

Pageturners Hilarious Books Experience

Jan 10th– Feb 7th 2013, St. Peter's School, Chippenham

What we did

Pageturners ran a five week project for parents and children from Year four and five along with any siblings. This project was funded by the Chippenham Borough Lands Charity. Twelve children from the school and seven parents took part (seven families). There were 11 boys and one girl.

At the first session the group heard extracts and blurbs from a range of funny books. Extracts and blurbs were scored out of ten on scorecards – one per family. There was lots of discussion going on in each family group! They then heard about one funny character from each book and made the one they most liked the sound of. Finally, the book cover were revealed and given a mark out of ten too. All the scores were added up and the winning book was **Zeus on the Loose by John Dougherty**.

This book was then the focus of the following four sessions. In week two, everyone got a signed copy of the book along with the second book in the series. The children were really excited that the books had been signed by the author and addressed to each of them. This was possible because we ordered the books directly from John Dougherty.

Each week, aspects of the book were drawn out and brought to life using interactive methods. Some of the activities included:

- Acting out a scenes from the book in small groups with drama props. This was to introduce the story to everyone.
- Anyone who didn't want an acting role made props in small teams – the temple of Zeus. In the book the main character, Alex made this from toilet rolls and old cardboard – each team did the same.
- Everyone completed 'book personality profiles' – these resulted in personalised recommended further reading suggestions.
- Doodling on a large tablecloth each session on arrival and whilst listening to book extracts. This also gave the smaller children something to focus on if they didn't want to take part in the activity – it was popular! We created quite a mural by the end!
- Making 'Zeus on the Loose in St. Peter's' stage sets and puppets.
- Writing their own scripts for the puppets in family groups or with friends.
- Showcase for teachers at the end when they acted out the plays and did their puppet shows.
- Talking about the book and giving opinions each week.

Feedback from participants

Feedback was collected at the very end of the project to find out what people thought overall. There was some informal feedback collected at the end of the first and second sessions (choosing the book, making a character drama and making the Temple of Zeus in small teams) to see what people thought – they

wrote down what they enjoyed (on the tablecloth) and had a chance to write down anything they didn't like:

- Drama was funny. It was all good. (child)
- It was lovely to see the children so excited about the story. All good, no negatives. (Parent)
- Enjoyed being arty and messy (Parent)
- I have enjoyed everything! Brilliant session (parent)
- I liked all of it cos it was cool (child)
- I liked the acting and the fun (child)
- I really enjoyed making the temple and working as part of a team. Loved the drama (parent)
- Making a character with my son. (parent)
- Making a character (child)
- Enjoyed the drama (Parent)
- Watching the drama (Child)
- Drama and making the character
- Decorating the model temple and watching the drama (adult)
- I liked acting and getting the books (child)
- We all had fun, thank you (parent)
- It was a really good session thanks very much.

Informal feedback on the book in week 4 (written on the mat):

- I think it's very good so far, because I like the characters (child)
- I like big, bellowy Zeus (parent)
- 9/10 Fun and enjoyable (parent)
- 10/10 funny (child)
- Fantastic (child)
- 8/10 Fun and enjoyable (child)
- 7/10 I like when Zeus turns into a hamster (child)
- 10/10 Very funny and gripping (Child)
- Good, Alex is my favourite character (child)
- Funny and entertaining (child)

- 9/10 funny (child)

Two of the parents spoke to me about the how good the book was. One parent said how lovely it was to see her son choosing to read a book, especially to hear him laughing while doing so. He flew through the two books. The child told me they were the best books he had ever read.

Another mum said the books were excellent for both her boys and they had enjoyed them together as a family. She said the boys had particularly loved the way the author had captured the daily routines of school life. The silly story suited them down to the ground.

I was also contacted by a parent who wasn't in the group wanting to know what the book was so that she could buy it for her daughter. She'd heard boys from the project talking about it in class and she thought it sounded brilliant.

Children's thoughts from the feedback form at the end (some of the children were too young to fill in the form):

Marks out of ten for the book along with a comment:

10/10: I loved it!

9/10

10/10

6/10; I don't know, ok.

10/10: Extremely amazing

10/10

9/10

8/10: It was one of my favourite books

Marks out ten for the Hilarious Books experience and how would you describe the project to a friend?

9/10: Funny and exciting.

10/10: Funny, cool. Very good description

10/10: A great use of time and really fun.

10/10: Fun, exciting, cool

(no mark): A very good interesting club

10/10

10/10: Very fun and enjoyable. We did drama, puppet theatre and made things.

10/10: Fun, funny, fantastic and flabbergasting.

What was your favourite thing we did (and why)

Performing the play. It brought the book alive

Making the scenes and character because it was fun.

Making a stage because I love art.

Being with friends.

The drama, because we did really amazing plays.

Drama because I love making up plays.

Drawing my character

Making the stage because I like making stuff.

Any suggestions for how we could change or improve the Hilarious Books Experience?

No x 5

No, it's the best it could be.

No, not really. Apart from have more weeks.

No, it's perfect. Very good.

Parents feedback

1. How much do you think your child enjoyed the Hilarious Books Experience?

(with 5 being 'very much' and 1 being 'not at all')? (5 completed)

1 2 3 4 5 x 5

1b. How much have you enjoyed attending the project:

1 2 3 4 x 2 5 x 3

Could you say why?

- I really enjoyed helping with the crafts
- My son loved being able to combine drama with reading
- Diverse and we really lived the book!

2. Which parts of Pageturners do you think your child most enjoyed? (put an X by any that apply)

Sharing a book with other children 2

Creative activities 3

Drama 3

Writing 1

Arts and making things 2

All of it 3

3. Please tick any of the following that apply to your child since taking part in the Pageturners project:

Increased enthusiasm for reading x 2

Discussing the book with you/other family members x 2

Talking at home/school about the activities and things we've done x 5

Any further comments or feedback?

- The children really seemed to enjoy using the book as a starting point for other imaginative activities arising out of the story.
- Pitched just right for year 4/5, who were the main target. Accommodated younger ones well though, with the crafty bits. The books went down very well at home, we read them as a family.
- Ben has enjoyed taking part.
- Excellent interaction and activities for parents and children – makes reading FUN! Well done. We lived and read the book in a very entertaining way.
- It was very enjoyable to be part of the group with my sons. Although my eldest did not need my support to engage in activities my younger sons did.