In Chapter 6, I discussed the importance of supporting children’s creation of their own stories and digital books. In this chapter I delegate the authorship to teachers. Having worked very closely with several teachers over the years, I am cautious about suggesting new activities and resources for their already very packed agenda and list of responsibilities. As it stands, the current UK curriculum does not place emphasis on media/digital-multimedia literacy and does not prepare teachers for teaching with and about new technologies. This textbook cannot plug the big hole. The focus on digital books is very specific. I hope, however, that my practical recommendations for using digital books will be a useful addition to advice on media literacy and technology use more broadly.

Cast your mind back to Chapter 5 and the multiple reasons for children to be story authors. There are many diverse reasons for teachers to be authors too. Teachers may wish to become authors of children’s digital books because they want to position themselves as writers and makers in the classroom, because they want to make the books in their classrooms more meaningful and personalised for individual children, or perhaps because they want to convey a specific idea to children in a new medium.

I am particularly excited about the potential of digital books created by educational professionals to address the low quality of educational content available for children’s digital reading and to become a means for teachers to share, innovate and contribute their own expertise and knowledge to children’s reading on screen. There are many programs with which teachers can make their own digital books for, or with, children. Such self-created digital books offer flexible and low-cost options for publication and can contain a diverse range of authentic themes, plots and characters.
I begin this chapter with a theory- and literature-based rationale for why teachers’ authorship of children’s digital books matters. This is followed by some case study examples, recommendations of resources, and strategies to support teachers as authors and makers of children’s digital books.

The importance of teachers’ authorship of children’s digital books

Teachers act as children’s role models, agents of socialisation and brokers of knowledge. As such, teachers are uniquely positioned to author the books through which children assimilate knowledge and learn about human values. Teresa Cremin has written extensively about the ways in which teachers can position themselves as writers. Teachers who read and write and writers who read can model the practice of literacy, extend children’s literacy life and encourage reading for pleasure (see e.g. Cremin et al. 2009). In this chapter, I extend the ‘teachers as writers’ proposition by suggesting that teachers can become the authors and multimedia makers of children’s digital books. This means that teachers may not only provide the text for children’s stories but also enrich them with images, audio-recordings and even interactivity. This may sound like an ambitious, perhaps daunting suggestion. But there is evidence that teachers are excellent multimedia story-makers and there are some easy-to-use software platforms facilitating teachers’ creation of stories. Why should teachers engage in this practice?

Since the early 2010s, there has been a proliferation of new forms of children’s stories (e.g. storybook apps, iBooks, enhanced e-books), available on a variety of reading platforms, including iPads, LeapReaders™ and Android tablets. However, despite greater availability of and access to digital stories, the quality and diversity of digital stories for young children are low. In Chapter 2, I outlined ways in which publishers and policy-makers could address this issue. In this chapter I propose that teachers can enrich children’s digital books with educational content that directly connects to the lives of the children in their classroom. This can happen in partnerships with commercial producers and there are some companies and researchers that partner up with schools. Although not everyone is fortunate enough to be in a productive partnership, all teachers can choose to change the content of children’s reading on screen. Any teacher can be a blogger and any teacher can be a digital story-maker. Teachers as authors can create digital books that extend specific topics or introduce
new concepts. Such teacher-generated books can address a specific curriculum area and contain bespoke support for individual children. For example, in one UK classroom participating in my research, the teaching assistant created a digital book with words that contained consonant clusters to support children’s early blending practice. The teaching assistant, while supporting a phonics lesson, noticed children’s enthusiasm when using iPads but also that no suitable material was available for practising their phonics skills. She used the story-making app to make a simple story with each page dedicated to different consonant blends (e.g. ‘glasses’ and ‘glue’ on one page and ‘dream’ and ‘dragon’ on another page).

Teacher-created digital books may motivate children to take part in reading-related activities and also to find delight in stories.

