

Article/Book Title: Reading for pleasure in paradise: paired reading in Antigua and Barbuda

Full APA Reference: Warrington, M. J., & George, P. (2014). Reading for pleasure in paradise: paired reading in Antigua and Barbuda. *Literacy, 48*(2), 66-71.

Major Themes/Theories: Paired Reading; Social Development; Collaboration; Intrinsic Motivation; Low SES; Access to Resources;

Abstract:

Reading for pleasure is essential in the development of literacy. This paper reports on findings from a paired reading strategy introduced into primary schools in Antigua and Barbuda in order to foster children's pleasure in reading. This programme of cross-age peer tutoring intervention began with the training of teachers in a small group of seven schools and was extended to all the schools on the islands in the following year. Qualitative research data from children and teachers showed that children were enthusiastic about the experience, with some evidence to show that their wider interest in reading was stimulated. Although for the pupils, particularly the younger ones, the main benefit of shared reading was perceived to be an improvement in reading skills, for teachers, it was the increase in children's confidence in reading that was cited as the most positive outcome. Although resource constraints in some schools did limit the scope of the programme, the paper argues that it boosted the reading development of a number of children and may have acted as a catalyst for stimulating a lasting pleasure and joy in reading.

Research Question Summary:

The beautiful island paradise of Antigua offers rich experiences for tourists and visitors, however due to susceptibility to natural disasters and economic crisis, a large proportion of the population is left with minimal resources and limited access; school age children falling into an at-risk and vulnerable position within the population statistics. Limited access and poor economic circumstance has left the island fairly resource-poor, directly impacting the quality of education able to be provided by the country, leading to poor literacy skills, especially for those students in the primary grades. Few children on the island make an active effort to read in their spare time and for enjoyment, as they find the task difficult, materials for reading are inadequate both by volume and pleasing appearance, thus making the experience less than satisfying. Warrington and George noted that the amount that students choose to read in their spare time, is directly linked to their own intrinsic motivation, therefore they proposed implementing a paired reading using peer tutoring platform, primarily to inspire and increase intrinsic motivation and encourage reading for enjoyment among primary-aged children. Due to the economic position of the country, paired reading and peer tutoring allows for an easy to setup and monitor program using pre-existing materials at no extra cost or time for anyone involved.

Methodology Summary

In the first year of the program implementation the plan paired grade 3(tutees) and grade 5(tutors) across seven participating schools in low-SES areas of Antigua, and in the second year it was introduced in all primary schools across the island. Guidance materials and training sessions were provided prior to the start of the initiative, which then followed a structured approach of two paired reading sessions a week, each lasting for 20-minutes. Due to the young age of primary students and evaluating outcomes, qualitative methods were used to interview both students as well as their teachers. Results from the interview were then coded and categorized according to themes with regards to the effectiveness of the program.

Results Summary

Results from the interview showed three main themes throughout the paired reading process; enjoyment, skills, and confidence. A majority of students involved expressed enthusiasm for the

implementation of the program, as tutees were able to choose which books they were reading and the tutors enjoyed helping their younger partners. Students were motivated afterwards to continue reading, as they showed more interest in reading and enthusiasm in reading inside and outside of the classroom; a key indicator of intrinsic motivation. There was ambiguity in the results relating to phonetic skill improvement, however the aim of the program was to stimulate motivation and enjoyment with reading among students, and a large measurable success of the program was such. In the second year of the program when all schools on the island were involved, some schools lacked space and sufficient books and resources, and less support was available in some cases, resulting in instances where the program not always properly employed.

Main Ideas Summary

Results from Warrington and George show that students enjoy working together to enhance their reading skills of decoding, speed, and fluency, while using a collaborative approach of paired reading and peer tutoring. Students who have low self-esteem and limited belief in their reading abilities can show personal and social improvements showing confidence gains while with a peer tutor and more generally in a classroom setting overall. This study notes that it is unknown if the positive results will carry forward, however based on this study, a collaborative approach such as paired reading can increase enjoyment for students, and for some it can act as a facilitator for inspiring a pleasure for reading.