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Using cross-age tutors in a first grade writing program

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USING CROSS-AGE TUTORS IN A FIRST GRADE WRITING PROGRAM

A Thesis

Presented to

**The Faculty of the Department of Elementary Education
San Jose State University**

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Mary J. Romagna

August 1997

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ABSTRACT

USING CROSS-AGE TUTORS IN A FIRST GRADE WRITING PROGRAM

by Mary J. Romagna

Cross-age tutors can help elementary school teachers maximize their instructional minutes and promote literacy development in students. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the writing ability and attitudes of six first grade students who worked with fifth grade tutors on and off computers twice a week for four months. Students read books, discussed topics, and wrote together. After examining quality of work and motivational levels of first grade students through writing samples, interviews, video observations, and student journals, it was concluded that: (1) students were engaged and motivated to write when working with a tutor, (2) quality of writing improved, (3) and computers were an incentive to write. It was assumed that many complex variables, such as regular whole class instruction, time, and maturity, also had an effect on the outcome of this study. Applications and areas of additional research are considered.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

With a complex, diverse, and continually changing curriculum tied to the demands of the nineties, teachers strive for student success in literacy. Teachers strive to provide the best for all students, personalizing instruction, providing for the many social, academic, and cultural differences, and challenging all students to work to their highest potential. A teacher's busy day consists of managing students of all abilities and backgrounds, teaching many subject areas, and providing a positive learning atmosphere. Teachers are asked to do these things with limited materials and resources, and with few, if any, instructional or clerical aides.

Teachers need to maximize valuable instructional minutes and practice effective teaching strategies aimed at increasing student learning. In searching for such methods, cross-age tutoring appears to be most promising. Cross-age tutoring is a program where an older student, at least by two years, tutors a younger student, the tutee. Most of the existing literature focuses on tutoring from the older child's perspective. The goal of this research is to provide further evidence for the benefits of cross-age tutoring, focusing specifically on the effects on younger students. It was my intent to seek information and learn how cross-age tutoring affected my students' literacy development. Literacy development is the acquisition of reading, writing, listening, and speaking proficiencies. The main focus of this study is the writing development of six first grade students.

Keeping my research focus in mind, two key questions were developed

for my study. In what ways will a cross-age literacy program affect the writing development of my first grade targeted students? Will students' quality of writing improve and will motivational levels increase?

Tutoring has been used across the curriculum, but few studies have taken advantage of current technology. To my knowledge, no other studies have examined the use of technology in a cross-age tutoring program. Because computers were available, I integrated them into my curriculum and took advantage of using them in my tutoring program.

Purpose of the Study

Promoting literacy development among my students was the main focus. Specifically, I wanted to see how working with a tutor on a regular basis would affect the writing development of my first grade students. The following questions were addressed:

1. Were students engaged and motivated to write when working with their tutor?
2. Did students' writing samples improve in length and quality when working with tutors?
3. Did students writing on computers with their tutor make a difference in their writing and their attitudes about writing?

Using tutoring, I wanted to provide social interaction, student-centered sessions, meaningful projects, and more technology access. In particular, I wanted to know how these components would affect the writing development of six, first-grade targeted students as I undertook a four-month study on cross-age tutoring.

Social Interaction

Having older students tutor regularly would help students on an

individual basis. Writing with the assistance of a tutor provides students with the one-on-one help they need when they encounter difficulties. Another strength of cross-age tutoring is the opportunity for social interaction between partners. Donald Schon (1983) stated that it is through dialogue, conversation and public inquiry that we begin to reflect on our own understandings. Ideas can be studied, shared, critiqued, and changed (Doll, 1993). We learn from others and our lesson plans should reflect this. Working with a tutor allows students to continually share ideas and experiences, debate, try new things in a risk-free environment, and work on issues related to the individual students' needs.

Student-Centered Curriculum

Working one-on-one allows sessions to be based on students' interests, ideas, and needs. When there exists one teacher and a classroom of students it can be quite a task to tailor the curriculum around every student's individual interests and needs. When students are working with their tutors, however, modifying the subject matter is quite easy to do and very effective. Tutees can have control over topics they study. Topics can be generative, i.e., generated from a student's daily life. According to Ira Shor's empowerment model, students learn to participate actively in their education by making meaningful connections to their everyday lives, needs, interests, or community cultures (Shor, 1992). Projects and papers become meaningful. Tutees are able to take an active part in their learning process. They are not passive listeners, but instead help create the project they will work on.

Meaningful Projects

Having tutors allowed me to give students opportunities to work on projects they might not get to do with just one teacher in the classroom. In the

past, traditional tutoring sessions consisted of a preset curriculum of drill and rote activities, such as memorizing spelling words with flash cards or doing endless pages of arithmetic facts. In this cross-age project, students worked on projects that were meaningful. Students generated their own topics and worked from there. Academic themes, such as learning the basics of writing, were important and were emphasized within the context of an activity. For example, if a student was interested in dogs because he or she just got a new puppy, that student could choose to read a book on dogs and then compose a story or list of ideas on dog care with their tutor. In this manner, learning writing and spelling skills comes naturally and in a meaningful way. The curriculum should grow out of student experiences. Giving students these opportunities is not always feasible with one teacher working with all students. Implementing a tutoring program can allow for student-centered learning with meaningful projects.

Technology Access

Students were given more opportunities to use computers and computer software. As a teacher, I know that effectively teaching an entire class the basics of computers and new software can take quite a while. Lowering the ratio to one-on-one with tutors allowed students to learn and use the computer and software at a much faster rate and at a more sophisticated level.

Methodology

Research was conducted at an elementary level at a kindergarten through fifth grade school located in the Silicon Valley. During this study I taught first grade full time and had access to my students' work and ideas. First graders were matched up with a designated fifth grade tutor from a cooperating classroom in the same elementary school. Students met in a whole class

setting twice a week for forty-minute sessions. The focus was on reading books, discussing topics, and writing. Students had the opportunity to write on and off the computer.

Although my entire class received tutoring for a period of four months, six students were chosen and studied in depth. Although the literature stated there were benefits for both the tutor and the tutee, for my research purposes, I focused on the effects tutoring had on the six targeted first graders in my classroom. These targeted students ranged in abilities and attitudes.

During the course of this four-month study, the following data were collected: writing samples, interviews, notes taken from videotaped sessions, and student journals.

Sixteen writing samples were collected from each student throughout the study. Samples consisted of independent writing and writing done with assistance of tutors. Writing samples were collected from students with and without their tutors help and were compared in length and quality. When possible, work compared was of the same genre. For example, letter writing or responding about their favorite part in a book. Writing samples were analyzed for content as well as the following characteristics: spaces between words; number of words and sentences; simple, pattern and complex sentences, capitalization, punctuation, descriptive words, spelling; and presentation and neatness on and off the computer. These characteristics are described in detail in Chapter Three, Methodology.

Students were interviewed seven to nine times during the course of the study. Students were audio taped and asked such questions as how sessions went, what went well, and how their tutor helped them. Videotapes of each

session were also collected and analyzed and observational notes were taken on interactions between tutoring pairs. The four characteristics I analyzed were: on-task behaviors, quality of interactions, technology use, and motivation and excitement levels during tutoring sessions.

Tutees also had the chance to write in journals. Writing during this time was in response to a questionnaire or to open-ended questions. For example, some entries included questions that asked them to reflect on how their sessions for the week went, what they learned, what went well, and or how they were helped by their tutor. Due to most of my first graders' limited writing ability, students were given the opportunity to draw about their sessions and then, when possible, dictation was taken.

Assumptions and Limitations

Over the course of my study, it was assumed that my first grade students matured and developed writing skills due to many variables. In addition to weekly tutoring, students were exposed to regular classroom lessons emphasizing literacy through whole language instruction techniques, e.g., guided, modeled, and independent reading and writing. Tutoring was one of the many strategies used to develop literacy. Students were expected to naturally grow, mature and improve over time. It was the intent of this research to discover in what ways tutoring sessions added to students writing development.

This study was limited to a sample of six targeted students in my first grade class. Efficient data collection was manageable with that number. However, my whole class received the tutoring session. Knowing the value of tutoring and because of classroom management issues, I did not separate my classroom into two groups, allowing only one group to receive the tutoring.

Rather I used a within-subject comparison of the work they did with and without their tutor. As is the case in all studies of this length and depth, there were many variables too complex and some unknown to me, which affected their growth throughout the course of the study.

Conclusions

I found that implementing cross-age tutors in my classroom was an effective teaching strategy. My students were given opportunities that I wasn't always able to provide them with on a regular basis in a whole class setting. Working with a tutor allowed tutoring sessions to be centered around the individual needs and interests of the tutee. Meaningful projects were created in a positive environment where friendships flourished. Writing samples with their tutors were longer and better quality pieces. Partners were engaged in a variety of projects where reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills were addressed. Tutees were able to use computers more frequently and learned software at a much faster pace with someone teaching them one-on-one. Students were actively working and motivated to write together.

Summary

Looking for effective teaching strategies to help teach first graders writing, I used fifth grade students as cross-age tutors twice a week for a period of four months. Through social interaction, student-centered tutoring sessions, and meaningful projects, the focus of this study was to see in what ways the quality of the tutees' writing and how attitudes about writing were effected. Writing samples were collected, students were interviewed, sessions were videotaped, and student journal responses were read in order to analyze motivational levels, quality of writing, and computer usage. This study was

limited to six targeted students in my first grade classroom. It was assumed that many complex variables, such as regular whole class instruction, time, and maturity had an effect on the outcome of this study.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Today's innovative elementary teachers teach using cooperative learning, manipulatives, integration of the arts, small group work, and individualized instruction. However, a typical day does not permit the luxury of much time for one-on-one instruction needed by the students and in order to meet the needs of each student, the teacher must rely on others to help with instruction (Day, 1993). Research has shown that there are many advantages to using a tutorial system. My interests lie in implementing cross-age tutoring into a nineties language arts curriculum in an elementary setting. In reviewing the literature, I have read about successful research, theories and ideas. Specifically, my literature review will explore the history of tutoring, its advantages, prior research, common classroom and teacher issues, and questions to consider. Although my research project focused on the effects of tutoring on the tutee, this review explores the advantages for both the tutor and the tutee. My focus will be on describing research in the area of language arts and with technology.