Another key reason for teachers’ involvement in story-making is the recurring evidence that children’s literature (both digital and non-digital books) lacks socio-cultural, gender and ethnic diversity. In their choice of authors and their propagation of bestselling titles, many Anglo-American publishers reproduce dominant socio-cultural, ethnic and gender norms. The social media campaign #WeNeedDiverseBooks and the non-profit grassroots organisation We Need Diverse Books™ advocate ‘essential changes in the publishing industry’ (https://diversebooks.org/about-wndb/). Such changes are important but cannot happen overnight; teacher-led production of children’s books could gradually contribute to shifting the mindset and enrich the canon of children’s literature.

Stories made by teachers can build on the cultural background of the children in their classroom and the local context of the school. I have seen some lovely self-made books by teachers in a New Zealand classroom, which contained photos of the local park and words about plants and birds living there. Stories authored by teachers can also contain characters and plots that portray the readers in the classroom rather than being the idealised characters often propagated by commercial publishers. For instance, in one classroom in the English Midlands, the teacher decided to make children in her class the heroes of her fictional story, an idea that has motivated children to read the book over and over again.

Teachers can also create digital books that address a specific topic that they need to discuss with the children in their class, such as bullying or the importance of sharing. Presenting the topic in the form of a story will structure the topic in an accessible way and aid children’s understanding and identification with the content.

Coming back to personalised learning, another important theme that can be conveyed to children through teacher-made digital books is the teacher’s own life. Teachers can share with children some of their
childhood memories, reading interests or hobbies and reconstruct the world of story as a space for conversation and mutual understanding of origins and shared presence. If we want to grow a generation of empathetic citizens, we need to introduce more opportunities for teachers to teach emotional skills; personal stories are an exemplary medium to do that. Why not create books for children which outline how their teacher grew up, how their teachers act in the local community, how they show acts of compassion? If children know their teachers as a person they will respect and appreciate them even more. In my UKLA minibook on personalisation (Kucirkova 2014b), I share an example of a teacher who created a digital book based on photographs depicting his typical weekend. The plot was fairly simple and the pictures were photographs of the teacher’s garden and a few objects at home, but the children absolutely loved his story. The teachers in our project reported unexpected positive consequences from engaging in the process, including improved classroom dynamics.

Books that feature teachers as story heroes are definitely not common practice in mainstream schools, and the children read that book with great delight and interest. Providing such innovative content through the medium of a digital book may become an exciting way of refreshing children’s reading lives and introducing more reciprocity into classrooms. Worth a try, perhaps?

**Teachers and children creating digital books together**

The continuum of agency and reciprocity reminds us that teachers’ authorship of stories needs to be accompanied with an ongoing process of negotiating a shared perspective in the classroom. Reciprocity can take the form of direct collaboration and teachers’ co-authorship of digital books with children. Through collaborative story-making, teachers and children can practise vital curriculum skills together and at the same time learn together about each other’s stories. Whether the book is about the teacher, the child, or both, the process of creation can be an enjoyable back-and-forth negotiation of story events and characters. Digital books may be better suited to collaborative co-creation than print books, for three reasons.

Unlike print books, digital books remove established hierarchies between adult and child and open up several ways into a story. Digital books also offer flexibility of reproduction and content-sharing. Last but not least, the ease of including photographs and one’s own drawings with a single tap is a significant advantage.
Teachers do not need to spend their free time making books for children; they can create digital books with the children in the classroom, as part of various lessons and methods of teaching set topics. In doing so, they can introduce children to the concepts of authorship, audience awareness and digital literacies, in *addition* to the specific topic they’re teaching (e.g. studying the life of Henry VIII through collaborative multimedia story-making). A collaborative story-making process is likely to be followed by joint story-sharing, which can be a very rewarding and motivating experience for children-authors. Finished books can be shared on the interactive whiteboard and be part of a whole-class discussion. Alternatively, given that digital books can be easily reproduced electronically and customised for different children, teachers can produce individual digital books and either print them out or send them to children’s individual accounts in the digital library.

