SUNY COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT

Reading Together USA:

The Benefits of Cross-age Tutoring for the Tutor

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and perceptions of students who participated as tutors in the Reading Together USA program.

The subjects were selected as struggling reader in fifth grade to participate in the Reading Together USA program. They were trained as tutors and learned the specific program in order to teach second graders. The tutoring occurs in three stages, which are spaced out over the year. Each stage becomes a little more involved and forces more independence from the tutee.

The tutors benefited in many ways through their participation in Reading Together USA. They became more responsible students who learned the importance of being a dependable role model. They were able to point out many of the areas of reading where they had progressed including fluency, comprehension and others. Most importantly, their self esteem increased. They were more confident as learners and readers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Statement of Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and perceptions of students who participated as tutors in the Reading Together USA program.

Introduction

Reading Together USA is a tutoring program that was developed to help both second and fifth graders improve skills in reading comprehension, organization, responsibility, and also to increase students' enthusiasm for reading. The fifth graders were first trained, then they were paired with a second grader where they followed a structured tutoring method outlined in their guidebook. (Kyle, 2000).

Need for the Study

The Reading Together USA program has only been readily available in the US since April 1999, so there has been minimal research completed. There needed to be a more in depth look at the positive and negative outcomes of the fifth graders in this program.

Also, there was no study of Reading Together USA in New York State where programs and curriculum are currently being driven by New York State English language arts standards. It is important that the goals of this program relate to the standards. Many of the fifth graders who participated in this program had difficulty with the fourth grade ELA test; therefore, these students qualified for academic intervention services. The Reading Together USA program offered a unique way to supply this remediation.

Kyle (2000) has indicated that in the Reading Together USA program most of the fifth grade tutors are academically talented and model students. This study used students to whom reading is quite challenging. Since much of the tutoring research shows a

positive correlation between cross age tutoring and increased

self-esteem and reading progress for the tutors, it seemed that

many needy students would benefit from this program. This

study examined the progress of students a number of whom had

learning disabilities who struggled with reading. It investigated

how the Reading Together USA program might further their

growth as readers and a learners.

Definition of Terms

Peer Tutoring-Tutoring where the tutor and tutee are the same

age.

Cross Age Tutoring- An older student tutors a younger student.

Reading Together USA- A highly structured and specific program

in which a fifth grader tutors a second grader.

Limitations of the study

This study was conducted with students in one school

district therefore limiting the results to one geographic area.

These students also received additional reading support, which may have impacted their attitudes about reading. It was necessary, however, for these students to receive these additional services to help meet all of their needs. Reading Together is not designed to develop all aspects of learning in language arts.

Research Questions

1. Will the tutors' (fifth graders) ability to be responsible learners increase as a result of this program?

2. How will the tutors' attitudes and perceptions about themselves as reader's change as a result of this program?

3. Will the program affect the tutors' general self-esteem?

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and perceptions of students who participated as tutors in the Reading Together USA program.

Tutoring In General

Tutoring has shown to be a very useful strategy to teach both the tutors and tutees in a variety of situations (Bar-Eli, 1998; Bond, 1999; Elbaum, 1999; Gaustad, 1993; Gumpel 1999; Juel, 1996; Kreuger, 1998; Labbo, 1990; Rekrut, 1994; Taylor, 1997; Thrope, 2000; Topping, 1998; Zukowski, 1997). Maher (1984) has shown that handicapped students especially benefit from this strategy because they gain not only the academics but also the social skills. There is much research to document the social gains from students who are tutored (Elbaum 1999; Gartner& Riessman 1993; Gumpel, 1999; Maher, 1994; Miller,

1995). Douglas (1995) has also listed two different forms of tutoring in the top five teaching strategies for students with learning disabilities. Another group that benefits more for tutoring programs are bilingual and multi-lingual students who gain from being taught in a one on one situation and from someone near their own age (Urzua, 1995).

