Tullos, cited by Krashen, 2004, p115).

Research in 1973 found that, for young teens, the types of reading which ‘correlated best with improved reading comprehension’ were humour, history & biography, science fiction,
myths & legends, adventure and current events (Thorndike, cited by Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, 2007, p31).

But the PISA findings indicate that in fact the most nourishing reading diet for a capable reader is a varied one. In general, ‘students who are diversified readers of long texts receive the highest average reading literacy scores’. We can go further, and see that nearly half of those reading at the highest levels are highly diversified readers of demanding texts. Less than 20% of the students reading the least diverse range of texts are in this top group. Somewhat counterintuitively, the research showed that, specifically in English-speaking countries and in Eastern Europe, students who read magazines and newspapers but rarely read books or comics perform better in reading tests than students who read a range of magazines, newspapers and comics (Kirsch et al, 2002, p112).

Perhaps this is because the former group are reading for information, while the diversified readers of short texts including comics and magazines may be reading for light and undemanding recreation. Unfortunately we do not have detailed information on the types of magazines or which parts of the newspapers are being read.

8.4.4 Helping readers to develop

Obviously it could be counterproductive for a poor reader to attempt very advanced texts with the aim of improving reading ability. Over-facing a reader may result in frustration and disengagement. Better, as Krashen suggests, to allow light reading to ‘serve as a conduit to heavier reading: It provides both the motivation for more reading and the linguistic competence that makes harder reading possible’ (Krashen, 2004, p116). There is evidence to indicate that children who engage with independent reading and read regularly for pleasure will, eventually, choose what are generally considered to be ‘good books’ (Schoonover, cited by Krashen, 2004, p116).
A study of urban American adolescents suggests that it is advisable to ‘provide the type of materials students prefer. These materials include magazines, comic books, and the Internet. Teachers should recognize this type of reading as legitimate... If we want urban students to engage in leisure reading, perhaps the first thing we need to do is expand our definition of reading’. It is further noted that ‘many teachers and librarians have successfully used comic books to engage reluctant readers’ (Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, 2007, p28).

On the other hand it is not obvious that expanding the definition of reading as a means of ensuring that more students succeed in it is a valid and purposeful approach. Surely the ideal would be to find a way for more students to access the kinds of texts which are currently regarded as relevant.

But Hughes-Hassell and Rodge are backed by the results from PISA for the OECD. These showed that ‘the gap in reading proficiency between those reading comics and those reading fiction is not huge’, leading the researchers to conclude that engagement with the kinds of texts not traditionally valued by schools may be a route to becoming a confident and proficient reader.

### 8.4.5 Comics

Wertham, writing in 1954 in what Krashen (2004) calls the ‘Golden Age’ of comics, declared that comic book reading was damaging to reading and language development, and that ‘severe reading difficulties and maximum comic book reading go hand in hand, that far from being a help to reading, comic books are a causal and reinforcing factor in children’s reading disorders’ (Wertham, cited by Krashen, 2004, p97).

There does not appear to be any evidence to support this view (Krashen, 2004, p97). On the contrary, as mentioned above, comic books have been successfully used to engage reluctant readers (Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, 2007, p28).
Of course, comic books are not a single homogeneous mass. Reading levels vary, and graphic novels can be highly sophisticated. In 1941 *Superman* and *Batman* comics were reported to be written at about fifth- or sixth-grade level, equivalent to the last two years of primary school. This was confirmed by similar work in 1979, which also indicated that other types of comics were at a far lower level than these ‘classics’ (Thorndike, 1941, and Wright, 1979, cited by Krashen, 2004). For comparison, best sellers in 1974 ranged in reading level from sixth to tenth grade (Krashen, 2004, p99).

Two studies have been done of the effects of silent reading groups in primary school using comic books. It appears that, while reading ‘high-interest’ books may result in faster progress, reading comics at least resulted in the expected level of growth. Moreover, the comics were much enjoyed by the children (Sperzle, 1948, and Arlin and Roth, 1978, cited by Krashen, 2004, p101). However, it is important to bear in mind that these studies were conducted with young children and it seems reasonable to assume that progress in reading at secondary age would require more challenging texts. Perhaps a focus on the more complex form of the graphic novel would fulfil this need.

### 8.4.6 Magazines

Despite the research mentioned earlier indicating that readers who predominantly read magazines will tend to be poor readers, there is evidence that magazine reading as part of a more varied reading diet may in fact be beneficial. In a piece of research conducted in 1982, a random sample of students were provided with two free magazine subscriptions related to their interests. These students made increased gains on ‘standardized tests of reading (but not on a test of “language”, i.e., mechanics and spelling)’ (Rucker, cited by Krashen, 2004, pp113-114).
8.4.7 Fiction vs non-fiction

The following graph draws on data from PIRLS to reveal the difference in reading attainment of people reading for different purposes. There is a huge difference between the reading attainment of people reading daily, dependent on the purpose/content of their reading (reading fiction as compared to informative non-fiction or general light leisure reading). Figure 3 below shows clearly how either fiction or light leisure reading (‘Reading for Fun’) on a daily basis correlates with much higher reading attainment than daily reading of informative non-fiction (‘Reading for Information’). However, once reading drops to once or twice a week, there is no difference at all.

Figure 3: How reading frequency and purpose correlates to 2006 PIRLS literacy scores for England
(Education standards research team, 2012, p11)

We have already seen that fiction has been found to have a greater impact on the development of empathy than non-fiction.

But in fact motivation to read is so fundamental in the development of young readers that this may be of secondary importance. A 2002 report suggests that ‘officially sanctioned school definitions of literacy disempower many young readers, and inhibit their
development as readers’. It suggests that both boys and girls would benefit from the inclusion of more information-rich texts, resulting in a more diverse reading diet for all (Coles and Hall, 2002, p96).

Reinforcing this idea is the work done by Moss and Hendershot in 2002 when investigating reading motivation in Year 6 students. When choice and non-fiction texts were employed in the classroom, ‘they found that choice was a key motivator to read. Furthermore, the provision of non-fiction texts enabled students to begin to view non-fictional texts as a source of reading for personal pleasure’ (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p19).

8.4.8 The power of choice

A survey conducted by Gormly in 2015 found that ‘91 percent of kids aged 6 to 17 say they’re more likely to read a book if they pick it out’ (cited by McElmeel, 2015, p32).

The pleasurable psychological state of ‘flow’ has been found to be most likely to occur with a self-selected text. ‘Assigned texts generally do not induce flow unless there was a previous interest in the subject by the reader’ (Towey, 2001, p133), and so it is more likely that readers will enjoy reading texts they have chosen themselves.

The study of urban American adolescents mentioned earlier in the context of their low reading attainment is interesting from the perspective of choice in independent reading. Very often, these teenagers listed their favourite book as being a book from the school’s required reading list (Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, 2007, p27). This suggests that these students were not making independent choices and were perhaps not truly reading for pleasure.
A study on fostering reading motivation found that 80% of children, responding to a question about which book they had most enjoyed, said that it was one they had selected themselves (Gambrell, 1996, p21). Krashen says that students who ‘choose what they read and have an informal environment in which to read’ are more motivated and progress faster (Krashen, cited by Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p18), while many other studies link choice with reading motivation (Education standards research team, 2012, p21).

Beyond this, a 1991 study by Schiefele indicated that students who were encouraged to select their own reading material ‘expended more effort in learning and understanding the material’ (Gambrell, 1996, p22).

The Accelerated Reader scheme, an international reading programme, employs the power of choice to encourage students to read as we shall see.

### 8.5 Accelerated Reader

The Accelerated Reader programme is used by the school in this case study to encourage reading and to assess reading attainment across the whole of Years 7 and 8.

#### 8.5.1 What is Accelerated Reader?

Accelerated Reader is a reading scheme created by a private company, Renaissance Learning. It is used by more than 2000 schools in the UK (Gorard et al, 2015, p6).

The scheme is described by Renaissance thus: ‘At its heart, AR is simple. Students read a book, take an AR Quiz, and get immediate feedback. Students get excited and motivated when they see their progress. And teachers can easily monitor and manage students’ independent reading practice’ (Renaissance Learning website).
8.5.2 STAR

The Accelerated Reader scheme assesses students’ reading levels before recommending that they read at a certain level (their ‘Zone of Proximal Development’, or ‘ZPD’). The tool devised by Renaissance Learning for assessing reading is called the ‘Standardised Test for Assessment of Reading’, or STAR. This is a dynamic and responsive test of vocabulary and comprehension skills. It generates ‘a diagnostic report that includes percentile rank, National Curriculum Level in reading, reading age, estimated oral reading fluency and Zone of Proximal Development’. The test is intended to be administered at least three times in a school year in order to track progress. (Gorard et al, 2015, p10).

