Buddy Reading

ABSTRACT: This research focuses on how to ensure high quality tutoring and mentoring in a buddy reading program. The majority of the research is centered around training older buddies what to do before, during, and after reading.

Being read aloud to has numerous benefits. Many parents may not have the time and/or resources necessary to read aloud to their child. Service-learning involves teaching students skills which allow them to address real community challenges. In my case, the skill is tutoring and mentoring, and the community challenge is children entering school who have not been read aloud to and have not been engaged in conversations during reading. From a broader perspective, the challenge is the achievement gap in reading.

The participants include fourth and fifth graders paired with kindergarten and first graders who attend their school's after care program. The buddy reading takes place after school. In order to get a comprehensive view of the effectiveness of the training I plan to design and carry out, data will be collected in five ways: 1) observations of buddy reading prior to formal training, 2) surveys given to the older buddies before and after training, 3) collection of lesson plans written by the older buddies, 4) documents in the form of journal reflections by the older buddies 5) videotapes of buddy reading sessions.

 Older buddies need explicit instruction in what to do before, during, and after reading. The instruction should be systematic and include modeling of what kinds of questions to ask and when to ask them. Furthermore, time must be allotted for older buddies to choose an appropriate book and practice reading it. Time also should be given for them to write questions and decide what "After Reading" activity will be done. This preparation should be done with the supervising teacher present. This supervising teacher needs to evaluate the kinds of questions the older buddies plan to ask, as well as what they plan to do before and after reading. The teacher should offer both positive and negative feedback in order to achieve and maintain high quality tutoring and mentoring.

In order to ensure high quality tutoring and mentoring, the older buddies must be trained in what to do before, during, and after reading. The trainer should model these skills and give the buddies an opportunity to practice them. There must be a supervising teacher who continues to offer feedback and support to the older buddies. Monitoring should be continuous.