

**The Impact of Same Gender Dynamics
On Cross-Aged Paired Reading**

Thesis

**Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development
State University of New York
College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Science in Education**

by

Hassan Jones

State University of New York

College at Brockport

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SAMPLE THESIS APPROVAL SHEET

Candidate: Please attach your present mailing address to one copy using a "post-it" note sticker.

SUBMITTED BY:

Hassam Jones 8/1/00
Candidate Date

APPROVED BY:

Sumera Z. Beggs 8/7/00
Thesis Advisor Date

Arthur E. Smith 8/7/00
Second Faculty Reader Date

Patricia E. Baker 8/7/00
Director of Graduate Studies Date

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics that take place in the relationship between same gender paired readers. The participants in this study were forty-four elementary students from the fifth and second grade level. The school is located in an urban environment and over seventy- five percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The findings from this study suggest that boys and girls prefer to work with their same gender during buddy reading. This finding was particularly strong among the boys. This conclusion was further supported by evidence that males paid more attention during buddy reading, behaved better, and had a healthier attitude toward reading when working with their buddies as compared to their classroom experience.

CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

The classrooms across America are becoming more divergent than ever. Teachers are faced with the seemingly insurmountable task of trying to bring together students with language barriers, various cultural backgrounds, ADHD, impoverished individuals, abused individuals, drug addicts, and individuals with learning disabilities. In the midst of all of this, school budgets are being slashed and teacher shortages are being felt across the nation. In an effort to overcome these new obstacles educators are returning to the philosophy of each one teach one and using more experienced students to help those who are less experienced. What forces are at work when you create a cross aged same gender paired reading environment? Do the males prefer to work with males and the females with females? How is their attitude towards reading affected? Is there a change in behavior?

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics that take place in the relationship between same gender paired readers. Student interactions were monitored during two four-week periods to determine what forces were at work in a same gender buddy reading relationship.

Need for the Study

The dynamics at play in gender relationships are crucial to the evolution of language development. A 1988 study of sex differences in the effectiveness of peer tutoring conducted by Topping and Whitley revealed that mixed sex combinations in tutorial pairs proved to be good for the tutor, but poor for tutees. Female-female combinations were good for tutees but poor for the tutors, and male-male combinations had positive affects for both. Research has also shown that females tend to be more social than males and perform better on reading and language arts task. While males tend to be more competitive and perform well on spatial and quantatative task (Hyde,1981; Macoby & Jacklin, 1974). The overwhelming amount of evidence and classroom testimony of poor reading performance among boys and good performance among girls, suggest that there needs to be a study that investigates the dynamics of gender based paired reading and its implications for the classroom. Moreover, the greater understanding we have of the forces at work in same gender paired reading relationships, the more prepared we will be to meet the language development needs of all students.

Definitions

cross-aged : Older and younger students working together.

dynamics: The forces that tend to produce activity and change.

meta-analysis - the statistical analysis of a large collection of results from individual studies for the purpose of integrating the findings.

paired reading: A more experienced child helping a less experienced child.

Limitations of the Study

The following are variables that could have limited the results of this study.

1. The schedule for buddy reading was inconsistent and did not occur in consecutive weeks.
2. Due to absenteeism students were not always paired with the same buddy.
3. Students did not receive any formal or informal training in tutoring.

CHAPTER II

Review Of The Literature

History of Cross-age tutoring

Peer - cross-age tutoring was first initiated in the 19th century by Joseph Lancaster, a quaker school master and Andrew Bell, and Anglican clergyman. Each claimed the idea originated with him, though it was Lancaster who eventually developed the more workable system of instruction (Rekrut, 1994). Lancaster's schools were built on the principle that children learned most efficiently from one another. Under the Monoterial system in England one school master was responsible for a large number of students so older and abler students were trained to teach what they learned (largely the 3Rs) (Rekrut, 1994).

The 1970s, a period of teacher shortage, revitalized the need for pupil to pupil teaching. This period also spurred research into various aspects of peer and cross-age tutoring - which student combinations worked best , whether students should be gender paired, what content tutors could effectively teach, whether tutors should be trained, and the like(Rekrut, 1994). A lack of financial resources caused by shrinking budgets in the 1980s forced educators to once again explore the cost effectiveness of peers and cross-age tutoring. In a 1984 meta-analysis

by Levin, Glass, and Meister (cited in Rekrut, 1994), the researchers concluded that cross-age tutoring was nearly four-times more effective as an instructional method than computer-aided instruction, reducing class size, increasing instructional time, or adult tutoring.

