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Shared Reading – Shared Learning




UNIVERSITY OF
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Key points about shared reading

- ▶ Focus moves from 'learning to read' to 'becoming a reader'
- ▶ Aims to promote 'literacy for life' (Wolfendale, 1996)
- ▶ Social interaction: the key through which learning takes place
- ▶ A structured and well-organised approach
- ▶ Complementary relationships between the more expert and the less expert (Foot and Howe, 1998)

Why?

- ▶ Concerns over reading
 - ▶ A complementary strategy
 - ▶ Appropriate for context – small-scale, short-term, relatively easy to set up and monitor
 - ▶ Children enjoy it
 - ▶ Proven by extensive research to be effective in increasing reading competence and developing social skills
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Research findings

- ▶ Gains in reading age: 10 projects – average tutees gained at 3.8 x ‘normal’ rates; tutors gained 4.3 x (Topping 1989)
- ▶ Changes in attitudes to reading – greater motivation
- ▶ Greater confidence, fluency, use of context and likelihood of self-correction, fewer errors, better phonic skills, increased speed
- ▶ Personal and social benefits – new skills, improved personal relationships, higher levels of self-esteem
- ▶ More positive attitudes to school


The programme in Antigua

- ▶ 7 Zone 1 primary schools
- ▶ Programme introduced to teachers and materials provided: a six-week programme involving Grade 3 (tutees) / Grade 5 (tutors) pairs
- ▶ Sessions timetabled twice a week for 20 minutes over 6-week period
- ▶ Scheme introduced to pupils and parents
- ▶ G5 trained as tutors
- ▶ Teachers selected pairs, and observed and monitored sessions
- ▶ Evaluation and extension of programme

Practical role of research team

- ▶ SUPPORTING teachers in implementation of programme in 7 schools
 - ▶ MONITORING progress of scheme in each school – conducting interviews with pilot pupils and organising post-pilot meetings
 - ▶ EVALUATING effectiveness of programme through questionnaires, interviews and measurement of reading gains over time
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Pre-shared reading: G5 feelings

- ▶ Excitement: ‘getting to play teacher’
 - ▶ Nervousness: ‘my heart beats, beats hard’
 - ▶ Being chosen: confirmation of ability and talent; of personality (especially girls), and potential to be good teachers Some *very* surprised (mainly boys)
 - ▶ High expectations for grade 3 children
 - ▶ Thinking about pedagogic strategies to support tutees
 - ▶ Fear of disappointment
 - ▶ A few concerns about behaviour and discipline
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Expectations for self

- ▶ Minority felt would not benefit / already *could* read
- ▶ Majority felt (a) own reading skills would benefit; (b) teaching skills would develop
- ▶ Some envisaged a mutual learning process:
'I think that it's good that we even teaching them so that they can learn better and we can learn from one another right we can know a word they might not know the word ... they can know a word and we wouldn't know it.'

Post-shared reading: pupil questionnaires

- ▶ Neither gender composition nor age of pair had any apparent impact on responses
 - ▶ 58% recorded positive responses to every question, indicating enjoyment, enthusiasm for SR, increased confidence in reading and a desire to participate in the future
 - ▶ Overall, 94% of responses were positive
 - ▶ Little evidence of variation between schools
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Questionnaires: reading skills

I have learnt ...

- ▶ 'more new words' (several responses)
- ▶ 'to call my words better' (girl)
- ▶ 'that reading is fun' (girl/boy)
- ▶ 'to read a little better' (girl)
- ▶ 'to break words down into syllables' (girl/boy)
- ▶ 'to infer better and use context clues' (boy)
- ▶ 'to read with expression' (boy)
- ▶ 'that I should not jump over punctuation marks' (girl)

Questionnaires: teaching skills (G5)

I have learnt ...

- ▶ 'that if you want to teach a child you have to have patience' (boy)
 - ▶ 'to be kind like a teacher' (boy)
 - ▶ 'when I come big I will know how to teach my children' (girl)
 - ▶ 'that you must also pay attention to your partner'
 - ▶ 'I pointed the words to help him concentrate'
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Questionnaires: inter-personal skills (G5)

I have learnt ...

- ▶ 'that it is good to teach to others' (boy)
- ▶ 'to help one another so we can have a better future' (boy)
- ▶ 'to never say I can't do something' (girl)
- ▶ 'a lot with my partner and she learn a lot too' (girl)
- ▶ 'how to use eye contact better' (boy)

Post-shared reading: student focus groups (G3)

- ▶ Majority expressed enthusiasm and enjoyment:
'I enjoyed the whole entire of shared reading' (b)
'You get to read a whole ton of good books' (b)
- ▶ Achievement and reward for good work:
'We get to read everything and we didn't get the words wrong, and we get points' (g)
- ▶ Learning from tutors:
'We have fun and we like reading and we read about the picture and they ask us questions and so, and we get spelling tests' (g)
- ▶ Helpful partners:
'She is very kind and she help me plenty' (g)

Post SR – G3 students (cont)

- ▶ Benefits – improved reading skills, learning new words, better spelling
- ▶ Change before and after:
‘I didn’t know how to read so much and now I know how to read plenty’ (g)
- ▶ Increased confidence in reading aloud (when prompted)
- ▶ Peers vv teachers: less shy in front of peers; teachers with more knowledge and skill to help

Post SR – issues with partners

- ▶ G5 tutors (in one school) *unable* to help, eg because ‘my partner can’t read properly’
- ▶ G5 tutors *uninterested*: ‘every time I want to read he don’t want to read’
- ▶ G5 tutors *discouraging*: ‘He always shouting at me if I get one single word wrong’
- ▶ *Behavioural difficulties* with G3 tutees – showing obvious disregard for rules, possibly through lack of interest. Disputes over what to read.