Renaissance Learning describe STAR as ‘a computer-adaptive assessment, using sophisticated item calibration and psychometrics to adjust dynamically to each student’s unique responses’ (Renaissance Learning website).

Renaissance commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to ‘develop learning progressions for the new national curriculum in reading and maths, around which the STAR Assessments have been built’ (Renaissance Learning, 2015, p3).

The test is a reliable test of reading ability. Shannon et al report that ‘STAR Reading has high construct validity, demonstrated reliability, and has been rated as an effective progress-monitoring tool by the National Center on Response to Intervention’ (Shannon et al, 2015, p31).

8.5.3 ATOS

Books are assigned reading levels by Renaissance using their own measure of text difficulty, called ‘Advantaged/TASA Open Standard (ATOS)’. Books’ word count, average sentence and word lengths and vocabulary level are taken into account to give the book a numbered
reading level. Renaissance have levelled over 160,000 books, both fiction and non-fiction (Gorard et al, 2015, p10).

Renaissance themselves describe their ATOS formula as ‘a research-proven tool to guide students to appropriate-level books’ (Renaissance Learning website). The rationale behind this is that: ‘Pupils develop reading skills most effectively when they read appropriately challenging books – difficult enough to keep them engaged but not so difficult that they become frustrated’ (Renaissance Learning website).

AR is thus a useful tool in identifying appropriate books for young readers. Clark and Rumbold (2006, p18) cite Johns and VanLeirsburg who observe that ‘helping students locate materials of interest and at desired levels of difficulty is a key aspect to improving their level of immersion in available printed materials’.

Of course, as Gorard et al (2015, p10) point out, ATOS ‘measures only the readability level of books and does not take into account the literary merit, thematic construction, quality and complexity of ideas or maturity of the content’.

Nell, writing in 1988, well before AR was in business, sounded a cautionary note on defining the level of a text, in terms of its value to a reader: ‘Clearly, substituting difficulty for literary merit is improper, and would lead to the conclusion that the poetry of T.S. Eliot and a Chevrolet workshop manual, being of equal difficulty, are of equal merit’ (Nell, 1988, p30).

Besides this, there may be value in a wider view of what is an ‘appropriate’ level for a reader. As we have seen, choice is an important motivator and is linked to achievement. Hunt, cited by Clark and Rumbold (2006, p18), observes that a reader ‘who finds a really good book … that has ideas he truly wants to learn about, frequently will outdo his own instructional level of performance’. Clark and Rumbold go on to cite Tompkins and McGee
who point out that ‘some books may be very difficult to read, but because they are so interesting students decide to read them anyway’.

### 8.5.4 AR quizzes

Students are required to select books at levels which are within their ZPD. Their reading is then checked by online quizzes which test literal comprehension of the text. The quizzes are intended to be taken within 48 hours of finishing the book, to ensure that it is as far as possible a test of comprehension rather than memory (Gorard et al, 2015, p11).

### 8.5.5 How effective is Accelerated Reader?

Two very recent reports on Accelerated Reader have indicated that it is effective and that students’ reading attainment progresses faster than expected when it is implemented correctly (Clark, 2014 and Gorard et al, 2015).

Clark, drawing on the National Literacy Trust’s findings, describes it as ‘a powerful tool that motivates students of all ages and abilities to read for pleasure’ (Clark, 2014, p7). Her research focuses on its effect on ‘reading enjoyment and attitudes towards reading’.

She found that, compared with students who were not using AR, students using AR enjoy reading more and read more widely. They also have more positive attitudes towards reading and readers. (Clark, 2014, p7). These findings applied to students in Key Stages 3 and 4 (so secondary school students). The exception, curiously, was in Key Stage 2 (ages 7 to 11), where AR was associated with slightly less reading engagement (p8).

However an American study published in 2015 contradicted this, finding ‘strong evidence’ that ‘using AR with fidelity has a positive impact on elementary students’ reading achievement’ (Shannon et al, 2015, p30).
In a large UK study of AR’s effectiveness as a catch-up intervention for weaker students, Gorard et al found that students improved in their STAR performance. They therefore concluded that AR was an effective catch-up intervention, with the caveat that weaker readers would need active tuition and support even to access the programme (Gorard et al, 2015).

Renaissance Learning’s inspection of their own data reveals some concerns about the success of their quizzes, with the Average Percent Correct (APC) on the quizzes taken being ‘in every year lower than that recommended by the software manufacturers’ (Topping, 2015, p2). This report acknowledges that this is ‘worrying’, but then goes on to suggest that the APC figure is ‘depressed by the inclusion of quizzes which were not passed. If only those quizzes which were passed are considered, the APC holds up to the 85% level recommended’ (Topping, 2015, p2). It is not clear why excluding failed tests from the statistics would be appropriate.

Further, this report indicates that students are choosing to read books which are at a lower reading level than the students’ chronological ages. The report concludes: ‘Recommendations for the future seem clear. Students should be encouraged to: pass all quizzes; sustain a higher level of challenge in their reading, especially on transfer to secondary school; and sustain Average Percent Correct at or above the 85% level on every book’ (Topping, 2015, p26).

8.6 Literature review summary

A typical Carnegie shadowing group will consist of about 20 students. They will be mainly girls in Years 7 and 8, and led by a school librarian. Research shows that the shadowing scheme is effective in extending students’ reading, and is generally regarded as enjoyable. It
not only stretches able readers but also offers literary texts which will not be part of the curriculum.

Reading for pleasure is something that can tend to be side-lined in schools by a target-driven approach to literacy. There is a widely felt sense that the structured nature of the English curriculum is an actual threat to reading for pleasure.

Reading for pleasure has been shown to be important as it increases creativity, academic attainment across the curriculum, happiness, confidence and empathy.

England’s teenagers do not read as well as their peers in other countries, and the picture is worsening. Besides this, they tend not to have a very positive attitude to reading. There is also a class divide over attitudes and attainment in reading, but regular reading is exceptionally powerful in overcoming differences between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Schools often struggle to encourage students to read. Their traditional armoury of reward systems appears to be counterproductive. There is a clear tension between the recognition that reading for pleasure, for its own sake and for no measurable benefit or reward, is connected with academic success, and the desire to encourage reading for this reason.

Accelerated Reader is a popular reading scheme used by many schools which charts reading progress and attempts to encourage reading for pleasure. There is a good evidence base for its use, provided it is administered sensitively and not used to restrict choice, though there may be concerns over the introduction of an extrinsic motivation to read. It is certainly a reasonable way to measure reading attainment.
Unenthusiastic readers should be supported to read more; reading practice will improve ability, which will in turn make reading more pleasurable. When it comes to encouraging reading for pleasure, it does not matter what children are reading. The important thing is choice and enjoyment.

But students who have reached a certain level of competence may be helped by encouragement to broaden their reading, and this is where Carnegie shadowing groups may be of use. Reading texts with more sophisticated language and content will improve attainment.

The Carnegie Shadowing Scheme is felt to be a counterbalance to the goal-oriented approach of English lessons. The unstructured nature of the groups’ discussions contrasts with the directed discussions of English lessons, and it is suggested that this may help students to become more articulate when expressing their opinions.

Young people’s perception of readers becomes less positive as they transition from primary to secondary school, which is likely to be a discouraging factor. In fact, research has repeatedly shown that the most powerful motivating factor in reading for pleasure is being part of a community of readers. Most important is the family, but a peer group which shares book recommendations and which values reading can also be significant. A Carnegie shadowing group can provide a safe space in which to be enthusiastic about books and is felt to be good for students’ confidence.

Small informal reading groups such as the Carnegie shadowing groups have been found to be an effective way to improve attitudes and achievement in reading.
9. Observation of a Carnegie Shadowing Group

9.1 Research context

The research was conducted in a large urban comprehensive school with a very mixed intake. The school is rated ‘Good’ by Ofsted and has a library which is open for an extended school day.

9.2 Assembling the group and preliminary research

The Year 7 students were on the whole already well engaged with the library. This was in part because they had fortnightly English lessons in the library, dedicated to the Accelerated Reader scheme, in which they selected reading books and took online comprehension quizzes.

There was some concern in the school about a lack of reading engagement which developed as the students grew older. As noted above in the literature review, this is consistent with the national picture. Certainly if we look at the borrowing figures for the autumn term prior to this research, the decline in library borrowing as students go further up the school is quite dramatic (see Figure 4 below, data extracted from the school’s library management system, Eclipse).

For this reason, and because the Carnegie books tend to be sophisticated and demanding literary works with mature subject matter, it was decided initially to invite selected Year 8 students and a few Year 7s with particularly high reading ages to participate in the group.
The Accelerated Reader data was used to identify the Year 8 students with the highest reading ages. The top thirty-four students were selected for further investigation. Their reading ages as measured by Accelerated Reader ranged from 13 years and 1 month to 16 years and 6 months.