In their personalisation theory developed in the context of adults’ use of mobile phones, Oulasvirta and Blom (2008) argue that creating a shared object intensifies the experience of everyone involved. They argue that personalisation heightens the motivation of both the creator and the receiver. This reciprocal motivation is present in both personalising digital tools and personalised stories. The theory suggests that both teachers and children benefit from creating digital books together.

**Strategies for creating digital books**

To inspire your own approach to digital story-making for children, I outline three fictionalised case studies to illustrate how teachers and other educational professionals can enrich the curriculum with their own digital stories. The case studies are representative examples from several projects I have conducted with UK teachers in the past six years. The case studies did not happen exactly as I describe them and are not intended to be directly emulated; my intention is to ignite your own ideas regarding possible approaches.

**Case study 1**

Ben, a teacher in a Year 4 Key Stage 2 classroom (nine- to ten-year-olds), created a digital book to accompany his teaching of a history lesson. The lesson followed the National Curriculum’s topic concerned with the lives of significant individuals who have contributed to national and international achievements. Ben decided to focus his book on Rosa Parks and
Emily Davison. He used the Our Story app to put together a set of pictures with text and sounds. He downloaded photographs, with appropriate attribution, from the Library of Congress, which has a comprehensive bank of resources on Rosa Parks:
https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/rosaparks/rosaparks.html

He arranged the images in a chronological sequence of the key events in Parks’s life and annotated them with short descriptive captions. For example, he used the Montgomery Sheriff’s Department booking photo of Rosa Parks after she was arrested and annotated it with this caption: ‘Rosa was arrested by the police and fined $14 for refusing to give up her bus seat for a white passenger.’ He used the microphone feature to audio-record a longer version of the text and added the following voiceover to the picture:

On the 1st of December 1955, Rosa Parks did something extraordinary and brave: she refused to disobey a bus driver’s order to give up her seat to a white passenger. Rosa was seated in the coloured section of the bus and the white passenger was standing because the whites-only section was full. But Parks refused to give the white passenger her seat. It was not a simple act of disobedience but an act of resistance against bus segregation. There were some other American women who in the 1940s and 1950s refused to support bus segregation. Do you know who they were? Name one and add her picture and text to this story.

Ben uploaded the finished story to his Dropbox account and downloaded it on the individual iPads used by the children in his classroom. Now each child had a version of the book and could edit it in their own way. Children could choose whether to add Lillie Mae Bradford or Irene Morgan (or others) to complete the story their teacher had started.

Ben also inserted some personalisation features into the digital story: he left some blank pages for children to complete. In the middle of the digital book, he inserted a profile picture of Rosa Parks and the following text: ‘Imagine you are Rosa Parks. Make an audio-recording about what happened on the 1st of December. You can add your own photo to the page. Use the iPad camera to take your picture.’

He inserted an image of a golden photoframe into three pages/slides of the story and encouraged children to add photos or names of their classmates. These pages were preceded with the following voiceover: ‘Rose Parks is a heroine who is remembered for how she showed courage, forgiveness and hope. Who in our class is an example of courage?’
The next photo frame had the title ‘Hope’ and this audio-recorded instruction by the teacher: ‘Who is our classroom hero of Hope?’ On the next page: ‘Who is our example of Forgiveness? Take a nice photo of your heroes and heroines and add them to the three photo frames.’

Children completed their digital stories with great enthusiasm, working either individually or in pairs. At the end of the activity, they shared the finished stories with each other. Ben also selected some examples to display on the interactive whiteboard. He was interested in seeing how children responded to the story of Rosa Parks but also in how they related her life to their own. He praised children’s efforts to recognise valuable characteristics in their classmates and suggested they make a display based on a ‘Hall of Fame’ with pictures of children displaying the three virtues of hope, courage and forgiveness. The activity was a well-accomplished amalgam of personal/social and past/present connections to stories.

