Cross-Age Peers as Partners: Students' Perspectives on the Reciprocal Effects of Paired Reading Using Cross-Age Peer Tutors.

Karen Elizabeth Eason

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation


https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/7261

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI®

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family.

To my parents, Tom and Louise,
who inspired my love of reading and always challenged me to do my best.

To my brother
Derek
who shares my LSU enthusiasm.

To my grandparents
Mawmaw & Pawpaw and Gam & Pap
who put family first and whose lives exemplified honesty, kindness, generosity, and integrity.

To my aunt
Susan
who inspires me with her positive attitude and zest for life.

To my goddaughter
Evan
who puts a smile on my face each time she climbs in my lap to read a book and who will always be my little princess.

And finally to my friends who are like family,
David, Beth, Will, Scott, Beth, Kevin, Donna, Avery, Evan, and Robert
who I can always count on for a good laugh and a kind word.

To each of you who help me appreciate the really important things in life, I am forever indebted. Your love, support, prayers, and words of encouragement are the source of my strength.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My life has been a series of experiences in pursuit of success and I owe a great deal of appreciation to the many people who have supported my endeavors. Ralph Waldo Emerson defined success when he said, "To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. That is to have succeeded."

My quest for success has been shaped by many people. For helping me to learn to laugh often and much, I am grateful to my "friends family," David, Beth, Will, Scott, Beth, Kevin, Donna, Avery, Evan, and Robert. Your friendship makes life worthwhile. In my journey to win the respect of intelligent people I am indebted to Dr. Earl Cheek for his support of my professional goals and to Dr. Jill Howard-Allor, Dr. Nathan Gottfried, Dr. Byron Launey, Dr. Jimmy Stockard, and Dr. James Wandersee for sharing their expertise, knowledge, and ideas. For teaching me how to win the affection of children, I am thankful to Leslie Akin. I am eternally grateful to Dr. Kerry Laster for her encouragement, support, and helpful suggestions. She has been an excellent role model in my efforts to earn the appreciation of honest critics. The unconditional love from my parents, Tom and Louise Eason, has been a source of strength when I had to endure the betrayal of false friends and a model for how to appreciate beauty and to find the best in others. The professional dedication and contagious enthusiasm of Martha Maple and the staff at Shreve Island Elementary have inspired me to try to
leave the world a bit better. I am grateful to the key women educators of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International for the generous scholarships and professional support. Each of these special people has helped me breathe easier because they have lived. They have truly succeeded and words are inadequate to fully express my gratitude.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ....................................................................................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................................................... iv

LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................. vi

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................ ix

CHAPTER

I INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 1
   The Purpose of the Study ......................................................................................... 2
   Historical Perspective: The Setting ....................................................................... 3
   Significance of the Study ....................................................................................... 7
   Research Questions ............................................................................................... 8

II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ............................................................................... 9
   Introduction ............................................................................................................. 9
   What Impact Do Readers’ Attitudes and Perceptions Have on Literacy Learning? 10
   What Is Appropriate Reading Instruction? ............................................................. 13
   The Use of Paired Reading in Appropriate Instruction ........................................... 18
   Peer Tutoring and Its Effectiveness ....................................................................... 23
   Research on Classwide (Same Age) Peer Tutoring ................................................. 26
   Research on Cross-Age Peer Tutoring ................................................................... 33
   Considerations for Implementation ........................................................................ 39
   Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 41

III METHODOLOGY ....................................................................................................... 42
   Research Design ..................................................................................................... 43
   Selection of Participants ......................................................................................... 45
   Data Collection ....................................................................................................... 47
   Data Collection Procedure ..................................................................................... 52
   Data Collection Analysis ......................................................................................... 53
   Trustworthiness ....................................................................................................... 54
   Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 56

IV THE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY .............................................................................. 57
   Vignette: January, 2000 (taken from fieldnotes) .................................................. 65
# Case Studies of Fourth Grade Tutors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutor/Tutee Interactions</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors’ Perceptions of Effectiveness as a Teacher</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors’ Attitudes and Perceptions of Self as a Reader</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Case Studies</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Findings, Limitations, and Implications for Future Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Future Research</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# References

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

# Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A SCHOOL DISTRICT LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR STUDY</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B SCHOOL DISTRICT LETTER GRANTING PERMISSION FOR STUDY</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C PARENT/STUDENT PERMISSION SLIP</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D TUTOR INTERVIEW GUIDE</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E BOOK BUDDY READING LOG</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Data Collection and Analysis Timeline and Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Mrs. May's Classroom Floor Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Mrs. May's Class Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Mrs. May's Lesson Plan Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>January 25, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>March 21, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>April 20, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>February 1, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>April 6, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>January 18, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>April 20, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>February 24, 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to observe students implementing Paired Reading with cross-age peer tutors and to describe the attitudes and perceptions of the tutors about the reciprocal effects of participating in this program. This study examined the following aspects of the fourth grade students' perspectives on the reciprocal effects of cross-age peer tutoring using Paired Reading: (a) the interactions of the fourth grade tutor with the kindergarten tutee during tutoring sessions, (b) the tutor's perception of the effectiveness of her role as a teacher using cross-age peer tutors, and (c) the students' attitudes about and perceptions of themselves as readers. This ethnographic multiple case study examined the interactions of cross-age peer tutors using Paired Reading and described the attitudes and perceptions of the tutors about the reciprocal effects of participating in this program. By giving detailed accounts of the fourth grade tutors' interactions with their kindergarten partners, analyzing their written reflections of the interactions, and summarizing their comments about their participation, this study extends the existing literature on the use of cross-age peer tutors, the use of Paired Reading, and students' attitudes and perceptions. The investigation provided valuable insights into the important impact Paired Reading using cross-age peer tutors had on students' perceptions and attitudes about reading. The study data indicated themes and patterns such as explicit instruction, modeled reading behaviors, feedback/reinforcement, and practice as factors which impact the effectiveness of Paired Reading using cross-age peer tutors. Each of the fourth grade students who were the focus of this study were provided the opportunity to experience success as a reader and use that success to assist her younger partner. Identifying the plausible
relationships which shape this social interaction provided insight into how beliefs and attitudes impact the tutoring relationship. Knowledge of student perceptions about themselves as teachers and readers can assist in the implementation of effective instructional practices and may reduce failure of students in literacy acquisition.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

According to The Developmental Studies Center (1996), the benefits for older students serving as a tutor for younger students center around the "ways they can experience their own growth, the ways they can experience themselves as contributing to the growth of someone else, and the ways the relationship pushes them to continue growing (p.11)". After completing just a few observations in the classroom I had selected for my pilot study and reviewing several journal entries from the students in that classroom, it was evident that doing qualitative research would provide me with tremendous insight into the students' perspectives of the reciprocal effects of using Paired Reading with cross-age peer tutors.

"Lindsay read two whole books called Spots and I Like. She was amazing and outstanding. I think she will grow up to be a fabulous reader. It felt like I was the kindergartner and she was the fourth grader," Amanda writes.

When reflecting on how her book buddy performed, Alicia writes, "My book buddy read all three books to me. If he didn't know that word he will [sic] look on the picture and see what the kid is doing or what kind of fruit it is. Sometimes he have [sic] to see what color it is or what shape it is to know what the word is."

"Today at Book Buddies I was pointing to the words and I told him to repeat after me. I told him to say the words after me. He did what I told him and when I got finished with the book, he had read the whole entire book," writes Mario.
"I was reading [sic] she told me what was going to happen next and I did not know it was going to happen," William explains.

Jordon expresses concern for his buddy as he writes, "My book buddy has a big problem. She can't read words."

These excerpts from journal entries are representative of the journal entries of the other tutors and are characteristic of the ways tutors experience their own growth, the ways they experience themselves as contributing to the growth of someone else, and the ways the relationship pushes them to continue growing. As I reflected on these entries and the benefits tutors experience as a result of the interactions with their younger partners, I wondered what the tutors' perceptions of themselves as readers, learners, and teachers were.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to observe students implementing Paired Reading with cross-age peer tutors and to describe the attitudes and perceptions of the tutors about the reciprocal effects of participating in this program. For years, educational researchers have conducted studies to investigate the effects of peer tutoring on both academic and social skills. In a critical review of research by Devin-Sheehan, Feldman, and Allen (1976) and a meta-analysis conducted by Cohen, Kulik, and Kulik (1982) the studies indicated that participation in a peer tutoring program positively impacts both tutor and tutee on cognitive as well as affective levels.

This study extends the findings of the studies reviewed by Devin-Sheehan et al. (1976) and analyzed by Cohen et al. (1982) by
describing the reciprocal effects from the perspectives of the tutors.
Ethnographic methods informed this research by providing case studies of fourth grade tutors, giving detailed accounts of their interactions with their kindergarten partners, analyzing their written reflections of the interactions, and summarizing their comments about their participation. This study sought to understand the attitudes and perceptions held by the tutors about the reciprocal effects of their participation in this cross-age peer tutoring program.

**Historical Perspective: The Setting**

**The School**

The setting for this study was a fourth grade class at an elementary school in a parish in north Louisiana. Students from the kindergarten classes came to the fourth grade class as part of the program that this study investigated. Sewanee Elementary School (pseudonym) had a total population of 646 students. There were 406 (63%) white students, 213 (33%) black students and 27 (4%) other ethnicities such as Hispanic, Indian, and Asian. There were 579 (89%) regular education students, 24 (4%) full inclusion students, and 43 (7%) students in self-contained special education classes most of whom were mainstreamed to regular classrooms for part of each day. Approximately 34% of the total school population participated in the free or reduced lunch program.

This elementary school was a unique school in many ways. It was a public, neighborhood school that was allowed to enroll students from outside the school's attendance area because of its alternative language arts curriculum and its year-round schedule. The school
operated on a year-round calendar where students attend school for nine weeks and are on break for two weeks. After the fourth nine-week period ends in July, the students have a four-to-five-week break. During the two-week breaks in October and February, one week of optional intersession classes is available for students desiring to attend school for an additional five or ten days. These intersession classes are non-traditional in that they involve cross-age groupings, thematic units developed by teachers, flexible time scheduling, and class size limitations of twenty or less. All students (special and regular education) may attend intersession classes.

Dr. Lynn Pierce (pseudonym) was Sewanee’s principal. She was asked to serve as the principal in 1985 in an effort to keep the school open. Under her leadership the school grew from a population of approximately 150 students to over 600 students with a waiting list at every grade level. Using her extensive knowledge in the area of reading instruction, Dr. Pierce and her staff developed an award winning program, receiving numerous local, state, and national awards which included the United States Department of Education’s Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award.

The school staff consisted of 50 professionals and 21 non-professionals. The professional staff at this school embraced a holistic, language-based philosophy. Most of the staff have received extensive training in the use of an integrated language arts approach, portfolio assessment, and the writing process.

Most teachers at this school also welcomed the concept of inclusion for students with various disabilities. This school pioneered
the inclusion of special needs students in this north Louisiana parish during the 1990-91 school year and had been involved in inclusive practices for nine years. There were two full inclusion teachers at the school who provided support in the regular classrooms where inclusion students were placed for the entire day with their regular education peers. The full inclusion special education teacher, along with a paraprofessional, provided support for the regular education classroom teacher. The full inclusion teacher also provided support for the identified special needs students as well as others in the classroom who were not achieving as desired.

There were three fourth grade classes at this school. Each class had a certified teacher and received support from a full inclusion teacher and a paraprofessional at various times throughout the day. Each teacher was responsible for the language arts instruction for her homeroom and one content area subject for the entire grade. During the daily schedule, each class had one fifteen-minute recess, a forty-minute block for enrichment (social skills, art, music, or physical education), and twenty minutes for lunch. The three fourth grade teachers had varying amounts of teaching experience, and one of the three had completed a minimum of a master's degree.

At this school, there were five kindergarten classes operating on a full-day schedule. Each kindergarten class had a certified teacher with limited paraprofessional assistance. During the daily schedule, each class had one fifteen-minute recess, a thirty-minute block for enrichment (social skills, art, music, library, or physical education), twenty minutes for lunch, and a one-hour nap time. The five
kindergarten teachers had varying amounts of teaching experience, but all five had completed a minimum of a master's degree.

The school's mission statement was "to provide an academic environment where lifelong learning is nurtured through a partnership with students, parents, community, and staff."

The community surrounding the school was urban. There was an Air Force Base located close to the school. The population in the school community was stable except for some military families who were transferred out of the area. Parent participation and administrative support were typically good.

**The Teacher**

When considering the type of classroom in which to conduct my research, I purposely selected a classroom in which it was evident that reading was important and where the teacher was enthusiastic about reading. I assumed that more might be learned by studying students who were in an environment where reading for a variety of purposes was valued and students were encouraged to read and reflect on their development as a reader. I knew I had found the right place when I saw a sign on the door of room 9 which read “You don’t have to read everyday, only on the days you eat.”

Mrs. Amy May (pseudonym) was recommended for this study by a colleague who identified her as an exemplary teacher who utilized developmentally appropriate teaching techniques, emphasized the importance and joy of reading to her students, and studied research and current practices in the fields of reading and writing. Amy, a European American woman was in her mid-sixties.
had been teaching for thirty-six years. She had been teaching at this school for the past ten years. Amy had worked in a variety of educational settings and taught at numerous grade levels including first grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth grade, and eighth grade.

Amy had a master's degree as well as certification as a reading specialist and educational specialist. She was committed to her professional growth and development and regularly read professional literature, attended conferences and workshops, and participated in a teacher study group. She was a member of professional organizations such as the International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and Phi Delta Kappa. She had received numerous awards and recognitions for her excellence in teaching and was participating in the process for national board certification as a middle level generalist.

**Significance of the Study**

This study identified and explored the beliefs and attitudes which impact the effectiveness of Paired Reading using cross-age peer tutors from the perspective of the tutor. Identifying the plausible relationships which shape this social interaction provided insight into how beliefs and attitudes impact the tutoring relationship from the perspective of the tutor. Knowledge of student perceptions about themselves as teachers and readers can assist in the implementation of effective instructional practices and may reduce failure of students in literacy acquisition.

This research used rich, thick descriptions to provide case studies of fourth grade tutors which gives detailed accounts of their
interactions with their kindergarten partners, analyzes their written reflections of those interactions, and summarizes their comments about their participation in this program. This study sought to understand the attitudes and perceptions held by the tutors about the reciprocal effects of their participation in this cross-age peer tutoring program. By studying these complex interactions from the perspective of the tutor, I offer insights into why other educators, in other places and with other children, might take advantage of the instructional implications gained from this research.

**Research Questions**

This study sought to describe and understand the attitudes and perceptions held by the tutors about the reciprocal effects of their participation in this cross-age peer tutoring program. The research answered the following questions as they relate to the students' perspectives on the reciprocal effects of Paired Reading using cross-age peer tutors:

(a) What is the interaction of the tutor with the tutee during tutoring sessions?

(b) How does the tutor perceive the effectiveness of her role as a teacher with the tutee?

(c) What are the tutors' attitudes about and perceptions of themselves as readers in relationship to participation in this program?
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

What impact do readers' attitudes and perceptions have on literacy learning? What role does Paired Reading play in providing appropriate reading instruction? What benefits and limitations determine the effectiveness of peer and cross-age tutoring? In the review of the literature for this study, these questions were addressed by focusing on the following areas: (a) the impact of readers' attitudes and perceptions on literacy acquisition, (b) appropriate reading instruction and the use of paired reading, (c) classwide (same age) peer tutoring, and (d) cross-age peer tutoring.

Introduction

In a reprint of William S. Gray's historical review of research on reading, Reading: A Research Retrospective, 1881-1941 (1984), he explored the power of research and its implications for the implementation of methods of reading instruction. He noted the accumulation of extensive literature which has raised as many questions as it has answered. As the questions continued to grow, the Cooperative Research Program in First Grade Reading Instruction conducted an investigation (better known as the First Grade Studies) which sought to find the method(s) which were superior for beginning reading instruction. The researchers concluded that there is no one best method of reading instruction (Bond & Dykstra, 1997). Searfoss (1997) points to the 1967 First Grade Studies as the impetus for the shift from researching methods of reading instruction to studies which explore the process of learning to read.
Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985) have used the analogy of a symphony orchestra to describe the process of reading. The holistic act of reading is similar to the performance of the symphony. Though reading is made up of skills, it is only performed when the parts are integrated smoothly. Much like learning to read, there must be some interest in beginning the challenge to learn to play an instrument. Initial success in mastering the skills required to play an instrument or learn to read promotes a positive attitude about the process and provides motivation for continuous and more challenging attempts. In addition, like playing an instrument, practice over long periods of time fosters success. Finally, based on personal experiences, there may be more than one interpretation of texts and musical scores alike. If students are to develop into symphonic readers, reading instruction must be based on the best educational practices within appropriate instructional contexts.