Data was extracted from the library management system and from the Accelerated Reader software regarding their library borrowing and the numbers of Accelerated Reader quizzes they had taken during the autumn term 2014. This was then compared with data for the same students from the autumn term 2013.

In many cases borrowing had dropped dramatically in Year 8, as had their engagement with the Accelerated Reader (AR) scheme, as can be seen in Figure 5 below.
Eighteen of these Year 8 students were selected for invitation to join the shadowing group. They were selected not only because they had high reading ages, but also because they had been regular borrowers from the school library during Year 7 and had tended to borrow relatively challenging fiction.

Six Year 7 students were also invited at this stage, based on the same criteria. Of these, all six responded positively. Of the eighteen Year 8 students invited, not one was interested in joining the shadowing group.

These Year 8 students were therefore invited to a meeting where they were requested to complete a questionnaire in the hope of finding out why they were not keen to join. All were provided with information concerning the nature of the research, and told that the questionnaires would be anonymous with no repercussions. There was no pressure to join the book group and they were told that there was no obligation to complete the questionnaire. Eleven students attended the meeting and all completed the questionnaire.
Ten out of these eleven students reported that they liked reading but did not like to discuss books in a group. Some expanded on this in a space provided for additional comments:

‘I enjoy reading and sometimes I like to discuss books but only as a conversation topic not a club/group meeting specially for it.’

‘I love reading but I prefer to discuss my reading with my friends, if anything, and I prefer it to be choice & I just like the experience of reading books - not really remembering them although there are always good and bad things in a book.’

‘I just want people to let me read in peace. I am not interested in sharing my thoughts on books because I believe it is everybody’s own personal experience.’

Following this meeting, three of these Year 8 students expressed an interest in joining the group and did in fact go on to become very committed members. It seems likely that students are reluctant to join a group if they are not familiar with the group leader, and that the meeting itself provided enough of an opportunity for them to feel more confident in joining the group.

An open invitation was now extended to Year 7, via announcements in English lessons, and to the whole of Years 7, 8 and 9 via announcements in assemblies. This resulted in an initial group of thirty-seven students, comprised of thirty-four Year 7 students and three Year 8 students.

9.3 The Shadowing Group

The group’s reading ages, as measured by AR, ranged from 9 years to 16 years and 1 month. It therefore included students with lower reading ages than had originally been invited to join the group, and there was concern that the Carnegie titles might be too challenging for some. The distribution of reading ages can be seen in Figure 6 below.
The group first met in the week before the announcement of the Carnegie shortlist. The longlist had been announced on 10\textsuperscript{th} February 2015, and the shortlist was announced on 17\textsuperscript{th} March. The winner was scheduled to be announced on 22\textsuperscript{nd} June.

Over the course of the shadowing group some group members left and others joined, including two more Year 8 students who became interested because their friends were regularly attending the meetings.

The weekly meetings were briefly documented after each session, a register was taken and a record of shortlisted books borrowed was kept.

Meetings were informal and took place in the library at lunchtimes. The library was closed especially for these weekly meetings and biscuits were provided. Since eating is normally forbidden in the library and it is usually a crowded place, this made the meetings into quite a special event.
An added complicating factor was the existence of a separate book prize running concurrently with the Carnegie Medal. This was a new, local, book award aimed at Years 5 to 7. The books on this shortlist were high-quality fiction but were suitable for slightly younger readers than most of the Carnegie shortlisted books. It was therefore decided to offer these in addition to the Carnegie shortlist. Some of the Year 7 students, and particularly those with lower reading ages, were more drawn to these titles and began to read from this list. Other Year 7s were more attracted by the more ‘grown up’ look of the Carnegie books and preferred these, while the Year 8 students were only offered the Carnegie books.

For the first two meetings, the shadowers met as a single group. But after the first meeting there were concerns about the large size of the group. It was felt that it would be hard to have productive and focused group discussions with such a large number, and that the voices of the more reserved students would be lost whilst livelier members would dominate. Some of the less able readers were particularly concerned, voicing their concerns in private and saying that they felt unable to admit that they struggled with comprehension in front of so many others.

At the second meeting, therefore, the group was split into two subgroups which would meet on alternate weeks. These groups were allocated with friendship groups in mind, but also keeping low ability readers and those drawn to the local book award list together, while putting higher ability Year 7s and those who were keener to read the Carnegie list into the same group as the Year 8 students. The intention here was to run groups whose members would, as far as possible, be reading the same selection of books.

9.4 Meetings and activities

The meetings were on the whole fairly unstructured and there were no rules about numbers of books to read nor any pressure to finish a book if it was not enjoyed.
Students discussed what they hoped to gain from membership of the group and the things they would like to do. A Year 8 boy hoped ‘to find different sorts things to read, so I’m not just reading the same kind of stuff’. His sentiment was echoed by a Year 8 girl, who added, ‘I mostly read what my sister is reading’.

One Year 7 girl suggested that ‘we could do Accelerated Reader quizzes on the books we’ve read’, but it was felt by the group leader that it would be better to keep the ethos of the group separate from AR and to avoid a goal-oriented approach in this context.

On occasions when fewer students attended meetings because of clashes with other school events, this was generally regarded as a positive thing. Comments included: ‘It’s nice when there are less of us because you can have a civilised conversation and be heard’.

An attempt was made to engage the students with the Carnegie judging criteria, but this was not very successful. The students found it hard to think about the texts in this way and were reluctant to discuss whether books met the criteria. More freeform, less structured discussions were far more productive.

One of the shortlisted books (Tinder) was heavily illustrated (and was in fact also shortlisted for the illustration prize, the Greenaway Award). This led to a discussion of the effects of illustration on the reader. Some felt it blocked their imagination, while others felt it enhanced their engagement with the book. Comments included:

‘The illustrations were annoying because when I read a book I get pictures in my head of the characters, and then the pictures weren’t what I’d imagined.’

‘I hate books with pictures, they stop you imagining what things look like,’
'I like books with illustrations, they really help me to have a picture in my head, I find it hard otherwise to imagine what people are like.'

Some students were daunted by the length of certain books: ‘I don’t like long books because they put me off. It feels too heavy and when I drop it I lose my place’, while others relished them: ‘I like long books because if they’re good it means you can spend longer reading them’.

The Shadowing Site contained videos of interviews with the shortlisted authors, which the group watched together. These were well received and fed into discussion of the books. For example, one student had queried the emotional responses of a character in a book, saying ‘she doesn’t seem to react to the horrible things that happen, it doesn’t make any difference to her. She just moves on to the next thing. I didn’t find it convincing’. The group then watched the author recounting how she had sobbed into her keyboard while writing, and talked about how they did not feel that this emotion had been communicated to them.

The group also engaged in a Skype interview with one of the authors shortlisted for the local book prize. This was well received and group members asked if it would be possible to do it again with other authors.

A few books resulted in very noisy impassioned debates. One book, Tinder, was a reworking of a Hans Andersen story. Most students were unfamiliar with the original story, but some of those who knew it felt that it spoiled their enjoyment of the book, as the story was less surprising. On the whole they did not feel that reworking old material to explore new themes was effective for them.

Another book, Cuckoo Song, also divided opinion. Some gave up on it, saying ‘it was too mysterious’, ‘too spooky’, ‘too much to figure out, I didn’t know what was going on’.
The Fastest Boy in the World was deemed ‘too simple’, while some wondered, ‘what’s the point?’ This led to an accusation that: ‘You didn’t like it because you have no imagination!’

Some students repeatedly began books and abandoned them part-way through. This led to a discussion of how much a book can be judged by its first chapter. Some students were adamant that they would not read on if the first chapter did not engage them. One said, ‘If you’re climbing up a slide and you keep sliding down, you should just give up because you’ll never get to the top.’ Others felt strongly that it was important to give a book a chance, one responding: ‘But if you’ve got imagination, you could fly to the top.’

Other responses included: ‘You can’t take a piece of toast out of the toaster without toasting it’,

‘You can’t judge a person by the first ten words they say’,

‘I read the first chapter of Narnia in Year 3 and gave up…. Clearly you guys are still at a year 3 stage!’

Besides these discussions and the Skype interview, other activities included word games, quizzes and a trip to read picture books to local Infant School children.

Students made use of the Shadowing Site website to create a poll asking ‘which book do you think should win?’ and voted on this. They also wrote book reviews which were posted on the site. The site allowed the reviews to be turned into a magazine, which was printed and distributed among group members.
The group produced a total of sixteen reviews, written by eleven different students. A few students were particularly interested to see reviews on the shadowing site written by their friends at neighbouring schools.