History

The word tutor is derived from the Latin "tueri" originally meaning "to protect," "to guard for," "to care for." Today tutors can take those sentiments to heart as they assist their fellow peers or younger students. The concept of tutors teaching children is not new and goes back in time throughout history as an useful and helpful device to teach. According to Wagner (1982) the use of

students teaching other students dates as far back as the first century A.D. (Day,1993). John Comenius, a 17th century educational reformer and theologian, said,

He who teaches others, teaches himself is very true, not only because constant repetition impresses a fact indelibly in the mind, but because the process of teaching in itself gives deeper insight into the subject matter taught (Gartner & Reisman,1994, pg. 8).

In the early 1800's Andrew Bell, a superintendent of an orphan school in India, devised a system where older students taught younger students. Joseph Lancaster of England enthusiastically implemented this system with a few additions of his own. In 1803, he vigorously publicized the system and was a public advocate of his "monitorial" system, where older students became monitors and taught other students. Lancaster was a strong believer that children learned most efficiently from one another. Leight and Reinhart (1992) note that one-room schools were prime examples of cross-age tutoring (Spiegel,1993). In the past ten years, tutoring has again become popularized. The tutoring movement has become an integral part of individualized instruction in schools today (Day,1993). Many programs, using peers or cross-age tutors, have been implemented across many subject areas and with many ages. Theorists of the past like Bell and Lancaster, and many of today's modern theorists believe that because learning is a social act cross-age tutoring can have social and cognitive benefits.

Benefits of Tutoring on the Tutee

There are many positive effects for the tutee in cross-age partnerships. When older and younger students are paired, motivation, cooperation, and self-

esteem flourish, as well as all the extra learning that takes place (Haluska & Gilleen,1995). Many studies have shown that the reading and writing skills of tutees can be significantly improved. For example, when sixth grade students were paired with kindergarten children to read and write collaboratively on a regular basis, tutees' attitudes towards literacy improved (Fitzpatrick & Leland, 1994). Students in that study read, discussed, and then wrote original stories together once a week. By the end of the year the number of kindergartners who could write stories increased dramatically. Reading with a buddy and discussing the story allows children to progress in the acquisition of reading ability and to put reading into a social context (Lamme,1987). The on-going interaction between partners creates a satisfactory relationship built on literacy (Fitzpatrick & Leland,1994). A study by Feitelson, Kita, and Goldstein (1986) showed that tutors reading regularly to first graders improved their listening comprehension, active use of language, and decoding skills. Having tutors read to younger children, therefore, can help a child build an excellent foundation for continued literacy growth.

Tutors are able to individualize their program to suit the tutees' moods and interests, and to take advantage of "teachable moments" (Rosner,1970). Tutees are receiving not only individual instruction, but more teaching. A wide variety of skills, with deeper levels of understanding, can be effectively taught in a more efficient amount of time. A tutor may more easily understand the tutee's problems because they are cognitively closer in age (Allen,1976). The fact that their cognitive framework is similar may also help tutors present subject matter in terms that the tutees better understand (Gaustaud,1993).

Peer based strategies have proved successful in increasing the aca-

ademic skills of students, with evidence of gains for both tutees and tutors, and corresponding improvements in student attitudes, self concept, and social skills (Cartledge, Gardner & Giesecke,1993; Delquadri, Greenwood,Stretton, Hall, 1983; Carta, Greenwood, Hall, & Whorton,1986). With tutoring the tutees can have academic achievement and meaningful time on-task with feedback occurring more frequently (Bar-Eli & Raviv,1982). Tutees can have an increased self concept and a sense of accomplishment and success knowing they have improved in an academic area. They also experience the benefits of having an older friend who helps and cares (Lipitt,1975; Allen,1976).

Benefits of Tutoring on the Tutor

Tutors often benefit as much as or more than their tutees (Gaustaud, 1993). In a literacy tutoring program, fourth grade tutors improved their oral reading fluency, their ability to read with expression, their story structure knowledge, and their speaking and writing ability (DeRita & Weaver,1991). In another language arts study, involving sixth graders and kindergartners, researchers found that the older students improved their attitudes towards reading, were more enthusiastic about writing, read more on their own, and used the library more often (Haluska & Gillen,1995).

Tutoring provides opportunities to practice and improve communication skills and work habits (Gaustaud,1992). Tutoring helps an older child with reading problems to develop positive reading behaviors (Labbo & Teale, 1990). It also gives tutors a legitimate reason for practicing reading and writing skills. Organizing material to teach to a younger learner facilitates long-term retention, and also aids in the formation of more comprehensive and integrated understandings (Cohen & Kulik,1988). Tutoring provides tutors with a chance to use

their knowledge in a meaningful way. Tutoring offers tutors the chance to feel a sense of empowerment, authority and importance. The tutor can gain skills in teaching, awareness of others, sensitivity to younger children's needs and concerns, and self-confidence regarding their ability to help others learn (Gorrell & Keel, 1986). Tutors come away with a better understanding of the learning process and can apply it to their own learning. They can have a better appreciation for their teacher and his/her teaching strategies, knowing what it is like to be in the teacher's role. In DeRita and Weaver's literacy study (1991), when tutors had a purpose for learning and a real audience, tutors looked forward to doing their work.

Using Low-achieving Students as Tutors

Working as a tutor traditionally has been assigned to higher achieving students. Recent research has shown that low-achieving students can be as effective and benefit as much as their higher achieving peers.

In Cartledge, Gardner, and Gieseckes' study (1993), low-achieving fourth graders, poor in reading and with low peer status, tutored third graders with similar abilities. Both groups were tested prior to starting the program on sight/word recognition and the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale. Tutors were trained for five sessions one week prior to the tutoring sessions. Each tutoring session was structured and the sessions lasted for five weeks. Comparison of the pre/post test showed an improvement in sight/word recognition and self concept for both the tutee and the tutor. This empowering experience enabled tutors to succeed academically and socially.

Robert Cloward, founder of the antipoverty program/study called Mobilization for Youth, hired underachieving adolescents to tutor elementary

students in remedial reading. Surprisingly, in just six months the reading scores of the tutors jumped by an equivalent of two years, far more than the scores of those they tutored (Cloward,1976). Similarly, Dollar (1974) used tutors who were underachieving, delinquent, or emotionally upset. In his program these tutors became quite extraordinary. According to Dollar (1976), this happened because for once they were involved in a significant activity with real-life consequences which they could handle and in which they could succeed.

Lower-achieving students may have an edge over higher achieving tutors because they have a sense of empathy towards their struggling tutee. Josie Supik believes this empathy contributes to low achievers' effectiveness as cross-age tutors and that these tutors often pick up on things teachers weren't able to see because they had experienced similar problems a few years earlier (Gaustaud,1993). Tutors who struggled academically may be more patient and understanding than those who have not (Lippitt,1976; Frager & Stern,1970). The opportunities for skill practice and social interaction are particularly meaningful for at-risk students and students with disabilities (Ezell, Hoel, Kohler, Miller, & Strain,1993).

Structured Programs

A good tutoring program needs to look at all the elements of the program very carefully. There can be problems with tutees, tutors, or the program features themselves. Even in the best of programs, tutors can be negative and use aversive forms of peer pressure, verbal harassment, and threats. Tutees can be uncooperative or fearful of older children. Tutors need guidance and supervision by a skilled teaching staff. Tutors need to be trained

in the use of proper teaching practices for individual instruction.

At high risk for problems are tutoring programs that are put together without much planning or thought. Though short term and limited gains can be achieved where tutoring is used informally (Kaufus,1984) evidence shows that structured interventions can result in even greater benefits to students (Cohen & Kulik,1988). Barriers and problems can be avoided by teachers by using a structured program. In the study by Ezell, Hoel, Kohler, and Strain (1993) teachers successfully implemented a structured model consisting of four components: planning, training, monitoring/evaluation, and problem solving. Although a structured program requires more time for training, discussing, etc., it can be well worth the time and energy expended to learn all the procedures, such as learning how to pick out an appropriate book for a struggling reader (Ezell, Hoel, Kohler & Strain, 1993). Therefore, a key element in a structured program is tutor training.

Training and Preparation

Research indicates that it is important to give formal instruction to tutors on a regular basis (Day,1993). Training can not be overestimated and that training is necessary for the success of a program (Day,1993). Direction and support have been identified as very important.

Training should entail adult modeling, rehearsal, and role playing, with ample feedback in both positive and negative situations. Training should be in interpersonal, management, and content skills. For example, tutors will need to learn how to relate to younger students, understand the content of what they will tutor, and be able to keep the tutoring session running smoothly. Training is especially important prior to first contact but should also be an on-going

process. Studies varied in time spent for training. Extensive training is desirable when tutor progress is the main objective.

Forming Partnerships

Pairing students

When matching tutor to tutee, the literature favors same sex partners because it allows for maximum interaction. When same sex partners were not available, older girls paired with younger boys was the next best pairing. There are mixed reviews on whether teachers should assign the partnerships or allow students to pick. In my experiences, I have seen teachers do the pairings where they take into consideration such factors as personality, abilities, and special needs.

Duration of Partnerships

The majority of the research encourages long-term partnerships. Brief tutoring arrangements are unlikely to create a warm and facilitative atmosphere because it takes time to develop a working relationship between partners. Academic gains can be made during brief exchanges, but higher levels of achievement can be attained in semester-long exchanges (Gorrell & Keel, 1986). However, there are some contradictory research. In a classroom system reported by Delquadri, Greenwood, Stretton, and Hall (1985) students were randomly paired on a weekly basis. Greenwood used this system for over four years and states, " The advantage of weekly random assignments lies in its flexibility, exposing all children to each other over a period of time and preventing boredom" (Delquadri, Greenwood, Stretton, & Hall,1985).