What Impact Do Readers' Attitudes and Perceptions Have on Literacy Learning?

Learning to read is a complex process which has been the subject of much research over the years. Some components of the literacy learning process that are interesting to reading teachers are the impact that readers' attitudes about reading and their perceptions of themselves as readers have on reading instruction. In response to the intuitions that attitudes and beliefs impact literacy instruction, researchers have focused on the relationship of the affective domain with the cognitive domain (Henk & Melnick, 1995; Mathewson, 1994; McKenna & Kear, 1990; Schell, 1992). Yochum and Miller (1990) reviewed research which examined students' perceptions of
themselves as readers and concluded that the self-appraisal and monitoring strategies employed by successful readers are influenced by affective factors such as beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions.

McKenna (1994) defines attitudes about reading as a system of feelings that cause the student to either approach or avoid a reading situation. In their 1998 review of reading research, Snow, Burns, and Griffin emphasize the important role attitude about reading plays in learning to read. They write, "Children who learn...that literacy is a source of enjoyment may be more motivated to persist in their efforts to learn to read despite difficulties they may encounter during the early years" (1998, p.143). In other words, children who believe reading is enjoyable will make repeated attempts at reading even when it becomes difficult. And conversely, those students who have a negative attitude about reading see no need to persist when reading becomes challenging.

In addition to identifying attitudes about reading as a factor which influences reading instruction, researchers have also studied what kinds of instruction promote positive attitudes toward reading. Mathewson (1994) cites a 1991 study by Shapiro and White which indicated that an individualized approach that included two periods per day of library time, cross-age tutoring, and no regular basal instruction promoted more favorable reading attitudes than the traditional basal approach. Using instructional strategies which foster positive attitudes about reading enhances the process of literacy learning.
Assessment of students' attitudes about reading has been investigated as well. McKenna and Kear (1990) developed the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) to enable teachers to reliably and efficiently estimate the attitude levels of elementary school students. The survey uses a pictorial format to assess the recreational and academic reading attitudes of students. Though the survey will not identify causes of attitudes about reading, it will provide teachers with a quantitative estimate of two important aspects of childrens' attitudes about reading and can be used to plan instruction which will foster positive attitudes in these areas.

Another important factor in literacy learning is students' perceptions of themselves as readers. In his 1992 study, Schell found that students' perceptions had a pervasive impact on the learning climate of the classroom and that poor readers aren't seen by themselves or their peers as personally or socially "good" as are good readers. When students have a negative perception of themselves as readers, they tend to disengage from the process of learning to read and avoid attempts at reading. However, those students who hold positive self-perceptions are motivated to continue reading which fosters a cycle of increased practice, pleasure, and proficiency. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) refer to these students as engaged readers who "can overcome obstacles to achievement...and become agents of their own reading growth" (p. 405).

Because research has shown that children who have positive perceptions read more often, for longer periods of time, and with greater engagement, Henk and Melnick (1995) developed the Reader
Self-Perception Scale (RSPS). The scale measures students' perceptions of themselves as readers and provides teachers with information that will assist them in enhancing students' self-perceptions and motivating students to read.

Students' attitudes about reading and perceptions of themselves as readers play an important role in the complex process of learning to read. Because these factors have such a tremendous impact on literacy learning, it is critical that reading instruction include materials and strategies which foster the development of positive attitudes toward reading and positive self-perceptions as readers. Understanding how children feel about reading and themselves as readers is a critical part of providing appropriate reading instruction.

What Is Appropriate Reading Instruction?

Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (1998) identified the common features that define "best educational practice" related to current definitions of teaching and learning from the curriculum reports, research summaries, and position papers of many educational disciplines (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Center for the Study of Reading, National Writing Project, National Council for the Social Studies, American Association for the Advancement of Science, National Council of Teachers of English, National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the International Reading Association). According to these reports (Zemelman et al., 1998), learning activities should be (a) child-centered, soliciting the students' own interests; (b) experiential, with
students learning by doing whenever possible; (c) reflective, with opportunities for students to look back and debrief; (d) authentic, with real ideas in purposeful contexts; (e) holistic, with instruction proceeding from the whole to its parts; (f) social and collaborative, with scaffolded learning interactions that promote cooperation; (g) democratic, providing a model for citizenship; (h) cognitive, with activities designed to develop true understanding of concepts and higher order thinking; (i) psycholinguistic, with language being the primary tool for learning; (j) rigorous and challenging, with students making choices and accepting responsibility for their own learning; (k) developmental, with activities that match stages of growth; and (l) constructive, where students gradually construct their own understandings in a productive learning environment (pp. 9-15).

In addition to the recommendations listed above, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has issued a position statement concerning appropriate educational practices for the primary grades (NAEYC, 1989). These developmentally appropriate literacy practices for primary grade students include these key components: (a) curriculum is designed to develop children's knowledge and to help them learn how to learn; (b) curriculum and instruction are designed to develop self-esteem, feelings of competence, and positive feelings toward learning; (c) each child is viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth; (d) curriculum and instruction are responsive to individual differences in interests and abilities; (e) different levels of ability and development are expected and accepted; (f) curriculum is integrated so
that learning in all traditional subjects occurs mainly through projects and learning centers that reflect children's interests; (g) the classroom environment allows children to learn through active involvement with each other; (h) children work and play cooperatively in small groups; (i) learning materials and activities are concrete, real, and relevant to the children; and (j) the goal of the literacy program is to expand the children's ability to communicate orally and through reading and writing.

These recommendations from Zemelman et al. (1998) and NAEYC (1989) suggest the need for classrooms that are socially interactive and filled with books of various levels and genres. The literacy-rich classrooms would communicate the importance of real reading and writing by engaging children in a variety of print activities throughout the school day. The recommendations encourage meaning-making, student choice, student talk, and socialization. The teachers in these classrooms would facilitate learning and be astute observers of students' interests and needs. Learning centers, cooperative groups, quality children's literature, an assortment of writing materials, and the use of invented spelling would be integral parts of the learning structure. Subskills such as phonics and word recognition would be taught as needed to accomplish larger goals, not in isolation or as the primary goal. Literacy activities would be integrated with content areas such as math, social studies, and science. Each child's progress would be monitored at regular intervals through authentic forms of assessment such as teacher observation, anecdotal notes, checklists, and rubrics.
Parents would receive narrative reports of their child’s progress and performance. Many educators would characterize classrooms like these as "whole language" or holistic, language-based environments.

Throughout the nation, there has been much discussion about the use of whole language approaches versus phonics approaches. Routman (1996) attributes the controversy surrounding the methodologies of whole language and phonics to the media. The media hype has served as a divisive tool that has misinformed and excited the public. Even though the focus of Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print (1998) is an investigation of the role of phonics and phonemic awareness within the process of reading development, Marilyn Jager Adams suggests that the argument over approaches must stop. To learn to read, the entire reading process must be developed. The development of the reading process includes the need for whole language and phonics approaches to reading instruction.

Seeking some agreement among experts in the field of reading instruction, Flippo (1999) conducted a ten year study in which the experts unanimously agreed on fifteen contexts and practices which would facilitate the process of learning to read. According to the experts (Flippo, 1999), the reading process is facilitated by instruction which provides multiple, repeated demonstrations of how reading is done or used. Additionally, the experts agreed that instruction and individual activities should be planned so that students engage in purposeful reading and writing most of the time. The process of learning to read is a matter of continuous rehearsal, development,
and refinement where there is a balance between practice of the parts and practice of the whole (Anderson et al., 1985). Becoming an expert reader requires instruction which will develop the use of skills such as phonemic awareness and phonics to the level of automaticity while cultivating the ability to monitor comprehension using a variety of strategies (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). Educators are now calling for a "balanced" reading program — one that integrates whole language strategies with explicit instruction in graphophonic skills and comprehension strategies (Cunningham & Allington, 1999; Routman, 1991, 1996).

In response, teachers are developing a program of balanced literacy in classrooms which encompasses many instructional issues and program components. Issues in reading include the various dimensions of reading development such as, phonemic awareness, concepts about print, and appropriate book selection. Components of a balanced reading program include reading aloud, book introduction activities, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, repeated reading, and explicit instruction of skills and strategies. In writing, issues include characteristics of writing such as spelling stages and invented spelling. A balanced writing program includes interactive writing, shared writing, modeled writing, independent writing, and spelling instruction. Balanced literacy programs employ multiple approaches to provide reading instruction which is based on the best educational practices within appropriate instructional contexts.
The Use of Paired Reading in Appropriate Instruction

Paired Reading was developed in the mid 1970's with the goal of presenting a technique suitable for use with a wide variety of children and capable of being used with minimal training by a wide range of people who work with children (Morgan, 1985). The technique was designed to be inherently flexible in an effort to be applicable to children’s varying reading levels and use of strategies. Additionally, it was intended to be easy to implement by others who do not normally teach reading by making the steps in the technique standard and simple to communicate quickly. Topping (1985a) explains Paired Reading as “a straightforward and enjoyable way for nonprofessionals to help children develop better reading skills (p.109)”. Initially, Morgan (1985) hoped that Paired Reading would be sufficient to tolerate use over long periods of time by adult tutors who had received little training and limited supervision. He expected to eventually train parents to use Paired Reading in the home and hoped that its simple structure would accommodate busy family schedules. He reports that training and implementation proved to be easier than expected and Paired Reading became a model for parental involvement in reading instruction (Morgan, 1985). Teachers and administrators have adopted Paired Reading as a model for parent involvement in reading instruction because of the ease with which parents can be trained and the structured practice within contextual reading it allows parents to provide their children (Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991).
The steps of this fundamentally simple technique are in two phases—simultaneous reading and independent reading. The process includes (a) selection of a book of the child’s choice, (b) parent and child begin reading aloud simultaneously, (c) the child signals and reads alone if desired, (d) the parent praises efforts to reinforce correct reading, (e) the parent allows four seconds for the child to self-correct an error or attempt an unknown word, and (f) the parent and the child read simultaneously again until the child indicates he/she is ready to read alone (Topping & Lindsay, 1992). The steps are easy to follow and provide students with a model for fluent, expressive reading and support sufficient for texts of varying difficulty.

In studies which are representative of other research on the effectiveness of Paired Reading (Carrick-Smith, 1985; Heath, 1985), statistical analyses revealed gains in reading progress (accuracy and comprehension) that were two to three times greater than the control group. The successful implementation of Paired Reading in a variety of settings has led teachers to use the technique as part of regular reading instruction using peer tutors (Topping, 1989). Topping (1985 b), lists seven factors in the effectiveness of the Paired Reading technique which include (a) provision of a strong model, (b) provision of a continuous prompt, (c) de-emphasized errors, (d) continuity and fluency emphasized, (e) comprehension and context clues emphasized, (f) child’s selection of own reading material, and (g) simple steps which require no special materials. The factors which make Paired Reading an effective technique have implications for its use in appropriate reading instruction in the elementary school.
As previously discussed, balanced literacy programs employ multiple approaches to provide reading instruction which is based on the best educational practices within appropriate instructional contexts. In an analysis of the literature on Paired Reading and its effectiveness, four themes emerge which reflect elements of appropriate reading instruction. The themes that emerge from a review of the literature include (a) practice, (b) feedback, (c) reinforcement/social interaction, and (d) modeling.

**Practice**

It is often said that "practice makes perfect." The practice of reading in a successful environment is important to the development of fluent readers. Bernice Cullinan (1992) asserts that reading to and with children provides them with practice that is part of a "success cycle". The cycle implies that the more a child reads (practice), the better the child gets at reading (proficiency); therefore, the more enjoyable reading becomes (pleasure). The average time a child spends actually reading in the typical classroom is limited (Anderson et al., 1985). If children are to become proficient readers, they must have time within the school day to practice reading skills by actually engaging in the act of reading (Allington & Cunningham, 1996). In the instructional setting, the use of Paired Reading allows students to interact with print in a meaningful way and read for a real purpose. The creation of an environment that continually reinforces the usefulness and value of reading is characterized as good and appropriate instruction (Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992).
Feedback

According to Zemelman et al. (1998), reading is best learned in a low-risk environment where children are encouraged to take risks knowing they will receive corrective feedback which is immediate, useful, and non-threatening. Getting feedback in Paired Reading sessions helps children become aware of the strategies they are using while reading. With appropriate feedback, children can discover additional strategies they can use. As they become aware of which strategies to use and when to use them, better comprehension will result (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998). Providing feedback which encourages children to monitor and self-correct while reading sends children a “can do” message (Cunningham & Allington, 1999). Useful feedback is an essential feature of appropriate reading instruction.

Reinforcement/Social Interaction

Opportunities for interacting with a partner who provides reinforcement for attempts at reading is a characteristic of Paired Reading that makes it a good teaching technique. Houghton and Litwin (1995) found that both students (tutor and tutee) made statistically significant gains in reading accuracy and comprehension through the use of an intervention involving the pause, prompt, and praise procedure. By providing support through social dialogue and interaction, students are able to perform highly challenging tasks such as reading (Dixon-Krauss, 1995). Using Paired Reading with peer tutors gives students the opportunity for social interaction and positive reinforcement for reading. Appropriate reading instruction acknowledges that language is social and enables students to take
risks, approximate, self-correct, and comprehend within the safety of social interaction (Fisher, 1995). The use of Paired Reading as a part of reading instruction provides students with the social interaction and reinforcement that is representative of appropriate reading instruction.

**Modeling**

Providing models for children helps them learn (Hennings, 1992). Essential to good reading instruction is the provision of models to facilitate the acquisition of reading skills and strategies. In his book, *The Read Aloud Handbook* (1995), Jim Trelease emphasizes the need for modeling reading behaviors by quoting Orville Prescott. Prescott says, "Few children learn to love books by themselves. Someone has to lure them into the world of the written word; someone has to show them the way (cited in Trelease, 1995)". Observation of demonstrations and guided participation are central components of Holdaway's natural model of learning (Weaver, 1994). The foundation of Paired Reading is rooted in providing a model for children to imitate. Because of its use of modeling, Paired Reading is an instructional technique that is typical of good teaching.

The use of practice, feedback, reinforcement with social interaction, and modeling make Paired Reading a powerful instructional tool. This multi-faceted technique helps students take increasing control of the reading process. Guiding students to take control of the reading process in order to be proficient readers is the purpose of reading instruction. The challenge to educators is identifying and implementing effective ways to assist students in their
quest toward literacy. A review of the literature regarding the use of Paired Reading in providing appropriate reading instruction in the elementary school indicates that Paired Reading is a simple technique to include in the reading curriculum and has beneficial effects for the students who participate.

Peer Tutoring and Its Effectiveness

Peer tutoring has been defined as a system of instruction in which learners help each other and learn by teaching (Goodlad & Hirst, 1989). In the broad sense, peer tutoring refers to the instructional assistance provided by one student to another in the same classroom, group, or grade. Adding the descriptor cross-age to the term peer tutoring implies the use of students who differ in age or grade by several years (Foster-Harrison, 1997) to provide assistance with instructional material. For years, educational researchers have conducted studies to investigate the effects of peer tutoring on both academic and social skills.

Devin-Sheehan, Feldman, and Allen’s 1976 critical review of research examined the available published research on long-term and short-term studies paying particular attention to variables which affect the outcome of tutoring. The review of research was restricted to programs primarily concerned with academic performance. The participants, goals, and procedures of the programs varied greatly form study to study; however, all of the studies reviewed were principally investigating the academic performance of students. Participants ranged from elementary school students to adults. Some program goals emphasized the achievement of the tutee while others
investigated the achievement of each student. The procedures employed included empirically validated programs as well as structured models guided by instructional goals determined by the data from the pretesting of students. Based on the evidence collected in the studies reviewed, Devin-Sheehan et al. (1976) concluded that several different kinds of tutoring programs can effectively improve the academic performance of tutees and in some cases the tutors as well. One type of tutoring program that provided interesting insight into peer tutoring is referred to as programmed tutoring. Programmed tutoring is described as a technique that has been methodically developed and successfully field tested. Based on the analysis of data from studies using programmed tutoring, Devin-Sheehan et al. were able to draw two conclusions which impact the effectiveness of peer tutoring. First, it was evident that because a particular or programmed method is effective in several different situations, the method was somewhat more important than the materials. In addition, the evidence suggested that particular methods may be more appropriate for certain subjects and imply that research findings from a tutoring program for a particular subject area such as reading should not be duplicated in a tutoring program for another subject area such as math or science. Finally, the 1976 review concluded that in most cases, students benefit from serving as a tutor and therefore, tutoring can be beneficial for both the tutor and the tutee. Overall, Devin-Sheehan et al. deduced that since only a few broad generalizations could be made based on the literature reviewed, more systematic research which identifies critical issues and problems based on theoretical
considerations must be conducted in order to draw additional valid conclusions. The thoughtful critique of the available research played a significant role in challenging researchers to conduct additional studies which were based on sound theoretical principles and were rigorously designed.