There are two main major types of tutoring, cross age tutoring and peer tutoring. In chapter one, cross age tutoring has been defined as when an older student tutors a younger student. Peer tutoring occurs when the tutor and the tutee are both the same ages. There are many different versions of tutoring and many have been proven successful. The main characteristic behind all tutoring programs is the philosophy that learning is teaching. Guastad (1993) pointed out that the highest level of comprehension is when one is able to teach that concept. Also, one on one teaching has long been recognized as superior instruction. It has shown to improve the overall school atmosphere as a learning environment for all. (Guastad, 1993).

More and more businesses are using tutoring or mentoring. They will pair employees to work together which in turn benefits

the company. When employees put two brains together, twice as many ideas come forward. It has been found that the company has more output of information when using teams rather than having employees work individually (Schreck, 1993). We need to prepare our future for the type of mentoring or tutoring that takes place in the business world.

Cross Age Tutoring

The greatest benefit of cross age tutoring is that both the tutor and the tutee gain from this system. The tutee is able to learn from a peer who is often better at understanding the misconceptions of the tutee since he or she may have struggled themselves. Sometimes " . . . tutors are better than adults in relating to the tutees on a cognitive, emotional, and social level" (Guastad, 1993 p.1). Tutors who have struggled academically may also be more patient with a younger student.

The gains of the tutee seem much more evident than the gains that will be made by the tutors; however, some studies have shown that "gains of the tutors often outdistance those of the students receiving help." (Gartner & Riessman, 1993 p. 2). The

progress as seen by Garter & Riessman (1993) was in learning about the subject matter, tutoring skills, listening and communicating effectively, and learning about learning.

Many studies have shown the importance and significance of cross age tutoring programs for the tutor. Labbo (1990) recognizes two elements that give this strategy a strong research base. One is literature on intergenerational literacy. It relates the plight of illiterate mothers who need to teach their children how to read. As they begin to read simple storybooks to their children, they are not only helping their children by introducing them to literacy, but also learning to read themselves. These parents become meaningful instructors and learn themselves (Labbo, 1990).

Another philosophy that supports cross age tutoring is repeated oral readings with an emphasis on performance. (Samuels, 1979). Many poor readers are not fluent readers, which impedes their learning significantly. Repeated oral readings are an essential part of any tutoring program and therefore are a good part of instruction. The other part is that the performances are authentic in a cross age tutoring program

8

because the audience is the tutee. Students are more likely to work harder when they know their audience is counting on them. When you have a genuine audience you always practice beforehand. Although practice does not always make perfect, practice does help progress! (Labbo, 1990).

There has been other cross age tutoring programs that have been found successful for both the younger student and the older student. Topping (1998) analyzed ten cross age tutoring programs and found that there was a significant increase in reading comprehension for both the tutor and the tutees. Sweetwater Union School District in California demonstrated that their cross age tutoring system improved the reading and writing scores for the seventh grade tutors as well as the third grade tutees (Thrope, 2000). The tutors mostly designed their program and there was a lot of flexibility in the program.

Another program examined the social benefits of peer tutoring through a study of four socially maladjusted boys without disabilities. Gumpel (1999) found "Results demonstrate that traditional peer tutoring and cross age tutoring can be expanded to the nonacademic domains of social skills training

and that the treatment may positively affect the social skills of both tutors and tutees"(1999, p. 116).

Webster Magnet School's two-year effort to use cross age tutoring to sustain the effects of early intervention proved very positive. One of the reason given to the success of their program was the one on one tutoring intervention. It was compared to Reading Recovery and Success For All in that aspect (Taylor, 1997).

As a result of her cross age tutoring program with middle school students, Schneider states (1997) "Cross age tutoring projects can foster student responsibility, empowerment and newfound interest in reading and writing activities." (1997, p. 137). She found that many of the outcomes of her study were that the students built self-esteem, handled responsibility better, and increased their reading and writing abilities. Her lesson plans were created completely by the students and she used a lot of modeling. At first some of the intermediate students were not convinced about the benefits, but they soon began to reflect on their progress. (Schneider, 1997).