Teacher Issues

Teacher as Facilitator

When using students as tutors, learners can receive instruction for virtually any skill during any activity in the school day (Kohler & Strain,1990). In order to reap the benefits of such tutoring a teacher must learn to take the role of facilitator in the tutorial models. Teachers must be willing to relinquish some control over instruction. The teacher gives up the notion that they are the absolute authority on an issue or that they alone are the giver of knowledge. A facilitator gives a lot of power to the tutors. The facilitator's role is more of a guide or a coach. Although this may not be easy for some teachers, the rewards can be considerable. The teacher should manage the process, train the students, and arrange the partnerships and logistics of the program. Although all this preparation takes time, once completed, a program should not burden the teacher with more work. On the contrary, the tutors will reinforce their teaching and will add new dimensions to the classroom learning situation (Rosner,1970).

Benefits to the Teacher

There are many benefits of cross-age tutoring to the teacher, such as: tutoring makes the day-to-day business of teaching more pleasant, tutors see their teachers as colleagues and an atmosphere of cooperation and support can develop, it reduces class size and the strain of management, discipline problems are reduced, and the focus of the teacher can be on planning curriculum and arranging conditions in which pupils can learn (Rosner,1970). Teachers take an active part and should provide immediate help to students who need it, but should try and leave the tutoring partners alone, respecting their ability to find their own approach to tutoring, make their own judgments, and find their own answers (Dollar,1974). Teachers can see tutors in a new

light and, through observation of their tutoring, assess their skills and knowledge in various content areas. Tutoring should be seen as collaborative relationships between tutors and highly skilled adults. Tutoring can complement and add to a teacher's existing program. Tutoring is a viable technique that gives students supplemental help in various subject areas (Day, 1993).

Technology and Cross-age Tutoring

To my knowledge, there is not any existing research on any cross-age programs that integrate technology. Given that computers were available, I wanted to take advantage of using them in my cross-age tutoring program. There is ample research on the advantages of using technology in the classroom. A number of studies demonstrate that students who worked with computers were more engaged (Collins,1991). Many students see working on the computer as fun, like playing video games or watching television. In one study at Peakville Elementary School, students used computers as part of their normal instructional day, and student achievement increased and attitudes became more positive (Levin, Glass, & Meister,1987). Students felt that computers made school more fun and often asked to stay in at recess or after school to work on one. Students felt empowered through the use of technology and their self concepts were helped through working with technology (Cyr, Hamilton, Teslow, & Wilson,1991).

For first graders, writing on the computer is especially attractive because those who have fine motor difficulties when writing with a pencil often are quite capable of learning how to use a keyboard to write (Collins,1983; Daiute,1985; Kleiman & Humphrey,1982; Kurth & Kurth,1987; Schwartz,1982). Students who are hesitant to write with a pencil often seem to like writing with a word

processor (Chandler,1984; Kleiman & Humphrey,1982). Young student writers tend to write longer and produce higher quality papers when using a computer versus a paper and pencil (Collins,1983; Levin, Boruta, & Vasconcellos,1983). Text editing allows writers to make easy revisions on the computer while with paper and pencil, a student must erase and rewrite, destroying a neat and clean appearance. For these reasons, having access to computers may motivate writers of varying levels of ability and experiences (Collins,1983; Daiute,1982; Hennings,1981; Marcus,1984; Silvern, 1988; Warash, 1984). It seems that adding the ease and novelty of the computer with the noted benefits of using tutors would improve the writing performance of students.

Conclusions

With a class full of students with diverse needs and strengths, teachers need effective options to maximize their instructional minutes. Research provides strong evidence for cross-age tutoring as a valuable option. Tutoring models have proven to be a success academically and socially for the students of today. Continued research can provide essential options for the future as our students enter the year 2000.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Twenty first graders were matched up with twenty fifth graders from a classroom in the same elementary school. Students met in a whole class setting twice a week for forty-minute sessions. The focus was on reading books, discussing topics, and writing their ideas. Students had the opportunity to write on and off the computer.

The first graders were matched up with fifth graders. The cooperating fifth grade class had thirty students. Fifth graders ranging from average to low in abilities were used as tutors. The cooperating teacher and I matched up pairs of the same sex, taking into consideration personalities. The tutoring partnerships stayed the same for the course of the study. I focused on six targeted students because I wanted to look at their interactions and writing in depth.

Targeted Students

First graders were ranked in reading and writing at the beginning of the year. Six students were chosen as targeted students. Three females and three males of high, medium, and low abilities were picked for this study. Three students of high, medium and low abilities were picked and considered to be average students with average backgrounds. Three other students, of high, medium, and low abilities, had special needs and/or were considered at-risk youth. They came from single parent households, had lower socioeconomic backgrounds, were second language learners, and had behavioral or social problems. Pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of the targeted students.

Profile of Targeted Students

Three average students:

Lori, Trent, and Randy all came from two-parent, two-income households where English was their native language. All have had a variety of literacy experiences and stimulations at home. They enjoyed school and had an interest in learning. They interact well with others and performed well in different types of social environments.

Three students with special needs:

Jim lives alone with his father. His father works a lot and is not able to spend a great deal of time with him. English is Jim's second language and he speaks it well considering that Korean is spoken at home. Jim is ranked second in my class ranking and is reading and writing at or above grade level. However, Jim has very little self control and seeks a lot of attention. He is a non-stop talker, easily distracted, and very interested in everything around him.

Violet is being raised by a single father who works two jobs. She has one ten year-old brother. A babysitter watches them at home. Violet has told me that there is no one available to read to her at home. Violet is ranked in the middle of my class. She can be independent, sensitive, moody, reserved, and shy. She does not like to take risks and has difficulty working with others.

Katerina is being raised by her two parents and has a younger brother at home. She comes from a lower socioeconomic background. Her primary language is Spanish. She is acquiring English, but is still considered a limited English speaker. She loves school but is very easily distracted by anyone or any type of stimulation around her. Katerina is ranked at the bottom of my class. She is behind academically, very dependent on her teachers, and in need of

constant one-on-one help with the majority of her work.

Procedure

Arrangements for Tutoring

The tutoring sessions were scheduled for twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:05 - 9:45 for a period of four months. Fifth grade tutors came to our classroom and worked on building literacy through reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities. Prior to the tutoring exchanges students participated in training and orientation activities.

Tutor Training and Orientation

Prior to the tutoring exchanges, I felt it was important to hold training sessions for both the tutors and the tutees. Training the tutors was a key element in providing efficient help for my targeted students. Tutors needed to know the rationale behind using tutors, the role of a tutor, how to work with young students, and problem solving in difficult situations. Tutors received training consisting of mini-lessons that were based on the needs of the students. For example, when I saw tutors doing the spelling for their tutees, I led a training session about phonetic spelling. When I needed to give training sessions to the fifth graders, I switched classrooms with their teacher. While I was holding mini-lessons with the fifth graders, their teacher was involved in a literacy activity with my first graders.

After training, orientation activities during the first week consisted of games and interviews. Partners were able to get to know each other in a fun, relaxed atmosphere. For example, students interviewed their partners to discover their interests and then presented that information to the class.

A Sample Tutoring Session

After the excitement of the tutors' arrival and a general mingling and greeting time, students chose an area to read, discuss, and write together. Some sessions were semi-structured and the tutors had a lesson plan to follow. For example, in October first graders started concentrating on descriptive writing in literature. The lesson plan for one session consisted of reading a book and describing any one of the characters in the story. On other days, tutors were given no lesson plans and students were given topic ideas but not a set activity. For example, after Halloween, some students wrote about what they were for Halloween or what they did.

Partners had the option to write with paper and pencil but were also encouraged to use the computers to write whenever motivated or interested. On many occasions, however, there were more students wanting to use computers than there were computers. When all computers were busy, students had no choice but to write down their stories on paper first. So, some pieces were written and edited on the computer while others were written on paper and then later copied on the computer.

During the four-month study, there were occasional seasonal or recreational activities that added variety and allowed students to work together in different ways. In November, there was a "game" day where students played charades with their favorite book titles and Pictionary. In December, classes presented poetry and had a holiday party together. Such activities added and built upon the sense of community that developed between the two classes.

A Sample of Independent Writing Time

Students were exposed to a variety of writing experiences in the class-

room, such as: writing with a partner, writing after teacher modeling, writing with the assistance of the teacher and other students in a whole class setting, and independent writing.

Independent writing might occur after students were exposed to a piece of literature. For example, after hearing a story, the class discussed various topics as a whole group or in partners. After discussion time students were generally asked to respond to the story in their writing journals. Some journal entries were open-ended, such as "Write about what this story reminds you of." On other days students were given a sentence starter like, "On Halloween I..."

Students had access to computers but due to the limited number of computers and management issues of one teacher getting all her students on them, most students did their writing with paper and pencil during independent writing time.

Students occasionally received some assistance from the teacher and others around them on phonetic spelling or ideas. Students had access to dictionaries, word boards, and other books.

Gathering and Analyzing Data

The following data have been collected and analyzed from the following sources over the course of this four-month study:

1. Writing samples
2. Participant interviews
3. Notes from video observations
4. Student journals

Data was analyzed keeping in mind these essential questions:

1. Were students engaged and motivated to write with their tutors?

2. Did students' writing improve in quality when they worked with their tutor?
3. Did student access to computers make a difference in their attitude about writing?

Writing Samples

Since this study took place in the beginning of the year, samples were studied and checked for characteristics of beginning and developing writers in my first grade students. Each month, writing samples were collected from students with and without their tutors help and then compared in length and quality. The majority of the work compared was of a similar nature. For example, samples of letters written with and without their tutor were collected. Similar samples were collected at the same time of the year. For example, Halloween stories, written with and without the help of their tutor, were collected. Eight individual writing samples and eight samples written with their tutor were collected for a total of 16 in all for each student. Writing samples were coded in the following manner: the first writing sample written independently was labeled as "1a" and the first writing sample written with the help of the tutor was labeled as "1b."

A checklist was devised, based on my years of teaching first graders, of what I deemed quality writing for a first grade student. Upon reading each sample, checklists were marked off if characteristics were met in that particular sample. Each piece of student's work was evaluated. Tables were analyzed and compared. The quality of writing was based on content and on the following characteristics: number of words and sentences, spacing between words, simple pattern sentences or complex, detailed sentences, capitalization and

punctuation, descriptive writing, story dictation, spelling, and neatness and presentation.