Cohen, Kulik, and Kulik (1982) integrated the findings of 65 peer tutoring studies through a statistical analysis and described the effects of the tutoring programs on both tutors and tutees. They focused on the effects in three major areas. These areas were: (a) student achievement as measured on examinations, (b) favorability of student attitudes toward the subject matter, and (c) favorability of student self-concept. The analysis of student achievement as measured on examinations reflected positive effects for both the tutor and the tutee. There was a statistically significant difference between the examination results of students who were part of a tutoring program (either in the role of tutor or tutee) and the examination results of students in a control group who were not part of a tutoring program. An investigation of studies which reported results on student attitudes toward the subject matter being taught revealed that student attitudes were more positive toward the subject matter being taught in classrooms with tutoring programs. Both tutors and tutees demonstrated more positive attitudes toward the subject matter being taught. When examining the effects of tutoring programs on the self-concepts of children, the average effects were very small and not large enough to be considered statistically reliable. The authors did report that there was literature that contained anecdotal records which
reported dramatic changes in self-concept as a result of participation in tutoring programs. However, the quantitative reports do not support such dramatic changes. Just as Devin-Sheehan et al. (1976) concluded, Cohen et al. (1982) reported that their meta-analysis confirmed that tutoring benefits the cognitive and affective domains of both tutors and tutees. Additionally, they expressed the need to conduct further investigations to identify key variables affecting educational outcomes of tutoring. Since the critical review of studies by Devin-Sheehan et al. and the meta-analysis of Cohen et al., educational researchers have accepted the challenges to continue the investigation and examination of the variables that determine the effectiveness of peer tutoring.

Research on Classwide (Same Age) Peer Tutoring

Study Summary

Greenwood, Delquadri, and Hall (1989) conducted a longitudinal study of differences in classroom ecological arrangements and student behaviors on low socioeconomic status and high socioeconomic status elementary students' growth in academic achievement. The four year study assessed the processes (ecological arrangements and student behaviors) and products (academic achievement) in Chapter 1 and non-Chapter 1 schools. The experimental group made up of low socioeconomic status students participated in Classwide Peer Tutoring (CWPT), a system in which tutor-tutee pairs work together on a classwide basis. A low socioeconomic status control group and a high socioeconomic status comparison group received teacher designed instruction.
Study Findings on Effectiveness

Analysis of the process effects data indicated that the experimental and comparison groups engaged in higher overall levels of academic behavior during lessons. Examination of the product effects reflected significantly greater gains in language, reading, and math for the low socioeconomic status experimental group than the low socioeconomic status control group. Additionally, there were no significant gains made by the experimental group as compared with the high socioeconomic status control group. A causal relationship between the implementation of CWPT in the experimental group and coinciding with changes in process and product variables as compared with those of the control group was evident.

Benefits

Based on the study findings, Greenwood et al. (1989) demonstrated that sustained use of an effective instructional practice such as CWPT can improve academic outcomes. Participation in the tutoring program provided students with the following benefits: significantly more reading aloud, academic talk, and question asking which resulted in higher levels of academic achievement. This four year longitudinal study included 416 students and demonstrated the effectiveness peer tutoring and the sustainability of peer tutoring strategies over time. The thorough design of this study have made it a model which can be replicated in other studies.
**Limitations**

Despite the substantial benefits of classwide peer tutoring, the following four limitations were identified: content preparation demands, physical efforts, noise levels, and conflicting schedules. Teachers found it difficult at times to select content tasks which fit in the CWPT standard tutoring format. Some teachers found it taxing to move around the room to monitor pairs and award points. The elevated noise level due to having the entire class engaged in tutoring was a negative factor reported by teachers. Finally, scheduling tutoring sessions within an already tight schedule proved difficult. These obstacles caused some teachers to use CWPT with less consistency and therefore, students in those classrooms did not experience the known benefits as often.

The major methodological concern for this study is the 50% rate of attrition over the four year period. Though the researchers couldn't control the relocation of students into other schools, beginning with a large subject pool allowed them to achieve statistically significant results despite the high rate of attrition.

**Study Summary**

Ezell and Kohler (1994) evaluated the academic peer tutoring for reading skills of children with special needs. Fourteen special needs students participated in seven peer tutoring interventions to improve reading accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Both the target students and their typical peers served as tutors. All tutors participated in training which included explanations, demonstrations, and practice of all interventions to be used in the
program. The interventions used served as the structure for the program. A particular program such as CWPT (Greenwood et al., 1989) was not used. The study was conducted during a 15 week period.

**Study Findings on Effectiveness**

The peer tutoring interventions used with the students yielded considerable improvement in reading accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. In addition, significantly higher levels of academic responding during peer tutoring were evident when compared with levels of academic responding during regular classroom instruction. The special needs students who were the focus of this study demonstrated improvement of reading skills and their academic engagement during tutoring was almost twice that observed in other classroom activities.

**Benefits**

Participation in a structured peer tutoring program enhances the academic achievement in reading for students with special needs. Students are more actively engaged when paired with a peer. Similar to the benefits identified in Greenwood, Delquadri, and Hall’s (1989) longitudinal study on CWPT, these special needs students experienced benefits such as increased time on task, social interaction with age-appropriate peers, and sustained individual attention. Though the sample size in this study is relatively small, statistically significant results were indicated and no students discontinued participation during the study.
**Limitations**

Though the project staff and participants indicated high satisfaction rates with the program and its benefits, there were limitations to its implementation. The main obstacle is the time required to develop and implement a quality program. Providing substantial support to teachers, training tutors, developing training materials, measuring student progress, observing student behavior, and monitoring the use of interventions during sessions are the activities which necessitate the commitment to large amounts of time. Not all students participated in all seven interventions which were part of this study. Because not all students were involved in all seven interventions, there were some students who only participated for four weeks. However, the interventions were designed to individualize instruction and therefore, it was not necessary for all students to participate in all interventions.

**Study Summary**

Mathes, Howard, Allen, and Fuchs (1998) investigated the effectiveness of Peer Assisted Learning Strategies for First Grade Readers (First Grade PALS) as a tool for enhancing the reading development of diverse learners within the regular classroom. Low-achieving first graders were of particular interest. The participants included twenty first grade teachers and 86 first grade students (46 low, 20 average, and 20 high achieving). The First Grade PALS program is a modification of the empirically validated Peabody PALS (for upper elementary students) which is modeled after CWPT (Greenwood et al.). The 35 minute sessions over a sixteen week period included
structured activities which were intended to develop phonemic awareness, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension.

**Study Findings on Effectiveness**

The results of the study indicated that the improved reading achievement of the first grade students did occur. However, low achieving students appear to have benefited more than average or high achieving students. For low achieving students statistically significant findings were seen on measures of word attack, word identification, oral reading rate, and early reading skills such as concepts of print and phonological segmentation. Though sample size of average and high achieving students was purposefully small, statistically significant findings were evident for average achieving students in measures of word attack, phonological segmentation, and oral reading rate. Educationally relevant effect sizes were suggested for passage comprehension and phonological segmentation of high achieving students. First Grade PALS teachers reported the belief that all learners benefited in academic achievement and social skills development.

**Benefits**

This study included a large number of participants who remained in the study for the 16 week period. In addition the participants were studied within typical academically heterogeneous first grade classes. The simplicity of First Grade PALS and its materials allows teachers to implement the program in a time efficient manner within the context of regular reading instruction. Additionally, the structure of the program facilitates the engagement in the act of
reading for 30 of the 35 minute session. The materials used with peer tutors maximize learning opportunities by providing appropriate levels of scaffolded support. The comprehensive, scripted teacher manual allows teachers to implement the routines with ease and consistency.

**Limitations**

To effectively implement First Grade PALS technical assistance and support was provided for the teachers. As would be expected based on the varying knowledge, skills, and abilities of teachers, the project staff had to provide more assistance to some teachers than others. Without the provision of support and expertise of the PALS staff, it is unclear how effectively the program can be implemented. Levels of teacher expertise in reading instruction vary greatly, and the ability to effectively implement a program, even one that is well-developed and teacher-friendly, will be diversified as well.

The researchers indicated that there was a two to four week lag time between pretesting and implementation of the PALS program. It is not clear why this gap occurred or what impact it might have had on the outcome of the study. However it seems that beginning participation in a successful program such as PALS with as little lag time as possible would only enhance the outcome for participants.

The three studies discussed above indicate the effectiveness of peer tutoring using students of the same age or within the same class. Based on the study findings, Greenwood et al. demonstrated that sustained use of an effective instructional practice such as CWPT can improve academic outcomes. Participation in a structured peer
tutoring program enhances the academic achievement in reading for students with special needs (Ezell & Kohler, 1994; Mathes & Fuchs, 1991). The simplicity of First Grade PALS and its materials allows teachers to implement the program in a time efficient manner within the context of regular reading instruction (Mathes et al., 1998). Though each of the studies target a different student population and use different programs to implement peer tutoring, they all showed academic gains in reading for participants by increasing time on task, providing appropriate levels of support, and engaging students in the act of reading over a sustained period of time. These findings have been corroborated in other studies (Brady, N. C. 1997; Houghton & Litwin, 1995; Locke & Fuchs, 1995; and Roswal & Mims, 1995).

Research on Cross-Age Peer Tutoring

Study Summary

Limbrick, McNaughton, and Glynn (1985) investigated the use of a cross-age tutoring program and its effects on the reading achievement of underachieving students. The three pairs were randomly selected from the lowest achieving students in a first grade and fourth grade classroom. The students used the Paired Reading technique (Morgan, 1985) which was modified so that error correction was delayed and passages were discussed before and after reading. The technique included concurrent modeling of correct reading and praise for reading independently by peer tutors. Specific training was provided to ensure that appropriate tutoring behaviors were employed.
Study Findings on Effectiveness

The tutees (students being tutored) demonstrated changes in accuracy, self-correction, and rate of progress which were clearly associated with the tutoring. In addition, tutees as well as tutors showed gains in comprehension measures. Moderate changes in accuracy, self-correction, and rate of progress associated with tutoring for the students who served as tutors were observed. Both tutors and tutees made substantial gains in reading ages in measures of accuracy and comprehension. Both students in the pairs made gains in difficulty levels in classroom materials read.

Benefits

The use of cross-age peer tutors impacted the reading development of both partners by using a simple technique. The benefits of this cross-age peer tutoring program included engaged time in reading, self-selected reading materials, social feedback, support sufficient enough to allow for the reading of more difficult texts, and ease of training and implementation of the modified Paired Reading technique. In addition, students had the opportunity to develop social skills during the tutoring interactions. The benefits were experienced by both tutor and tutee.

Limitations

This model of peer tutoring is not part of a particular program and therefore, does not have specific materials. To implement, teachers must have access to a wide range of reading materials from which students can select to read. In addition, the teacher must have some level of expertise in selecting reading materials that fall within a
range of difficulty that will not be at the frustrational level of the students. Though the study indicated substantial gains for both the tutors and the tutees, the use of only six subjects is small for a quantitative study.

**Study Summary**

Raschke, Dedrick, Strathe, Yoder, and Kirkland's 1988 study using older students to tutor kindergarten students was conducted to investigate if there were significant differences toward older students between tutored and non-tutored kindergartners. Twenty sixth grade students and seventy kindergarten children participated in the six month study. The tutors were randomly assigned to tutees. The kindergarten students were divided into two groups, one that participated in the cross-age peer tutoring program and one that interacted with the older students without any structured activities. The cross-age peer tutoring program consisted of weekly one hour sessions in which the tutors gave the kindergartners academic and motivational help.

**Study Findings on Effectiveness**

The study revealed significant differences between groups. The group of kindergartners who had older tutors for structured activities demonstrated a more positive growth in attitude toward the older students. Participation in the cross-age tutoring program using structured activities fostered positive attitudes about the older students. The researchers found that the tutor-tutee exchange is best characterized as a give and take relationship which makes it a valuable instructional tool.
Benefits

Over a six month period, researchers studied a large group of students in a public university laboratory school. The study indicates benefits which include: (a) the kindergarten students in the cross-age peer tutoring program felt more confident about engaging in future academic tasks such as reading, (b) the kindergarten students in the cross-age peer tutoring program found the older children as facilitating rather than intimidating, and (c) the kindergarten students in the cross-age peer tutoring program felt more comfortable around the older students in other settings within the school.

Limitations

To implement a cross-age peer tutoring program, the cooperation of multiple teachers and the coordination of schedules is essential. Within an already busy school day, this can prove difficult. When schedules of one or both grade levels are interrupted, the consistency of implementation can be affected. In addition to planning schedules, it is important for teachers to work together in pairing students appropriately. Finding time for teachers to plan together is hard to do. In most situations, the successful implementation will require the cooperation and enthusiasm of teachers who are willing to put in time after the school day in order to organize and provide structure for the program.

Study Summary

The purpose of Giesecke and Cartledge's 1993 study was to further validate the beneficial effects of cross-age peer tutoring and extend the knowledge of cross-age peer tutoring when low-achieving
students serve as tutors. The four fourth grade participants who served as tutors were selected by their teacher based on their poor reading performance and low peer social status. The three third grade students who served as tutees demonstrated a reading ability similar to the fourth grade students and were selected by their teacher in cooperation with the fourth grade teacher based on that criteria. The six week tutoring program included one week of training and five weeks of tutoring. The thirty minute sessions were conducted in the library during the time allocated for reading seat work. The tutors used games to provide practice on sight word recognition.

**Study Findings on Effectiveness**

Substantial gains were consistently observed in sight word recognition as a function of participation in the cross-age peer tutoring program. Those gains were demonstrated by both the tutor and the tutee. The study also revealed significant gains in self-concept ratings. All of the participants felt that the program had been helpful and enjoyable.

**Benefits**

In a relatively short period of time (five weeks) both the tutor and tutee were able to significantly improve sight word recognition. The ability to use students to assist in instruction provides both students with social interactions which facilitate support and encouragement when attempting new tasks. The use of games as part of the tutoring sessions helped eliminate the fear of academic material which may have seemed intimidating to underachieving students (both in the role of tutor and tutee). The participants were provided
with extra practice, increased exposure to sight words, and opportunities for social interaction in learning activities.

**Limitations**

Despite substantial gains by both the tutor and tutee, the study examined a small number of subjects. Scheduling the peer tutoring sessions using students from several classes was a challenge. Because not all of the students in each classroom participated in the program, the tutors and tutees had to leave their regular instruction to participate. Interviews with students revealed that they wanted the sessions to be scheduled so that they did not miss the seat work from their respective classes.

The three studies discussed above indicate the effectiveness of cross-age peer tutoring. The use of cross-age peer tutors has been shown to impact the reading development of both partners by using a simple, modified Paired Reading technique (Limbrick et al., 1985). The benefits of participation in a cross-age peer tutoring program include engaged time in reading, social interaction, and support sufficient enough to allow for the reading of more difficult texts. Extra practice provided through increased exposure to academic material is an added benefit (Giesecke & Cartledge, 1993). The benefits can be experienced by both the tutor and the tutee. Though each of the studies target a different student population and use different program structures to implement cross-age peer tutoring, they demonstrated academic gains for participants by increasing time on task, providing appropriate levels of support, and engaging students in the academic activities over a sustained period of time. These
findings have been corroborated in other studies on the effectiveness of cross-age peer tutoring (Fresko & Chen, 1989; Labbo & Teale, 1990; Supik, 1995; Topping, 1989; and Zukowski, 1997).