Tutors working with tutees

- ▶ Gained from: helping others to read; inter-personal relationships; having authority over a younger child
- ▶ Most tutors thought G3 children had benefited from the scheme and these benefits centred on demonstrable improvements in reading skills: eg *'When I was reading...an ah tell her to read, she was stumbling...and then when the days go on she start to read without stumbling'*
- ▶ G5 students able to point to strategies employed in helping partners: *'I make him sound it out'*
- ▶ But resistance from some G3 boys: *'he just doesn't want me to help him'*

Benefits to self (G5 tutors)

- ▶ Improvements in own reading
- ▶ Opportunity to spend more time reading leading to improvements in their reading skills
- ▶ Some acknowledged help from G3 tutees
- ▶ Improvements in self-confidence: *'Before I did SR I used to read quiet, but I don't want nobody hear me, but now I can read, I can read with people and I'm not shy'* (g)
- ▶ Personal and social development
- ▶ Development of teaching skills

Teacher questionnaires

- ▶ Improvements in reading:
 - 59% increased the amount of reading done
 - 56% improved comprehension
 - 70% had greater confidence to read
 - 69% had more interest in reading
 - 43% showed greater fluency in reading
 - 48% showed greater accuracy in reading
 - 44% put more expression into their reading
- ▶ Other improvements:
 - 62% improved concentration + raised self-esteem; 54% better behaviour on a task

Variations in questionnaire findings

- ▶ Levels of improvement most marked amongst G3 students


Eg 78% G3 boys and 88% G3 girls showed improved confidence in reading; 89% of boys and 82% of girls showed a greater level of interest in reading. Self-esteem was seen to increase in 73% of boys and girls.

- ▶ Improvements for boys were thought to be slightly lower overall, particularly among G5 boys

- Eg 47% G5 boys showed improved confidence in reading; 40% showed a greater level of interest and improved self-esteem

Teachers' focus groups


What the teachers hoped for

- ▶ To see students grow in enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of, reading: *'get them to love reading'*
 - ▶ Developments in reading comprehension
 - ▶ Improvements in confidence, eg being more outgoing and fluent when asked to read in class
 - ▶ Improved communication and social skills
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Benefits of shared reading

1. Improvement in confidence levels and some of those with low self-esteem 'boosted a little'
2. Increase in students' enthusiasm for reading
3. G5 – personal and social skills through helping partners and development of coaching and tutoring skills in some cases
4. Improvements in reading ability – ambiguity
5. Enjoyment and eagerness to continue with SR

Successful SR: planning

- ▶ Principal and teachers should be convinced of the value of the programme and agree and understand its purpose
 - ▶ Parents and children understand the purpose of the scheme
 - ▶ Principal or senior teacher oversees scheme and supports teachers
 - ▶ Sessions are timetabled – in class time – before term begins
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Successful SR: selecting students

- ▶ Selection of pupils for pilot (6 pairs) depends on purpose of programme
 - ▶ SR can be particularly beneficial for G5 pupils lacking self-esteem (rather than those who are the best readers)
 - ▶ Pairing is done through collaboration between G5 and G3 teachers, with **pairs matched on basis of ability** (and personality); gender appears not to be important
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Successful SR: training tutors

- ▶ Older students must be properly trained and given mark sheets and guidance notes
- ▶ Allow enough time for training
 - teachers were generally enthusiastic about training G5 students: ‘really and truly, you know, I found the training to be very good – I actually thought it was very, very good’
 - but, in one school guidance materials would have been helpful ‘if we had followed them ... If we had the time’

Successful SR: implementation

- ▶ Teachers must monitor reading sessions and intervene if necessary with respect to choice of books and behaviour
 - ▶ Resources should be fully utilised to make as wide a range of books as possible available – use of libraries, bringing books from home, sharing books across classes
 - ▶ Maximise space
 - ▶ 6 weeks is long enough
 - ▶ Certificates reinforce sense of achievement
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Evaluation

- ▶ Measuring effectiveness is important
- ▶ Agree **who** will evaluate (principals of other schools, zone officers)
- ▶ Agree **what** will be evaluated:
 - Changes in reading attainment (recorded at the beginning and end of school years)
 - Teachers' record sheets
 - Questionnaires and interviews with teachers and students
- ▶ Agree **how many** schools/teachers/students to evaluate

Conclusions

- ▶ When properly planned and implemented, and when teachers and children understand its purpose, evaluation of SR in Antigua supports research findings elsewhere:
 - SR is particularly effective in increasing levels of confidence and interest in reading
 - SR contributes to improved personal and social skills
 - SR aids the technical skills of reading – but is focused on the enjoyment of reading
 - Increased enjoyment and engagement with school have been shown in other studies to lead to an improvement in overall attainment