Analyzed Characteristics

Number of Words and Sentences

Number of sentences and words were counted in each writing sample. Work was compared to see if students put out more work if they worked with a tutor. Often young writers struggle with putting words down on the paper. Whether they struggle with coming up with ideas, writing letters, spelling words, or distractions around the room, beginning writers seek out help and suggestions. When I am able to work with students, I see a difference in how much they put down on their paper. Simple interactions with students often provide a gentle push to get them moving forward. I wanted to see if pairing them up with a tutor would help them overcome their individual struggles and produce more work.

Words and sentences were counted based on my interpretation of their work. One limitation or debate in counting sentences was that I had to decide what constituted a sentence for a first grade student. Would a complete thought indicate a sentence or would punctuation delineate when one sentence ended and the other started? Because there were so many writing samples involved and, as a reader, I was not always sure when a thought started or ended, I decided that as a matter of manageability and convenience a sentence ending would be designated by punctuation.

Spacing Between Words

I looked to see if my students were developing concepts of print. Putting spaces between words is acknowledging words as individual units and not just

strings of letters connected together down a page. With beginning writers the first step is putting down their ideas on paper. It is common for their letters and words to be written in one long string of words with no spaces. As writers develop they will start understanding concepts of print and begin noticing where words end and begin and put spaces in between words as needed. I wanted to see if pairing them up with a tutor will help them notice and put spaces in between words as needed.

Simple, Pattern Sentences or Complex, Detailed Sentences

Many first graders start out writing simple, pattern sentences such as, "I like dad" or "I like mom." These pattern sentences are acceptable and offer beginning writers security and structure. As they mature they may use more complex sentences such as, "I like mom because she is nice" or "Dad helps me with my work." Often at this level, with guidance and help, students can push themselves to write with more details.

Capitalization and Punctuation

Most beginning writers are oblivious to punctuation. I separated capitalization into it's own category because it has been my experience that often this is the first form of punctuation that first graders learn and apply. Due to developing fine motor skills, most first graders start out writing in all capital letters because it is easier. With the writing samples I analyzed, it was noted if my students started each sentence with a capital and whether or not they started individual names with capitals. They were exposed to other capitalization rules through literature and teacher modeling but those two capitalization rules were all that I required of my students in the beginning of the year. Literacy development was noted when I saw students using upper and lower-

case letters in the appropriate places.

When there is a reference to the use of punctuation, I am referring to whether or not my students can use periods, question marks, and exclamation marks correctly in their writing. It was noted if students attempted to use other forms of punctuation but, I only emphasized those three uses in the beginning of the year.

Descriptive Writing

During the course of the school day, students were exposed to good literature and writing. The focus was often on the use of describing words, as this is a concept that first graders can easily grasp. It was emphasized that good writers add these describing words to “paint a picture” for their readers to see. Instead of writing, “I like the cake. It is good,” students were encouraged to write with more description such as, “I like the tall, strawberry cake because it has sprinkles and candles on top.” Although most students will agree that the second sentence sounds and looks better, most write sentences that are more like the first.

Story Dictation

The targeted students who were seen as struggling emerging writers had the option to dictate their stories to their tutor. In the beginning stages of literacy acquisition, it is important to develop students' oral language through story telling and dictation. Instead of struggling with the mechanics and letter formation components of writing when they do not know all their letters and sounds, it is valuable for an emergent writer to dictate their ideas to a tutor. Giving students the option to dictate stories when they are not ready to write independently gives them a sense of accomplishment and keeps the writing

process a positive experience. As targeted students grew, they gradually moved away from dictating stories to writing them on their own.

Spelling: Copy Writing or Phonetic-based

Most beginning writers start writing by copying letters and words that they see in their environment, whether it is on the classroom walls, student dictionaries, street signs, or their favorite books that are read to them. When I look at a child's writing and observe that they are copying words, I know they are still at the beginning stages of writing. These beginning writers often do not take the risks required to write words on their own yet. In this copying stage, they often require a lot of assistance as they want to know how to spell words or where to find the words they want to spell correctly.

As students develop, they start to take risks and spell words using phonetic spelling, otherwise known to as "best guess" or "invented" spelling. When students use their knowledge of letters and sounds they spell words using their phonetic knowledge. I am looking to see students move towards phonetic spelling in the first half of the school year. As they use their phonetic spelling, they tend to not worry if a word is spelled correctly and focus more on their writing. I want them to concentrate on putting their thoughts down on paper and do not want them to be slowed down with spelling concerns. Phonetic spellers generally produce not only more work, but better quality pieces because they are concentrating more on their storyline than their spelling mistakes.

Neatness and Presentation

As students finished their writing samples I looked to see if their work was neat and legible. I looked to see if they wrote left to right, top to bottom, in or out

of the lines, and if their paper was neat and clean.

I noted if they had typed it on the computer. In some instances, because I only have five computers, I asked students to have their story written down on paper first to shorten their time on the computer.

Independent Reader

A colleague at my elementary site, another first grade teacher familiar with the characteristics of emerging and beginning writers, was asked to read and assess all 16 writing samples of each child. Prior to ranking, the independent reader read the characteristics, noted above, on which I based quality writing and then ranked them according to her judgment. Names, dates, and other coding information was deleted from the writing so that the reader would not be aware of who a child was, when the work was completed, and if a tutor had helped. The independent reader was given all 16 writing pieces in a random order and asked to rank them from least proficient to more proficient. After the independent reader ranked them, I went back and noted what number sample it was and if a tutor had helped them or not. Results were compared.

Interviews and Video Observations

Targeted students were interviewed seven to nine times about their experiences with their tutors. Questions from journals were discussed in detail and/or students described their interactions or work with me. Interviews were no longer than five minutes in length and occurred at recess time. Interviews were either taped and transcribed or notes were written during the course of the interview.

In most instances, a video tape recorder was set up on a tripod during each session. The camera was left alone except when it was moved to view

another targeted student. After each week of tutoring, tapes were viewed and notes were taken on my observations.

Interviews and videotaped sessions were analyzed for:

1. On-task behaviors - Were tutee and tutor working on appropriate projects in a timely manner?
2. Quality of interactions - Were tutoring partners involved in literacy development in some manner, whether it was reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities? Were they actually interacting and sharing thoughts and ideas? Were sessions dominated by tutee or tutor or both?
3. Technology - Were students engaged when they worked on the computers?
4. Motivation and excitement - Did tutoring pairs appear to be happily writing and working together on or off the computer?

Due to my limitations as teacher as researcher, I was not be able to look extensively at each one of these four characteristics each time with each student. However, I did look for these four characteristics over the course of the study.

Limitations of Videotaping and Student Interviews

Because I did not tape all interactions with each student, I was only able to analyze a small sampling of tutoring interactions. Tapes were snapshots of students working together from anywhere from three to five minutes at a time. Students were not taped in long stretches of time with their tutor. It was sometimes difficult for me to hear pairs working together as the noise of the busy classroom interfered with the audio taping. A lot of additional time was

needed to view the tapes.

As far as interviewing, students could deal with basic, concrete questions such as, "What did you do with your tutor today?," but they had difficulty dealing with abstract concepts, such as "How did your buddy help you with your learning?" Having young students express their thoughts was somewhat of a challenge. Interview questions were modified into simpler terms to which a first grade student could relate.

Due to time and management constraints, I did not interview or video tape sessions of students working alone. When making comparisons to independent work I do so using my own observations, assessments, and interpretations. In working with my students in the classroom full time I have a lot of knowledge about how they work independently.

Journal Writing

Tutees spent ten minutes each week to write in a journal about their tutoring experiences. Drawing or writing during this time was in response to a questionnaire format or included open-ended questions asking them about the learning that occurred for that week. Sample questions included: What did you learn this week? What was helpful or fun? What ways did your buddy help you? How is it different working with someone versus working alone? What did you like about your writing this week? What did you like the best about the week? Did you have any difficulties working with your tutor? Due to most first graders limited writing skills, students' information was taken and summarized from my dictation notes, their notes, and their pictures.

Assumptions and Limitations of Journals

It was my hope that if students had a chance to respond in journals about

their interactions with their tutors, that they would learn more about their work and themselves. I did realize however that this was somewhat of a high expectation for my first graders for the beginning of the school year. I knew there would be some limitations in using student work journals with my targeted students.

First graders often have trouble writing and expressing their feelings in writing. Because of this limitation the journal questions tended to be easy, yes or no questions, which they could successfully respond to. Students were encouraged to write but their phonetic spelling was often hard for me to decipher and understand. They had the option of drawing pictures instead of words. Many students opted for the picture drawing and, as they drew, I took dictation. However, there was limited time for me to do this during class time.

Despite these limitations, I felt that the journal writing gave my first graders the opportunity to think about their learning in a way they hadn't thought about it before. Most of this self reflection was simple and, although what they did write did not provide me with as much information as I had hoped, there was valuable information that contributed to the research. The insights which I write about come directly from their written or dictated journal responses.

Summary

Working as cross-age tutors, fifth graders assisted my first grade students twice a week for four months on literacy-related activities in the regular classroom. Six first grade students of varying abilities and needs were designated as targeted students for the study and their interactions, their attitudes, and their writing samples were studied in depth. Before tutoring sessions began in

October, students were involved in training and orientation activities. Training was seen as an important component of a successful program and mini-lessons were given to the fifth grade students on appropriate topics concerning tutoring issues.

By gathering writing samples, interviewing students, taking notes from video observations, and having students write in journals, I was able to address the essential questions in this study. The essential questions were:

1. Were students engaged and motivated to write with their tutors?
2. Did students' writing quality improve with a tutor?
3. Did access to computers make a difference in their attitude about writing?

Data was analyzed using a rubric that focused on: on-task behaviors, quality of interactions, technology use, and motivational and excitement levels. Various aspects of the data collection had limitations. Having young six and seven year old students express themselves verbally and in writing was challenging. Time and management issues were a limitation of being a teacher as researcher.

Chapter Four

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were collected over the course of the four-month study and consisted of: writing samples, interviews, video observations, and student journal entries. Data were analyzed keeping in mind these essential questions:

1. Were students engaged and motivated to write with their tutors?
2. Did students' writing improve in quality when they worked with their tutor?
3. Did students access to computers make a difference in their attitude about writing?