Considerations for Implementation

The influences of peers on the academic achievement and motivation of children can be significant (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). Whether deciding to implement a cross-age or same-age tutoring program, teachers must consider a number of issues which can impact the effectiveness of implementation. Some issues to consider include scheduling, structure, training, and levels of engagement.

Scheduling

Scheduling must be considered in the implementation of cross-age and same-age peer tutoring. Finding time to schedule tutoring sessions within an already busy schedule has proven difficult for teachers (Greenwood et al., 1989). Peer tutoring with same-age tutors may be more manageable within a single classroom. When implementing a cross-age peer tutor program scheduling can be difficult because more than one teacher’s schedule must be considered (Rekrut, 1994). Regardless of the style of tutoring teachers decide to implement, there will be interruptions to the schedule.

Structure

There is evidence that structured forms of peer tutoring tend to be more effective (Topping, 1989). Mathes, Grek, Howard, Babyak, and Allen, (1999) attribute the success of their program, First Grade PALS, partially to the simple structure and materials it uses. Other forms of
tutoring which do not have prescribed structures may be easier for some teachers to implement. However, consideration must be given to the teacher's ability to organize students in such a way that time is used efficiently to achieve the goals of the peer tutoring relationship. The identification and acquisition of appropriate materials for use by peer tutors must be considered also (Schloss & Kobza, 1997). The structure of the program and the materials required in its use have implications for the time that will be required for training and support of teachers as well as students.

**Training**

To effectively implement any teaching strategy, each participant must understand his or her role. The use of peer tutoring is no exception. Some tutoring programs require the use of specific materials or formats (Greenwood et al., 1989; Mathes et al., 1998). Other programs may be developed by the teacher based on the needs of the students being served. Regardless of the program, teachers must consider the amount of training that will be required for teachers and students to effectively implement the program. Topping (1998) explains that "effective tutoring certainly involves the provision of quality training, support, and monitoring (p.48)."

**Levels of Engagement**

Interactions with others can enhance the intellectual value of academic tasks (Forman & Cazden, 1994). The use of peer tutoring provides students with opportunities for social interaction related to an academic task. Limbrick et al. (1985) found that in addition to
providing opportunities for social interaction, peer tutors can offer scaffolded support for challenging tasks.

**Conclusion**

Over and over again, studies have pointed to the effectiveness of using peer tutors. Maheady (1998) has synthesized the advantages for students who participate in any form of peer tutoring and includes higher academic achievement, improved interpersonal relationships, enhanced personal and social development, more positive learning environment, and increased motivation. The most thorough research has been conducted and reported on same-age peer tutoring and indicates a need for further research regarding the use of cross-age peer tutoring. The existing research on cross-age peer tutoring demonstrates its effectiveness and provides information which can be generalized to other situations. In addition, studies (Carrick-Smith, 1985; Heath, 1985) have revealed the effectiveness of using Paired Reading to improve reading progress in accuracy and comprehension.

In the plethora of professional literature about using cross-age peer tutors, I have not located any articles that investigate the attitudes and perceptions about the reciprocal effects from the tutor's perspective. Additionally, other studies have not investigated the use of Paired Reading with cross-age peer tutors.

This study will extend the existing literature by investigating the combination of using two effective strategies (Paired Reading and cross-age peer tutoring). Through this investigation an attempt was made to understand the tutors' attitudes and perceptions about the reciprocal effects of using Paired Reading with cross-age peer tutors.
Despite the many ways of knowing, one highly disciplined approach to constructing meaning through discovery is research (Glanz, 1999). Meaning is constructed and truths are realized through the process of discovery as information is gathered and analyzed. Unlike quantitative research, which uses controlled statistical investigations guided by testable hypotheses, qualitative research pursues meaning and truth in the context of natural settings and human interactions through rich descriptions of people, places, and conversations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The systematic and theoretical approaches of qualitative research enable the exploration and understanding of the local and situated nature of classroom life. Within that context, educational researchers are able to examine the consequential nature of learning within and across events (Putney & Green, 1999). Grady (1998) characterizes qualitative research as a flexible method of investigation that is sensitive to the day-to-day changes in the school setting and attempts to answer the “why” questions. While statistical investigations can reveal whether or not a method is effective, it is qualitative research that can attempt to explain why the method is effective. Employing qualitative research methodology to investigate the use of paired reading with cross-age peer tutors provided insight into the phenomenon of the process of reading development and why the use of these strategies is effective from the perspective of the tutor.
Research Design

This was a descriptive case study conducted in a fourth grade classroom with inclusion special education and regular education students at a public elementary school in a North Louisiana parish. The study included kindergarten students who came to the fourth grade classroom to participate in a cross-age peer tutoring program. A pilot study was begun in December 1999 to conduct observations of one fourth grade class participating in a cross-age peer tutoring program in this classroom setting. The pilot study was used as an opportunity to familiarize myself with students and the tutoring program, refine the research questions, and begin selecting the participants who were the focus of this study. After coding the field notes for the pilot study, I decided to continue observing the fourth grade students in cross-age peer tutoring pairs and seek the answers to the following questions: (a) What is the interaction of the tutor with the tutee during tutoring sessions? (b) How does the tutor perceive the effectiveness of her role as a teacher with the tutee? and (c) What are the tutors' attitudes about and perceptions of themselves as readers in relationship to participation in this program? I observed the cross-age peer tutoring pairs and selected three pairs from which the fourth grade tutors became the focus of this study.

The investigation of the attitudes and perceptions held by the tutors about the reciprocal effects of their participation in this cross-age peer tutoring program began in December 1999 and continued through May 2000. Field notes were taken for observations in one fourth grade class participating in a cross-age peer tutoring program.
A continuation of these observations of three cross-age tutoring pairs formed the basis for the research for this dissertation. I continued to visit this fourth grade classroom two times per week for the length of the tutoring sessions until May 2000. Participant observation was the primary mode used to gain information and access data in this environment. Conversations with the fourth grade tutors, the kindergarten tutees, and the fourth grade classroom teacher provided a broader knowledge of the activities being observed. Key informants such as the building administrator, assistant principal, and the kindergarten teacher were used to provide a more thorough understanding of the students, the teacher, and the learning environment.

Extensive time spent in this fourth grade classroom provided a personal presence that allowed the researcher to tell the story of others. According to Miller, Manning, and Van Maanen (1998), qualitative research can be viewed as an ethnographic process. That process reflects the attempt to describe the actions, events, beliefs, attitudes, and social interactions within the context of the natural setting. Ethnography refers to methods of research that (a) emphasize exploring the nature of particular social phenomenon, (b) work with unstructured data, (c) investigate a small number of cases in detail, (d) analyze data by interpreting the meanings and functions of human interactions, and (e) create a product that takes the form of rich descriptions and explanations (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994, p.248). Studies which focus on society or culture, whether a group, a program, or an organization typically use some form of case study as a
strategy to capture the meaning of the experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In educational research, a case study can provide the opportunity to make an in-depth assessment of students’ experiences within the school culture using multiple methods of data collection. An ethnographic multiple case study enhanced the understanding of the complex social phenomenon of using paired reading with cross-age peer tutors.

**Selection of Participants**

Selection of participants is an involved process which includes determining criteria for selection, establishing rapport, and maintaining ethics in the field (Johnson, 1990). Due to the volume of data collected in qualitative studies, there is an optimal number of participants (Morse, 1998). The more data obtained from each participant diminishes the additional number of participants required to provide useful information. If too much data is collected, the data set becomes over saturated and the information becomes redundant (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Because the researcher’s ability to communicate plays a significant role in the collection of data, the role of researcher has special importance (Flick, 1998). Establishing relationships that facilitate cooperation and communication can enable the development of quality information. If participants are not comfortable in the presence of the researcher, the data can be negatively impacted.

Adhering to ethical principles is paramount in order to maintain the trust of participants. Two fundamental ethical
considerations are informed consent and participant anonymity (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). For this study informed consent was secured through the use of a permission letter. The letter explained the purpose of the study as well as the participants' roles in the study and gave them the opportunity to accept or decline the request to participate. To maintain anonymity of participants pseudonyms were used. In addition to using pseudonyms, the researcher kept confidential information obtained through observations, interviews, and document analysis.

This classroom was selected as a research site because it had a broad spectrum of students with varying abilities and disabilities as well as differing socioeconomic backgrounds. The classroom teacher was experienced in the use of developmentally appropriate literacy skills. She was also selected because of her commitment to developing avid readers through the use of Paired Reading using cross-age peer tutors.

The teacher selected for the study had 36 years of teaching experience. She had taught fourth grade for five years in this school. Her undergraduate degree was from Henderson State University; her master’s degree was from Centenary College of Louisiana. She completed the educational specialist degree from Louisiana State University in 1996.

The target classroom consisted of 29 fourth grade students. There were three full inclusion students in this classroom and 26 regular education students. The class had a racial make-up of 13 black students, 14 white students, and two students of other ethnicities.
Fifty-one percent of the students in the fourth grade class participated in the free or reduced lunch program.

When considering which three fourth grade students were to be the focus of my research, I looked for students who interacted with their kindergarten tutee and the text consistently and who expressed their reflections by written and oral communication clearly. Classroom observations, interviews with tutors, and critical reading of journal entries were used to determine the students who were the focus of this study. In addition, Mrs. May's feedback was considered. The three students who were chosen as participants in this study were Nina, Jan, and Amy.

All three selected participants were European American girls. Each of the girls had a kindergarten partner who was randomly assigned by Mrs. May. Nina served as a tutor for Beth, an African American female. Jan's partner was Ellie. Ellie was a Hispanic female. Amy's partner was a European American male named Chris. Each of the kindergarten students was selected for participation by their teachers because the students demonstrated a lack of exposure to literacy activities in the home.

Data Collection

The instruments of data collection are the primary difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods. A credible ethnographic multiple case study is made up of several sources and methods of data collection to achieve an accurate and full description of the phenomenon being studied. The combination of methods and data sources in the same study is referred to as triangulation. Grady
(1998) defines triangulation as using three or more kinds of data collection to converge on the same issue or question. The collection of data is a central component to any research project and can be achieved through a multitude of methods and strategies.

Figure 3.1 is a graphic representation of the timeline and procedures that were followed for the data collection and analysis conducted in this study. The pilot study was implemented in Phase 1. The procedures and analyses representing the focused research designed to answer the research questions were in Phase 2 and Phase 3.

**Observations**

A primary method of data collection characteristic of ethnographic research is observation (Stewart, 1998). The use of observations is guided by the research questions that were established in the planning of the study. The research questions provide a purpose for observing the participants in their natural setting. Marie Clay (1998) writes, “To become observers,... we need to define conditions for recording behavior” (p.106). Recording behavior from observations is documented in field notes. The researcher writes down what is seen, heard, and experienced as well as what is thought during the collection of and reflection on the data. This written account of ideas, strategies, and reflections combined with descriptions of people, objects, places, events, activities, and conversations makes up the content of field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field Entry</td>
<td>December, 1999</td>
<td>• Negotiate role as researcher</td>
<td>• Observations and fieldnotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January, 2000</td>
<td>• Familiarize with setting and data collection</td>
<td>• Review artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Study</td>
<td>2 days/week</td>
<td>• Select students</td>
<td>• Interviews with teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book Buddies Program</td>
<td>• Research questions</td>
<td>• Member checking and peer debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Refine procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Write prospectus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused Research</td>
<td>January - April, 2000</td>
<td>• Observe selected students</td>
<td>• Observations and fieldnotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 days/week</td>
<td>• Begin data analysis</td>
<td>• Review artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book Buddies Program</td>
<td>• Develop coding categories</td>
<td>• Interviews with teacher and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Video and photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Member checking and peer debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Exit</td>
<td>April - May, 2000</td>
<td>• Continue data analysis</td>
<td>• Observations and fieldnotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 days/week</td>
<td>• Confirm emerging themes</td>
<td>• Review artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book Buddies Program</td>
<td>• Write dissertation</td>
<td>• Interviews with teacher and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Member checking and peer debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• External audit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1 Data Collection and Analysis Timelines and Procedures
I visited this classroom two times each week during the period from December 1999 until May 2000. I collected data in the form of descriptive and reflective field notes. As participant observer, I captured a picture of the setting, teacher, students, and other adults using rich descriptions. Actions and conversations were observed and recorded as part of the field notes. During the pilot study, the visits were tape recorded. Some tape recording was continued. Video-taping and photography of tutoring sessions was used also. This extensive data gathering provided ample information for this research study.

**Interviews**

One of the methodological bases in qualitative research is the semi-structured interview (Flick, 1998). A semi-structured interview or general interview guide approach (Patton, 1990) is made up of a range of questions which tend to be open and lend themselves to answers from participants which are conversational in nature. The two way communication maintained by interviews provides opportunities to seek clarification, expand on questions, and observe non-verbal responses. Conducting interviews is a rich source of information which allows the participants to share their experiences and provides the researcher with additional perspectives. These experiences and perspectives are documented in interview transcripts which also can be referred to as field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The idea of verbatim transcripts is described as a faithful reproduction of the auditory record (Poland, 1995). Like the field notes from observations, interview transcripts contained descriptive and
reflective information which was used in the triangulation of the data. During the pilot study, interviews with Mrs. May and the students were tape recorded. The tape recording of interviews was continued during the focused research phases. As the subjects became more comfortable with the interviewer and the interview process, some interviews were video taped. All recorded interviews (audio and video) were transcribed verbatim and used in the triangulation of data.

**Analysis of Documents**

Analysis of documents or artifacts is another major data collection technique (Grady, 1998). There are a variety of documents that can become part of the data which is analyzed for content relevant to the investigation. These documents cover a broad spectrum and can range from photographs to academic records to journals. Because of their ability to provide insight into beliefs and feelings as well as reactions to successes and failures, journals can reveal significant amounts of information (Smith, 1988). Including the analysis of documents in the triangulation of data provides a valuable source of accurate and tangible information. Using multiple sources of data is a strategy that produces data from one source which can be corroborated through the other sources. The corroboration of data through multiple channels adds trustworthiness, credibility and dependability to the study (Flick, 1998). The primary source of document analysis for this study was the review of journal entries. During the pilot study, the journal entries of all of the fourth grade
students were examined to see which students could clearly write about their reflections on the tutoring sessions.

Preliminary analysis of the data helped me to narrow my choices to the three fourth grade tutors who were the subjects for this dissertation. The analysis assisted me in refining the research questions which guided the study. Beginning in May 2000, I compiled and triangulated the data based on the model of James Spradley (1980).

**Data Collection Procedure**

Permission to complete this research was obtained from the local school board and the school administrator. Permission to observe and interview the children, tape record, video, and photograph was given by all parents. A copy of the letter requesting permission to do the study from the school district, a copy of the letter granting permission, and the parent permission slip are included in Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C.

Field notes were taken two times per week from December, 1999 through January, 2000 as part of the pilot study. Additional field notes were compiled, coded, and categorized through May, 2000. Triangulation of sources will be completed to include information from the following: (a) field notes, (b) key informants, (c) observer comments and reflections, and (d) document analysis. The fourth grade teacher and tutors were interviewed as key informants in this project. An interview guide was developed for use in interviews with the tutors. (See Appendix D) Other key informants such as the the school administrator, the assistant principal, and the kindergarten teachers were informally interviewed to gain additional information.
School records, journal entries, and test data were reviewed for pertinent information. After the field notes from observations and interviews were reviewed and information from the documents read critically, the information was analyzed to discover themes and patterns to determine the circumstances that contributed to creating answers to the research questions.

**Data Collection Analysis**

In the analysis of data, the researcher uses intellectual processes such as critical reading, connecting data, identifying patterns, forming judgments, and answering research questions. To be able to engage in these analytical processes, the researcher must sort and code the data (Baumann, Hooten, & White, 1999). To provide descriptions for the patterns and topics which emerge from the data, Bogdan and Bicklen (1992) formulated a series of coding families that help the researcher develop coding categories for sorting data. The coding families include (a) setting/context codes, (b) situation codes, (c) perspectives held by subjects, (d) subjects’ ways of thinking about people and objects, (e) process codes, (f) event codes, (g) activity codes, (h) strategy codes, (i) relationship and social structure codes, and (j) methods codes.

Once the data had been sorted and coded, it was carefully examined for patterns and topics which emerged from the data and provided answers to the research questions which have guided the entire investigation. To enhance the credibility of the study, the researcher documented carefully the manner in which analysis pathways emerged. This explicit explanation served to convince readers that adequate controls for personal biases have been employed.
(Underhill, 1995). Through this process, I was able to provide a rich descriptive picture of how these tutors perceive the reciprocal effects of Paired Reading using cross-age peer tutors.