9.5 Questionnaire findings

Once the shadowing group had come to an end, students were invited to attend a meeting to complete a questionnaire and discuss their thoughts. Once again, they were told that they were not obliged to participate in this research and that it would be entirely anonymous. Ten students attended the meeting and completed the questionnaire. It is likely that larger numbers of students would have attended were it not the end of the summer term when there is a general sense of ‘winding down’ for the summer and a lot of other activities going on.

All students said that they had both read and enjoyed books which they would not otherwise have chosen to read.

Some students chose to add comments on this:

‘It took me out of my comfort zone of reading and now I like lots of different books. I normally judge a book on its cover but this time I read some and really enjoyed them.’

‘I didn’t expect to like Buffalo Soldier but I loved it.’

‘I wouldn’t have picked Tinder but I loved it! I thought I would like Tinder the best, but I think Apple & Rain was better.’

‘I read some really good books that I wouldn’t have read otherwise. I read the ones I thought looked and seemed good and generally that was the case.’
When asked what they had liked about the book group, nine out of ten students said that they enjoyed sharing their opinions on books they had read. Seven out of ten said that they had enjoyed hearing others’ opinions. This mismatch could perhaps be seen in the noisy discussions where students were often eager to make their points heard but less keen to hear other people speak.

Nine out of ten enjoyed discussing and debating the books, being part of a book awards process, and reading books that they might not otherwise have chosen. Some chose to add comments, saying that they had enjoyed:

‘The trips,’

‘Spending time with people who have the same thoughts as me,’

‘It encouraged me to read more.’

When asked whether they would like to be part of an awards process again, seven said that they would, while one said they didn’t mind. Two said that they would prefer to do another lunchtime activity instead in the future. Some added comments:

‘I enjoyed discussing my opinion on books,’

‘I enjoy reading award winning books,’

‘You have something to look forward to (awards),’

‘I liked voting for the books I liked because it meant they could be recognised for how good they were,’

‘I liked feeling as if I could make a judgement that could be considered,’

‘Celebration,’

‘It was nice to share my opinion with others’.
Seven out of the ten students agreed ‘very much’ or ‘a bit’ with the statement ‘When I was in Year 6 I spent more time reading than I do now’. When asked to select reasons (as many as applied) for this, six students said that they did not have so much time any more for reading, while three said that it was harder to find books to interest them.

9.6 Group interview findings

Once the students had completed the written questionnaire, a semi-structured group interview was carried out. Notes were taken at the time, and the following extract touches on several themes noted and discussed in the literature review above.

GL is the Group Leader, and the students have been randomly allocated letters to preserve anonymity.

GL:  Did you read more than you would otherwise have read as a result of book group?

A:  No, but I read books I wouldn’t have picked, which is good.

B:  I read about one book in a year usually and I read three books for book club, so yes definitely. It’s good.

C:  Yes, definitely...

C:  I don’t like it when I enjoy a book and then I look deeper and find that I don’t actually like the character, that I wouldn’t like them if I met them. For instance someone who gets pregnant at 18.

GL:  But perhaps reading books can help to develop empathy? So you’re not judging by the superficial things you might see in real life?

C:  Characters in books sometimes get covered up by the story, and then when you look deeper you might not like them.

D:  Characters aren’t important. It’s the story that is important. Characters are just there to support the story.
E: When it’s written in the first person, it is confusing when the character is not like you.

GL: *There’s some research showing that reading for pleasure increases empathy.*

A: I think they’ve got that the wrong way round. People who read for pleasure are the kind of people who have empathy, people who read are a certain kind of people. It isn’t because they read.

D: If you don’t read, you can’t see the world through other eyes.

F: When I was at primary school I had a friend who stopped being my friend and was mean to me, and I kept seeing it from her point of view. My mum said, ‘but no-one’s seeing it from your point of view’. I think you can be too understanding.

D: If you’re understanding, it’s more likely that someone else will be understanding and friendly to you. It has to start somewhere, so you might as well try it.

G: When I was reading *Apple & Rain*, I would read it any second I had, I would pick it up all the time. If I’m not reading something as good as that I don’t bother. At the moment I’m reading another really good book, it’s called *Life According to Alice B Lovely*.

A: I’m reading that at the moment! It’s quite good actually.

C: I play devil’s advocate with myself and argue with my first opinions. Some books have a cover thrown over them and I don’t like it when I look underneath the cover and I don’t actually like the characters. Reading books is all about the deeper meaning and what you can learn from it.

D: No, it’s all about enjoying the story.

C: There’s no point if you don’t get something else from it!

D: Yes there is, that’s how I read, I just love stories and I don’t want to look for meaning. It spoils it.

GL: *So how do you feel about studying books in English?*
E: I don’t like doing books in English. It’s not so personal if everyone else is reading the same bit.

D: Reading is a hobby, so if you’re doing it as a class, it’s not so personal.

C: Studying books in English ruins the joy of it.

E: When I study a book in detail, I can’t re-read it. I like re-reading because I find more layers and discover more stuff when I do. But if I’m studying it, everything is just brought out straight away so I can’t re-read it.

F: Re-reading uncovers more layers, I like to discover more meanings.

G: People judge you by whether you read. If you read, you’re not cool.

D & C: No! That’s not true!

G: Yes it is. H [a Year 7 boy] pretended he had a detention so he could come to book club, because he was too embarrassed to say he was in the book club.

C: It’s so important to read. You can learn a lot. You don’t get taught this stuff in maths and English. You learn more when you learn by yourself. I’ve learnt the way of my life from the books I’ve read. My behaviour is conveyed by what I read. In Year 4 my mum banned me from reading Cathy Cassidy because I got so depressed. I would wake up in the mornings and be really grumpy and moody. Then I read some other books which rebalanced it. The books dictated my mood.

F: People make assumptions about you because of what you read. I read a lot of historical fiction and people think I want to be a history teacher. I got labelled as shy, quiet and bookish by the head teacher at my primary school. I was having a bad time in the playground and people were being mean to me.

D: I always pretend I’m doing my homework when really I’m just reading.

G: Books have a lot of things like teenage pregnancy and divorce in them. My mum says books aren’t how they used to be. I like things that are more imaginative, like Roald Dahl.
C: I relate things in books to real life. It helps me solve problems. If I encounter a problem I will think of a book where the same thing has happened, and look at how the characters dealt with it, and maybe think whether I could do something better.

9.7 Analysis

The addition of the local book award shortlist affected the shadowing process by making the shadowing group more inclusive of less confident readers while retaining the ethos of valuing literary fiction and offering reading material which might not otherwise be picked up by the students. The Carnegie titles were too challenging for some of the Year 7 students in the group, who were nevertheless keen to extend their reading and participate in the group.

The group was typical of Carnegie shadowing groups as identified by Cremin and Swann, being run by a school librarian and comprised of students in Years 7 and 8. Girls far outnumbered boys in the group, which again was typical. The group posted a slightly above average number of book reviews, as over half of the shadowing groups in the study posted less than ten (Cremin and Swann, 2012). This is probably because the group leader had intimated that students posting reviews would be given priority to join in the trip to read to younger children.

This small sample group echoed Cremin and Swann’s finding that students participating in the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme read and enjoy books which they would not otherwise have selected. The students reported that their reading had been extended by the group.

In the group interview, the students touched on the issue of social perceptions of reading, with the mention of one group member who had been embarrassed to admit that he was part of the group. He had not attended many sessions, and this appears to have been the reason. He did join in the trip to read with local Infant School children, and when the group
returned to school part of the way through the school day he was spotted by some other boys who called out to him, asking where he had been and what he was doing. He was very evasive and made jokes in order to avoid telling them where he had been. It is clear that he was not comfortable with being seen as part of the book group.

The students reported that they enjoyed discussions with like-minded peers and that this was a large part of the appeal of the group. The importance of a community of readers is strongly supported by the literature, as we have seen earlier from the research into the ‘Sustained Silent Reading programs’, from the effects of peer discussion observed in the American National Assessment of Educational Progress (see p32 above), and from the various studies showing that discussion opportunities can increase engagement (see p37 above). It can be a very powerful tool in motivating readers.

Another point raised in the group interview which echoes the Cremin and Swann report is the distinction between reading for pleasure and reading for English lessons. The list of perceived differences between the two (see Appendix 3) is very much echoed by the students’ comments in the current research, with particular emphasis placed on the importance of a personal response to texts.

Their comments are also reminiscent of author John Boyne’s remarks on the problems of his book *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* being used as a school set text. He described how he was ‘confronted by a teenage fan who told him she had “loved” the book and immersed herself in it before she reached her GCSEs. Now she has been compelled to dissect and study it in detail, she told him, she “hates” it’ (Furness, 2015).

The students clearly value their personal relationships with books, and in some cases even explicitly articulated some of the ideas raised in the literature surrounding this, indicating that they learn how to handle real-life situations by reading fiction (see the discussion of
how literature has been shown to improve social connections and decision making, pp40-41 above).

