

Literacy Today No. 93

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News

1 **Funding for community-based English language learning**

The Communities & Local Government Secretary, Robert Jenrick, announced in mid July a £5.1 million fund to provide classes to those with little or no English in 30 areas across England.

2 **Children's Commissioner calls on Government to make early years central to COVID-19 fightback with a new "Best Beginnings" guarantee**

Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner for England, has published a report in mid July on the provision of early years services for children, alongside a warning that many nurseries were at risk of closure, which would hit the life chances of some of the most vulnerable children and hold back the economic recovery following lockdown.

4 **Proposed phonics check in Year 2**

The Government's controversial phonics check has been criticised as even less appropriate during the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic than it would normally be.

Quick Reads 2021 Authors Revealed

In late June the Reading Agency announced the new line-up of best-selling authors who will be writing a new series of short novels for Quick Reads, the programme that aims to tackle the UK's adult literacy crisis by helping less confident readers to start reading.

Children's choices and who influences them

A survey commissioned by the Reading Agency to mark the launch of the Summer Reading Challenge 2020 has revealed that 89% of 7-11-year-olds surveyed had been reading during lockdown, and 37% had been reading more than before the schools had closed.

5 **Coronavirus: Baseline assessment delay**

In late June the Department for Education announced its decision to delay the introduction of statutory reception baseline assessment until autumn 2021, because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

6 **Number of students required to continue English study set to increase with rising unemployment**

As employment may no longer be an option for many school leavers this year, the proportion of young people seeking an apprenticeship or opting to stay in full time education when they may otherwise have found employment, could be set to rise considerably.

7 **New resources support ESOL practitioners working with refugees**

During Refugee Week 2020, in June, the Learning and Work Institute, Learning Unlimited and the Education and Training Foundation, launched a suite of resources to help ESOL practitioners address the early integration needs of refugees.

First Ambassadors Announced for 2020 Summer Reading Challenge

The Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge 2020 has announced the initial line-up of stars in children's publishing and entertainment who have pledged their support for this year.

8 **Help for Year 6 teachers to support literacy and wellbeing when schools reopen**

To support Year 6 teachers who are preparing to welcome their classes back to school, the National Literacy Trust has collected literacy and wellbeing resources for 10-11-year-olds on its Back to School page, which hosts several of top teaching resources, fun lesson ideas and activities.

8 **Zone In platform for young adults**

The National Literacy Trust has launched Zone In, a free online platform for students and young adult learners aged 13 and over, which is packed with weekly activities and resources to help young people build new skills and improve their literacy during lockdown.

Free book by over 110 authors and illustrators

Award-winning children's author, Katherine Rundell, has launched *The Book of Hopes: Words and Pictures to Comfort, Inspire and Entertain Children in Lockdown*, which the National Literacy Trust is hosting exclusively on Family Zone.

9 **Reading and traditional children's activities surge in lockdown**

While reading and traditional children's activities have surged during the lockdown, a significant minority are at risk of falling behind.

New dates for free embedding maths and English in apprenticeships webinars

The Education and Training Foundation has added new dates for the free embedding maths and English in apprenticeships interactive webinars in May and June.

Research

10 **The future content of courses on teaching early reading in initial teacher education in England: evidence-based or controlled by government?**

In this original research article written for Literacy Today, Professor Margaret Clark explores the issue of the future content of courses in teaching early reading and asks whether the future is to be policy determined by evidence or government ideology.

16 **Lockdown, inspiration for creative writing**

Research published at the end of June by the National Literacy Trust, to mark National Writing Day, showed that lockdown had inspired a resurgence in children and young people's creative writing, which in turn, had played an important role in supporting children's wellbeing during the period of uncertainty.

Studying English increases with rising unemployment

As employment may no longer be an option for many school leavers this year, the proportion of young people seeking an apprenticeship or opting to stay in full time education when they may otherwise have found employment, could be set to rise considerably.

17 **Reading offer insight into different cultures**

A survey conducted by the Reading Agency to mark National Reading Group Day, revealed that 2 in 3 reading group participants (65%) felt they had a better understanding of the world because of participating in their group, as 87% had reported that they had a better understanding of other points of view because of their participation.

Inspiration for post-16 English teaching from practitioner research

Reports of 12 collaborative action research projects that have produced inspiring ideas for post-16 English teaching are now available to read in the publication of the sixth phase of the Education and Training Foundation's Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment programme.

18 **An integrated approach to teaching may benefit children with low reading ability**

Children starting primary school may benefit from a new approach to teaching reading that fully integrates phonics and language teaching, according to a Nuffield Foundation-funded study from City, University of London. *A Pilot Study to Evaluate an Integrated Phonics and Language Programme for the Teaching of Reading to Deaf and Hearing Children*, pointed out that current educational practice focused on phonics and there was less emphasis on language.

- 19 Nuffield Early Language Intervention boosts young children’s language skills by three months**
An evaluation by the Education Endowment Foundation has found that the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) boosts the language skills of four- and five-year olds by an additional three months, which suggests that the programme could be a promising way to help children catch up when schools reopen.
- Parliament - Debates**
- 20 COVID-19 and Language Schools**
Caroline Ansell (Con, Eastbourne) introduced a debate on the effect of COVID-19 on International Language Schools.
- 21 English language learning**
Baroness Verma (Con) asked the Government what plans it had to make learning to speak, and to read, English compulsory.
- Parliament - Questions**
- 22 Written Questions in the House of Commons and House of Lords relevant to the government policy on the National Curriculum/Early Reading in England, 10 June to 16 July 2020**
Professor Margaret M. Clark OBE writes about the background to questions on aspects of Government literacy policy.
- 23 Answers to written questions**
Answers to written parliamentary questions on literacy from the Department for Education, the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport, the Department of Health and Social Care, the Home Office, the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government, the Department for International Development, the Ministry of Justice, H M Treasury and the House of Lords.
- 40 Publisher details**
Publisher details and subscription information.