Case study 2

Gabbie, an early years practitioner in a Steiner kindergarten, created a series of digital picture-based dictionaries and personal stories using Our Story. The digital dictionaries were photographs of objects in the school, such as a fork next to a plate or a washbasin in the bathroom. Each photo was accompanied with the word in capitals – e.g. ‘SPOON’ – and Gabbie’s audio-recorded pronunciation of the word. She used the digital dictionary with children whose first language was not English or who had weaker language skills when they started attending the pre-school.

The personal stories she created were about individual children in the class. The stories were all titled ‘[first name of the child]’s Day’ and followed the child’s day in the kindergarten. The pictures were photos of the individual children and the text was written by the teacher (there was no audio-recording in these digital stories). For example, Matthew’s story had eight pages, whose text I reproduce with permission and fictionalised children’s names:

• Page 1 started with a photo of Matthew waving goodbye to his grandma in the morning. The text read, ‘Bye-bye granny, have a lovely day!’
• Page 2 featured a photo of Matthew playing with wooden blocks with another boy in a corner of the classroom. The caption was, ‘Matthew is playing with his friend Frank. Sharing toys is good.’
• Page 3 was a photo of Matthew eating grapes from a colourful plastic bowl: ‘Matthew is enjoying his morning snack. Yummy!’
• Page 4 was a photo of Matthew playing outside with a giant party bubble: ‘Matthew loves bubbles more than anything in the world!’
• Page 5 showed Matthew eating peas with a girl sitting next to him: ‘Matthew likes eating vegetables. Vegetables are good for our bodies!’
• Page 6 featured Matthew reading a book: ‘Psst, it’s reading time! Matthew is reading Rabbit & Bear!’
• Page 7 was a selfie of Gabbie with Matthew, both looking into the camera with a broad smile: ‘Gabbie and Matthew always have a lot of fun together!’
• Page 8 was a quick shot of Matthew putting on a coat in the classroom corridor: ‘It’s time to go home. See you tomorrow Matthew!’

Gabbie printed the children’s stories on coloured paper and folded and stapled them into A6 format. The children were encouraged to take their printed copies home and share them with their parents. Some families requested a digital copy and so Gabbie sent an electronic copy of the digital book to the parents’ email address. There was not a single child in the class who didn’t love their personalised book. Gabbie’s books became a tradition in the kindergarten, each cohort of new children receiving their own personalised books created by the teachers.

Case study 3

Key stage 2 teacher Rebecca created a digital story to bring closer to students one of the statutory requirements in the Year 3 science curriculum: the life cycle of plants. The UK curriculum demands that pupils be able to ‘identify and describe the functions of different parts of flowering plants: roots, stem/trunk, leaves and flowers, as well as understanding the requirements of plants for life and growth’: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study

Rebecca decided to create a fictional multimedia story about an imaginary girl called Rebecca, who follows the life path of a plant in her own garden. She purposefully made the character a younger version of herself because she could easily take pictures of herself in the garden and because it would help the children to take the role of storyteller. Instead of giving children a ready-made book, she made it into a ‘living book’ that the children could add to and complete during the classroom activity of story-making/story-sharing. To create the book, the teacher used her classroom laptop and PowerPoint slides and the free art-making software Tuxpaint.
To begin her digital story, Rebecca took a selfie standing in an allotment with bare soil. There were several tools lying around on the ground but no sign of flowers or other plants. She added the following text: ‘Rebecca wonders how to make her garden bloom. Can you help her?’

The teacher showed children this digital page (slide) on the interactive whiteboard and asked the children, ‘Can you help Rebecca with her garden?’

They enthusiastically answered with a loud ‘Yes!!’

‘What does Rebecca need to do to make her plants grow?’ the teacher asked.

Various answers came up. Rebecca repeated the most relevant ones: ‘Good answer, some sunshine. Get some tools. Very good. So which tools will Rebecca need to start the work?’

Instead of the children verbally describing the tools, Rebecca asked them to draw them on the interactive whiteboard. She clicked on Tuxpaint (the software was installed on her laptop connected to the whiteboard) and opened a blank canvas with a set of paintbrushes. She called individual children to come forward and draw the tools they thought she would need to plant the garden seeds. A boy drew a shovel, a girl used a digital stamp (or sticker) of a sun (available from the drawing software tool) and another girl drew a watering can and soil.