It has been found that there are two main problems with cross age tutoring. One is that tutors are not often given enough training and they are ill prepared when it comes time to tutor. The other main problem is scheduling difficulties. These two problems have been thought of in the creation of Reading Together USA in that there is much prep work and training time for the tutors. There is a coordinator who schedules the program at the beginning of the year so that it will fit with the schedules of all participating teachers (Topping, 1998).

Reading Together USA

Reading Together USA is a cross age tutoring program in which fifth graders tutor second graders. It is designed to improve reading fluency and comprehension of the second graders, however the fifth graders benefit greatly from the experience. They increase their self-confidence, view of themselves as readers, increase organization, and strengthen leadership skills (Kyle, 2000).

The Reading Together USA started in Israel eighteen years ago. It is an adaptation of the Yachad tutoring system and was

11

brought to the United States by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Guilford County Schools, National Council of Jewish Women Research Institute for Innovation in Education and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. It was in 1999 and 2000 with federal money, and through 2000, the program has been piloted in 25 school in five states. In 2001, it expanded to almost one hundred (Kyle, 2000).

There has been a formal study of the benefits of the second graders comparing the program to the Sunshine Resource Assessment Kit. The students involved in Reading Together USA had mean pre-scores of 8.72 and post scores of 16.42 as opposed to the control group who received resource reading support and scored from 8.57 to 13.46. (Outcomes Study, 1999). Another study was done in Texas using the Texas Primary Reading Inventory, and the scores of the Reading Together program increased an average of 15.17 points as opposed to the control groups whose scores increased 11.3 points. (Outcomes Study, 1999).

Every reading program and every tutoring program is slightly different. In Reading Together USA the lessons are

mostly pre-designed and highly structured for good organization.

It also gives the student a dependable reference point in case

they forget anything. Studying one of these programs can be

very challenging. Topping (1998) says " . . .We cannot assume

the positive results noted from one type of tutoring can

automatically be generalized to other kinds of tutoring" (47).

There are many structural differences between all tutoring

programs and they need to be acknowledged. It is also

mentioned that each tutoring program once recorded as effective

cannot always be duplicated as such. There are changing

circumstances and conditions which will not make it

automatically effective everywhere. This study is an evaluation

of the Reading Together USA program as outlined in one

particular district.

CHAPTER THREE

Design of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and perceptions of students who participated as tutors in the Reading Together USA program.

Research Questions

1. Will the tutors' (fifth graders) ability to be responsible learners increase as a result of this program?

2. How will the tutors' attitudes and perceptions about themselves as readers change as a result of this program?

3. Will the program effect the tutors' general self esteem?

Methodology

Subjects

There were twenty-two students participating in Reading Together USA from three different fifth-grade classrooms. They either needed reading support or special education reading and writing support. Two classes were reading groups and one is a special education cluster. They were all reading at a mid fourth grade to beginning fifth grade level. They received support in the areas of reading and writing from either a special education teacher or reading teacher. All students mentioned in this research have been given fictitious names.

Materials

Most materials are supplied by Reading Together USA, which includes tutor and tutee binders, sets of trade books, some games and activity sheets. Students are required to provide a basket with basic school supplies.

As the special education teacher/researcher, I used the Bader IRI or the QRI for a baseline reading score. This was to ensure that the students involved in the program were fluent in their decoding skills. The program assumes that these skills are sufficient. I also used the Bader interest surveys at the beginning of the year (see Appendix A). At the end of the year, I administered a reading interest forms to assess gains in the students' confidence about reading (see Appendix B).

I kept a journal throughout the program to take notes of the students' behaviors, reactions and progress. I noted whether students were becoming more responsible with their materials, how much effort they were putting into their activities and their general attitudes about the program. Students kept journals as well with their thoughts and observations so that we could discuss their issues at our debriefing sessions.