Writing Samples

During the course of the study, 16 writing samples written alone and with a tutor were collected from each student and compared in length and quality. In most instances, work was of a similar genre. For example, letter writing or responding about a book. Students were observed to see if they displayed characteristics of beginning and/or developing writers. In addition to content, the following items were looked for in each writing sample: number of words written, spacing between words, simple or complex sentences, number of sentences, capitalization and punctuation use, descriptive writing, spelling, computer use, and neatness. See Chapter Three for a detailed description of each category.

Tables comparing the above characteristics in each writing sample, with and without tutoring help, can be found at the end of this chapter. Original writing samples from targeted students can be found in the Appendix A. Please note that student work samples have been left in their original form and when

quoting student work, the mistakes, including misspellings, are left intentionally.

Results of Writing Samples

Overview

When compared to independent writing, students were more motivated and engaged with their tutors and they produced better quality work. Their writing was longer and included many of the important characteristics of good writing for a beginning writer. Students wrote, on average, more words and sentences, were more likely to use description, capitalization and punctuation, and were three to four more times as likely to use the computer with their tutor. Due to one-on-one time with their tutor and other variables, individual writing samples improved throughout the four month study. An independent reader ranked each student's sixteen writing samples from least proficient to more proficient. (See Table 6) Writing samples with their tutors were found to be more proficient. Independent work towards the end of the study started to out-rank earlier writing samples with their tutors. Independent writing and assisted writing improved over time.

Jim - Without his tutor

Jim used both phonetic and standard spelling. The main difficulty Jim had when he was writing was keeping on task and concentrating on his work so that he finished in a timely manner and didn't rush through it at the last minute in order to finish. Due to his lack of concentration, he often made simple mistakes, such as forgetting to put a word in the middle of the sentence. His story lines were often very simple, as he usually produced the minimum amount that was required. For example, in Jim's second writing sample he wrote about Halloween: "On Halloween I will Trick or treat!"

As seen in Table 1, he produced an average of 15.75 words and 2.5 sentences per writing sample. Only one writing sample in January included descriptive writing. He was more interested in talking about his ideas than writing them down. In his fifth writing sample he wrote a holiday letter to his tutor. The letter reads, "Dear Kenneth, happy HANUKAH. Thank you for helping me. Thanks kenneth? your buddy jim."

He spent time talking about all the things he wanted to write, but when it came time to produce the product, he wrote only fourteen words and made punctuation and capitalization errors.

Jim - With his tutor

On average Jim wrote more and finished his writing on time when he worked with his tutor. As seen in Table 1 he averaged 27 words and 3.875 sentences per writing sample. When he had someone sitting right next to him, helping him concentrate on his work and not the distractions around him, he produced a better quality product. In his fifth writing sample with his tutor, he wrote,

"Dear santa I want a ball, a robott, a nintendo 64, a cumputer, and a vortex. thank you santa. noke noke whos thre santas hat santas hat who santa hat sleping, from jim."

His letter to Santa not only listed all the items he wanted for Christmas but included a "knock, knock" joke as well. Obviously, more thought went into this letter. Compared to the other December letter he wrote by himself, this one was almost double in length and it displayed characteristics of a developing writer with less errors. Working one-on-one with his tutor allowed him to verbalize, share ideas, organize his thoughts, and write the letter in the given

time. Table 2 shows that 6 out of the 8 samples were completed on the computer. Table 3 shows three out of eight samples had descriptive writing. In writing sample eight he writes on the computer,

“My bobcat has black dots and has orange, white, and yellow fer. He has light green eyes, long wiskers, pink nose, and black ears. He has a furey chin. My bobcat is very tiered and sleepy good by. THE END.”

As seen in Table 8, Jim’s last two writing samples with his tutor included complex sentences. When working with his tutor he was not always rushed to finish and on some occasions he had time to play computer games with his tutor before he left for the day.

Lori - Without tutor

Lori was a good, independent writer from the start. She had many creative ideas and had no problems putting them down on paper. As seen in Table 1 she wrote 31.75 words per sample. As seen in Table 4 she didn’t always do the next step however, and include punctuation and capitals or go back and check her work for omissions and mistakes. Her writing was legible but often messy, often in all capital letters. Her thoughts were usually detailed, but her sentences ran on and on, often without punctuation. For example, in writing sample three she wrote,

“once there LiVeD A A nice cat in the tawn he Was POOR VAIrY POOR NE SEd 12345 NE Was VAIRY Klen What A Nice CAt SED the LADY in the DRESS AND iN the hat the ENd.”

(Once there lived a nice cat in the town. He was poor, very poor. He said, “1,2,3,4,5.” He was very clean. What a nice cat,” said the lady in the dress and in the hat. The end.)

The story was detailed but in most instances she had trouble reading her

work back because there were no sentence breaks, her work was messy, and she rarely used punctuation. She often omitted parts she got confused about when she was reading back stories. Lori had creativity and spelling skills and she was ready to learn editing skills, but someone needed to sit down to teach and assist her with it.

Lori - With tutor

Lori didn't need any story ideas from her partner, but she did receive help in the organizational and editing departments. As seen in Table 10 she wrote detailed sentences in five writing samples, included punctuation in all but two stories, and used capitalization in half of her assignments. Table 1 shows that she wrote an average of 48.875 words per sample. She continued to write creatively and independently. Lori didn't seek out very much help unless she was stuck on the spelling of a word or she was uncertain of the assignment. I noticed her tutor allowed her this creative freedom and only intervened when asked about spelling or to assist her with editing skills. As a result, her stories had fewer run-on sentences and she started using some punctuation. Having someone to read her work to helped Lori self correct simple sentence errors. She continued to write in upper and lower case interchangeably but the punctuation and sentence structure allowed her to read back her work with relative ease. In writing sample six, she wrote,

"When I GRow UP I WANT two DoGS to MAKE PUPPIEs. I WANT MY DOGS to BE DAHLMASHANS. I WANT to BE A ANiMAL DOCTER. IL ViST My MOM AND DAD. AND ALL MY RElitives. WEh I GROW UP I WANT A two StoRy HOUSE AND A POOL. tHE END!"

As time moved on and Lori continued to mature, her writing became

more descriptive. As seen in her eighth writing sample, she used lots of description to write about the snow:

“ In the snow we dug snow houses. out of snow and sticks. my foot sepps (*steps*) showed in the deep snow. we had to dress warm. becuse it was cold out side. I wour my snow boots and my mittens. and my snow hat. and then we went on the ski loft. then we went off for are skiing class. its fun. then we act lunch. what we act chips. and we drank choclete milk. we allso act hot dogs. the end.”

Violet - Without tutor

Violet liked to write. However, she spent a lot of time struggling over using her phonetic spelling versus using correct spelling. On most days, she was obsessed about having everything “correct.” This struggle often slowed her down and limited her creativity. As seen in her individual sample number two, where she was asked to describe a character or animal in a book, she stuck to using simple pattern sentences,

“Moi Bats has a blalk wegin Moi Bats hav pink eirs Moi bats has a brown noos Moi Bats has black white.”

(“My bats has black wings. My bats have pink ears. My bats has a brown nose. My bats has black and white.”)

As seen in Table 1 she wrote an average of 26 words per sample but she often didn't have time to read back her work, correct mistakes, or add punctuation. This is evident in her first writing sample, where she writes,

“On Halloween I will I will go Trick or treat” [no period].

If she had had time to go back and read her work she may have picked up on the errors.

Violet - With tutor

As evident in the Table 12, Violet wrote, not only an average of 35 words

per sample, with more description and detailed sentences. As seen in writing sample number one with her tutor, she wrote,

“Witch. on halloween i am going to bee a witch. i am going to have a black hat, black chrt, and a orange skrt.”

(Witch. on Halloween I am going to be a witch. I am going to have a black hat, black shirt, and an orange skirt.)

When she was with her tutor, in most instances, she didn't get hung up on using standard, “correct” spelling and instead used her phonetic spelling. This enabled her to focus more on her storyline and creativity. As seen in her second sample with her tutor, Violet used lots of description to describe a character in a book.

“She has red hare, green eyes, a long purpl nos, a yellow dress, blue shoos, and a sad face. She has a long droopy chin and a ring.”

(“She has read hair, green eyes, a long purple nose, a yellow dress, blue shoes, and a sad face. She has a long droopy chin and a ring.)

After producing all this writing, she even had time to draw a picture to go along with her work. She accomplished a lot more when her tutor was around. As seen in the Table 2, she published on the computer for all eight writing samples. Violet used punctuation in six out of eight writing samples, as seen in Table 4. Her writing confidence benefited from the one-on-one help her tutor gave her, as her tutor helped her sound out words and develop her ability to spell words independently. Throughout the months, as Violet grew in confidence, her creativity started to come through as she wrote using her imagination. For example, in sample six she wrote,

“Ferst sarah bid a snowman. Thin a rainbow came, and tha had a

snowball fit. Tha opened the presins and thn tha eat diher and thin tha wint tobed.”

(First Sarah built a snowman. Then a rainbow came and then we had a snowball fight. Then we opened presents and then after that we ate dinner and then went to bed.)

Trent - Without tutor

When this study started, Trent was slow and very insecure about his writing abilities. He chose to do simple, pattern sentences, often writing only one or two sentences. He often got stuck at words he didn't know how to spell and was hesitant to ask others for help. By November, Trent started to take some risks, but still was overly concerned with everything from letter formation to spelling corrections. He would do the basic assignments but didn't go back and look at his work and often didn't notice omissions of words and capitals. As seen in Table 13, he paid attention to punctuation and capitals in only half of his writing samples. It is seen in Table 1 that he wrote an average of 11.625 words and 2 sentences. As we approached December, Trent continued to work slowly and quietly and was hesitant to ask others for help or share ideas. He was content to figure out everything himself. He started to use his phonetic spelling more often but wrote simple sentences that lacked description, details, and punctuation. For example, in his eighth writing sample, he wrote down just one sentence on a winter activity.

“I on tahe witr's day I wuld go slidy” [no period].

(“I on Tahoe winter's day I would go sledding”)

He used his phonetic spelling, but the idea at the beginning of the sentence was unclear.