The discussion on empathy and seeing things from other perspectives, too, echoes the literature showing that reading increases empathy (see pp42-44 above). It reinforces the idea that fictional narratives can help readers to become more open-minded and accepting of difference, reminding us of the literature indicating that regular readers have a better understanding of cultural diversity and more respect for the views of others (see p41 above).

9.8 Impact

9.8.1 Attainment

It is clear that the shadowing group had an impact in terms of the value that the students placed on it. It created a reading community where students could share their personal responses to texts without any goals or assessments, and without any social judgements on them. There was complete freedom to choose their books and to choose whether to complete them.

Students’ reading was broadened and they found themselves enjoying the kinds of books which they would not ordinarily have selected for themselves.

All of these points are clear benefits from the reading group. But what of measurable benefits? Were there any quantifiable academic benefits?

In order to assess the reading progress of the group, data from the Accelerated Reader software was extracted. Because reading ability is tested on a termly basis, it is possible to display graphs charting students’ progress.
The few Year 8 students were removed from this data, because they had not had lesson time allocated to AR and so were less well engaged with the scheme than Year 7. It was therefore felt that their results might not be so accurate. The following results therefore relate only to the Year 7 students in the group. See Appendix 4 for the Accelerated Reader graph illustrating these results.

The average reading age of the group at the start of the year was 12 years and 5 months. Had they progressed at an average rate over the school year as indicated by the AR scheme, the group would have been expected to end the year with an average reading age of 13 years and 1 month. By the time the shadowing group ended, their projected age at the end of the year was 13 years and 5 months.

This means that the group were making above average progress, averaging 6% better than their cohort nationally and 7% better than their cohort within the school. This can be seen in the figures produced using the Accelerated Reader software (See Table 1 below), in which the ‘Student Growth Percentile’ is a measure of the students’ progress relative to others in their cohort.

Table 1: Progress of the shadowing group compared to their cohort nationally and in school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison of Student Growth Percentile with cohort</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Shadowing Group</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This might appear to indicate that the shadowing group had measurably improved their reading. But of course the picture is not so simple. The school is using Accelerated Reader in an effort to improve reading across the whole cohort, and while this group has performed
better, on average, than the rest of their year as a whole, the difference between the performances of individual class groups is very large.

Table 2 below shows the range of progress achieved by all nine mixed-ability Year 7 classes over the course of the school year. As can be seen, the classes ranged from two in which the students had progressed 13% more than the national average, and one in which they had performed 33% worse than the national average.

The shadowing group students were from various different classes, so meaningful statistical comparison is impossible. The classes have evidently had differing experiences which have impacted their progress in various ways.

Table 2: Progress of the school’s Year 7 classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7 class 1</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 class 2</td>
<td>+14</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 class 3</td>
<td>+13</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 class 4</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 class 5</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 class 6</td>
<td>-18</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 class 7</td>
<td>-21</td>
<td>-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 class 8</td>
<td>-25</td>
<td>-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 class 9</td>
<td>-32</td>
<td>-33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB classes have been numbered to preserve confidentiality. All classes are mixed-ability.

9.8.2 Library engagement

Perhaps a more straightforward way of examining any measurable impact is to look at library borrowing and active engagement with the AR scheme through online comprehension quizzes.
Figure 5 on p66 above shows the decline in engagement of 34 Year 8 students of high reading ability who were initially selected for invitation to join the shadowing group. As can be seen, the library borrowing of this group during the autumn term dropped from 133 in 2013 (their Year 7) to 27 in 2014 (their Year 8), a decrease of 80%.

The number of quizzes completed during the autumn term dropped from 267 in 2013 to 99 in 2014, a decrease of 63% (see Table 3 below).

To put this into the context of their year group, library borrowing data from Eclipse shows that the borrowing of their whole year group dropped by 74% over the same period, presenting a similar picture of disengagement from the library. There is no data available for comparison of the whole year group’s AR quizzes.

A direct comparison can be made with the shadowing group participants by comparing their library borrowing from the autumn term of 2014 (their Year 7) and the autumn term of 2015 (their Year 8). As can be seen in Figure 7 and Table 3 below, library borrowing for this group decreased by 38% while the number of quizzes completed dropped by 25%.

While there is still a quite substantial drop in engagement with the library and the reading scheme for this group going from Year 7 to Year 8, it is dramatically less than the drop observed in the previous year’s cohort of formerly keen readers.

We can also compare the activity of the students involved in Carnegie Shadowing with the behaviour of their whole year group. The data for the whole year group over the same period can be seen in Figure 8 below. As can be seen, library borrowing for the whole year group during the autumn terms of their Year 7 and Year 8 decreased by 54%, while the number of quizzes taken decreased by 38%. The behaviour of the shadowing group participants therefore compares very favourably with the majority of their cohort. Although this might be to some degree expected as they were a self-selecting group, the previous year’s keen and capable readers had disengaged in much the same way as the rest of their year group.
**Figure 7:** Borrowing and AR quizzes for students involved in Carnegie Shadowing, autumn terms 2014 & 2015

![Graph showing borrowing and AR quizzes for students involved in Carnegie Shadowing, autumn terms 2014 & 2015](image)

**Figure 8:** Borrowing and AR quizzes for whole year group, autumn terms 2014 & 2015

![Graph showing borrowing and AR quizzes for whole year group, autumn terms 2014 & 2015](image)
Table 3: Comparing library engagement for 2014 Year 8 group and 2015 Year 8 group during autumn terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Decrease in library borrowing</th>
<th>Decrease in AR participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014 selected Year 8 students</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Year 8 whole year group</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Year 8 Carnegie shadowing participants</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Year 8 whole year group</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident that the selected group of invited Year 8 students is not an exact like-for-like comparison with the eventual group of participants, being selected on the basis of reading ability and reading habits rather than on desire to participate. Besides this it is notable that the overall decrease in engagement for the whole of Year 8 is reduced in 2015, suggesting other factors at play. However, it does appear that participation in the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme significantly reduces the observed disengagement from the school library which is seen in the transition from Year 7 to Year 8.
10. Conclusion

Reading for pleasure is highly significant in many ways. It benefits cognitive development and academic attainment quite spectacularly, and appears to be the single most important factor in overcoming socio-economic educational disadvantage.

It also has a beneficial effect on emotional wellbeing and social connections. It enhances the ability to connect with others and increases general knowledge and openness to other perspectives. It has even been shown to enhance empathy.

However, there are real challenges in engaging secondary students with reading. A key factor here lies in attitudes towards reading and readers. Secondary students often have a very negative view of readers and frequently do not identify themselves as readers. It has been repeatedly shown that the most influential factor in increasing the motivation to read and improving attitudes to reading is involvement in a reading community.

Small reading groups where peers can share their thoughts on books without any specific goals or directives have been shown to create just such reading communities. They are places where it is safe to admit to enjoying books, and where the love of reading may be fed and grow through connecting with others’ enthusiasm.

The Carnegie Shadowing Scheme plays an important role in broadening students’ reading and encouraging them to choose books which they would not otherwise have read. It creates a reading community and goes further, to create a sense of networked communities across the UK which share their reviews and other activities via their groups’ pages on the Carnegie Shadowing Site.
However, the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme is not inclusive of less able readers. There are less able students who are nevertheless keen to expand their reading and share their thoughts with their peers, and the Carnegie scheme does not cater for them.

The shadowing group in this case study certainly felt that they had benefitted from the experience. They agreed that they had read more widely as a result of participation, and had enjoyed discussing the books with each other. There was a consensus that school English lessons were damaging to their love of reading, and a sense that reading should not be directed. They expressed a range of conflicting opinions on approaches to reading, but shared the view that it should be a personal experience.

Participation in the scheme dramatically reduced the disengagement from the school library which had been observed in the past as students moved up the school, though there was no clearly measurable benefit to their reading ability. More significantly, the less easily quantified benefits of creating a reading community should not be disregarded. The research indicates that this kind of experience can positively affect long-term attitudes to reading, the tendrils of which will reach into all areas of life.
11. Bibliography


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Yahoo! School Librarians’ Network (SLN) Group. Forum available: [https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/sln/conversations/topics/147503](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/sln/conversations/topics/147503) [9th August 2015]
12. Appendices

Appendix 1:

Carnegie Medal Judging Criteria (CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Shadowing Site)

The book that wins the Carnegie Medal should be a book of outstanding literary quality. The whole work should provide pleasure, not merely from the surface enjoyment of a good read, but also the deeper subconscious satisfaction of having gone through a vicarious, but at the time of reading, a real experience that is retained afterwards.

All criteria will not necessarily be relevant to every title nominated. Where appropriate, consider and assess the following:

The plot:

Is it well-constructed?

Does the author appear in control of the plot, making definite and positive decisions about the direction events take and the conclusions they reach?