Procedures

Pre- Phase One

Reading Together USA is a cross age tutoring program which originated in Israel where fifth graders tutor second

graders. The tutoring sessions are pre-planned and highly structured as the tutors had vigorous training. The program is broken into three phases so that the tutees steadily become more independent. The goals of the program are to leave the tutors more responsible, with a increased self esteem, and to strengthen reading skills using the second grade text.

The coordinators chose students to participate in the program who usually received reading or special education support. All selected fifth grade students were administered either the Bader IRI or QRI to assess their reading level. It was essential that the participating students do not have a deficit in phonemic needs or decoding needs as these skills would not be addressed in the program. Students who might have benefited most from this program need to increase their confidence and comprehension skills.

The Reading Together USA program began in the middle of October for a six week training period. The coordinators and the tutors met twice a week to plan lessons. At that time, students continued to receive small group pull-out instruction once a week on inferential thinking and writing skills. They also were

required to read every night for twenty minutes and write in their journal three times a week. The teacher then responded to their writing helping to show their progress and areas they still needed to improve upon. In the classroom they participated in the regular silent reading program with various forms of book reports, and a daily ten-minute language based lesson every morning. In this way, the Reading Together USA Program was only a part of their whole reading and writing program, however, it was the focal point of this research.

Phase One Preparation

The Reading Together USA procedure consists of three major phases. The first stage has two parts: tutor preparation and then stage one tutoring. The training takes a total of ten sessions in which the students will learn the order of the process. There are ten steps in each 40 minute tutoring session:

1. Short warm up chat between the tutor and tutee

2. Tutor reads a story aloud and the tutee listens

3. Before reading activities: Predicting using the pictures and title

4. First reading of the passage by the tutee. Tutor encourages, corrects mistakes using the correct process, and records on the process form

5. After the first reading, tutee answers a question or questions asked by the tutor

6. Tutee re-reads the passage. Tutor encourages, corrects mistakes and records on the progress form.

7. Tutee paraphrases the content of the passage

8. Tutee answers comprehension questions about the passage

9. Tutor and tutee carry out post reading activity

10. In the remaining time, tutor and tutee engage in an interaction created by the tutor related to the passage

There is one step after each session for just the tutors called debriefing in which tutors write in their journals and then talk with the coordinator about the lesson. They assess their successes and failures and where they need to improve.

Once the tutors learned this process through a variety of simulations, movies and activities, they were ready to tutor.

Tutors and tutee were paired up by their strengths and interests by the coordinators.

Phase One Tutoring

Next, the tutors and tutees went through a series of fourteen one-hour tutoring sessions, each having a different theme. The tutoring sessions took about forty minutes which left twenty minutes for the tutors to write in their journals and have the debriefing discussions. In those discussions the teacher and tutors dialogued about the importance of a complete re-telling including a beginning, middle and end, predicting helping a reader, re-reading, making the session exciting, and also the value of organization. Students were put in a responsible role where they never have had that expectation before. Each student brought up issues they were struggling with their tutee and the rest of the group assisted in problem solving.

After Phase One, there was a two-month break so the tutors did not get bored or worn out. In that time, their regular special education teacher or reading teacher lead a literature study group.

Phase Two and Three

The next step was Phase Two. There the tutors went through a brief training period to review the steps and learn a few variations. In this phase the tutors and tutees took turns reading aloud from trade books instead of short one-page stories. Another difference was the use of the sharing board so tutees could see the work of other second graders. Silent reading was also introduced and practiced in this phase. The steps in phase two are as follows:

2. Warm up chat

3. Picture walk

4. Paired readings

5. Silent reading

6. Tutor shares about his/her reading

7. Tutee shares about his or her reading

8. Activity

9. Sharing Board

10. Debriefing

Phase Two served as a connection to Phase Three where the tutees read an entire story silently followed by many

comprehension activities. In both Phase Two and Three the tutees had homework and needed to check in with their tutors at the beginning of each session. Phase Three is the shortest session lasting only two to three weeks and focuses on selecting books from the library and then reading them at home. During the tutoring session the tutees share their books with their tutors and fellow tutees.