Trent - With tutor

In the beginning Trent's tutor either took dictation or told him how to spell all the words needed to write his story. Trent liked this and for the first time I saw him verbalizing his thoughts before he wrote. Having someone to work with one-on-one allowed him to produce more work, as the length of his writing samples increased dramatically. As seen in Table 4, he paid attention to capitalization seven out of eight times and in six out of eight instances he used punctuation. Keeping in mind that five out of eight writing samples were dictated to his tutor, he produced an average of 37.5 words. The philosophy behind allowing Trent to dictate his stories was so that he would open up and share his ideas instead of laboring over the spelling and sounds of each word he was trying to make. While developing his oral language skills and building up his confidence level, this serious, young boy started opening up. Trent's tutor did most of the spelling up until December and then his tutor and I required him to do more of the spelling himself. It was somewhat of a struggle for Trent to make this transition, but by the end of January he took responsibility for his own story writing. As seen in his eighth writing sample, Trent works with more detailed sentences and his personality starts to come out in his writing.

"I like to make snow anoles in the snow. I like to have snow balls
7fighr. It took two hurs. 7"

*("I like to make snow animals in the snow. I like to have snowball
fights. It took two hours.")*

Katerina - Without tutor

Due to Katerina's lack of letter and sound recognition and poor fine motor skills, she had trouble writing. She worked very slowly as she tried to copy

words from the board, books, and or dictionary. As seen in Table 1, she produced a low number of words per sample, an average of 4.85 in her first seven writing samples. Many things on the table were not checked off because she was not yet functioning at a beginning writing stage, but still working at an emerging writing stage.

She was also very easily distracted which added to her difficulty. She was very social and was able to tell stories orally, but writing down her thoughts was very difficult for her in the regular classroom setting. As you can see in writing sample number two, where she was asked to write about her favorite part of a story, she only produced two words, "Dogs celebration," both of which she struggled to copy from the book. Ultimately, she erased "celebration". Perhaps because writing was such a struggle for her during this half hour time period she spent most of her time off-task, either talking or playing with her pencil. She was not yet at a stage where she was able to write independently. It wasn't until January that she started writing simple sentences, as seen in sample number seven:

Mybear has white
My bearsi Jessica
My bearishoney
Myisstore
Helesttwomsnowmon" [no period].

(My bear has white. My bear is Jessica. My bear is honey. He likes it when he is a snowman.)

She still wrote without spaces and periods, but combined her own phonetic spelling and words that she copied from different sources. She still continued to work slowly, but was writing more.

Katerina - With her tutor

Working with her tutor allowed Katerina to dictate all her ideas. She was very verbal and had no problem telling stories in detail. Katerina sometimes drew pictures about her stories and then dictated them to her tutor. Katerina was pleased that her ideas were put down on paper. Her oral language and vocabulary developed. Her tutor did most of the writing until January when Katerina started to express the desire to do it herself. She used her dictionary to copy words related to one topic, "chicks" sample number seven:

"chicks. orange. ngee. yellow fur. black,eyes reb peecks. cute. chicas."

(Chicks. orange. yellow fur. black eyes. red beaks. cute chicks.)

Katerina continued to be easily distracted and playful but her tutor constantly tried to draw her back into her work.

When Katerina worked on the computer, she copied the dictated story. Her partner helped her find and recognize letters and their sounds. Her tutor helped her with tracking and keeping her place as she copied the words from her story. She reminded Katerina if she forgot spaces and letters or if she skipped words. Katerina enjoyed the ease of writing that the computer offered and, at the same time, learned letter recognition and developed fine motor skills. As seen in Table 2, all her writing samples were written neatly on the computer.

Randy - Without tutor

Randy had a vivid imagination and could tell long, detailed stories but he could not produce a lot of writing in the beginning of the school year. His writing samples averaged five words per story in the first five samples. He expressed

his ideas verbally and with pictures or with copying words as seen in sample one:

“cat hot red gus tv rain ten [no period].”

He struggled with poor fine motor skills and often his work was messy and illegible. As seen in Table 17, 3 out of 8 samples were not written neatly. He was often distracted and spent time daydreaming. Even as his use of phonetic spelling increased his messiness often made his stories difficult to read and most often he was unable to remember and read back what he had written. Without individual help, Randy often struggled through writing and did not produce much writing. He did not pay much attention to capitalization, punctuation, and descriptive writing until January.

Randy - With tutor

When Randy was able to dictate his stories he was able to share his ideas with others. For example in writing sample number four about dinosaurs he tells,

“Dinosaurs lived a long time ago. When they did they roamed the planet and usually fought to decide who was king. Usually the T-Rex won all the fights. so he was the king dinosaur.”

Randy had the opportunity to discuss topics and books of interest at great length with his tutor. His stories increased in length and in details. Table 18 shows that Randy used punctuation and capitals in more than half of his samples and that three samples included descriptive writing. When Randy copied stories on the computer he received practice in letter recognition and formation. Using the computer instead of pencil and paper allowed him to write down his ideas without the frustration of letter formation and neatness.

Towards the end of the study, he was able to focus and concentrate on his work because his tutor helped him stay on-task and sound out his words. As seen in his last writing sample, he made the transition to using his phonetic spelling quite easily and his stories included lots of details and creativity. In sample eight he writes about how a mountain lion looks in a magazine picture,

“Mafn the montnlio haz snow oin itohtenen is a moontnlion. there are roks. the cat has a pink nose. he ha a red fur coat. he has hup klos hehas litgreen iss. he has wit and black. he is a big cat htee is snow on. he has wit gin. is a rile big blue sie. ”

(My mountain lion has snow on it. He is a mountain lion. There are rocks. The cat has a pink nose. He has a red fur coat. He has sharp claws. He has light green eyes. He has white and black. He is a big cat. He has snow on it. He has white grin. There is a really big, blue sky.)

Results of Independent Reader

The independent reader was given the instructions to read the characteristics of quality writing I had written, read each writing sample, and then rank each student's 16 writing samples from least proficient to more proficient. Without knowing any information about the child, she ranked their writing samples and her findings can be found in Table 6.

Looking at the data in Table 6, the independent reader ranked the majority of the samples written with a tutor as more proficient. The majority of all students' independent work was ranked in the lower half of the ranking as least proficient. However, the ranking does show that for the most part, student's individual, as well as assisted work, improved over time. Some students' individual writing samples written towards the end of the study surpassed in ranking some of the earlier samples they had written with a tutor. For example:

Jim's eighth individual sample was ranked fourteenth, Violet's sixth and seventh individual sample ranked tenth and eleventh, and Randy's eighth individual sample ranked twelfth. All students' last writing sample with their tutor ranked somewhere between twelfth and sixteenth. The ranking results done by the independent reader supports my belief that student work with a tutor was better quality writing.

Interviews, Video Observations, and Student Journals

As a participant-observer, sessions were videotaped and notes were taken after viewing. Students were interviewed between 7 - 9 times during the course of the study. Students had the opportunity to respond in journals about their feelings and interactions with their tutor. Each session was analyzed for:

1. On-task behaviors - Were tutee and tutor working on appropriate projects in a timely manner?
2. Quality of interactions - Were tutoring partners involved in literacy development in some manner, whether it was reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities? Were they actually interacting and sharing thoughts and ideas? Were sessions dominated by tutee or tutor or both?
3. Technology - Were students engaged when they worked on the computers?
4. Motivational and excitement - Did tutoring pairs appear to be happily writing and working together on or off the computer?

Due to my limitations as a teacher as researcher, I wasn't able to extensively look at each one of these four characteristics each time with each student. However, these characteristics were analyzed over the course of this study.

Student Interviews

Targeted students were interviewed 7 - 8 times throughout the study about their experiences with their tutors. Questions from journals were discussed in detail and or students described their interactions or work with me. Interviews were no longer than five minutes in length and occurred at recess time. Interviews were either taped and transcribed or notes were taken during the course of the interview. Excerpts of interviews, organized by child and topic, can be found in Appendix B.

Student Interview Results

Overview

Some main themes were very apparent through analyzing the student interviews. Students enjoyed working with tutors for the following reasons: tutors were nice and helpful, exchanges were fun and productive, it was easier to work with someone than working alone, tutors helped tutees on spelling, it was good to have someone to talk to and share ideas with, and computer time together was enjoyable. Students talked about how they liked working on the computer the best because it was fun and it was easier than writing a story with paper and pencil. Students stated that they enjoyed writing with their tutor and that they got more work done with them.

Jim

Throughout the course of the study Jim stated that having a tutor was fun and that his tutor helped him with writing. As I analyzed Jim's interviews, the things that especially stood out were the importance of his being able to talk to someone about his work, the spelling help he received, and his excitement for the computer.

His attitude towards and motivational level to write increased when he was working with a buddy. He felt that the work was fun and easier with a buddy. He thought of his tutor as a friend and as someone to help him. The following interview pointed out the importance of his tutoring partnership:

Interviewer: Did your buddy help you with your story today?

Jim: Yeah.

I: How did he help you?

J: He helping me with the letters.

I: What do you like about your work?

J: Fine.

I: What is the best thing about your work?

J: I like the picture.

I: What do you like about the picture?

J: It's just cool!

I: What's cool about it?

J: It's just so cool.

I: Did you do the picture yourself?

J: No.

I: Who helped you do the picture?

J: My tutor.

I: Did you tell him what to do for the picture?

J: Yeah.

I: Did you talk a lot about how to draw the picture?

J: Yeah, last time we met we did.

I: Did you have fun talking with your buddy?

J: Yeah.

I: Why?

J: Because it was f - f- fun!

I: What do you like about having a buddy?

J: It's cool.

I: Sounds like you guys are good friends.

J: Yeah.

I: How does it feel to have a good friend?

J: Nice.

Jim did have some good times with his tutor. However, after a period of two months he had some behavioral difficulties with his tutor. Because Jim was very active and easily distracted by his peers and the environment he occasion-

ally had trouble staying on task with his tutor. He wanted to talk more than write. He easily went off topic or couldn't sit still, which frustrated his tutor. It is important to note, however, that working individually, without a tutor, Jim was twice as distracted and got less work done than with a tutor attempting to help him. In a regular classroom, even with a twenty to one ratio, Jim had a harder time focusing and finishing his work. Although his tutor had less patience than I had hoped for, he did try a few tactics to keep Jim on task. During the interviews, Jim talks about trying to be calm and concentrating. As seen in the interview below, there was evidence that Jim was working on proper behavior needed to focus and finish his work:

December

I: What did your buddy do to help you?