The teacher thanked the children and saved their pictures as three JPG images on her laptop and inserted them into the photo gallery connected to the Our Story app. She then asked a different group of children to come forward to the board and continue the digital story with the depicted tools. She instructed them to write in the ‘correct tense’ and type up their short sentences next to the individual tools. The final pages for the classroom story were:

• Page 2: ‘The sun was shining.’
• Page 3: ‘Rebecca used a shovel to dig a hole.’
• Page 4: ‘She watered the soil with a watering can.’
• Page 5: ‘She planted a seed in the soil.’

The lesson ended but Rebecca continued work with the ‘living book’ the next day. The lesson began with her displaying the incomplete digital story on the interactive whiteboard. She swiped through the first five pages and asked the class, ‘And what happens next? Rebecca planted a seed in the soil. What will happen to the seed in the soil?’ She waited for children’s answers and then suggested they act out the ‘life cycle of the seed’ with their own bodies. The teacher orchestrated the story
dramatisation as a whole-class activity. Children gathered on the carpet in the centre of the classroom and acted out how the seed would grow, following Rebecca’s instructions. She encouraged them by asking, ‘Can you show me what a seed looks like?’ The children crouched and lay on the floor, pretending to look very small. She then asked them to pretend to be a seed that was receiving a lot of rain and sunshine. ‘Now can you show me what a shoot looks like?’ The children jumped up and raised their arms up in the air. ‘And if I give you more water how will you grow?’

Rebecca took pictures of children acting out the story and occasionally had to shush them because they were getting very excited. ‘Excellent, now can you show me what grown-up plants look like? And when it’s time to blossom can you all turn into flowers? Nice smiling flowers!’ The children were beaming with joy. ‘Wonderful, well done! What about your roots? And your leaves?’ The children used their hands to indicate wiggling leaves and their feet to represent the firm roots of the plant. Rebecca took pictures of children pretending to be the individual plant parts, selecting either a wide shot featuring several children or an individual child who was acting particularly persuasively. She used the iPad camera to take the pictures, so the pictures were part of the photo gallery, ready to be used to continue the story. When the acting part was finished, Rebecca connected her iPad to the whiteboard and opened the Our Story app to display the photo gallery together with the storyboard. (Please make sure that when taking photographs of children you have their parents’ explicit permission and the children’s verbal consent to do so.)

Rebecca then said to the class, ‘My story doesn’t seem to be in the right order. Can you order the images in the right sequence?’ She called individual children forward to select pictures and drag them into suitable positions on the storyboard to create a sequence. The activity continued with annotations of the individual pictures in the digital story as well as with pens and pencils in children’s workbooks. In sum, the use of the app in this activity facilitated children’s active involvement in producing the pictures and text for the story and thereby connected their own bodies to the plant life cycle.

**Apps and programs for creating digital stories**

Teachers’ choice of story-making apps/programs will be dictated by their familiarity with a particular technology and its availability in their classroom. The following list provides some examples of programs teachers may find useful. In comparison with the programs outlined in Chapter 6,
the user interface of these story-making programs is more oriented towards adults, with text-based navigation, possibilities to enlarge the text for display on the interactive whiteboard, and adult settings that require email and/or credit card registration. The programs give expression to text rather than images or videos and can be used by adults together with children or by adults or older children independently.

**Story-making on laptops and desktop PCs run by Microsoft**

Teachers are very likely to be familiar with Microsoft Power Point but they may not be familiar with its use for story-making. PowerPoint functionality is available with any Microsoft package installed on a laptop or desktop PC. When creating a presentation, you can think of it as creating a book, the individual slides corresponding to book pages.