Many of today's ideas centered around peer collaboration have their roots in work done by Vygotsky. According to Vygotsky, "learning occurs as a child gradually integrates higher level thought processes that are activated through social interaction with adult or in collaboration with capable peers" (Dixon, p. 146). Once again echoing Joseph Lancaster's belief that children learn most efficiently from one another.

Characteristics of a Cross-Age Tutoring Program

In the study (1994), Peer and cross-age tutoring: The lessons of research, Rekrut observes that highly successful programs train tutors in three areas: a) interpersonal skills: how to help without telling, ways to give encouragement, using positive statements about tutee work and attitudes; b) management skills: how to sit with the tutee (usually side by side for paired reading, for example), having proper materials for the lesson, finding a quiet place to work; and c) content skills: preparing lesson activities in advance, prior reading of what tutor and tutee will read together, thinking up questions for parts of the story, and creating follow up activities for the next session such as writing predictions.

In addition an effort should be made to match student learning styles with tutor teaching styles. Brown and Morgan (1983) noted that teaching style had a direct impact on the tutee's performance and social interaction was a secondary variable, leading to the possible conclusion that style may be the primary variable responsible for learning.

According to Fresko and Chen (1989) another factor in cross-age tutoring is ethnic similarity between the tutor and tutee. The researchers found that a direct and positive impact upon perceived tutoring effectiveness was linked to the ethnic similarity of the tutor and tutee. This being the case Fresko and Chen suggest that similarity is more likely to be effective for behavior modification than dissimilarity because it promotes identification and imitative behavior.

The pairing of students is another aspect that must be carefully considered. The research suggest that when developing a peer - cross-aged tutoring program same sex partners should be used, primarily for comfort and modeling reasons (Rekrut, 1994). In cases where same sex pairing is not possible the pairing of an older girl and younger boy is reported as being more effective. Mavrogenes and Galen (1971) agree that same sex pairs have the greatest influence on tutoring gains and found this fact to be true especially among blacks. However, their research did not find a significant difference in same sex pairing among whites and Puerto Ricans.

Brown and Morgan (1983) suggest that sex combination used in cross-aged tutoring does affect the tutor's attitude toward the tutoring situation and appears to be related to the patterns of social interaction.

Benefits of Cross-age Tutoring

A review of the literature shows that the benefits of cross-aged tutoring can be categorized in four main areas: academic, social/psychological, behavioral, and financial. In the 1982 meta-analysis of educational outcomes in tutoring, Cohen, Kulik, and Kulik reported that tutored students outperformed their peers on examinations, and they expressed more positive attitudes toward the subjects in which they were tutored. In addition the tutors not only developed positive attitudes toward the subjects that they were teaching, but they also gained a better understanding of these areas. Furthermore, twelve of sixteen studies on effects of tutoring programs on self-concept revealed higher self-concept for those who served as tutors than for those who did not serve as tutors .

Academic Benefits

Most research on cross-age tutoring has been conducted in the academic area of reading. Some of the reasons for this are: the availability of study populations, the importance of reading as a foundation of success in other areas such as science and social studies, and the measurability of reading achievement (Rekrut, 1994). All major research reviews on the effectiveness of peer tutoring in reading have shown that tutors accelerate in reading skill at least as much as, if not more than the tutee (Topping, 1989). In one of the most impressive studies dealing with cognitive gain, it was reported that a group of elementary students being tutored progressed seven months in ten weeks where as the intermediate age tutors gained nineteen months in seven months as measured by standardized test (Mavrogenes & Galen, 1979).

This finding is supported by the work of Greenwood, Whorton, Carta, and Hall (1988) who stated that compared to teacher directed instruction, peer tutoring increases the time students spend in relevant academic behavior. Moreover, Greenwood and others revealed that students who received explicit teaching and peer tutoring scored significantly higher in reading fluency and comprehension measures than those without. More importantly, a similar study involving students from Yorkshire involved in paired reading not only demonstrated

measurable reading growth, but indicated that, “advantages occurring to paired reading children over non-paired reading children are maintained and do not wash out” (Bayliss, p.8 1986).