Do events happen, not necessarily logically, but acceptably within the limits set by the theme?

Is the final resolution of the plot credible in relation to the rest of the book?

Characterisation:

Are the characters believable and convincing?

Are they well-rounded, and do they develop during the course of the book?

Do they interact with each other convincingly?

Are the characters’ behaviour and patterns of speech consistent with their known background and environment?

Do they act consistently in character throughout the book?

How effectively are the characters revealed through narration, dialogue, action, inner dialogue and through the thoughts, reactions and responses of others?

Style:

Is the style or styles appropriate to the subject and theme?

How successfully has the author created mood, and how appropriate is it to the theme?

Do dialogue and narrative work effectively together?

How effective is the author’s use of literary techniques and conventions?

How effective is the author’s use of language in conveying setting, atmosphere, characters, action etc.?

Where rhyme or rhythm are used, is their use accomplished and imaginative?

Where factual information is presented, is this accurate and clear?
Appendix 2:

Full list of Carnegie Medal winners (CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Book Awards website)

2015 Tanya Landman, *Buffalo Soldier*, Walker Books
2013 Sally Gardner, *Maggot Moon*, Hot Key Books
2008 Philip Reeve, *Here Lies Arthur*, Scholastic
2007 Meg Rosoff, *Just in Case*, Penguin
2002 Sharon Creech, *Ruby Holler*, Bloomsbury Children's Books
2001 Terry Pratchett, *The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents*, Doubleday
2000 Beverley Naidoo, *The Other Side of Truth*, Puffin
1999 Aidan Chambers, *Postcards From No Man's Land*, Bodley Head
1998 David Almond, *Skellig*, Hodder Children's Books
1997 Tim Bowler, *River Boy*, OUP
1993 Robert Swindells, *Stone Cold*, H Hamilton
1992 Anne Fine, *Flour Babies*, H Hamilton
1991 Berlie Doherty, *Dear Nobody*, H Hamilton
1990 Gillian Cross, *Wolf*, OUP
1989 Anne Fine, *Goggle-eyes*, H Hamilton
1986 Berlie Doherty, *Granny was a Buffer Girl*, Methuen
1985 Kevin Crossley-Holland, *Storm*, Heinemann
1984 Margaret Mahy, *The Changeover*, Dent
1983 Jan Mark, *Handles*, Kestrel
1982 Margaret Mahy, *The Haunting*, Dent
1980 Peter Dickinson, *City of Gold*, Gollancz
1979 Peter Dickinson, *Tulku*, Gollancz
1978 David Rees, *The Exeter Blitz*, H Hamilton
1977 Gene Kemp, *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*, Faber
1976 Jan Mark, *Thunder and Lightnings*, Kestrel
1973 Penelope Lively, *The Ghost of Thomas Kempe*, Heinemann
1971 Ivan Southall, *Josh*, Angus & Robertson
1969 Kathleen Peyton, *The Edge of the Cloud*, OUP
1968 Rosemary Harris, *The Moon in the Cloud*, Faber
1966 *Prize withheld as no book considered suitable*
1965 Philip Turner, *The Grange at High Force*, OUP
1963 Hester Burton, *Time of Trial*, OUP
1962 Pauline Clarke, *The Twelve and the Genii*, Faber
1961 Lucy M Boston, *A Stranger at Green Knowe*, Faber
1960 Dr I W Cornwall, *The Making of Man*, Phoenix House
1959 Rosemary Sutcliff, *The Lantern Bearers*, OUP
1958 Philippa Pearce, *Tom's Midnight Garden*, OUP
1956 C S Lewis, *The Last Battle*, Bodley Head
1955 Eleanor Farjeon, *The Little Bookroom*, OUP
1954 Ronald Welch (Felton Ronald Oliver), *Knight Crusader*, OUP
1953 Edward Osmond, *A Valley Grows Up*
1952 Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*, *Dent*
1951 Cynthia Harrett, *The Woolpack*, *Methuen*
1950 Elfreda Vipont Foulds, *The Lark on the Wing*, *OUP*
1949 Agnes Allen, *The Story of Your Home*, *Faber*
1948 Richard Armstrong, *Sea Change*, *Dent*
1947 Walter De La Mare, *Collected Stories for Children*
1946 Elizabeth Goudge, *The Little White Horse*, *University of London Press*
1945 *Prize withheld as no book considered suitable*
1944 Eric Linklater, *The Wind on the Moon*, *Macmillan*
1943 *Prize withheld as no book considered suitable*
1942 'BB' (D J Watkins-Pitchford), *The Little Grey Men*, *Eyre & Spottiswoode*
1941 Mary Treadgold, *We Couldn't Leave Dinah*, *Cape*
1940 Kitty Barne, *Visitors from London*, *Dent*
1939 Eleanor Doorly, *Radium Woman*, *Heinemann*
1938 Noel Streatfeild, *The Circus is Coming*, *Dent*
1937 Eve Garnett, *The Family from One End Street*, *Muller*
1936 Arthur Ransome, *Pigeon Post*, *Cape*
Appendix 3:

Perceived contrasts between shadowing group and English lessons (Cremin and Swann, 2012, p80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading in ENGLISH LESSONS is perceived to be framed as/focused on:</th>
<th>Reading in EXTRACURRICULAR GROUPS is perceived to be framed as/focused on:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of assessed levels of performance</td>
<td>Increased pleasure in reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The skills of reading as assessed and determined by current assessment criteria</td>
<td>The will and desire to read, un-assessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposition of set texts</td>
<td>Choice of texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of set texts or parts of them, not always finished</td>
<td>Whole texts read as complete books or abandoned of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ views and exam board requirements/attainment targets</td>
<td>Student voice and opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary analysis</td>
<td>Personal response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher ownership and control</td>
<td>Student ownership and control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit teacher recommendations regarding set text</td>
<td>Explicit reader to reader recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed written work to evidence analysis; teacher as audience</td>
<td>Non-assessed writing (e.g. reviews), produced from choice for other readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-framed discussion</td>
<td>More open discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult as educator/instructor and assessor</td>
<td>Adult as co-reader and colleague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly demarcated teacher - student relationships and hierarchies</td>
<td>Less demarcated group leader – group member relationships and hierarchies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality in physical/social arrangements</td>
<td>Informality in physical/social arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible class challenges re perception of readers as ‘boffins’</td>
<td>Increased sense of security regarding one’s position as a reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>Lack of pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System/school reading</td>
<td>Lifelong readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of conformity</td>
<td>Sense of community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4:

Accelerated Reader graph showing progress of Carnegie Shadowing Group
Appendix 5:

Questionnaire completed by Year 8 students who were not interested in joining the shadowing group

**Section 1: Carnegie Book Group**

Why didn’t you want to join the Carnegie book group? Please tick as many as apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>√</th>
<th>Reasons:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am already too busy with other clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My friends aren’t doing it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t like reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I like reading but don’t like to discuss books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am a member of another book club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other – please explain here:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Section 2: Reading for pleasure**

1. How much do you agree with the following statement:  
   ‘When I was in Year 7 I spent more time reading more than I do now.’
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A bit</th>
<th>Very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. If you have answered ‘very much’ or ‘a bit’, please tell me why (tick as many as apply):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓ Reasons:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have so much time any more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s hard to find books that interest me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t enjoy it as much as I used to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends aren’t interested in books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other things are more fun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other – please explain:
Appendix 6:

Questionnaire completed by shadowing group participants

Section 1: Carnegie Book Group

Did the book group lead you to read books you wouldn’t otherwise have chosen?

Yes / No

If yes:

Did you find that you enjoyed any books that you would not otherwise have chosen?

Did you find that you most enjoyed the ones you had expected to like best?

What have you liked about being a member of the book group? Please tick as many as apply:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Biscuits!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing my opinions on books I’ve read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hearing others’ opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussing and debating the books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being part of a book awards process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading types of book I might not otherwise have chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anything else? Please write it here:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Would you want to be part of a book group again?

**Yes / No**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If Yes:</th>
<th>If No:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you want to be part of an awards process again?</td>
<td>Please tell me why... is it:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to do other things during lunchtime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes: Please tell me what you liked about it</td>
<td>If no: Please tell me why and what you would prefer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t enjoy discussing books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t enjoy reading books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to choose my own books and not read the book group selections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – please tell me here:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 2: Reading for pleasure

1. How much do you agree with the following statement:

‘When I was in Year 6 I spent more time reading more than I do now.’

Not at all

A bit

Very much

2. If you have answered ‘very much’ or ‘a bit’, please tell me why (tick as many as apply):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have so much time any more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s hard to find books that interest me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t enjoy it as much as I used to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends aren’t interested in books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other things are more fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – please explain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7: Original dissertation proposal for an Open Access publishing project

Open Source for Open Access:
A case study of Ubiquity Press

Introduction

Academic journal publishing is changing. Even the traditional, established publishers such as Elsevier acknowledge that Gold Open Access is an area that they will need to expand.