When the students were about half way into Phase Two, they received a survey in which they were asked to respond to open ended question about Reading Together (See Appendix B). I used their responses along with my general observations to analyze the program.

Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed qualitatively. Most of the data came from anecdotal notes and my observations in my journal. In addition, the students' journals were a good source to show their progress and growth. Also, the information given in the beginning of the year about reading interests was compared with

an end of year interest form. All tutors were required to fill out a

form stating what they thought of the program and what they felt

that they gained from the program.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and perceptions of students who participated as tutors in the Reading Together USA program.

Data Collection

Student observations, discussions with parents, and also the feedback from the surveys the students anonymously filled out provided a wide range of information about the Reading Together USA program. In the student surveys, when asked if they would recommend if this program be used again next year, twenty-one students said that they thought we should continue Reading Together USA and one student said that she was not sure and there were pros and cons for both sides. Therefore, 95.5 percent thought that the program was beneficial enough to be repeated.

Another question the students were asked was: How did the program affect you as a learner or reader? Nineteen students out of twenty-two (86.4%) had very specific responses which ranged from their academic gains to their emotional gains. I was very impressed with the complexity of their answers and the detail to which they gave reasoning. The program seemed especially difficult since in order to participate they often missed recess and other "fun" activities. The following sections will address each of the three research questions.

Research Questions

1. Will the tutors' (fifth graders) ability to be responsible learners increase as a result of this program?

2. How will the tutors' attitudes and perceptions about themselves as readers change as a result of this program?

3. Will the program affect the tutors' general self esteem?

Responsibility

One of the major problems the coordinators encountered was the students' not being prepared to tutor. Sometimes they would forget their materials, or not complete their exemplar. This became a dilemma because if they were not prepared, they either made a fool of themselves attempting to tutor without the proper materials or had to tell their tutee that they could not be their tutor and the alternate would be their tutor for the day. Often, it seemed, the look of disappointment that their tutee gave them was a larger consequence than any other a teacher could give. One student said "The thing I enjoy least is that if we forget something we can't tutor. That makes my tutee really sad that she has to be tutored by someone else. It also makes me a little sad too. I start to feel more irresponsible because I wasn't there."

Eventually due to the fact that the second graders were suffering when the tutors were not prepared, the coordinators had to become more firm in our expectations. After some discussion about the issues, the kids themselves decided that there needed to be some stronger consequences. They designed

three expectations that were to be met in order to continue
participating. They chose (with some adult prompting):

1. We must be a good role model

2. We must be prepared

3. We must be enthusiastic

Independent of the teacher they also decided that there must be
consequences for people who broke the rules. The consequences
that the students designed were better than any I have seen
teachers put together. They were as follows:

First Offense: Either miss recess or stay after school for
detention. (Some teachers do not give recess so there had
to be an alternative for the students in those classes.)

Second Offense: You must write a note to your parents
telling them why you were not prepared. The next day, you
must return a note signed by your parents stating a home
consequence that you and your parents agree to. Some
suggestions were missing TV time, computer time, or
something else meaningful to you.

Third Offense: You will have lunch detention with the
principal and you will be asked to leave the program.

Since the kids themselves wrote these rules they felt more ownership. In fact, one student said, "The thing I really hate is how if you forget your homework you have to either miss recess or stay after school, but I do have to agree they are good consequences." Another student said that the rules were his least favorite part but " . . . they make sense too."