J: He helped me sound out the words.

I: What else did he help you with?

J: He helped me be calm.

I: How did he help you be calm?

J: He tapped me or I tapped him when he was talking to someone else.

I: What worked really well today?

J: Huh. It was a medium day.

I: Why medium?

J: Only a little bit of fooling around.

In the course of three interview samples Jim makes two references about concentrating on his work. He has made the important connection between concentrating and getting work done. He mentions that working calmly and listening to his tutor has helped him finish his work.

Jim's tutoring interactions were rich with literacy activities, whether it be through oral language expression, reading a book, or writing a story on or off the computer. Jim was very concerned about spelling words correctly in his work. As seen in the next excerpt:

January

I: What did your tutor help you with?

J: He helped me with sounding out words. He helped me with the computer. He helped me read.

I: How did your work turn out when you finished with a project your tutor helped you on?

J: Fine. He helped me sound out words. If I didn't have a buddy I would spell it wrong.

I: What were your feeling towards your work?

J: My work made me feel good - it turned out good.

Jim made many references that he was pleased that his tutor helped him sound out words he wanted to spell. Given that little extra needed help gave Jim a sense of accomplishment and allowed him to focus on the content of his paper and not the mechanics of spelling.

Jim thought that working on the computer was the best thing about working with a tutor. Jim and his tutor spent a lot of time "playing" with the computer and learning new software. As seen in the following excerpt, working on the computer was seen as a fun activity or a game.

I: What did you do today Jim?

J: I got to work on the computer. It was fun.

I: What was fun about it?

J: It was cool.

I: What was cool about it?

J: I like it! I like it!

Jim made four references about having fun on the computer. He talked about liking it because, "It is so cool!" He learned special features, such as using pictures in lieu of words and having the computer read back a selection. He learned these two features with the help of his tutor. Individually Jim may not have found those features. He also was exposed to a variety of different software with his tutor. On his own, Jim did not have the opportunity to use a

variety of software due to time and his behavioral constraints. Exposure and time on the computer with his tutor was a definite positive learning experience for Jim.

Lori

The most recurrent theme that ran through Lori's interviews was that she liked receiving help with spelling. She also stated that she enjoyed having someone to talk with and help her with the work, especially with the picture part. She talked about how her buddy helped her write and learn "bigger grade stuff" on the computer.

Lori is a developing writer. She writes on a variety of topics and freely using phonetic spelling. She was ready to make the next step, the transition to using more standard spelling, so spelling words, especially "big" ones was of particular interest to her as seen in the following excerpt from one of our interviews together:

January

I: What was the best thing about having a buddy?

L: She helped me spell big words. I really don't know how to spell big words. She sort of helps me.

I: How did you feel when your work had those big words in it?

L: It felt good when she helped me.

Lori made references to spelling in 8 out of 9 interviews. From her statements, it appeared that receiving this help made her feel better about her self as a writer. She stated that when her tutor was not around it was harder to spell big words because no one was right there to help her.

Lori enjoyed working on the computer. She liked to add pictures and print her work. She stated that her tutor helped her on the computer, with editing skills, the technical components of using a computer, and adding

graphics. The following excerpt is from an interview in which she discussed computer use:

January

I: Did you do the writing by yourself today?

L: Yes.

I: Then what did you do after you finished the writing on paper?

L: We wrote it on the computer. I did the top, first part, and my buddy did the second part.

I: Why did you do it that way?

L: Because there were a lot of words.

I: What else did your partner help you with?

L: She helped me find a picture.

As seen in the above interview, Lori actively and excitedly used the computers to write her stories with her tutor. She made 12 references to computers during our interviews. There was a lot of interaction, not only with the technology, but with each other as her tutor helped her with editing, revising, and adding graphics. Because Lori's stories were so long her tutor would occasionally take turns typing for her. This allowed Lori to concentrate on the content of her paper and on editing skills. I believe that giving her more one-on-one time on the computer was a contributing factor in producing a better quality writing sample.

Violet

Violet consistently talked about how nice her tutor was and that she helped her do her work. The following excerpt was an example:

October

I: And how did it go today with your partner? Did you like working with your partner?

V: Yeah!

I: Why did you like working with your partner?

V: Because she's nice.

I: What did she do that was nice?

V: She helped me and on the black cat I couldn't do it so she helped me write it.

There were six references to her enjoyment in having a partner to work with. I believe that the fact that she had someone to work with her on a regular basis had a positive effect on this relatively withdrawn and shy girl. The companionship of someone who cared affected her mood and her writing ability.

Violet enjoyed writing stories with her tutor, especially on the computer. When Violet wrote independently she often did not get much computer time because she worked so slowly. Using the computer was a real incentive for writing when she was working with her tutor because she received one-on-one help. In the following interview she talked about the ease of writing on the computer:

January

I: What was the best thing about having a buddy?

V: Having her to help me.

I: Did you enjoy each other.

V: Yes.

I: What did you enjoy the most?

V: Working together on things. I like working on the computer.

I: Why did you like that?

V: Because it's more easier because if you don't know how to write a word the computer will write it for you in case you get stuck. Like I didn't know how to write a "g" a long time ago and the computer could write it for me and then I knew how it was suppose to look.

Violet made many references to liking writing on the computer. She stated that it was fun to write stories. She talked about how it was easier to type letters on the keyboard than writing them down with a pencil. With students developing fine motor skills, pushing a key on a keyboard is often much easier

than forming the letters on paper with a pencil. The computer is seen as more “user-friendly.” Violet talked about completing more work on the computer because it was easier. She referred to the fact that she learned some technical things about computers, such as putting in spaces, finding and accessing a menu to use in a writing processing program, adding pictures, and typing stories. She mentioned that she can now type stories at home too. Not only was she able to learn new information, but she was able to apply it at home as well.

Violet stated that it was easier to work with a partner than working alone:

October

I: Did you like working with a buddy?

V: Yes! It's more easier and you can get stuff done more quickly. Sometimes they help you sound out words or write some and you get done faster.

She declared that more work can be done, ideas can be shared and, most importantly, spelling help can be given.

November

I: How did you come up with all those describing words in your writing?

V: I read a book.

I: How did your buddy help you with this?

V: She sounded out describing words and I thought they were good ones.

I: What do you like best about your picture and writing?

V: Spelling.

I: What about the spelling?

V: Because I like spelling.

I: What did you learn when you did this project?

V: How to spell like some more words.

I: What did your buddy help you with this week?

V: Helping me spell some words.

Interacting with her tutor allowed Violet to share ideas verbally and to develop her spelling confidence. Allowing her to verbalize her ideas helped

her concentrate and develop a storyline. Getting one-on-one help allowed her to feel successful with the spelling of words. She was able to put down a lot of her ideas down on paper and learned new words as well. Having a tutoring buddy was a success!

Trent

Trent is a reserved and shy child. Having someone to work with one-on-one provided him with an opportunity to open up a little bit. During our interviews, he talked about how it was nice to have someone to talk to and share ideas with.

November

I: Did you talk about your ideas?

T: Yes.

I: Did it help to have someone to talk to?

T: Yes.

I: Why did it help to have someone to talk to?

T: Because if you can't spell out a word you can ask someone else. Then you can get the word right.

I: What about when you get stuck about an idea, what does your buddy do?

T: You can ask your buddy if he has any ideas.

I: Does your buddy do that sometimes with you?

T: Yes.

I: Do you like sharing ideas?

T: Yes.

Trent used his tutor try out off his ideas before writing them down. Because he lacked confidence, it was good for him to verbalize his stories before writing them. During independent writing time, he was often slow to write because most of his time was spent on thinking of an idea or trying to decide how to write what he wanted to say. Having someone to verbalize with helped build his writing confidence and improved his work samples.

For most of the four-month study Trent lacked confidence in spelling words by himself. Having someone to help him spell words was very important.

October

I: How did it go Trent?

T: It went great.

I: What was great about today?

T: Because he helped me sound out words.

I: How did it feel when you were finished with your work?

T: Great!

In six of the interviews he mentioned how his tutor helped him sound out words. He mentioned that finishing his work made him feel great. Having the tutor there to help him sound out words sped up his writing and, because of it, he started to write more words and sentences. By January, he started sounding out most of the words by himself and writing so much more than in the beginning of the year. Working with a tutor helped to develop his phonetic knowledge and use in spelling new words. This skill transferred over into his independent writing time. He became more motivated to write and happier to do writing assignments.

Trent stated that he enjoyed working on the computer because he saw it as fun:

January

I: What fun things did you do with your buddy?

T: On the computer, we did projects, you can make stuff, like drawing.

I: What did you do on the computer with your buddy?

T: Type stories.

I: What was that like?

T: It was fun.

I: What did your buddy teach you about the computer?

T: He helps me a lot. He helped me print pictures. He taught me how to spell words on the computer.

Trent made references about computers being fun. He talked about

learning new things, such as adding pictures, changing font size, and typing new words. When using the computer, he was engaged with typing his stories and learning some technical aspects of using a computer.

Katerina

Katerina talked mostly about enjoying the computer and having her buddy help her with the actual writing of words. Katerina had very poor fine motor skills. Left alone to write she often spent five to ten minutes writing one small word, often erasing it numerous times and looking at an alphabet strip for the correct formation. On her own, she tried to avoid writing whenever possible and usually drew a picture instead. She did not know all her letter names and sounds as well. Combining all these factors together, I knew it would be beneficial for her to dictate her stories. She was a very good story teller and liked to talk. Getting those ideas down on paper was the main task of her tutor:

November

I: What did you do before you went on the computer?

K: My buddy wrote the words I told her down on the paper.

I: How did she write the words down?

K: I told her what to write down.

I: Was it nice that she wrote down the words for you?

K: Yeah.

I: Did it make it easier for you?

K: Yeah.

I: Is it hard for you to write down the words?