But if Open Access (OA) is to offer a viable alternative model in the long term, there is a problem. Article Processing Charges (APCs) are often so high that universities could never save money by publishing via OA rather than paying subscriptions to paywalled journals. In fact it may be more expensive.

Open source journal software offers the possibility of a very different costing model. How might it affect the landscape of journal publishing?

Ubiquity Press is a new OA publisher with a streamlined business model. They make use of open source software and offer universities the opportunity to set up university presses with very low APCs. Could this new model be the way forward for academic publishing?

Aims and objectives

The project aims to examine the developing nature of OA publishing and asks whether there are sustainable business models which can save academic institutions money while providing them with the publishing environment they require. This enquiry will be focused by explaining the infrastructure and business model of Ubiquity Press and discovering what may motivate or discourage universities from establishing university presses via this route.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To show the current situation regarding open access mandates and policies in the UK
- To show in broad terms how the business models of other Open Access publishers work
- To analyse the functions of existing university presses
- To analyse the business model and infrastructure of Ubiquity Press, including:
  - A breakdown and analysis of their current clients and partners
  - A breakdown and analysis of their current publications
  - A financial analysis of their business model including platform fees, APCs, publishing costs
  - A report on the human and physical infrastructure of the company
- To examine the motivations of academic institutions which publish via Ubiquity Press
- To examine the requirements of academic institutions which do not publish via Ubiquity Press

Scope and definition

This study is concerned with Gold Open Access, defined by Vincent and Wickham (2013) as ‘work that is immediately available free of charge at the site of publication to any member of the public. Post-Finch it is commonly taken to mean that such access is supported by author-side article processing charges (APCs) but in fact the majority of those listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (www.doaj.org/) charge no fee of any kind either to author or reader. The Finch Report also associates Gold open access with free reuse via an unrestricted CC-BY licence but logically and legally availability and licencing are separate issues.’
APCs are defined by Vincent and Wickham (2013) as ‘the sum of money paid up front by authors or their institutions in order to permit Gold open access’.

CC-BY licence, also defined by Vincent and Wickham (2013) is ‘the licence which determines the form of reuse permitted to those who access articles or other publications. CC stands for ‘Creative Commons’ and BY or By means that the author(s) of the article must be appropriately acknowledged. More restrictive versions of the licence forbid commercial reuse (-NC) or the use of the article to construct derivative materials (-ND)’.

Regarding the analysis of the Open Access publishing landscape and the functions of university presses, the scope of the research will be limited to literature produced in roughly the last seven years in order to properly take account of new publishing models. The literature review will include not only journal articles and reports, but also blog posts, tweets and discussions on comment boards while noting that these are a self-selecting and unedited sample of opinions.

The interrogation of institutions’ motives in setting up university presses will be restricted to one or two institutions which publish with Ubiquity, and one or two which do not.

The content considered by this study will be academic journals and monographs.

Research context / literature review

This work is intended to enter the discussion on the future of gold Open Access publishing. Some traditional publishers are suggesting that it offers limited possibilities (Anderson, K. 2014) and cannot be the future of academic publishing in a substantial way. The British Academy published a collection of articles discussing the subject of OA (Vincent and Wickham, eds, 2013). This debate requires detailed investigation into the sustainability of Open Access business models.

The RCUK’s policy on Open Access ‘aims to achieve immediate, unrestricted, on-line access to peer-reviewed and published research papers, free of any access charge’. Drawing on this and other documents such as the Finch Report, the HEFCE OA policy and the Wellcome Trust’s policy on open access the study will clarify the current climate on Open Access publishing.

Clearly if OA is to be sustainable for academic institutions it must represent an overall financial saving on the traditional model of journal subscriptions. In 2011 the Research Information Network published research indicating the level at which this would be possible. The average APC at the time was £2,364. Based on this level of charge, UK institutions’ costs would actually rise by £8.3m per annum. If the charges averaged at £1,950 then the change would make no financial difference, while if average APCs were to be set at about £1,457, the institutions would benefit from savings of about £2.8m per annum (RIN, 2011).

The Wellcome Institute recently revealed the range of APCs paid for publication of research that they had funded (Kiley, 2014). More than two thirds of these APCs were at the level of £1,457 or higher, with well over half of those at the critical level of £1,950 or higher.

In 2010 a survey of scholarly journals using Open Journal Software (Edgar & Willinsky, 2010) reported on the relative costs of producing journals using OJS and other software. They found that, for journals using OJS, first-copy costs were ‘$188.39 per article… roughly a tenth of the industry standard over the past decade’ while the annual budget for the majority stood at ‘less than what are held to be the “fixed” costs ($3,800) of a single article’. Edgar & Willinsky conclude: ‘These journals are also in a position to contribute to future discussions about scholarly communication in light of their budgets, which appear to challenge what is often held up as the necessary and real cost of scholarly publishing’.
It will be interesting to analyse the data from this report to establish how OJS is affecting OA publishing. It will also be necessary to investigate whether there is more recent data available.

While there have been some relevant case studies of publishers (Maron and Loy 2011, Ruderman 2013), examinations of the attitudes of academics (Ellingford 2012 and Wiley 2013) and surveys of universities’ handling of APCs (Jisc APC pilot case studies 2014), from which this study will draw, there has not been a great deal of work done to show in detail whether an individual company’s business model is sustainable and workable in the long term. This project aims to address precisely that.

The work of the Research Information Network (2014) on the transition to Open Access will help to elucidate the context within which Ubiquity Press is working.

Ubiquity Press is a researcher led OA publishing company who ‘support publishing by academic societies and university presses’ (Ubiquity Press website). They aim to create an international community of academics connected by Ubiquity’s university presses. University staff are integrated into the peer review process and Ubiquity operate a badging system for peer reviewers. The idea is to create an atmosphere of trust which may be absent when working with traditional publishers, while keeping APCs very low at £250.

They publish not only journals but also ebooks and ‘metajournals’ of research data.

Ubiquity’s is not the only OA model in the scholarly world. It will be necessary to look at other models in order to give some context and comparison.

Examples of other OA journal models being attempted currently include:

- **PeerJ**
  Publishes two Biological and Medical Science journals, for which authors purchase a ‘lifetime publishing plan’ (PeerJ website). In return for this they are able to publish articles for no charge so long as they contribute by acting as peer reviewers.

- **PLoS**
  Produces some high profile OA journals which publish anything submitted so long as it is sound. It was initially founded in 2000, with a grant of $9 million. It is now ‘financially self-sustaining’ (Haynes, 2012 p155).

- **The Open Library of the Humanities**
  They cite the success of PLoS and point out that ‘the truly interesting thing about the PLOS model ... is that PLOS ONE publishes not based upon importance, but upon accuracy and then lets the scientific community decide what research stands out’ (Open Library of the Humanities website). Like PLoS, the Open Library of the Humanities charges APCs but will waive them in the event of an author being unable to pay.

- **eLife**
  An OA journal for biomedical and life sciences research. It is funded entirely by the Wellcome Trust, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Max Planck Institute. In this publishing model, there is not only no subscription, but also no APC. The Wellcome Trust website says that ‘the editorial team will be editorially independent of the funders’ (Wellcome Trust 2012). Campbell (2012, p12) observes that ‘it will be interesting to see how any potential conflicts of interest are managed and whether other funders will also switch budgets from research to journal publishing.’
Monograph publishing presents its own problem. Rupert Gatti describes traditional monograph publication as employing a financial model which ‘relies on denying access to knowledge’ (Gatti 2014), as prices are high and sales are low. This is a particular problem for Humanities subjects.

Knowledge Unlatched’s website describes a ‘crisis’ in monograph publishing, as ‘over the past few decades the market for monographs has shrunk by around 90%’. The high cost of academic books is prohibitive for individuals and, increasingly, even for libraries.

In response to this problem, various models of OA publishing are being used for monographs.

Examples of OA monograph publishing models in current use include:

- **Open Book Publishers**
  
Publishes both print and ebooks in tandem with a free online edition. Their digital editions are able to incorporate multimedia elements, for example their anthropological book on ‘Storytelling in Northern Zambia’ which includes the original audio and video recordings of Zambian storytellers so that ‘readers can verify and participate in the academic discussion – and scholars can make further use of the primary material in their academic research.’ (Open Book Publishers website, 2014). Open Book Publishers use print-on-demand to produce their printed works to keep costs down.