Twelve of the twenty-two students stated that they thought responsibility was one of the main benefits that they got out of the whole program. Some students noted that the skills they were learning and practicing in Reading Together USA carried over into their other academic areas too. One tutor stated, "It made me more responsible and complete stuff easier. It made my time more spaced out for play and work." Some of the tutees found that they had to set a good example for their tutee and explain about how they do homework. It gave them a real reason to do their work, or their tutees would not be as impressed by them. Also, after they forget something for their tutee once, the impact was so great they never want to disappoint them again. One girl said "Since Reading Together USA, my homework has been coming in right on time and that makes me really happy. I

haven't forgotten my homework since the last report card." She

let us know that this program was not teaching isolated skills.

Perception of Reading Progress

When the program first began, many of the fifth grade

teachers expressed concerns about the academic gains especially

in the area of reading for the tutors. They were worried that

using second grade material would not improve the reading skills

of fifth graders. This seemed like a valid concern. The responses

of fifth graders and their parents have shown that they benefited

quite a bit in many different academic areas.

Many of the students have said that they are reading a lot

more. I see more students involved in Reading Together USA

borrow books from my classroom library than other students do I

work with. Also, some parents have approached me to let me

know that they are surprised at the increase in choice reading

time their son or daughter is doing. Although, quantity of

reading is not everything, students who struggle with reading will

not choose to read as a leisure activity because it is so difficult.

An increase in the quantity of reading shows the student feels

more confident in his or her reading. One student said "This program has affected me because I read a lot more at home and at school." Another student noted that "When I started this program I didn't like to read. Now I love to read." I believe that something as simple as giving a child an authentic audience can turn a child towards reading. They see the purpose in reading and then want to read more just as the student who said, " . . . it makes me put more effort into reading when I know my tutee is there."

For many students lack of fluency can limit the enjoyment of reading. If it is so time consuming and each word is ultimately so challenging, reading can become a laborious task rather than a pleasure. Many students noted that their fluency improved through reading easier books, but the skills carried over into their age appropriate text. Some students were very proud that they read better out loud and used more expression when reading. This improvement made them want to read to younger siblings and also in class.

"This program has affected me as a learner because I now remember what the book or chapter was about. Even though it

was for the second grader I learn from this. I also practice with my little sister as if she was the second grader." If only all teachers received such obvious feedback such as what this student had to say! She has stated in her own words that one of the major purposes of this programs was achieved.

Self Esteem

Many of the fifth graders involved in this program have struggled academically for many years and as a result they became less and less confidant in themselves. One student who fits this profile is Skye. She is a student with minor learning disabilities, however she has much strength in her interpersonal skills. She is social in non-academic settings but she is not always confident in academic settings. She said that she did not like reading at all and would not read unless assigned to read. She put off all reading homework until the last possible minute. Although she did not enjoy reading or any aspect of language arts, she is the furthest away from being belligerent or problematic.

Skye started out tutoring tentatively and she was very nervous meeting with her tutee. As she continued tutoring she became more and more enthusiastic and began making comments about her tutees speech, which prompted us to have her evaluated for articulation problems. One of Skye's journal entries was as follows:

> I really like tutoring. It's very fun. The thing I like best is the interactions. I like them best because they are like a game. I have learned a lot from tutoring. I learned that you have to be very responsible and sort of how to be a teacher. Also, how it feels when your tutee is not paying attention. Now I know how it feels! I really love tutoring Shannon. It's lots of fun!

This entry exemplifies how Skye really matured in her thinking of herself. She began to better understand the teacher's perspective and why it was important to be attentive during lessons. She also was very excited to be a tutor and took much pride in this fact.

Another student with a general lack of self-esteem was Matt. He was a unique student who was going through a difficult time with a custody battle. He originally started the year with one classroom teacher, but needed to be transferred because of extreme behavior with another student. At the parent conference to discuss transferring Matt to another class, his father stated

that Matt just did not like school at all. The only part he felt important was when he was tutoring. He felt valued and felt as if he was able to make a difference with his tutee. In all this emotional turbulence, the Reading Together USA program was the only thing that kept him coming back to school. When we did switch his class, we made sure he had another teacher who was also participating in Reading Together USA.