**Trustworthiness**

Qualitative researchers use terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to establish the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To demonstrate that the findings are legitimate and trustworthy, several procedures were followed.

**Credibility**

Persistent observation, triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were used to ensure that my findings and interpretations were credible. By observing the tutoring sessions over a six month period, my ability to understand the interactions between tutor and tutee was increased. Through persistent observation, I built trust among the subjects, identified emerging themes, and determined irrelevancies and distortions.

An additional way that credibility was ensured is through triangulation. Data was collected from several sources so that the limitations of one source could be compensated by the strength of another. The data was verified and emerging themes and patterns were identified.

The fourth grade teacher, whose students were the focus of the study, served as a member checker (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The fourth grade teacher received and reviewed a copies of the field notes. The fourth grade teacher and the participant observer (the researcher)
discussed any changes that were needed to reflect accurately the situation in the classroom. The use of a peer debriefer to code the field notes also insured accurate reporting of data.

**Transferability**

Due to the thick description in a qualitative report, someone interested in generalizing the information from the context of the study can decide whether transfer to another context is possible. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the degree of transferability depends upon the degree of similarity between the sending and receiving contexts. As a researcher, I provided sufficient descriptive data so that similarity and transferability judgments can be made by other researchers.

**Dependability and Confirmability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend the use of an external auditor to provide dependability and confirmability. An external auditor is used by qualitative researchers to examine the data after field notes are analyzed to carefully verify the process and product of the study. The researcher leaves an audit trail of documentation. Halpern (as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) suggests six types of documentation in an audit trail which include: raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, materials related to intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information. The auditor uses the documentation to discern whether the research findings are grounded in the data, judges whether the inferences are logical, and checks for bias. In this study, an extensive audit trail of descriptive and
Reflective field notes from observations, interviews, and document analysis provided dependability and confirmability.

Conclusion

Rich, elaborate, well-organized information from multiple sources is the cornerstone of a qualitative study that has the ability to develop a complete understanding of an issue. The study of educational phenomena is complex and qualitative research provides an avenue to investigate it more fully. Placing the researcher within the context of interpersonal, social, and cultural relationships provides rich and wide-ranging descriptions (Hara, 1995). These descriptions serve to inform the practice of education by answering the questions surrounding the social interaction and culture of schools. Therefore, understanding the complex social phenomenon of using paired reading with cross-age peer tutors from the perspective of the tutor was investigated using qualitative research methodologies.
CHAPTER IV
THE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Mrs. May's classroom was located in the main building of Sevanee Elementary and was the first classroom on the right past the entry hall and office. As I walked down the long hallway toward room 9, my eyes were drawn to large red and blue stars on the wall just outside the classroom door. Each star had a photograph of Mrs. May with one of her students and around the photograph were smaller metallic stars. Above the display of stars was a large banner that read "Centurion Club." Beside the wall of stars was a chart which explained that each metallic star represented 1,000 minutes of at home pleasure reading. I stood amazed at the number of Mrs. May's fourth grade students who had already read 1,000 minutes or more.

After looking at all of the stars of the Centurion Club members, I reached for the door knob and saw a sign on the door that read "You don't have to read everyday- only on the days you eat!" I chuckled to myself and opened the door only to see books, books, and more books neatly organized and labeled all over the room. There were shelves, boxes, and tubs of books everywhere. Some were labeled by genre, some by theme or topic, some by levels, and still others by authors. There were newspapers, magazines, charts, graphs, and comic strips. Everywhere I looked there was something to read. I made a notation in my field notes to document my impression of this classroom. "Reading is valued in this classroom and there is a clear sense that Mrs. May emphasizes regularly that reading is IMPORTANT."
The classroom furniture was arranged (Figure 4.1) so that students had easy access to the many books located throughout the room. All of the books were located on shelves or counters which were just the right height so that the fourth grade students could easily reach them. Each shelf and container was clearly labeled so that students could effortlessly locate the reading material and correctly return it when they were finished with it. There were numerous shelves and other containers which were labeled. Some of the labeling categories included Women’s Biographies, Newbery Medal Winners, Patricia Polacco, Hello Readers, and Folk Tales, Myths, and Legends.

Fabric with the American flag on it covered the door, two wooden Uncle Sam statues stood outside the hall door, a large American flag hung on the east wall, a United States map rug was on the floor near the student lockers, and the variety of red, white, and blue containers across the room gave it a patriotic feel. The small lamps that were placed on tables, counters, and shelves around the room provided a soft light that was enhanced by the natural light shining through the wall of windows on the south side of the room. The hanging plants in front of the windows, small green plants on tables, and a vase of fresh flowers added to the warmth of the room. The classroom had a comfortable, home-like feel with carpeted areas, small throw pillows, and a rocking chair.

Mrs. May was responsible for teaching reading/language arts to her homeroom class of 29 students. Additionally, she taught social studies to all of the fourth grade students at Sewanee. (See Figure 4.2)
Figure 4.1 Mrs. May's Classroom Floor Plan

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Mrs. May’s Class Schedule

8:00 - 10:30  Reading/Language Arts

10:30 - 11:30  Social Studies (A)

11:30 - 11:45  Recess

11:45 - 12:15  Lunch

12:15 - 1:20  Social Studies (B)

1:20 - 2:00  Enrichment

2:00 - 3:00  Social Studies (C)

3:00 - 3:15  Dismissal of students

Figure 4.2  Mrs. May’s Class Schedule
The two and one half hour reading/language arts schedule included *Daily Oral Language* (Great Source Education Group, 1997), *Daily Analogies* (Houghton Mifflin, 1991), and Reading/Writing Workshop. The Reading/Writing Workshop included the following components: read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, independent writing, and spelling workshop.

Mrs. May documented the daily lessons on a specially designed lesson plan form which she developed with the help of her two fourth grade colleagues. (See Figure 4.3) The lesson plan form reflected the English Language Arts Content Standards which were required by the state of Louisiana and was designed to assist the teachers with documentation of the skills that were taught in each lesson.

As part of the regular reading/language arts instruction, Mrs. May developed a cross-age peer tutoring program which she called Book Buddies. The Book Buddies program was developed three years ago by Mrs. May because of her interest in improving reading instruction. She believed that providing students with more opportunities to read for meaningful purposes was important to the reading development of each child. As a result of reading professional journal articles and other professional literature, Mrs. May designed the Book Buddies program for her fourth grade students and some of the kindergarten students at Sewanee Elementary. The Book Buddies program was implemented over a nine month period as part of the regular reading instruction.
Figure 4.3 Mrs. May's Lesson Plan Form
Mrs. May talked with the five kindergarten teachers and together they decided that providing their students with the opportunity to participate in this cross-age peer tutoring program would be beneficial for the reading development of their students. They established that the students who would participate were those students who were not demonstrating important literacy behaviors such as book handling skills, left-to-right movement, using oral language in relation to the text and illustrations, and making connections between letters and sounds. All of the teachers agreed to include their students' participation in Book Buddies as part of their reading instruction each week. The five kindergarten teachers each selected five or six of their students who they believed demonstrated poor beginning literacy skills and showed little or no evidence of being read to at home to serve as buddies for the fourth grade students. After selecting which of their students would participate, each of the kindergarten teachers explained to their students how the program worked and modeled what their sessions would be like.

The Book Buddies program was designed to provide each of the students with the opportunity to practice reading within the context of the social interaction of the peer tutoring relationship. In order to provide her fourth grade students and the kindergarten students with appropriate reading material, Mrs. May wrote several grants which were funded. With the funds from the grant, Mrs. May purchased a variety of books (fiction and non-fiction). The books that Mrs. May purchased for the students to use represented a gradient of text that supported and challenged the readers. The books were classified on a
continuum from emergent books to fluent books based on the characteristics inherent in the books that supported readers' strategic actions and provided problem-solving opportunities. During each session, the cross-age pairs each received four to six of the books from the collection of leveled books. Reading books from across the spectrum of difficulty during each session provided the opportunity for both the fourth grade students and the kindergarten students to be engaged in the reading process.

Before the first session, Mrs. May randomly assigned each one of her students to one of the kindergarten students. Once the pairs were determined, Mrs. May began conducting mini-lessons with her students to teach them how to be effective tutors and good role models. She explained:

I have spent some time really working with the big buddies on their role as the teacher and their role as the leader in that pairing so that they're making sure that the child is looking at the text with them and interacting with the text.

She said that she emphasized to her fourth grade students the importance of using the index finger to help the kindergartner track the text. She modeled and taught them how to interact between the text and the pictures by asking questions and talking with their buddies. In addition, she instructed the big buddies how to use reading strategies such as echo reading and Paired Reading with the kindergartners. To help the kindergartners develop sound to symbol recognition, she taught her students how to question the children about sounds and words that were on the page. Fourth grade students were taught how they would be expected to fill out the reading log.
during each session. (See Appendix E) The students were required to enter the title of each book they read to their buddy and sign their name in the log.

Once Mrs. May had completed the initial mini-lessons and felt that her students were ready to serve as tutors, she began the sessions each Tuesday and Thursday morning. Each Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30 a.m., Mrs. May's fourth grade students picked up their kindergarten partners and returned to their classroom for a thirty minute tutoring session in which the fourth grade students read to and with their kindergarten book buddy. A typical Book Buddy session was much like the one documented in my field notes on January 4, 2000.

Vignette: January, 2000 (taken from field notes)

As I entered the room, I could hear a bell ringing and I looked toward the front of the room from where the sound seemed to come. I saw Mrs. May standing near the chart stand and lightly tapping a small bell. She asked the students who had their desks cleared and ready to raise their hands. As I looked across the room, I could see hands going up one right after the other. I noticed that the only thing on their desks were a few small books and a pencil. With each hand that went up, Mrs. May praised the students for following directions. Soon everyone was ready, the room was quiet, and all eyes were on Mrs. May. She told them that it was almost time for Book Buddies and she had a few things about which she wanted to remind them. As she said the words Book Buddies I noticed a number of smiles on faces and several discreet arm gestures that seemed to say, "Hooray!"
Picking up a book off a nearby desk, she reminded the students that they were to hold the book together with their buddy. Using the book she picked up, she modeled sharing the book with a dark-haired little girl sitting at the desk near the front of the room. Next she asked the class how they would help the kindergartner track the text. A group of voices responded with, “Holding their index finger.”

Mrs. May complimented the group on their knowledge and began dismissing students to pick up their buddies. Within just a few minutes, the buddies had returned and across the room there were little bodies huddled together with their noses in books and the room filled with the hum of voices reading and an occasional outburst of laughter. Mrs. May and I both began walking around the room to observe the students. We had to really watch where we were stepping as we walked around a room with pairs of students everywhere — lying on the carpet, leaning against lockers, sitting in chairs, sitting at desks, and even lying under tables.

As I moved around and listened to different pairs, I saw fourth graders holding the index fingers of their buddies and pointing to each word as it was read. I heard the small voices of kindergartners echoing the text their partners had read. I saw pairs of hands holding books together while they talked about the words and pictures on the page. Looking at the faces of the students, I saw a variety of expressions ranging from big smiles to looks of intense concentration. Just as I was about to sit down next to a pair for a more in depth observation, I heard the bell ring three times, looked towards the sound, and saw Mrs. May standing at the front of the room. When the
hum of the reading voices silenced, the students were dismissed to return their buddies back to their classes. After the fourth graders got back, Mrs. May told them she would like them to share some things they have learned from their experiences so far working with their book buddies. Several students shared their feelings, but I was particularly struck by Jan’s comment. She said, “I’ve learned that I can help her read. I’ve learned that I can help another person so they can be a successful reader.”

When I heard that, I thought to myself, “Wow! I’ve found a great place to do research.” It was clear to me that these were students who were taking their jobs as tutors seriously.

The vignette described above was typical of the many Book Buddy sessions I observed over the course of the study. Under the leadership of Mrs. May, the students developed the necessary skills to be effective tutors and became reflective about their own growth as a teacher and a reader. Observing students implementing Paired Reading with cross-age peer tutors within the classroom community described in this chapter provided the context in which to better understand the attitudes and perceptions of the tutors.
CHAPTER V
CASE STUDIES OF FOURTH GRADE TUTORS

The three girls who were the focus of this study were unique individuals who each had their own style of teaching and learning. Their development as tutors was varied and complex. The attitudes and perceptions of these girls provided an interesting account of their participation in this cross-age peer tutoring program. Accounts of the three tutors and their attitudes and perceptions will be described in this chapter.

Tutor and Tutee Interactions During Cross-Age Peer Tutoring Sessions

Question A: What Is the Interaction of the Tutor with the Tutee During Tutoring Sessions?

In order to understand the attitudes and perceptions held by tutors about the reciprocal effects of their participation in this cross-age peer tutoring program, it was necessary to investigate what kinds of interactions were taking place between the tutor and the tutee during the sessions. After analyzing field notes, assessment information, and interview transcripts, I categorized the data into three broad categories related to tutor and tutee interactions for literacy learning: (a) explicit instruction, (b) modeled reading behaviors, and (c) feedback/reinforcement.

Explicit instruction refers to a student’s explanation of a particular skill or strategy and its use. In order to assist their partner with the application of meaning-making skills and strategies, a student makes a conscious effort to communicate how to use a specific reading skill or strategy within the context of the peer tutoring
session. Bringing an awareness to a wide variety of behaviors used by good readers to solve problems and construct meaning while they read enhances the reading development and literacy learning of the tutor and the tutee. The appropriate selection and use of strategies while engaging in the act of reading contribute to improved word recognition and reading comprehension.

Modeled reading behaviors involves the demonstration of a particular skill or strategy and its use. Providing the learner with an appropriate model helps them learn how and when to use specific problem-solving skills and strategies while reading. Inherent in the technique of Paired Reading is providing children with a model to imitate. Observation of another reader using skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text facilitates the acquisition of reading behaviors.

Feedback/Reinforcement refers to the comments made by a student which describe an error, correct the performance, or emphasize both the error and its correction in a comparison mode. This occurs as students share work with others, cooperate on learning tasks, seek help from others, or give assistance to others. Through dialogue, a student can give and receive support for the use of skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text. Through the collaboration of partners, positive support and instructional scaffolding allow students to perform the complex task of reading. The comments provide the learner with useful information about the use of skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text. In addition feedback encourages
students to monitor and self-correct while reading in order to further develop reading comprehension.

In the coding of field notes, there was one sub-category that was evident in all of the data patterns which emerged. There was enough data within each category to indicate a notable pattern for the theme of practice. Inherent in the Paired Reading technique is the practice of reading skills and strategies by both the tutor and the tutee. Practice takes place when a student applies the knowledge that has been gained from explicit instruction, modeled reading behaviors, and feedback by engaging in the act of reading. As a student engages in the act of reading and interacts with the text in a meaningful way, the skills and strategies that have been learned are being used for the purpose for which they were intended to be used. Because the theme of practice is integrated within the three dominant coding categories and is characteristic of the interactions, it will not be discussed separately. Therefore the categories explained above reflect the emergent themes from the data related to tutor and tutee interactions for literacy learning.

Tutors' Perceptions of Effectiveness as a Teacher

**Question B: How Does the Tutor Perceive the Effectiveness of Her Role as a Teacher with the Tutee?**

Critical reading of the field notes and interview transcripts along with further coding of the data revealed a pattern of data which reflected the tutors' perceptions of effectiveness as teachers. This exploration of the data resulted in an additional coding category called perceptions of effectiveness.
Perceptions of effectiveness refers to how the tutor understands her competency in teaching another student to read. The tutors used written reflections and dialogue with the researcher to express their beliefs and feelings about how effectively they served as teachers for their kindergarten partners. Their oral and written comments provided insight into how they felt about their role of teacher in this program.

Tutors’ Attitudes and Perceptions of Self as a Reader

Question C: What Are the Tutors’ Attitudes About and Perceptions of Themselves as Readers in Relationship to Participation in this Program?

Additional examination of the data indicated patterns of information which answered the final research question. The resulting coding categories included: (a) attitudes about reading and (b) perception of self as a reader.

Attitudes about reading involves a student’s beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about reading. Attitude toward reading plays a role in whether a student approaches or avoids a reading task and is evident in a student’s enthusiasm and confidence. Attitude about reading is influenced by motivation and interest.