The benefits of cross-aged tutoring also extend into students writing as reported by the 1997 study, “Increasing Literacy among Kindergartners through Cross-Age Training.” In this study Henriques observes that students showed a definite increase in emergent reading, writing, and speaking skills. A similar report was given by Crowhurst (1992) on the effects of corresponding with an older audience. Findings from this study suggest that in an effort to communicate with an older audience, students adopt strategies that will help them do so from their interactions with the older individuals. Specifically in this study sixth graders exchanged pen pal letters with college students. It was observed that during the writing period the length of the sixth grade letters got longer, many of them adopted question strategies, strategies for beginning and ending, vocabulary items, and strategies for taking up topics (Crowhurst, 1992).

Social Benefits

The social nature of reading/language lends itself to a cross-aged tutoring program. Reading is viewed as less tedious, non-academic, and takes on a more meaningful purpose - communication. Leland and

Fitzpatrick (1993) in a cross-age literacy study involving sixth graders and kindergartners reported that the participants showed increased enthusiasm for reading. Further the students perceived their work together as time off and fun. This spirit of joy was also continued in Manette Swett's (1971) first hand account of what happens when a fourth grade decides to adopt a kindergarten. One student, Trey wrote:

This year I got my buddy to laugh. At the beginning of the year he often cried but by the end of the year he was laughing. He will sing all of a song with me now. He smiles all of the time. I think I helped him change (p.20).

Another student, Jennie replied:

We really did enjoy adopting the kindergarten. I think we helped them and us gain responsibility. It makes you feel pretty good to know you really taught somebody else something (p.20).

Henriques (1997) observed that, "One positive aspect of cross-age tutoring is individualization, the one to one ratio that maximizes active participation between the tutor and tutee and adjust the learning experience to the level and pace of the learner" (p. 45). In a 1997 study on cross-age tutoring between primary and intermediate students the examiners discovered that the experience left students with a greater understanding of responsibility and respect for each other. They also valued themselves as learners and teachers (Schneider & Barone, 1997). Fulton (1994) described how the PEP or peer partner in education program encouraged partnerships among students that begin

with a task, but often developed into sustained friendships.

Still another program that demonstrates the social benefits of cross-aged tutoring uses students as communication intervention agents (Goldstein, 1993). This program works on two levels. In the first intervention peers are taught to use communication strategies that promote interaction on the part of socially withdrawn classmates. In the second intervention, both children with disabilities and those without are taught socio-dramatic play scripts that provide a basis for improved interaction during free play (Goldstein, 1993).

Psychological Benefits

Research has also shown that students who participate in cross-age tutoring programs have increased psychological benefits as well. In a study (1982) on Cross-age Tutoring: Effects on Tutors Attributes, the researchers concluded that cross-age tutoring significantly increases the tutor's empathy, altruism, and self-esteem. Participants in this study were able to establish an empathic understating of the tutee's problems in order to help him/her effectively. They were also more willing to voluntarily help students for intrinsic reasons without the benefit of a reward. Further, the participants self-esteem was strengthened as a consequence of self-reinforcement and gain of respect from others (Yogev & Ronen, 1982).

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Behavioral Benefits

It has been well documented that students who have learning disabilities or display behavior problems benefit from being tutors. The interactive dynamics of peer - cross-age tutoring makes it fun, and many students eagerly look forward to that part of their day (Mavrogenes & Galen (1979). Chandler (cited in Mavrogenes & Galen, 1979) found that once low performing students saw that they have motivated others, they had a more positive out-look on their own abilities. The findings of Ragan's (1993) study which focused on cooperative learning in resident care settings also lends support to cross-age tutoring as a form of behavior modification. The researchers followed twelve boys ages 14-15 for several weeks. A noticeable change in behavior was observed leading to the suggestion that,"Cooperative learning offers a way to help break the cycle of physical and sexual abuse, drugs, and neglect at home by teaching the meaning and feeling of cooperation, accomplishment, and success" (p.51). Steinhausen (1983) in a national look at high school peer education programs found that one of the most commonly stated purposes of program goals was the desire to promote positive behavior along with reducing problem behavior, improvement of self-concept and increased school attendance.

In a questionnaire given to students with learning disabilities, who were often truant from school, Lazerson, Foster, Brown and Hummel (1988) reported that lack of social acceptance at school from both peers and teachers, and not academic problems, was listed by the tutors as their main reason for skipping school. However, their findings suggest that these same students when engaged in a cross-age tutoring program where they felt needed and responsible significantly decreased their truant and tardy behaviors.