Many of the tutors improved their self-esteem drastically. They were proud to be picked to be in this program and saw all of the benefits to their tutees. They became a role model and had a little second grader who looked up to them and often idolized them. They were able to see their potential and see all the wonderful things they could accomplish if they worked hard and put their mind to it. One student said, "I am proud that I taught someone and made a difference in their life." Another student concluded, "I wish I could be a tutor forever." Many of these students will forget many of the social studies and science lessons, but I think few will forget the gratification they received from being the one to help teach a younger child to read.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

In general, the Reading Together USA program was quite successful for the tutors. The students became more responsible not only with the program but with other homework as well. It also seemed to help their impressions of their reading skills. They seemed more confident and therefore began to read more and notice more connections as they were reading. Lastly, the tutors increased their self esteem. They were honored that they were chosen for this program and began to feel that if their teachers felt they were good enough readers to be tutors, then they must possess good skills. I believe that this positive energy began to transfer over to their general self esteem.

Implications for the School

The program was difficult to implement and the coordinators were faced with many challenges. One of the most difficult aspects was the coordination of the whole process. It

was difficult for us to find a time when all students involved could leave the classroom and not miss anything essential or something they will be responsible for later. Classroom teachers needed to be brought on board earlier so they could more fully see the benefits of the program.

Another issue that was faced was the time the special education teacher and the reading teacher spent preparing the tutors in the program and the actual tutoring time was the time that typically went to working on skills they lacked. These tutors are traditionally taught in a combination of push in and pull out services by the reading or special education teacher to work on strengthening their reading and language arts skills . These students are allotted so much time of special service team resources and that time was used to help these students participate in the program. Therefore, the skills that the students lacked were not taught in the traditional way due to limited teacher time. This became a debate as to whether they should be part of this program or they needed these reading skills directly taught to them. It became a delicate balance of whether to stress

self esteem and responsibility or specific reading skills directly related to fifth grade material.

The school had a slightly different atmosphere for those students who participated in Reading Together USA. Many tutors and tutees sat together on the buses and helped each other out in social situations. In the halls, the tutees often looked for their tutors' artwork and class work with awe. They were always very proud to be doing what they were supposed to be doing as their tutor's class walked by. The tutors learned more responsibility and needed to set an example around the school therefore helping their general behavior.

New York State Curriculum

Another question that was addressed was how the Reading Together USA program helps to fit into the tight curriculum standards that exist in New York State. The following chart exemplifies how the New York State standards are related to the skills taught in Reading Together:

New York State Standard	Examples in Reading Together USA
Standard 1: Students will read for information and understanding.	Students are expected to read fluently and expressivel to their tutee every session. They model good pre-reading strategies through activating prior knowledge and predicting experiences.
Standard 1: Students will write for information and understanding.	It is necessary for students to write when developing their interactions with their tutees. They have a specific purpose for writing. The tutee needs to fully understand the text that he or she has just read.
Standard 1: Students will listen and speak for information and understanding.	Students are required to listen to the teacher and each other as the group plans the next tutoring session. They also need to speak and participate in the planni stage to be an effective tutor. They train to understar the difference between literal and higher level questioning.

tandard 2: Students will read or literary response and expression.	The tutors explain the different types of literature suc as poetry, prose or expository. They need to understand the importance of using different forms of literature to teach to their tutees. This program gives opportunities for reaction to different kinds of literature to express an opinion.
Standard 2: Students will write for literary response and expression.	When working with their tutee, students write their own interaction with the tutee. We have discussed the importance of showing the students an exemplar. The tutors design the lesson and then write up an example of their expectations.
Standard 2: Students will listen and speak for literary response and expression.	During the tutoring session, the tutors increase their comprehension of a passage by modeling a response. The also listen to the tutees retelling of the story specifically for a beginning, middle, and an end. If it not complete they ask leading questions to get more information.