To make a story, arrange the slides in a chronological order and combine pictures with text. You can easily insert images stored on your computer and also add sounds and video files. Video and audio files can be added using the ‘insert’ option on each individual slide. If the slides represent book pages, it is important to allow enough space between the text and the pictures. When I create a digital book in PowerPoint, my pages typically look like the example in Figure 7.1.

The finished book can be exported as a PDF, which can be printed in various sizes or as booklets, depending on your printer. It can also

‘Do you think there is an animal missing in this picture? Why?’

**Figure 7.1** An example of a PowerPoint story page.
Source: Author
be saved and shared as a multimedia story with sounds and video. If you want a final digital story with multimedia, you will need to save it as a MPEG or Windows Media Video (.wmv) file. The story will then play in one loop and you can adjust the display timings of individual slides with the ‘animations’ options.

If you want to print the story out, you need to save it as a PDF and print the pages, which will then need folding and stapling. You can also format it as a booklet during the book creation process. A step-by-step guide to how to create a booklet and print it out may be found here:  
http://www.thewindowsclub.com/create-booklet-book-microsoft-word

I have described here the simplest way of using PowerPoint for a digital or printed story but Microsoft offers several more sophisticated options. If you are interested in exploring them further, I suggest you conduct an online search using keywords relating to the specific format you are after (e.g. ‘Microsoft booklet A3’). Given that Microsoft Office has a large user base, there are many free guides and even video tutorials on YouTube which may guide you in what you want to do.

As well as with programs for computers, you can create a digital book with tablet applications. These apps are predominantly for picture-driven stories; I described the most popular ones in the last chapter. For adults and older children’s story-making Book Creator may be suitable.

Story-making on tablets and iPads

*Book Creator One 4+* and *Book Creator for iPad* by Red Jumper Ltd are the most popular apps for creating multimedia books on iPads. Users can add music, narration, video, text and pictures and save finished stories in a digital library. The app can be purchased through Apple’s Volume Purchase Programme with a discount.

https://itunes.apple.com/app/id661166101?mt=8&referrer=click%3D405de7be-0b94-4cce-816e-c57a818badde

Publishing professionally designed books

For teacher-authors who wish to take their books into the international marketplace and earn royalties from book sales, it may be worth researching the options available to independent authors. A popular platform is BookRix. BookRix is a free self-publishing platform that offers e-book distribution services to independent writers:  
https://www.bookrix.com/
Another commercial site is Amazon’s Self-Publishing on Demand service. Amazon is behind the reader device Kindle, so its self-publishing services focus on books that can be read on Kindle. However, it also offers the opportunity to sell printed copies (on demand) with the CreateSpace facility (which at the time of writing was merging with Kindle Direct Publishing to form one service: https://kdp.amazon.com/en_UK/). A guide video and details are available here:
https://www.amazon.co.uk/p/feature/78e7r2e8ccbv3sp

Young Storyteller

I have mentioned the option of digital books that are co-created by or made independently by older children. Children’s own creation is largely facilitated by the Amazon’s Young Storyteller programme. In the UK, Amazon collaborates with the National Literacy Trust, which allows teachers to sign up and access resources to support story-making. Adults or children can write stories to make a book and then have the book published as a paperback or e-book and sell it on the Amazon website. The school then receives the royalties from book sales. More about this programme is available from:
www.amazon.co.uk/youngstoryteller

Photo books

For teachers who feel especially creative and wish to create professional-looking books that can be sold online, there are some professional book-making tools that can be used to create printed photo books, picturebooks and even novels and magazines. All of these services carry a fee and are not particularly designed for use in schools but could be adapted. Examples include:

*Blurb*
http://www.blurb.co.uk/bookmaking-tools

*Shutterfly*
https://www.shutterfly.com/

*Solentro*
For UK customers the shipping costs are lower for photo books made by Solentro, since it is a UK-based provider.
https://www.solentro.co.uk/
Bookemon
This site provides specific offers for educators, though it is currently only available for US teachers.
https://www.bookemon.com/

Create My Books
This site has multiple book-building functions and is suitable for books that are more text than photo driven.