Financial Benefits

Another appealing aspect of cross-age tutoring programs is the low cost involved. Henriques (1997) expressed, " Cross-Age tutoring is a cost-effective way to individualize teaching, increase literacy experiences, and provide enrichment, as it requires no additional staffing, or additional expenses for the school" (p.47). Goldstein (1993) also found programs involving cross-age tutoring to be less expensive and a highly effective way to expand communication instruction in integrated settings adding that it allows you to, "take full advantage of the influence that peers naturally exert on one another"(p.40).

Negative Aspects

One of the drawbacks to cross-age tutoring is the quality of the research. Much of the work done in this area is based on subjective and informal observations and of limited value according to Cohen, Kulik and Kulik (1982). Another complaint is that there is not often enough space to afford the one to one privacy for students to work together (Henriques, 1997). Still another problem investigated by Brown and Morgan (1983) was the impact that performance contingent rewards had on the cross-age tutoring experience. The researchers found that performance contingent rewards had a negative impact on the tutoring process, reporting that: "the introduction of the performance - contingent reward resulted in the tutors being more tense and hostile during the tutoring session and less motivated to continue teaching when the reward was moved" (p.207).

A closer look at the research also reveals that same gender pairing as suggested for cross-age tutoring programs, could exacerbate the already uneven distribution of gender equity in the classroom. (Sadker, 1989). The interaction between teachers and students puts males in the spotlight and regulates females to the sidelines according to Sadker. Therefore Sadker argues that males reap the benefits of a more intense classroom. Styslinger (1999) found that the social nature of

language development and its dependence on intimacy and collaboration for success was naturally biased toward female students. The researcher observed that during peer revision females were highly verbal and initiated and sustained the process. Males on the other hand were less verbal and not as social as their female counterparts.

Summary

The academic, social, and cultural diversity of today's classrooms has never been more complex. This added to shrinking school budgets, and shortage of qualified teachers is causing educators to find different ways of maximizing their resources. Peer - cross-age tutoring provides educators with an inexpensive way to combat the ever changing environment of today's classrooms. The overwhelming census from the research suggest that cross-age tutoring helps students become more responsible, involved in purposeful learning, and adopt long term academic, social, and behavioral benefits, that are applied both inside and outside the classroom. There are some questions about the validity or research done on cross-age tutoring, the availability of space, the impact of contingent rewards, and the affects of gender pairing.

CHAPTER III

The Research Design

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics that take place in the relationship between same gender paired readers.

Research Questions

What forces are at work when you create a cross-aged same gender paired reading environment? Do the males prefer to work with males and the females with females? How is their attitude towards reading affected? Is there a change in behavior? What variables make the relationship successful?

Methodology

Subjects

The participants in this study are 44 elementary students from the fifth and second grade level. The school is located in a very supportive community in an urban school district. The majority of the students are African American and the male/female ratio was 20 girls and 24 boys. The total student population in this school is approximately 900 individuals.

Materials

A wide variety of books were used at the student's discretion. Students were encouraged to select books from the school library to share with one another. On occasion students were also assigned reading from a second grade basal. A journal was used periodically by the older students to answer guided questions about their experience. Finally at the end of the eight week experiment a questionnaire was filled out by the fifth and second grade participants.

Procedure

This study was spread out over time for a total of 8 weeks. Twice a week students worked with a partner from a different grade level of the same sex for approximately thirty minutes. The fifth grade students were prompted to answer questions about their experience periodically in a buddy reading journal. They were also instructed to write whatever thoughts or feelings they had about buddy reading at any time in their journal. At the end of the eight weeks students from both grade levels were given a survey dealing with observations that were made during their interaction with one another.

Analysis

The data from the questionnaires were descriptively analyzed in the following groupings: fifth grade males, fifth grade females, second grade males and second grade females. A cross-age and cross-gender comparison will be made. Afterwards the fifth grade journals were used to determine trends in their thinking.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics that take place in the relationship between same gender paired readers.

Research questions

What forces are at work when you create a cross-aged same gender paired reading environment? Do the males prefer to work with males and the females with females? How is their attitude towards reading affected? Is there a change in behavior? What variables make the relationship successful?