Perception of self as a reader indicates how a reader understands her competency in reading. Positive perceptions are associated with time on task reading and persistence with challenging text. Conversely, negative perceptions are associated with lack of engagement with text and lack of persistence with difficult reading material.
In this chapter, I have defined each of the coding categories. An analysis of each tutor's interaction with her tutee and a description of her perceptions about her effectiveness as a teacher and a reader are provided so that I could answer my research questions. As I have chronicled the participation in a cross-age peer tutoring program of three students from December to May, I have attempted to describe in rich detail the events, thoughts, and feelings I observed. Although my data revealed many examples of each child's growth, I have highlighted representative samples which gave insight into the attitudes and perceptions of these fourth grade tutors. I have recounted dialogue, showed samples of documents, and summarized their attitudes and perceptions about themselves as readers and teachers in relationship to their participation in this cross-age peer tutoring program.

Three Case Studies

Nina: Introduction

Nina was born on September 7, 1989, and was the youngest girl in Mrs. May's classroom. Nina had consistent and regular attendance. She lived with her mother and stepfather. She had one older sister who attended a local middle school and one younger sister who attended Sewanee. Nina attended kindergarten at Sewanee during the 1994-95 school year until her family moved to Florida. She returned to Sewanee during the third grading period of the 1996-97 school year. Nina lived in the school's attendance zone and therefore her enrollment did not require a contract.
When she returned to Sewanee, she demonstrated difficulty with reading and was referred to the School Building Level Committee (SBLC) by her teacher for an evaluation of her academic problems. The SBLC reviewed Nina's academic performance and assessment data and determined that she exhibited characteristics of dyslexia which affected her ability to recognize words, read with fluency, and construct meaning from written passages. Due to her identified reading disability, the SBLC recommended that Nina receive modifications and accommodations in the regular classroom as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The modifications and accommodations Nina received in the regular classroom included: (a) extended/adjusted time, (b) individual or small group test administration, and (c) tests read aloud except for reading comprehension.

Nina was evaluated at a local private reading clinic where the reading specialist arrived at the same conclusion as the SBLC at Sewanee. The report from her evaluation indicated that the use of classroom modifications and accommodations could provide Nina with the support necessary to experience academic success. In addition, to improve Nina's reading skills, she attended tutoring sessions at the reading clinic and received services at Sewanee from a reading specialist.

During 1998-99 Nina took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and her core total score was at the 74th percentile. She scored at the 40th percentile in reading and the 96th percentile in math. Mrs. May indicated that Nina still demonstrated some difficulty with reading,
and Nina was aware of her struggle as a developing reader. In an interview conducted in March, she talked about not attending Sewanee during the end of kindergarten, first grade, and part of second grade “when you’re really learning how to read.” She stated that she believed she was behind in reading when her family moved back from Florida. Nina said:

Learning to read was hard for me because I could not remember what I studied. But the school tutored me and I had private tutoring. I still work real hard. Reading is still a little hard for me but it gets easier each day. The more I read the better I get.

Nina was a quiet, serious student who was friendly to her peers and appeared to make friends easily. She contributed often in the class discussions held before and after tutoring sessions. On a number of occasions, I observed her assisting other students and sharing materials with them. Nina’s work area was always neat and organized and she displayed very little off-task behavior. She appeared to follow directions without them having to be repeated and was persistent with assigned tasks. She was polite and well mannered with her peers, Mrs. May, and other adults. She regularly used words such as please and thank you. When responding to Mrs. May or other adults, she often answered with, “Yes, ma’am.” or “No, ma’am.” During my visits in the classroom, I never observed Mrs. May correct Nina for inappropriate social behavior.

Nina’s partner was an African American female named Beth who was born on April 16, 1994. Beth lived with her mother and stepfather in an apartment building that is in the school’s attendance zone. Beth attended a preschool program at another public school in
the city during the 1998-99 school year. She lived in a low income area and was a participant in the federal free/reduced lunch program. In August, 1999, Beth’s teacher administered the Developing Skills Checklist to her. On the print concepts subtest, Beth scored 48%.

**Nina: Explicit Instruction**

In her role as a tutor, Nina took the opportunity to explain particular skills and strategies and their use to Beth. In order to assist her with the application of meaning-making skills and strategies, Nina made a conscious effort to communicate how to use specific reading skills and strategies within the context of the peer tutoring session. There were many reading behaviors that Nina explained to Beth throughout the course of the study. Some of the skills and strategies that Nina taught Beth included: (a) using known words as anchors or chunking, (b) letters, sounds, and words, and (c) one-to-one matching of voice to print.

**Using Known Words as Anchors or Chunking**

During the tutoring sessions, I observed Nina regularly employ the strategy of using known words to figure out an unknown word. However, the only times she explicitly taught this technique to Beth was when Beth was attempting to read a passage or if she wanted Beth to attempt a particular word. On April 18, 2000, Nina and Beth were reading *The Kitten Twins: A Book About Opposites* (Leonard, 1990), and Nina explained the strategy to Beth.

Text: “And when we’re at the playground,” said Tom, I like to climb UP, and Tim likes to slide DOWN.”

*Nina: And when we’re at the*
When Nina got to the word playground, she asked Beth if she knew what the word was. Beth shook her head to say no. Nina covered the word ground with her finger and pointed to the word play. She asked Beth, “Do you know this word?”

Beth replied, “That is the word play.”

“That’s right,” Nina said. “Now look at this part of the word. It starts with /gr/.”

Beth looked at the picture of a slide and some monkey bars on the page. Then she said, “Play, playground.”

“You got it! Sometimes we have to break a word apart and put it back together again.”

**Letters, Sounds, and Words**

Throughout the study there were frequent opportunities for Nina to talk to Beth about letters, the sounds they make, and how to put them together to make words. During several sessions, Nina talked to Beth about the letters i and a. She reminded Beth that those letters could also be words. She told Beth to remember that if she saw those letters by themselves in the story, they would say their own names and be words.

At a session in April, Beth picked up an emergent reader called *I Get Ready for School* (Cousin, Mitchell, and Porter, 1997) and began to say the letters that were in the words on the cover. When Beth finished, Nina said, “Those are the letters in the words. Letters make words.” Nina pointed to the word school and says, “S-c-h-o-o-l. This is school.”
Beth pointed to the word I and said, “This says I.”

“Yeah! You got it!” replied Nina.

One-To-One Matching of Voice to Print

Nina assisted Beth with this strategy in every tutoring session. Matching text with voice using the index or pointing finger was something Mrs. May regularly reminded her students to focus on with their buddies. In a session in January, 2000, Beth covered a line of print with her finger as Nina tried to read and it was clear that Beth was not matching text to what Nina was reading. Nina stopped reading and explained to Beth that touching each word as it is read will help Beth learn to read the words by herself. Nina took Beth’s index finger and reread the passage touching each word with Beth’s finger as she read it.

Bringing an awareness to a wide variety of behaviors used by good readers to solve problems and construct meaning while they read enhanced the reading development and literacy learning of the tutor and the tutee. The appropriate selection and use of strategies while engaging in the act of reading contributes to improved word recognition and reading comprehension.

Nina: Modeled Reading Behaviors

The use of Paired Reading in the cross-age peer tutoring sessions involved the demonstration of skills or strategies and their use. There were numerous reading behaviors that were modeled in every session. Some of the modeled behaviors observed include: (a) book handling skills, (b) noticing detail in pictures, (c) word-by-word matching, (d) predicting what makes sense, (e) locating familiar and
known words, (f) left-to-right movement and return sweep, (g) checking illustrations with print, (h) making links between text and prior knowledge, (i) reading with expression and fluency and (j) rereading to monitor and self-correct. There were many reading behaviors that were modeled by tutors during each session and it was not possible for the researcher to observe and document all of them. However this list is representative of the behaviors that were consistently modeled during the interactions with tutors and tutees.

While reading *Home for a Puppy* (Gordon, 1988) Nina modeled making predictions. Near the end of the story, the little boy in the story had two puppies left and Nina predicted that the boy would keep one puppy. After she told Beth what she thought would happen, she told her that they must read on to find out what happened.

Another strategy Nina modeled for Beth was making links between the text and prior knowledge. In the story, *Saturday Sandwiches* (Nicholas, 1997), Nina read, “Some sandwiches are tall and some are flat. Some sandwiches are on long buns, and some are on round rolls.” After she read the page to Beth she said, “Look at that big giant long bun. Have you ever eaten a sandwich like that?”

Beth laughed and responded, “Yes, I tried to put the whole thing in my mouth!”

Providing the learner with an appropriate model helps them learn how and when to use specific problem-solving skills and strategies while reading. Inherent in the technique of Paired Reading is providing children with a model to imitate. Observation of another
reader using skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text facilitates the acquisition of reading behaviors.

**Nina: Feedback/Reinforcement**

Feedback and reinforcement occurred frequently during the tutoring sessions. It included comments made by Nina which demonstrated an error, corrected the performance, or emphasized both the error and its correction in a comparison mode.

In a February tutoring session, Beth indicated to Nina that she wanted to try to read a page in *Friendly Snowman* (Gordon, 1988). The text on the page said, “We will make his big, round body.” Beth began reading and correctly read the words we and will, but she got stuck on the word make. Nina replied, “You got some right, but now you’re mixed up. Let’s read it together.”

After reading the “F” book in the Alphakids series (Sundance, 1998), Beth turned to the last page where there was a chart of the alphabet. Beth began to sing the ABC’s. Nina told her to point to the letters while she sang. Beth started the singing over and pointed to each letter. However she skipped the letters M and N. Nina took Beth’s finger back to the skipped letters and helped her complete the song and touch each letter.

Additional feedback and reinforcement continued as Nina and Beth shared books and gave and received assistance. Through dialogue, Nina gave support for the use of skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text.

Through the collaboration of partners, positive support and instructional scaffolding allows students to perform the complex task.
of reading. The comments provide the learner with useful information about the use of skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text. In addition feedback encourages students to monitor and self-correct while reading in order to further develop reading comprehension.

**Nina: Perception of Effectiveness**

Nina used written reflections and dialogue with the researcher to express her beliefs and feelings about how effectively she served as a teacher for Beth. Her oral and written comments provided insight into how she felt about her role as a teacher in this program.

After one of the first sessions in December, 1999, Nina wrote, “Beth is not a kid that likes to do things over. I try to make it fun but she is still learning.”

On January 25, 2000, Nina made an entry in her Book Buddy journal that expressed her beliefs about her effectiveness as a teacher for Beth. (See Figure 5.1)

In a February, 2000 journal entry, Nina wrote about a strategy she used with Beth that she believed would help Beth become a reader. Nina told about how she would pick some words out in a book and show them to Beth before she read her the story. While reading the story to Beth, she asked her to find the words on the page and then show them to her. Nina closed her entry by writing, “The words she recognizes are growing so that she can soon read a whole book.”
I learned about how to teach and that I am a read for my buddy. I had a lot of trouble with reading when I was younger and if I had had a book buddy when I was that young I would do a lot better in reading today. I know I was just like them, try my heroes to read the words but I needed help. I like learning about my book buddy and I knew I could be helping him for life.

Figure 5.1 January 25, 2000
During a conversation with the researcher in March 2000, Nina explained how she thought being a book buddy was helpful for her buddy and for herself. She said:

I think that being a book buddy is good for me and good for my book buddy because I needed help when I was her age. But I did not have a book buddy to help. It is also good for me because I learn to look at all the words I read and do it very carefully.

Her journal entry on March 21, 2000, provided insight into how Nina believed her role as a teacher would effect Beth’s future. (See Figure 5.2)

**Nina: Attitude About Reading**

Nina’s beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about reading were clearly positive. Nina eagerly approached reading tasks and it was evident that she was enthusiastic and confident. In a conversation with the researcher, Nina stated, “I feel wonderful about reading and my growth as a reader.”

Nina indicated that reading was still hard for her at times and that she believed that reading books was easier than reading a list of words. She expressed that she enjoyed reading books because “it helps a lot.” Nina said she was the top reader in the Mrs. May’s Centurion Club. As of April 18, 2000, Nina’s reading log reflected over 15,600 minutes of reading for pleasure at home.

Nina’s journal entries reflect her belief that reading is important and that learning to read should be taken seriously. On January 11, 2000, she wrote, “Beth was not listening today and I do not think she learned much. I hope that she will not act like this anymore. She likes to read animal books and she did not get to read
anymore. She likes to read animal books and she did not get to read any of them today." In another entry in January, Nina wrote, "Beth is way too playful during reading time. I am trying to get her to focus." She emphasized her belief that reading is important in her journal entry on April 20, 2000. (See Figure 5.3)

---

Figure 5.2 March 21, 2000

- My daddy is getting good at pointing out words in a book that she knows.
- When we read a book she will look at the title and said the words she knows. I think she is improving very well!
- When we start a new book I will look through it and find a word that is in the book a lot and show her it and tell her that when she sees it to point it out and said it. I know she will not know how to read all the books we read but I know it will help her in the future.
I think I have an important job as a book buddy because it will help her be a better reader when she gets older and she has to read for homework every night. I would have been a better reader if I had had a book buddy. It is nice to know that I am helping her with something that she will need for the rest of her life.

Figure 5.3 April 20, 2000
Nina: Perception of Self as a Reader

Although Nina expressed on a number of occasions that she had had a difficult time learning to read, it was evident that she had developed confidence in her reading ability. In an interview in January, she told the researcher that she believed she did several things that made her a good reader. Those things included: (a) going to a quiet place and keep reading, (b) reading things in which she is interested, and (c) challenging herself to read chapter books instead of only picture books.

During an interview in March, Nina was asked if reading was easy or hard for her. She replied, “It is still a little hard but it gets easier each day. I am a very good reader now.”

Although Nina expressed positive perceptions of herself as a reader, it was evident that she was not satisfied with her reading ability. In an April interview, she told me, “I challenge myself to be a better reader. You don’t learn if you stay on the same thing all of the time.”

Jan: Introduction

Jan lived with her maternal grandparents. She was born on May 6, 1990 and the court awarded sole custody of Jan to her grandparents in July, 1992 for an undisclosed reason. Jan enrolled at Sewanee Elementary in August, 1995 for kindergarten. Jan did not live in the school’s attendance zone and attended Sewanee on a contract basis. Jan’s academic records did not reflect any serious academic or behavioral concerns.
A review of report cards and standardized test data indicated that Jan was an average to above average student who had no significant learning problems. During 1998-99 Jan was in third grade and her core total score on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills was at the 54th percentile. She scored at the 67th percentile in reading and the 40th percentile in math. Jan received no special modifications or accommodations in the classroom.

In an interview in February, 2000, Jan said that she thought she learned to read at school when she was five years old. When asked if learning to read was easy or hard, she replied, “Learning to read was easy to me. I love to read!”

Jan was a somewhat withdrawn student who was friendly to her peers, but did not appear to have many close friends. She contributed often in the class discussions held before and after tutoring sessions. On a number of occasions I observed her daydreaming during class discussions before and after the tutoring sessions. Jan’s work area was often somewhat cluttered and disorganized. At times she displayed some off-task behavior; however, her off-task behavior did not appear to impact her academic performance. She appeared to follow directions with an occasional need to have them repeated and was persistent with assigned tasks. She was polite and well mannered with her peers, Mrs. May, and other adults. She regularly used kind words and a respectful tone of voice. During my visits in the classroom, I periodically observed Mrs. May correct Jan for inappropriate social behavior such as talking to a neighbor while someone else was talking.
Jan's kindergarten partner was a Hispanic female named Ellie who was born on May 3, 1994. Ellie lived with her mother and father in a home that is not in the school’s attendance zone. Therefore, Ellie attended Sewanee on a contract basis. Ellie attended a preschool program at a private school in the city during the 1998-99 school year. She was not a participant in the federal free/reduced lunch program. In August, 1999, Ellie’s teacher administered the Developing Skills Checklist to her. On the print concepts subtest, Ellie scored 29%.

**Jan: Explicit Instruction**

Jan explained particular skills and strategies and their use to Ellie. In order to assist her with the application of meaning-making skills and strategies, Jan communicated how to use specific reading skills and strategies within the context of the peer tutoring session. Although Jan explained specific reading behaviors to Ellie throughout the course of the study, explicit instruction was not as prevalent in their interactions as were modeled reading behaviors, feedback, and reinforcement. Some of the skills and strategies that Jan taught Ellie included: (a) one-to-one matching of voice to print and (b) letters, sounds, and words.