Bear in mind that the key market of these companies comprises users interested in creating photo books, so they are well suited for teachers who wish to create polished picturebooks and have access to their own (high-quality) photographs. Some sites offer discounts for educators (and Bookemon allows you to order books using official purchase orders) and some offer discounts for bulk orders. The story-making process happens in the ‘create mode’, where users can upload existing book pages or start creating them from scratch using the provider’s templates. Most sites allow one to upload Word, PDF and PowerPoint files, so you can prepare the story using the tools you are familiar with. You can also choose a pre-designed template and insert your story into colourful photo frames with seasonal or occasion-relevant themes (e.g. autumn leaves or celebration confetti).

To print the book, you need to choose the format, cover and binding. Some providers offer the option of e-books in addition to print books and some will also help with ISBN registration if you want to obtain one for your book. The price per copy depends on the number of copies and delivery charges.

Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined rationales, strategies and resources for teachers interested in authoring digital stories for children in their classes. Digital books made by teachers can be treasure troves of useful information, local knowledge and authentic stories. The key reasons for teachers to create or co-create digital books for and with the children are: to contribute to making better-quality educational content available for children’s on-screen reading; to enrich story diversity, including cultural and local knowledge; to provide bespoke support for individual children via stories; and to connect to the children in their classrooms by positioning themselves as writers, makers and three-dimensional human beings. The case studies outlined in this chapter illustrate the creative ways in which
teachers can leverage the potential of digital books to motivate children to read and to connect their multimedia materials with the worlds of stories.

Reflection point

I think of children’s books as not so much for children, but as the filling that goes between the child and the adult world. One way or another, all children’s books have to negotiate that space. (Michael Rosen)

This quote from the popular British children’s writer Michael Rosen always makes me imagine a bridge built by books between adults and children. When writing for children, adults need to bridge between young readers’ understanding and one’s own conceptualisation of the world. At the same time, they need to strive for originality and to impart educational and moral guidance. This is not an easy task. When I was trying to write a children’s book, I did not go down the typical route of reading many published children’s books. Instead I spent countless hours talking to children about their own stories. I also found children’s reviews of books a great source of inspiration. Bestselling children’s authors have attractive websites which are a great place to learn about children’s perspectives on specific titles. For example, the official site for the Harry Potter series (Pottermore) hosts a book club for Harry Potter fans. When logged in as a user, you can contribute your views and read other readers’ views on the characters and plot twists. This can be a source of inspiration for your own writing, but also a way of getting to know the ‘filling’ between adults and children’s story worlds.

Further reading

McCannon, D., Thornton, S. & Williams, Y. (2008) The Encyclopedia of Writing and Illustrating Children’s Books: From Creating Characters to Developing Stories, a Step-by-Step Guide to Making Magical Picture Books. Philadelphia: Allen & Unwin. This encyclopaedia is a comprehensive guide to all the steps involved in developing, illustrating, writing, crafting and selling children’s books. It will be of particular interest to teachers who decide to take the authorship of children’s books to the next level and attempt large-scale distribution. The tips on how to adjust the content to different age groups and different book genres (comics, fantasy, fairy tales) may be particularly helpful for teachers-authors.

Kucirkova, N. (2014) *iPads and Tablets in the Classroom: Personalising Children’s Stories*. Leicester: UKLA. This resource offers practical examples of incorporating digital books created with *Our Story* into classrooms across year groups and subject areas.

http://www.ukla.org/publications/view/ipads_and_tablets_in_the_classroom_personalising_childrens_stories/

For teachers interested in building or strengthening their identity as a writer, the Teachers as Writers project run by the Arvon Foundation, the Open University and Exeter University may provide inspiration, particularly the engaging blogs written by participating teachers and researchers.

http://www.teachersaswriters.org/

Teachers who are story authors are creative and curious and may therefore find the *National Geographic* website inspiring. There is a section dedicated to teaching resources which has a wealth of story ideas and story sparks.

https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/teaching-resources/