Findings

Table 1
Male 5th grade survey responses

1) If I could switch buddy reading partners I would select	
boy	53%
girl	12%
no difference	35%
2) How did you and your buddy get along?	
good	6%
very good	70.5%
ok	6%
not good	17.5%
3) Do you prefer to work with a girl or a boy during buddy reading?	
girl	6%
boy	94%
4) How did buddy reading affect your attitude toward reading?	
wanted to read	70.5%
not want to read	0%
no difference	29.5%
5) Would you prefer to read out loud in class, or with your buddy?	
class	41%
buddy	59%
6) Do you pay more attention to reading in class or with your buddy?	
class	41%
buddy	59%
7) Do you behave better during buddy reading or during classroom reading?	
class	47%
buddy	53%
8) What things did you do to get your buddy to work with you?	
smile	53%
bribe	47%
turns reading	65%
share things	65%
tell teacher	17.5%
questions about the story	70.5%
yell at	6%
ask politely	47%
gave up	12%
threaten	6%
select own book	70.5%
other	17.5%

Table 2
Female 5th grade survey responses

1) If I could switch buddy reading partners I would select

boy	11%
girl	22%
no difference	67%

2) How did you and your buddy get along?

good	22%
very good	22%
ok	33%
not good	22%

3) Do you prefer to work with a girl or a boy during buddy reading?

girl	78%
boy	22%

4) How did buddy reading affect your attitude toward reading?

wanted to read	44%
not want to read	12%
no difference	44%

5) Would you prefer to read out loud in class, or with your buddy?

class	33%
buddy	67%

6) Do you pay more attention to reading in class or with your buddy?

class	67%
buddy	33%

7) Do you behave better during buddy reading or during classroom reading?

class	47%
buddy	22%

8) What things did you do to get your buddy to work with you?

smile	22%
bribe	56%
turns reading	78%
share things	67%
tell teacher	56%
questions about story	22%
yell at	33%
ask politely	33%
gave up	11%
threaten	22%
select own book	68%
other	22%

Table 3

Male 2nd grade survey responses

1) If I could switch buddy reading partners I would select

boy	100%
girl	
no difference	

2) How did you and your buddy get along?

good	27.5%
very good	45%
ok	0%
not good	27.5%

3) Do you prefer to work with a girl or a boy during buddy reading?

girl	0%
boy	100%

4) How did buddy reading affect your attitude toward reading?

wanted to read	55%
not want to read	27 %
no difference	18%

5) Would you prefer to read out loud in class, or with your buddy?

class	27%
buddy	73%

6) Do you pay more attention to reading in class or with your buddy?

class	27%
buddy	73%

7) Do you behave better during buddy reading or during classroom reading?

class	27%
buddy	73%

8) What things did you do to get your buddy to work with you?

smile	36%
bribe	18%
turns reading	55%
share things	73%
tell teacher	73%
questions about story	18%
yell at	18%
ask politely	73 %
gave up	45%
threaten	45%
select own book	64%
other	9%

Table 4
Female 2nd grade survey responses

1) If I could switch buddy reading partners I would select

boy	20%
girl	70%
no difference	10%

2) How did you and your buddy get along?

good	10%
very good	40%
ok	20%
not good	30%

3) Do you prefer to work with a girl or a boy during buddy reading?

girl	80%
boy	20%

4) How did buddy reading affect your attitude toward reading?

wanted to read	40%
not want to read	10%
no difference	50%

5) Would you prefer to read out loud in class, or with your buddy?

class	20%
buddy	80%

6) Do you pay more attention to reading in class or with your buddy?

class	60%
buddy	40%

7) Do you behave better during buddy reading or during classroom reading?

class	80%
buddy	20%

8) What things did you do to get your buddy to work with you?

smile	50%
bribe	20%
turns reading	90%
share things	50%
tell teacher	70%
questions about story	30%
yell at	30%
ask politely	80%
gave up	80%
threaten	10%
select own book	40%
other	70%

Fifth Grade Male
Journal Responses

In the male journal responses the emotions of feeling like a teacher, a helper, and being happy were repeated over and over again. The most common reason they gave for preferring to work with a boy was familiarity with what the boys like. Given the opportunity to change one thing about buddy reading the majority of responses indicated that the noise level was too loud for them to fully concentrate. When asked what was the most interesting thing about buddy reading the journal entries consistently showed how amazed the fifth grade males were with the vocabulary of the second grade boys. The journal entries also revealed that the fifth grade males preferred buddy reading to classroom reading because their buddy paid more attention to them, and in the classroom too many people would be looking at them which made them nervous.