- **Knowledge Unlatched**
  
Libraries internationally share the payment of a Title Fee, in return for which the book will be ‘made available on a Creative Commons licence via OAPEN and HathiTrust as a fully downloadable PDF’. Because the Title Fee is a fixed sum, this will become increasingly cost-efficient for libraries as more libraries join the scheme. KU’s executive director, Frances Pinter, observed that because the number of participating libraries exceeded their target, the price per title for each library would be reduced from the target price of $60 to under $43.

The latest development is the release of the white paper by Kennison and Norberg (2014) proposing a new approach to funding open access in the Humanities and Social Sciences. This is already being vigorously debated by Straumsheim (2014), Rick Anderson (2014) and many others.

It is hoped that a close investigation of the business model of a publisher such as Ubiquity Press, which keeps APCs low through the use of OJS, may shed some light on the question of whether such complex proposals are necessary.

**Methodology**

This will be an essentially qualitative study, involving literature review and interviews.

The initial groundwork in creating a picture of the OA publishing landscape will require an analysis of the literature surrounding OA policies and mandates. It will also require an analysis of information about companies co-existing in this arena, largely drawing from company websites to illustrate current publishing models.

Following this I will conduct interviews with key staff at Ubiquity Press as follows:

Brian Hole (co-founder and Publisher)
Tom Pollard (co-founder and Operations Manager)
Tim Wakeford (Editorial Manager)
Caroline Wilkinson (Institutional Relations Manager)
I have had a preliminary meeting with Brian Hole, who is happy to support this project and allow access to the company. He is also happy to provide contacts for Ubiquity Press’s partners.

I then plan to contact one or two of the academic institutions publishing with Ubiquity for interviews regarding their perspective on OA publishing. Finally I plan to do the same with one or two institutions which have not published with Ubiquity Press.

**Work plan**

The work will be done on a part-time basis and will be completed by January 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>Jan</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>Summer break</td>
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<td>Review material relating to OA policies &amp; mandates</td>
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<td>Collect info on business models &amp; charges of other OA publishers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review literature on functions of university presses</td>
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<td>Write up sections on OA context</td>
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<td>Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview key staff at Ubiquity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview 2 Ubiquity clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview 2 non-Ubiquity clients</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcribe interviews</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Analyze interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write up findings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Review and write conclusions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Write reflections</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>First-draft memo, bibliography, etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources**

No special resources will be required for this project. There will be minimal travel costs.

**Ethics**

There are no remarkable ethical issues with this project. Informed consent will be required from all interviewees, while all literature references will be properly referenced to avoid plagiarism.

**Confidentiality**

Brian Hole of Ubiquity Press is happy to provide access to the company and tells me that there will be no issues of confidentiality or areas of the business which must be kept private. There should be no need for anonymisation, but this could be offered to interviewees from academic institutions if required.

**References**


Jisc APC pilot case studies (2014) https://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/Jisc-APC-project/Case-studies/ [14th May 2014]


Open Book Publishers website  [22 April 2014]

Open Library of the Humanities website,  The OLH Model  [22 April 2014]

PeerJ website  [22 April 2014]

Research Councils UK (2013)  RCUK Policy on Open Access  [10th May 2014]


Ubiquity Press website  [15th May 2014]


Wellcome Trust (2013)  Open Access Policy  [14th May 2014]

### Research Ethics Checklist
**School of Informatics BSc MSc/MA Projects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does your project pose only minimal and predictable risk to you (the student)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does your project pose only minimal and predictable risk to other people affected by or participating in the project?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is your project supervised by a member of academic staff of the School of Informatics or another individual approved by the module leaders?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the answer to either of the following questions (4 – 5) is YES, you MUST apply to the University Research Ethics Committee for approval. (You should seek advice about this from your project supervisor at an early stage.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Does your project involve animals?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does your project involve pregnant women or women in labour?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the answer to the following question (6) is YES, you MUST complete the remainder of this form (7 – 19). If the answer is NO, you are finished.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Does your project involve human participants? For example, as interviewees, respondents to a questionnaire or participants in evaluation or testing?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the answer to any of the following questions (7 – 13) is YES, you MUST apply to the Informatics Research Ethics Panel for approval and your application may be referred to the University Research Ethics Committee. (You should seek advice about this from your project supervisor at an early stage.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Could your project uncover illegal activities?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Could your project cause stress or anxiety in the participants?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Will you be asking questions of a sensitive nature?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Does your project rely on covert observation of the participants?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Does your project involve participants who are under the age of 18?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Does your project involve adults who are vulnerable because of their social, psychological or medical circumstances (vulnerable adults)?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Does your project involve participants who have learning difficulties?  
No

The following questions (14 – 16) must be answered YES, i.e. you MUST COMMIT to satisfy these conditions and have an appropriate plan to ensure they are satisfied.

14. Will you ensure that participants taking part in your project are fully informed about the purpose of the research? Yes

15. Will you ensure that participants taking part in your project are fully informed about the procedures affecting them or affecting any information collected about them, including information about how the data will be used, to whom it will be disclosed, and how long it will be kept? Yes

16. When people agree to participate in your project, will it be made clear to them that they may withdraw (i.e. not participate) at any time without any penalty? Yes

The following questions (17 – 19) must be answered and the requested information provided.

17. Will consent be obtained from the participants in your project? No (n/a)

Consent from participants will be necessary if you plan to gather personal, medical or other sensitive data about them. “Personal data” means data relating to an identifiable living person; e.g. data you collect using questionnaires, observations, interviews, computer logs. The person might be identifiable if you record their name, username, student id, DNA, fingerprint, etc.

If YES, provide the consent request form that you will use and indicate who will obtain the consent, how are you intending to arrange for a copy of the signed consent form for the participants, when will they receive it and how long the participants will have between receiving information about the study and giving consent, and when the filled consent request forms will be available for inspection (NOTE: subsequent failure to provide the filled consent request forms will automatically result in withdrawal of any earlier ethical approval of your project):

18. Have you made arrangements to ensure that material and/or private information obtained from or about the participating individuals will remain confidential? No (n/a)

Provide details:

19. Will the research be conducted in the participant’s home or other non-University location? Yes

If YES, provide details of how your safety will be preserved:

Interviews will be conducted at the offices of Ubiquity Press, therefore I do not consider that there are safety concerns.
Appendix 8: Reflection on the dissertation process

The final work is entirely unrelated to the Proposal document (Appendix 7). This complete change of plan was due to my being offered a job working in a secondary school as Learning Resource Centre Manager. With the new job came new research interests, and although I had been full of enthusiasm for my original research proposal, I now began afresh.

As I learned about the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme, I conceived the idea of using a shadowing group as a case study to examine its effects.

Because the Carnegie shortlist was announced on March 17th and the winner would be announced on June 22nd, I was tied to this schedule for my action research. In some ways this is regrettable because I would have preferred to carry out the literature review first. I would then have had the literature findings in mind when conducting the original research.

In the event I read research papers concurrently with the action research, but due to time constraints did not write the formal literature review until the shadowing scheme had ended.

It did not occur to me at the beginning of the project to extract data on the whole year group’s AR quizzes, and I only took data on the selected Year 8 students at this point. This was unfortunate, because at the end of the project I realised that it would have been useful. By this time the data had been removed from the school’s system because these students were now in Year 9 and so were no longer enrolled on the scheme. However I think that the year group’s library borrowing data was sufficient to indicate that the small selected group was reasonably representative.

I spent a long time collating data from the Accelerated Reader software before concluding that it added nothing to the research and discarding it. I had hoped that a detailed analysis of progress in reading would reveal something of interest but in fact there are so many other variables in the students’ experiences of school that it was not useful. This might however be an interesting area for further study in its own right, as one would have time and space to examine the enormous variations in progress between different classes taught by different teachers and could perhaps begin to understand which factors are most significant.
Another area which would be fruitful for further study is that of the gender divide over reading. The almost exclusively female group of this study is absolutely typical of reading groups across the country, and further research on this would be interesting.

During the early stages of my study I was concerned that the unstructured nature of the group meetings was a problem and that it would result in inadequate material for research. In fact I think that the group interview conducted at the end of the process indicates that the unstructured meetings were valuable to students, who complained that the structure of studying texts in English lessons was killing the pleasure of reading. The students astonished me by the range and complexity of ideas expressed during this discussion. The depth of their feelings on the subject of books confirmed for me that this was a worthwhile enterprise and that demonstrating the worth of book groups like the shadowing group is useful.

The literature review was enjoyable for me and yielded surprisingly conclusive findings in some areas. However, despite efforts to construct focused Boolean searches, the search of bibliographic databases yielded a great deal of material which was not specifically relevant to the study, concerning for example research on encouraging boys to read, or recommendations for school libraries’ use of ebooks to encourage reading for pleasure. The library catalogue yielded more useful material, and focused Google searches produced key national and international research from the last five years from organisations such as the OECD and the National Literacy Trust.

I have learned a great deal which I will now be able to put to use in my work as I plan new initiatives in school.