**One-To-One Matching of Voice to Print**

Mrs. May reminded her students to focus on this strategy with their buddies before each session. Jan was very conscientious about teaching one-to-one matching of voice to print and assisted Ellie with this strategy in every tutoring session. Matching text with voice using the index or pointing finger was something Jan taught as well as modeled for Ellie.
After a session in January, 2000, Mrs. May asked the tutors to reflect on their interactions with their buddies and share something they had taught their buddy. Jan eagerly volunteered to share an example of how she had helped Ellie. “I helped her learn how to put her index finger on each word. If a word is like sometimes, you touch some and times. You touch both sounds when you say sometimes,” she explained.

**Letters, Sounds, and Words**

During the study there were multiple opportunities for Jan to talk to Ellie about letters, the sounds they make, and how to put them together to make words. Ellie could recognize letters, but was not always able to associate the correct sound with the letters.

At a session in March, Ellie picked up an emergent reader called *Bubble Gum in the Sky* (Everett, 1988) and asked Jan to read it. Jan read the first page which said, “Lou liked to chew.” Then she asked Ellie to point to the word chew. Ellie told Jan that she didn’t know where it was so Jan took her finger and touched the word chew. “C-h says /ch/ and e-w says /oo/. C-h-e-w spells chew,” explained Jan.

**Jan: Modeled Reading Behaviors**

The use of Paired Reading in the cross-age peer tutoring sessions involved the numerous and frequent demonstration of skills or strategies and their use. There were numerous reading behaviors that were modeled in every session. The modeled behaviors observed include: (a) book handling skills, (b) noticing detail in pictures, (c) word-by-word matching, (d) predicting what makes sense, (e) locating familiar and known words, (f) left-to-right movement and return
sweep, (g) checking illustrations with print, (h) making links between text and prior knowledge, (i) reading with expression and fluency and (j) rereading to monitor and self-correct. There were many reading behaviors that were modeled by tutors during each session and it was not possible for the researcher to observe and document all of them. However, this list is representative of the behaviors that were consistently modeled during the interactions with tutors and tutees.

While preparing to read *Saturday Sandwiches* (Nicholas, 1997) Jan modeled making predictions. Ellie and Jan studied the cover and talked about the items the children were holding. Jan asked Ellie what she thought the children might do with the cheese, mustard, and bread. Ellie and Jan talked about sandwiches and different kinds of sandwiches that could be made with the items pictured on the cover. Jan read the title and Ellie echoed the title. They talked about who might make sandwiches on Saturday. Jan told Ellie she thought the children on the cover would make sandwiches on Saturday. Then she said to Ellie, “Let’s read the story and find out what happened.”

Another strategy Jan consistently modeled for Ellie was reading with expression and fluency. As they were reading *The Kitten Twins: A Book About Opposites* (Leonard, 1990), Jan would change the tone of her voice when reading the opposite words on each page and she easily pronounced the words in the story. After Jan would read a page, Ellie would imitate the way Jan had read mimicking her changes in inflection and tone.
Jan: Feedback/Reinforcement

Jan provided feedback and reinforcement frequently during the tutoring sessions. Her comments demonstrated Ellie’s errors, corrected her performance, or emphasized both her error and an appropriate correction.

In a January tutoring session, Ellie was trying to imitate the way Jan had read a page in *The Monster Under My Bed* (Gruber, 1985). The text on the page said, “Thump, thump, bump, thump! What is that noise?” Ellie began to imitate Jan’s voice, but she did not use much expression in her voice. Jan stopped her, modeled the behavior again, then read with Ellie to provide support. After Jan assisted her, Ellie repeated the page on her own correctly and Jan praised her for reading with expression in her voice.

While reading *What Am I?* (Cutting & Cutting, 1988), Jan asked Ellie to make a prediction about what animal would be on the next page after reading her the clues. When Ellie responded correctly, Jan provided enthusiastic and positive comments. When Ellie was unable to make a prediction or made an incorrect prediction, Jan guided her to the correct answer by asking probing questions and giving additional hints and clues.

Additional feedback and reinforcement continued as Jan and Ellie shared books and gave and received assistance. Through continuous dialogue during tutoring sessions, Jan gave Ellie support for the use of skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Jan: Perception of Effectiveness

Jan used dialogue with the researcher and written reflections to express her beliefs and feelings about how effectively she served as a teacher for Ellie. Her reflections provided insight into how she felt about her role as a teacher in this program.

During a class discussion after one of the sessions in January, 2000, Jan told her classmates what she had taught Ellie that day, "I taught her not to put in words that are not there."

On February 1, 2000, Jan made an entry in her Book Buddy journal that expressed her beliefs about her effectiveness as a teacher for Beth. (See Figure 5.4)

Figure 5.4 February 1, 2000

E is learning to tell how many things she can remember about the book. I think I am helping her read. She in teaching me a few things.
In a January, 2000 journal entry, Jan wrote about her effectiveness with Ellie and how surprised she was about it. She wrote, “I learned how fast I can teach her to read. Ellie is reading some books all by herself. She is reading it to me. She just shocks me how she reads it to me.”

During a conversation with the researcher in March 2000, Jan explained how she thought being a book buddy was helpful for her buddy and for herself. She said, “I think that being a book buddy helped me become a better reader because it gives me practice. I think I am helping Ellie be a better reader. She is improving her reading. I like to help little people read.”

Her journal entry on April 6, 2000, provided insight into how Jan felt about her role as a teacher. (See Figure 5.5)

Figure 5.5 April 6, 2000

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Jan: Attitude About Reading

Jan did not explicitly state in writing or orally very often her attitude about reading. However, her beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about reading were clearly positive. It was evident by her facial expressions and persistence with reading tasks that Jan was enthusiastic and confident about reading. In a journal entry she wrote, “My book buddy is not an all time reader. She doesn’t like reading as much as I do.”

In an interview, Jan told me that she loved to read. She said she read two to three hours every night. Jan said she was one of the top readers in the Mrs. May’s Centurion Club. As of April 18, 2000, Jan’s reading log reflected over 15,400 minutes of reading for pleasure at home.

Nina’s journal entries reflected her belief that reading is important. In March she wrote, “Being a book buddy is important because it helps Ellie be a better reader.”

Jan: Perception of Self as a Reader

It was evident that Jan had developed confidence in her reading ability. In an interview in January, she told the researcher that she believed she was good at reading and enjoyed being a book buddy. She said, “I get to help another person read that cannot read as well as I can. It feels good to help someone learn to read so they can be a success.”

During an interview in March, Jan was asked if reading was easy or hard for her. She replied, “Reading is a breeze for me and I am a good reader.” Although Jan did not write extensively or talk
comprehensively about her perceptions of herself as a reader, her behavior demonstrated that she had positive feelings about her ability to read. Positive perceptions were demonstrated with time on task reading and persistence with challenging text.

**Amy: Introduction**

Amy was born January 19, 1990 and was one of the oldest girls in Mrs. May’s classroom. Amy lived with her mother and father and had no siblings. She did not live in the school’s attendance zone and attended Sewanee on a contract basis. She enrolled at Sewanee in August, 1996 for first grade. She had attended kindergarten at an exclusive local private school. At Sewanee, Amy had regular attendance and was consistently on time.

A review of academic records indicated that Amy was an average to above average student who had no significant learning problems. During the 1998-99 school year, Amy was in third grade and her core total score on the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* was at the 84th percentile. She scored at the 67th percentile in reading, the 98th percentile in language, and the 56th percentile in math. Amy received no special modifications or accommodations in the classroom.

In an interview in January, 2000, Amy said learning to read was hard for her at first. When asked about how she learned to read, she replied, “First, Mrs. Smith (pseudonym) taught me the alphabet. Then I learned phonics. Then Mrs. Smith had me practice sounding out words. It was hard for me at first, but I learned quickly thanks to Mrs. Smith.”
Amy was a quiet, shy student who was friendly to her peers, but did not appear to have many close friends. She contributed sometimes in the class discussions held before and after tutoring sessions, but did not consistently and regularly volunteer to give input. Amy’s work area was usually neat and organized with the appropriate materials easily accessible. She appeared to remain focused and on-task throughout my observations. She followed directions without needing them repeated and was persistent with assigned tasks.

Amy was polite and well mannered with her peers, Mrs. May, and other adults. She was often seen smiling and seemed confident in her academic endeavors. During my visits in the classroom, I did not observe Mrs. May correct Amy for inappropriate social behavior.

Amy’s kindergarten partner was a European American male named Chris who was born on September 19, 1994. Chris lived with his mother and father in a home that is not in the school’s attendance zone. Therefore, Chris attended Sewanee on a contract basis. Chris attended a nursery school program at a day care in the city during the 1998-99 school year. He was not a participant in the federal free/reduced lunch program. In August, 1999, Chris’s teacher administered the Developing Skills Checklist to him. On the print concepts subtest, Chris scored 33%. Chris demonstrated significant academic difficulty due to impulsive off-task behavior and poor fine motor skills. In addition speech, language, and communication skills were identified as concerns. Chris was referred to the SBLC and it was recommended that he undergo an evaluation for special education.
services. The district’s pupil appraisal team evaluated Chris and determined that he needed to receive speech and language services. Chris did not qualify for any additional special education services.

**Amy: Explicit Instruction**

As a tutor, Amy explained particular skills and strategies and their use to Chris. Amy made an obvious effort to communicate to Chris how to use specific reading skills and strategies within the context of the peer tutoring session. The reading behaviors that Amy explained to Chris throughout the course of the study were numerous. Some of the skills and strategies that Amy taught Chris included: (a) letters, sounds, and words, (b) conventions of print, and (c) using known words as anchors or chunking.

**Letters, Sounds, and Words**

Throughout the study, Amy talked to Chris about letters, the sounds they make, and how to put them together to make words. Chris had difficulty consistently recognizing letters and expressing the sounds associated with the letters. Many of the tutoring sessions included some discussion about letters, sounds, and words.

In January, Amy worked with Chris on associating sounds with letters and blending the sounds to make words. To sound out the word sink, Amy pointed to the letter S and asked Chris what sound it made.

He replied, “That’s an S. S says /s/.”

“That’s right,” Amy continued saying, “Now look at this part of the word. It says /ink/. Can you put the sounds together? /s/ /ink/”

Chris responded, “/S/ /ink/, sink.”
Conventions of Print

At many of the sessions, Amy chose to explain conventions of print such as punctuation marks to Chris. I found this choice interesting and did not observe either of the other two tutors address this topic. When I asked her why she chose to focus on punctuation, she explained, “Knowing punctuation marks helps with how I should say something I read and it lets me know when to start and stop reading.”

As I observed Amy reading The Kitten Twins: A Book About Opposites (Leonard, 1990) to Chris, I noticed that she was saying the names of punctuation marks as she came to them in the reading. An example of Amy’s explicit instruction of punctuation was:

Text: “Oh, no!” said the teacher. “How will I ever tell you twins apart?”

Amy: Open quotation marks Oh comma no exclamation mark end quotation mark said their teacher period Open quotation marks How will I ever tell you twins apart question mark end quotation marks.

After she read the sentence, Chris asked her what quotation marks were. She pointed to them and explained that quotations marks go around the words that a character says. Amy went on to explain to Chris each form of punctuation and what it meant.

Using Known Words as Anchors or Chunking

I observed Amy regularly employ the strategy of using known words to figure out an unknown word. She typically taught this technique to Chris when she was attempting to get him to attempt a
particular word. On May 2, 2000, Amy and Chris were reading *Accidents* (Mitchell, Porter, and Cousin, 1997), and Amy explained the strategy to Chris.

Text: “Sometimes I spill my milk.”

Amy pointed to the word sometimes and asked Chris what that word was. Chris responded, “You read it first. I want to read after you.”

Amy said, “I’ll help you. Look at this part,” she said pointing to the word some with her eraser. “This says some. Now look at the other part. It says times. Let’s put them together and make one word.”

Together they said, “Sometimes.”

**Amy: Modeled Reading Behaviors**

Using Paired Reading in the cross-age peer tutoring sessions involved the demonstration of skills or strategies and their use. There were numerous reading behaviors that were modeled in every session. The modeled behaviors observed include: (a) book handling skills, (b) noticing detail in pictures, (c) word-by-word matching, (d) predicting what makes sense, (e) locating familiar and known words, (f) left-to-right movement and return sweep, (g) checking illustrations with print, (h) making links between text and prior knowledge, (i) reading with expression and fluency and (j) rereading to monitor and self-correct. There were many reading behaviors that were modeled by tutors during each session and it was not possible for the researcher to observe and document all of them. However this list is representative of the behaviors that were consistently modeled during the interactions with tutors and tutees.
The book *Accidents* (Mitchell, Porter, and Cousin, 1997) is a short emergent reader that has one line of predictable text on each page and illustrations which heavily support the text. Amy modeled the use of checking illustrations with print. As she would read each page, she would point to the word and then the picture to demonstrate the connection. For example, on the page that read, "Sometimes I step on the teacher's toe," Amy pointed to the picture of the child stepping on the teacher's toe as she read the words step on the teacher's toe.

Another strategy Amy modeled for Chris was making predictions. In the story *The Monster Under My Bed* (Gruber, 1985), Chris pointed to a picture and said, "I can't see what's under the bed."

Amy replied, "I wonder if it will be the dog. Let's read some more and find out."

They continued reading to the end of the book where they learned that it was the cat under the bed. Amy said, "I'm glad we kept reading because I was wrong. I thought the dog would be under there."

**Amy: Feedback/Reinforcement**

During the tutoring sessions, feedback and reinforcement occurred frequently. Many of the comments made by Amy which demonstrated an error, corrected the performance, or emphasized both the error and how to correct it.

While reading *The Monster Under My Bed* (Gruber, 1985) in a March tutoring session Chris indicated to Amy that he wanted to try to read a page himself. The text on the page said, "Mommy, there is a
monster under my bed.” Chris read the word mommy correctly, but he said ‘the’ instead of ‘there’. Amy said, “Look at that word carefully. It can’t be ‘the’ because it has ‘r-e’ on the end of it. That makes it the word there.”

Each page of the “F” book in the Alphakids series (Sundance, 1998), had one word on it that began with an “f” and included pictures that supported the word. On each page, Amy guided Chris to figure out the word. With each correct response, she would smile at Chris and offer words of praise and encouragement.

Additional feedback and reinforcement occurred as Amy and Chris shared books during the tutoring sessions. Amy provided Chris with support for the use of skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text through ongoing dialogue.

**Amy: Perception of Effectiveness**

In her written reflections and dialogue with me, Amy expressed her beliefs and feelings about how effectively she served as a teacher for Chris. I gained insight into how she felt about her role as a teacher in this program from her oral and written comments.

After one of the first sessions in December, 1999, Amy wrote, “I like doing book buddies. My book buddy listens to me.”

On January 18, 2000, Amy made an entry in her Book Buddy journal that expressed her beliefs about her effectiveness as a teacher for Chris and how he was improving. (See Figure 5.6)

In a February, 2000 journal entry, Amy wrote about a strategy she used with Chris that she believed would help him become a reader. “My book buddy is learning to put his finger down on the
word as we both say the word. Chris likes to echo read with me more than anything."

During a conversation with the researcher in March 2000, Amy explained how she thought being a book buddy was helpful for her buddy and for herself. She said:

"I think that being a book buddy is good because I learn with it. I'm a good teacher because I read the way the punctuation marks say to and I ask him to find smaller words in big words like playground."

---

Figure 5.6 January 18, 2000

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Her journal entry on April 20, 2000, provided insight into how Amy believed her role as a teacher would effect Chris' life. (See Figure 5.7)

I think my job as a book buddy is cool. It is important to teach your book buddy how to read. When I first met C, he couldn't read at all. I felt sorry for him. I think it is important because later in life C wouldn't be able to pay the bills or read the newspaper because he couldn't read.

Figure 5.7 April 20, 2000
Amy: Attitude About Reading

It was clear that Amy’s beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about reading were positive. Amy eagerly approached reading tasks with enthusiasm and confidence. In a conversation with the researcher, Amy stated, “The more I read, the more words I learn which makes me enjoy books.”

Amy expressed that she enjoyed reading books. She said that she was a member of Mrs. May’s Centurion Club because she read at home. As of April 18, 2000, Amy’s reading log reflected over 6,000 minutes of reading for pleasure at home.