Fifth Grade Female

Journal Responses

The fifth grade females stated that they felt responsible, proud, and like a role-model when they participated in buddy reading. The most common reason they gave for preferring to work with a girl was that it felt “normal”. The one thing they would change about buddy reading was to have separate places to work with their buddy. When asked what was the most interesting thing about buddy reading they wrote how shocked they were by the wide range of abilities among the students. They observed that some read well, where as others could barely read at all. The journals also revealed that the fifth grade girls preferred buddy reading to classroom reading because they were able to focus more. The responses in their journals also indicated that classroom reading was uncomfortable and made them feel a little scared.

Observations

- 1) Given a choice both girls and boys at the second and fifth grade level prefer to work with students of their same gender.
- 2) Girls at these grade levels are more receptive to the idea of working with a student of the opposite gender.
- 3) Boys had a better relationship with their buddies than their female counterparts.
- 4) Buddy reading had a greater influence on the males' attitude toward reading than the females'.
- 5) The majority of males and females at both grade levels preferred to read with their buddies than out loud in the classroom.
- 6) Boys paid more attention during buddy reading and females paid more attention during classroom reading.
- 7) Boys behave better during buddy reading and females behave better during classroom reading.

- 8) A successful buddy relationship for both males and females depended on a number of variables some of which were: sharing things, taking turns, selecting their own books, and asking politely for cooperation.
- 9) Buddy reading gave the 5th grade males and females a sense of responsibility and made them feel important.
- 10) Buddy reading makes it easier for those who don't feel confident in their reading ability and it is fun.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusion

The findings from this study suggest that boys and girls prefer to work with their same gender during buddy reading. The rationale for this is that they feel more comfortable about being able to relate to one another through familiar experiences. This phenomenon was particularly strong among boys, leading the researcher to the conclusion that there is a strong desire for males to learn from other males. This conclusion was further supported by the evidence that males paid more attention during buddy reading, behaved better, and had a healthier attitude toward reading when working with their same-gender as compared to their classroom experience.

The research also suggest that males and females at both grade levels overwhelmingly preferred to read with their buddy than out loud in the classroom. One fifth grade girl Cherae wrote: " I feel bad reading in the classroom because kids laugh at me when I have to read. Also because I can't read that good." This sentiment was further expressed by a fifth grade boy, Frank, who wrote, " I feel scared because the only person I like reading to is my sister." Another student Jerrod wrote: " I don't feel good reading in the classroom because the kids look around at stuff and don't pay attention. Plus kids look at their pokemon cards

and mess with stuff.” One conclusion that could be drawn from this is that buddy reading is less intimidating and more enjoyable for poor readers. Research suggest that poor readers lack opportunities to practice reading and that they are often placed in environments that discourage reading (Labo, Teale, 1990 & Stanovich, 1986). During buddy reading the student is no longer in the spotlight, but is involved in a more meaningful social exchange of communication. It also forces students to pay more attention to what is happening because of the immediate feedback and close proximity that is shared by the participants.

Implications For Further Research

Further research is warranted on same gender buddy reading. There needs to be a longitudinal study that looks at the effects of cross-aged same gender buddy reading on both the younger and older participants. This might provide more insight into the developmental attributes that are gained or loss over a period of time. Do the tutors and tutees retain the skills learned? Is there a point at which gender does not matter? Why do males seem to receive more benefits from the experience than females? How does gender pairing affect students ability to socialize with the opposite gender? Does this type of relationship work successfully for all academic areas or just reading? Do students who have special needs reap the same benefits as those in a regular educational setting?

Implications for the Classroom

Reading is an essential part of a student's educational success. The data from this research show that buddy reading has a definite impact on on students' attitudes and behavior toward reading. With growing classroom sizes and widespread learning abilities at each grade level, teachers will need to find ways to customize each student's learning in order to fit his/her particular needs. Cross-age tutoring goes a long way toward meeting this goal. It provides students with an opportunity to read in a non-threatening environment that encourages social interaction and furthers natural developmental growth. Students become the masters of their learning, anticipating each other's strengths and needs allowing them to more effectively carry out their responsibilities (Morrice & Simmons, 1991).

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