Standard 3: Students will read for critical analysis and evaluation.	At the end of a tutoring session during the debriefing, the students respond in their journals. Then they re-read their writing to think about what they would like to revise. They are reading to check their analysis for completeness and details that occurred during that particular session.
Standard 3: Students will write for critical analysis and evaluation.	Students are writing in their journals to evaluate their progress. They are reflecting about their successes an ways they need to improve their teaching. This is an essential step in the program for their improvement.
Standard 3: Students will listen and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.	After journal writing, the tutors sit and have a discussion to share their experiences. They help to solve each other problems and give each other advice They participate in the discussions to respond to othe or to share and evaluate their own experiences.
Standard 4: Students will read for social interaction.	The social interaction aspect of reading is evident wh the tutors read and interact with the text.

Standard 4: Students will write for social interaction	The journal entries are used to share with the group in a social manner.
Standard 4: Students will listen and speak for social interaction	The entire program encourages the building of a mentoring relationship between the tutor and the tutee. The students engage in a warm up chat, read with each other, and do activities related to the story. The tutor develops a higher self esteem as a role model and a competent reader.

Therefore, it is felt that the Reading Together USA program fits directly into New York State's expectations of our fifth graders.

Implications for Further Research

Especially due to the fact that this is such a new program, I feel that there is much research to be continued on this topic. This research may need to be repeated in a similar district for more reliability. This was one suburban/rural district and therefore we cannot take the data collected here as a final answer.

Ideally it would be very good if continued research could be done to see if the students do indeed increase their reading skills through pre-testing and post-testing and the use of a group who does not use the Reading Together USA program but rather a more traditional system of teaching. This would need to be quantitative evaluation of the program.

This research only dealt with the benefits for the tutors. It would be beneficial to look back and see if there are even greater benefits for the tutees. How much do they gain? Does their self esteem and sense of responsibility increase?

There are many more questions to be answered. This is a new program and many modification are still being made. Will the program still have the same positive effects after these modifications? We will have to continue to research the benefits of cross age tutoring and specifically the Reading Together USA program.

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I still need to find the city for Zukowski and add in more information for the Outcomes study. Both of these pieces of information is at school and I will fix them on Monday.

Thanks for reading this!

UNFINISHED SENTENCES

1. Sometimes I like to _____

2. Last summer I _____

3. I hope I'll never _____

4. When I read I _____

5. My friend likes to _____

6. I often worry about _____

7. The best thing about school is _____

8. Someday I want to _____

9. The person I like best is _____

10. I wish someone would _____

11. Learning to read is _____

12. My favorite television show is _____

13. The worst thing about school is _____

14. I have fun when _____

15. The biggest problem with reading is _____

16. After school I like to _____

17. I wish my teacher would _____

18. My eyes are _____

19. I would like to be able to read _____

20. If I had three wishes I would wish for _____

_____

_____

Notes from follow-up discussion: _____

_____

_____

Name (Optional)_____

<u>Reading Together USA Survey</u>

I would appreciate it if you could answer these questions honestly. I am using your answers to help me write a paper of my own about the Reading Together USA program. You do not have to include your name if you do not choose. If you need more space, feel free to attach additional pieces of paper. Also, at the end please note if there is more information you would like to share verbally rather than in writing. Thank you very much for assisting me with my research.

1. What do you enjoy most about Reading Together USA?

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2. What do you enjoy least?

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3. How do you think this program has affected you as a reader/learner?

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4. What are you most proud of? What do you think you have accomplished?

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5. Would you recommend that another fifth grader be part of this program next year? Why or why not?

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6. Do you have any other additional comments?

_____

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_____

7. Are there things you have not mentioned but would like to discuss with me?

(Circle one)

Yes   No

Thank you very much for your tine and effort. I really appreciate your honesty in filling out this survey!

Ms. Kessler