Nina’s journal entries reflected her belief that reading is important and that learning to read should be taken seriously. In an entry in February, Amy emphasized her belief that reading is a fun and enjoyable task that she loves. (See Figure 5.8)

Amy: Perception of Self as a Reader

In a conversation Amy told me that she learned to read quickly and easily. When I asked her if she was a good reader, she said, “I know this. I can read pretty good. I am a good reader.” In an interview in January, she told me that there were several things she did that made her a good reader. Those things included: (a) “I keep reading books,” (b) “I sound out words.” and (c) “I say the first letter of a name if I can’t figure it out.”

During an interview in March, I asked Amy if reading was easy or hard for her. She replied, “It is easy for me now.”
Today my book buddy was kind of playful. When I had started a book C. had started playing a little, but finally he cooled down. I love reading to a book buddy. I have always wanted to be with a sweet little rascal. I love to read to C. It's Fun!
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings

This ethnographic multiple case study examined the interactions of cross-age peer tutors using Paired Reading and described the attitudes and perceptions of the tutors about the reciprocal effects of participating in this program. By giving detailed accounts of the tutor's interactions with their kindergarten partners, analyzing their written reflections of the interactions, and summarizing their comments about their participation, this study extends the existing literature on the use of cross-age peer tutors, the use of Paired Reading, and students' attitudes and perceptions. The three girls who were the focus of this investigation provided valuable insights into the important impact Paired Reading using cross-age peer tutors had on students' perceptions and attitudes about reading.

This study answered three questions about the students' perspectives on the reciprocal effects of Paired Reading using cross-age peer tutors. The questions were:

(a) What is the interaction of the tutor with the tutee during tutoring sessions?
(b) How does the tutor perceive the effectiveness of her role as a teacher with the tutee?
(c) What are the tutors' attitudes about and perceptions of themselves as readers in relationship to participation in this program?
Patterns and themes emerged as the field notes, assessment information, and interview transcripts were critically analyzed. The following summary explains the findings and answers to the research questions.

**Question A**

Question A examined the interactions of the tutor with the tutee during the cross-age peer tutoring sessions. I found that the three girls who were the focus of this study consistently interacted with their tutees and the selected texts. The behaviors that were observed in the tutoring sessions were generally consistent across the three pairs. Instruction from Mrs. May prior to the beginning of each session appeared to focus the tutors on which strategies they would emphasize with their tutees. Each of the tutoring sessions included behaviors that were described as explicit instruction, modeled reading behaviors, and feedback and reinforcement.

Explicit instruction referred to the tutor's explanation of a particular skill or strategy and its use. In order to assist their partner with the application of meaning-making skills and strategies, the tutor communicated how to use a specific reading skill or strategy within the context of the peer tutoring session.

The demonstration of particular skills and strategies and their use provided the tutee with an appropriate model that helped them learn how and when to use specific problem-solving skills and strategies while reading. Providing children with a model to imitate is inherent in the technique of Paired Reading. Observation of another
reader using skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text facilitated the acquisition of reading behaviors.

Feedback and reinforcement was provided by the tutor in the form of comments which demonstrated an error, corrected the performance, or emphasized both the error and its correction in a comparison mode. Through dialogue, the participating students gave and received support for the use of skills and strategies to solve problems and construct meaning from the text. Through the collaboration of partners, positive support and instructional scaffolding allowed students to perform the complex task of reading. The comments provided the learner with useful information about the use of skills and strategies necessary to solve problems and construct meaning from the text. In addition, feedback from the tutors encouraged the kindergarten students to monitor and self-correct while reading in order to further develop reading comprehension.

In the investigation of the interactions of the tutor and tutee, there was a theme of practice that was evident in all of the data patterns which emerged. There was a substantial amount of data integrated within each category that indicated a notable pattern for the theme of practice. Inherent in the Paired Reading technique was the practice of reading skills and strategies by both the tutor and the tutee. Practice took place when a student applied the knowledge that had been gained from explicit instruction, modeled reading behaviors, and feedback by engaging in the act of reading. As the students engaged in the act of reading and interacted with the text in a meaningful way, the skills and strategies that had been learned were
being used for the purpose for which they were intended to be used. Because the theme of practice was integrated within the three dominant coding categories and was characteristic of all of the interactions, it was not discussed separately. The behaviors observed and documented gave a descriptive picture of the tutor and tutee interactions that promoted literacy learning within the context of a cross-age peer tutoring program.

**Question B**

Question B investigated the tutors' perceptions of their effectiveness in their role as teachers in this cross-age peer tutoring program. This exploration of the tutors' perceptions of effectiveness revealed a positive perception of effectiveness in the case of each of the three study participants.

Nina, Jan, and Amy each understood her competency in teaching another student to read and communicated enthusiasm and confidence about her ability to teach. Through observations of the interactions with their buddies, I was able to conclude that the tutors believed their job as a teacher for the younger student was important. The tutors used written reflections and dialogue with the researcher to express their beliefs and feelings about how effectively they served as teachers for their kindergarten partners. Their oral and written comments provided insight into their beliefs and perceptions of their role as a teacher in this cross-age peer tutoring program. An examination of the tutors' personal reflections and an investigation of the tutors' observed behaviors revealed a belief by the tutors' that they were responsible for the tutees reading development.
Question C

Question C explored tutors' attitudes about reading and their perceptions of themselves as a reader in relationship to their participation in this cross-age peer tutoring program. The beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about reading that were expressed by the tutors indicated positive attitudes toward reading by all of the participants. Because attitude toward reading plays a role in whether a student approaches or avoids a reading task, it was important to understand the reading attitudes of the study participants. Their positive attitudes were evident in their enthusiasm for reading with their book buddies and their confidence as readers and teachers. Attitude about reading is influenced by motivation and interest and this cross-age peer tutoring program provided students with a plethora of opportunities to read for a meaningful purpose thereby, enhancing their motivation for and interest in reading.

Exploration of the tutors' perceptions of themselves as readers indicated how each reader understood her competency in reading. Positive perceptions were associated with time on task reading and persistence with challenging text. The tutors' personal reflections and observed behaviors revealed a belief by the tutors' that they were proficient readers who were capable of sharing their expertise with beginning readers.

Conclusion

In this study I have described each tutor's interaction with her tutee and investigated her perceptions about her effectiveness as a teacher and a reader so that I could understand the reciprocal effects of
cross-age peer tutoring using Paired Reading from the perspective of
the students. As I have chronicled the participation in a cross-age peer
tutoring program of three students from December to May, I have
attempted to describe in rich detail the events, thoughts, and feelings
that I observed. Although my data revealed many examples of each
child’s perspectives, I highlighted representative samples which gave
insight into the attitudes and perceptions of these fourth grade tutors.
I have recounted dialogue, showed samples of documents, and
summarized their comments on their attitudes and perceptions about
themselves as readers and teachers in relationship to their
participation in this cross-age peer tutoring program.

Bringing an awareness to a wide variety of behaviors used by
good readers to solve problems and construct meaning while they
read enhanced the reading development and literacy learning of the
tutor and the tutee. The appropriate selection and use of strategies
while engaging in the act of reading is impacted by affective factors
such as beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. While the findings of this
study were specifically reflective of the students who participated in
this particular cross-age peer tutoring program, the investigation of
students’ perspectives on the reciprocal effects of cross-age peer
tutoring using Paired Reading was strongly supported in professional
educational literature and had implications for instruction.

Although the outcomes of this research are specific to the
students who participated in this particular cross-age peer tutoring
program, I believe that it is important to acknowledge students’
perspectives in literacy acquisition and to contemplate the
characteristics of the tutors' interactions with the tutees that supported literacy learning. Teachers who are cognizant of their students' attitudes and perceptions and who provide opportunities for their students' to engage in interactions which support literacy learning have the power to positively impact the reading development of their students.

Limitations

Regardless of the research methodology, there will be some limitations. Keeping the possible limitations in mind, researchers strive to insure that steps are taken within the constraints of their study to preclude potential limitations. As a researcher, I recognized the potential limitations and attempted to delineate these limitations for the reader.

Rich, thick descriptions and the analysis of phenomenon are characteristic of ethnographic case study research. Due to the need for vivid descriptions and thorough analysis, the product of this kind of research can be too lengthy, too detailed, and too involved for educators to read and use. In an attempt not to overburden the reader with too much information, I highlighted the salient themes and patterns so that the narrative remained informative and interesting. In addition to using vivid descriptions and interpretive commentary regarding the patterns that emerged from the data, I included visual representations to emphasize important ideas and significant relationships.

Maintaining an observational schedule that focused on examination of student perspectives of the reciprocal effects of
cross-age peer tutoring using Paired Reading prohibited seeing additional interactions and activities which impacted the students' attitudes and perceptions about reading. For example, each of the participants discussed their membership in Mrs. May's Centurion Club for reading for pleasure at home. Based on their responses about this club, it appeared that this program provided students with a motivation to read and their interest in membership impacted their attitudes about reading and perceptions of themselves. In addition, this study did not investigate how Mrs. May's beliefs and attitudes impacted the students or what role their home environments played in their perspectives. Investigating this particular program of cross-age peer tutoring using Paired Reading was the purpose of this study; however, I believe it is important to acknowledge that other factors can influence the attitudes and perceptions of students.

**Implications for Future Research**

The acknowledgement of other factors which can influence students' attitudes and perceptions about reading provides opportunities for more in-depth research. I purposefully did not investigate the impact of the teacher's or parents' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions and its impact on literacy learning. Because Mrs. May frequently communicated with parents and provided them with detailed information about how to interact with their child, further research could examine what role the school/home connection played in the development of students' attitudes and perceptions about literacy learning.
Mrs. May provided support for the tutors before, during, and after each tutoring session and encouraged them to reflect on their experiences by keeping journals. In addition, she maintained a journal of her own reflections and kept the dialogue about their experiences open and continuous. Research could be conducted on the impact Mrs. May's attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about reading and teaching impact the development of her students’ perspectives.

Finally, this research focused on the perspectives of three students who participated in a particular cross-age peer tutoring program. The development of reading attitudes and perceptions of students in this particular cross-age peer tutoring program could be compared and contrasted with the development of reading attitudes and perceptions of students who do not participate in a peer tutoring program using a quantitative research design.

Epilogue

This research has helped me understand more about the impact students' attitudes and perceptions have on their reading development. In addition, it has sparked an interest in continuing the investigation of programs that encourage student interaction to promote positive attitudes and perceptions about reading while the literacy development of each child is fostered. I chose this particular classroom and program because it was such a supportive environment where the students' perspectives on their own growth and development are fostered and valued. In Mrs. May's words,

This is a truly wonderful experience. The sheer joy of sharing a book together not only does a lot for the little child to develop a love for reading and books but also does a lot for the older
child to develop this respect and care and awe. I think they have forgotten how they learned to read. They have forgotten what it was like to not know directionality and to not know basic things. Even my most struggling readers are not aware of that. As they become aware of that and start experiencing that with this child it becomes a teaching tool for them. And as the little children begin to read to my students on their own, my kids believe they have taught them to read. This is great!

I appreciate all that I have learned from Mrs. May, Nina, Beth, Jan, Ellie, Amy, and Chris and believe that they have significantly contributed to the growth and development of each other as well as themselves through their participation in this program. I am convinced that the affective domain plays a substantial role in the cognitive development of the reading process. I feel that it is critical that both researchers and practitioners accept the challenge to better understand the role of affect in reading because “the student who can read but chooses not to, is probably the most crucial concern confronting our educational institutions today. It is not illiteracy we are combating, but aliteracy” (Thomas & Moorman, 1994, p. 11).
REFERENCES


McKenna, M. C. (1994) Toward a model of reading attitude acquisition In E. H. Cramer & M. Castle (Eds.) *Fostering the love of reading: The affective domain in reading education* (pp.18-40), Newark, DE: International Reading Association.


APPENDIX A

SCHOOL DISTRICT LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR STUDY

670 Ockley Drive #3
Shreveport, Louisiana 71106
November 15, 1999

Dr. Essie Holt
Assistant Superintendent
Caddo Parish School Board
1961 Midway
Shreveport, Louisiana 71130-2000

Dear Dr. Holt,

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral studies program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. To fulfill the requirements for the degree, I need to conduct a research study and write a dissertation. I have discussed my interest in conducting the study with the principal and with the fourth grade teacher who would be involved. They are eager to participate.

Please accept this letter as my request for permission to conduct a study on the use of paired reading using cross-age peer tutors for my dissertation. I plan to conduct the study at Shreve Island Elementary in a 4th grade classroom beginning December 1, 1999. As part of the study, I plan to conduct observations of students, interview the students and teachers being observed, and review student work samples and academic data. The identity of all participants will remain anonymous and all information collected will be kept confidential.

A letter explaining the study and requesting permission to participate will be sent to the families of each student. A copy of the permission letter will be attached to this request. The participants for the study will be selected from the group of students who return the permission letter which has been signed by the parent/legal guardian and the student. Every effort will be made to minimize disruption to the educational process and to maintain the ethical principles of the study.

I appreciate your consideration of my request and would be happy to talk with you if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Karen E. Eason, Ed.S.

Karen E. Eason, Ed.S.

Attachment

124

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
November 16, 1999

Karen Eason
670 Ockley Drive #3
Shreveport, LA 71106

Dear Karen:

Your letter, requesting permission to do research in one classroom at Shreve Island, has been received. You indicated that you had discussed the study with both the principal and teacher at Shreve Island. Based on that information, approval is granted through this office.

I wish you well with your study and with degree completion requirements.

Sincerely,

Essie W. Holt, Ed.D.
Assistant to the Superintendent

EWH:tb
201-99

Offering Equal Opportunity in Employment and Education Programs

125
Dear Family,

I am a student at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge studying for a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction. As part of the requirements for my degree, I will be doing research in Mrs. Maple's room while the kindergarten students are there for the Book Buddies program. Mrs. Maple's class was selected because of the outstanding teaching that takes place in her room. The school board as well as Dr. Laster have given me permission to conduct my study at Shreve Island.

I will be studying the reading strategies Mrs. Maple's students use with the kindergarten students in the Book Buddies program. To get information about the strategies the students use, I will take notes and photographs while I observe in their classroom. Also, I will interview the students and Mrs. Maple, as well as look at the work the students do in class.

All of the students who participate in the study will remain anonymous and any information about the students and their work will remain confidential. I will need your permission in order to study your child as he learns to become a better reader. Please complete the form below and return to your child's teacher tomorrow.

Please call me at 869-2335 if you have any questions. I appreciate this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Karen Eason

I give my permission for ____________________________ to participate in Ms. Eason's study. I understand that she will observe and talk with my child, collect work samples, audiotape, take photographs, and write a report on her findings. I understand that my child's identity will remain anonymous.

_________________________________  ________________________
Parent Signature                   Date

_________________________________  ________________________
Student Signature                  Date
1. Tell me about how you earned to read. Was it easy? hard?

2. Are you a good reader?

3. What problems or difficulties do you have with reading?

4. Do you think being a book buddy helps you become a better reader? How?

5. Do you think being a book buddy helps your book buddy become a better reader? How?

6. What things do you say or do to help your book buddy?

7. What do you like most about reading? least?

8. How do you feel about your growth in reading?

Adapted from Yochum & Miller (1990).
Our Goal is sixty minutes per week per child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>My Reading Log</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Who read it?</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

128
VITA

Karen Elizabeth Eason was born on April 24, 1968, in Shreveport, Louisiana, to Tom and Louise Eason. She attended public schools in Shreveport, Louisiana, and is a graduate of Caddo Parish Magnet High School. She received a bachelor of science degree in elementary education in 1990 and a master's degree in elementary school administration in 1994 from Centenary College of Louisiana in Shreveport. She completed additional graduate hours at Louisiana Tech University and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge where she received an educational specialist degree in 1996.

Ms. Eason has been a professional educator for ten years. She has served as a classroom teacher in kindergarten and second grade. She has also worked as a reading specialist and administrative intern. For the past two years, Ms. Eason has worked as the curriculum coordinator in an elementary school in Shreveport. She also works as a reading specialist at a private reading clinic where she provides diagnostic reading evaluations for children. Ms. Eason is currently completing the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Karen Elizabeth Eason

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Title of Dissertation: Cross-Age Peers as Partners: Students' Perspectives on the Reciprocal Effects of Paired Reading Using Cross-Age Peer Tutors

Approved:

[Signature]
Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Jill H. Alin
James H. Wadensree
James W. Stoddard

Date of Examination:

June 26, 2000