K: Yeah.

I: Why?

K: Sometimes I get confused.

I: What do you get confused about?

K: The writing.

I: What's hard about it for you?

K: Writing the words mom and dad.

I: You mean spelling out words?

K: Yeah.

I: Now last week when you did a story without your buddy was it

hard?
K: Yeah.
I: Why?
K: Because I had to do all the writing.
I: Did you finish today with your buddy?
K: Yeah.
I: How did that feel to finish?
K: Good.

Because Katerina was such a social girl, she was content to share her ideas verbally. Having someone to talk to allowed her to feel success. She talked about how beautiful it was to share with someone. Because she was given the option of dictation, she actually finished most of her work. It was not very often that she finished her work when she was working by herself. Giving her this option allowed her to feel successful.

The computer was another great resource for Katerina. The ease of writing words on the computer was enticing. The computer was also seen as fun and easy:

October
I: What did you do on the computer?
K: We write about me and that I am gonna be a witch.
I: And how was it when you wrote on the computers?
K: Fun.
I: What was fun about it?
K: Writing.
I: Who did the writing?
K: Me and my buddy.
I: How did you work that out? How did you decide who was going to write?
K: I don't know.
I: Did you feel good about writing?
K: Yeah.
I: Did you find letters on the keyboard?
K: Yeah.
I: What was hard about the computer today?
K: Nothing.

I: What was easy?
K: Everything.

Katerina consistently brought up computers during interviews. When asked at the beginning of each interview what she had worked on for that week, she talked about computers before anything else in five interviews. She discussed it in 6 out of 8 interviews. Katerina made four references to the ease of using a keyboard versus using a pencil.

Randy

Randy preferred to work with his buddy versus working alone. Being a very social person, he enjoyed interacting with people and as seen in the interview excerpt below, he clearly understood the benefits of having someone help him:

January

I: Would you rather work alone or with a buddy?

R: With a buddy.

I: Why?

R: It would be harder alone because there would be no one to help you.

I: Do you want to continue having buddies come or do you want to stop?

R: I liked having them come because they helped us.

Randy stated numerous times that working alone was much harder than with someone. He declared that it was much easier when you had someone helping you with your work. He liked the attention and the social interaction, but most importantly he liked receiving help, especially with writing.

While it was true Randy enjoyed the social interaction of tutoring, he realized that when he was with his tutor he should concentrate on his work. Randy was a very easily distracted student who was interested in everything

around him. He had a very vivid imagination and a funny sense of humor which often led him to get carried away. Having someone work with him one-on-one helped him concentrate on his work:

January

I: How did your work turn out when you were finished with a project that your buddy helped you on?

R: Good.

I: Why?

R: We concentrated.

I: What were your feelings towards your work?

R: I felt good because I finished my work.

I: What was the best thing about your work?

R: The best thing was that I finished.

Because Randy was easily distracted and slow to write due to poor fine motor skills, it was very important for him to learn to finish his work. In the beginning of the school year it was very hard for him to complete his work in the given time. Often, work was not completed or he had to spend more time on it while the other students moved on to other projects. He knew it was important to complete his work. He was more focused when he worked with his tutor. While working with his tutor, he started to learn the connection that concentration and peacefulness could lead him to that goal.

Randy had very poor motor skills. He did enjoy writing, but often it was hard for even him to decipher what he had written. He either endlessly labored over each letter formation, which slowed down his writing, or he wrote quickly and illegibly. Either way it held back his writing progress. Allowing him to use the computer or dictate a story to his tutor was the perfect solution. Randy liked using the computer because it was easier to push keys on the keyboard than form letters with a pencil. Dictating a story to his tutor was another option that

he liked also. He remained excited and motivated to write because these special measures enabled him to express his ideas.

January

I: Did you like going on the computer today?

R: Yes.

I: Why?

R: It's easier.

I: Why is it easier?

R: Because you don't have to write by hand.

I: Do you like to write with the computer keys better?

R: Yeah. Because it's easier.

I: Why is it easier?

R: You just push a button and then it shows it on the screen.

I: What about if you make a mistake? Is it easier or harder on the computer?

R: Easier. Because you just push another key.

I: What do you push the other key for?

R: To erase!

I: Does it erase easy when you are doing the writing with a pencil?

R: No!

I: How come?

R: Because you have to rub your pencil against the paper.

In three interviews he stated that it was easier to write on the computer or have someone write down your story dictation than do the writing on his own. Randy is one of those kids just bursting with ideas and you can actually see his face light up when he is telling a story. He adds amazing details and lots of description. You can tell he almost thinks faster than he can talk. Allowing him these two options gave him the opportunity to successfully share his ideas. Instead of becoming a frustrated young writer he remained motivated.

Video Observations

In most instances, a video tape recorder was set up on a tripod during each session. I left it alone except to periodically move it to tape another

targeted student. Tapes were viewed after each week of tutoring and notes were taken on my observations. Due to time constraints, not all interactions between partners were taped and only pieces of targeted students' interactions from each session were analyzed. Samples of notes taken after viewing tapes can be found in Appendix C.

Results of Video Observations

Overview

When viewing the video tapes, I noted that students were engaged in a variety of literacy activities such as reading and writing on and off the computer, listening and sharing ideas with each other, and drawing pictures together. For the most part students worked on-task with their tutors during tutoring sessions. When students worked off-task, their tutors intervened in attempts to get them back working again. Tutoring pairs were very involved with discussing and sharing ideas. Some video clips show students working intently on the computer with tutors assisting tutees when necessary with typing and procedures, such as printing or changing the font. Overall, students were very actively involved with each other and many video tapings showed students smiling and laughing as they worked with their tutor.

Jim

Throughout his video clips, Jim was seen being read to or reading to his partner, writing on and off the computer, talking with his partner, acting out stories, using manipulatives, and drawing pictures.

The following scenario was taken from my notes on a video clip where Jim and his partner work on-task writing a story on the computer:

Jim is working on computer. His tutor shows him how to have the computer read back what he's typed. Jim puts on headphones and listens. Tutor puts hands on Jim's shoulders to keep him focused on the computer. Jim is working on task. Jim engaged in this new trick. Jim adds more to his story. He has the computer read it again. Jim distracted by another printer printing something. Tutor is trying to get him to focus back on his story. Tutor tugs at his shoulder. Jim starts back at his story. Both students look at paper. They have the computer read it again. Jim starts typing again. He has computer read it again. He starts laughing at the computer voice. He says, "the computer doesn't know how to spell vortex." Jim wants to erase it so it will say it right. Tutor tells him that it is ok as is.

Jim had many good days with his tutor. However, the most apparent theme throughout my notes on Jim's video clips was that he was seen either on-task, happily working, or he was seen off-task, having difficulty working and getting along with his tutor. In reviewing my notes, I found that in most instances Jim was on-task when one or more of the following conditions existed: he was working on the computer, his partner engaged in a lot of discussion about his writing with him, and his partner read to him a book he picked out. When his partner gave him feedback and worked on something patiently, with Jim he did much better.

He was off-task when his partner asked him to do the majority of the work by himself, and when there was little interaction between them, there were other things that easily distracted him. Jim was a challenging student to keep engaged and focused. His tutor tried a number of techniques, such as verbal reminders to concentrate, tapping him on the shoulder to get his attention, having him sit in one place, and asking him questions about his work to help draw him back into the assignment. On the days Jim was really off-task, his

tutor would get very frustrated and lose his patience. On one occasion, he said something that hurt Jim's feeling and the rest of the session was spent trying to get him to stop crying and to cheer up. Eventually, he started reading a new book and Jim stopped moping around and started concentrating on the book.

Despite the occasional disagreement or problem, there was a lot of smiling, talking and laughing. Jim especially loved the opportunity to discuss his writing topics, books, and personal events with his tutor. Some clips show the pair sharing the pencil and working on spelling and on neatness. On many occasions, Jim's tutor was seen making suggestions or asking him to add more details in his writing. One clip showed Jim's tutor reading a passage Jim had written and asking him if it made sense. Upon hearing the sentence, Jim made changes.

Jim was very happily engaged when read to or assisted on the computer. He would frequently ask if they could work on the computer. On some occasions I would use computer time as an incentive for good behavior and work, and Jim would try to quickly comply with my demands so that he had the opportunity to use the computer. Jim enjoyed the opportunity to learn new things on the computer. He was taped one session when he learned how to have the computer read back what he wrote. He laughed at the way the computer talked and after each sentence he would continue to have the computer read it. It was obvious by his engagement with the computer that he was motivated to write on it.

Lori

All of Lori's video clips show her working on task intently reading, writing, discussing, and drawing. Lori did the majority of the work

independently. Her tutor was seen in most instances waiting patiently next to her in case she was needed. Lori was observed being engaged in activities and was seen finishing her work and asking to do more. Lori didn't appear to need much interaction from her tutor to work on her writing.

When interaction did occur, it did so when Lori asked for spelling or editing assistance as seen in the following notes taken from a video clip:

Lori reads her story to tutor. Tutor points to the paper. Lori looks at the paper, rereads it, and erases. Lori writes. Her tutor watches. Her tutor points out a word. The tutor asks Lori a question. Lori answers it. Her tutor helps Lori sound the word out.

Other interactions occurred when Lori was working on the computer. At times Lori asked for help and her tutor was seen helping her with changing font sizes, printing, adding a picture, and occasionally taking turns typing in previously composed stories.

Violet

Violet had good and bad days working with her tutor. In general, Violet had difficulties working with others. As seen in some video clips she displayed some anti-social behaviors, such as ignoring her tutor, walking away from her tutor, and stubbornly not working on her assignments. Her behavior was unpredictable from one session to another. It is important to note that over time, her behavior began improving. This could be due to a number of factors, such as adjusting and feeling comfortable with her tutor over time. However, quite the contrary happened when she worked with a substitute tutor who assisted her when her regular tutor was absent. She did quite well, actually better than with her regular tutor. So it is quite possible that when difficulties arose between Violet and her tutor, it was more a clash of personalities than stub-

bornness on Violet's part.

A few clippings showed Violet having interesting conversations on her writing topics. For a child who withdraws from whole class discussions because of her shyness and insecurities, this was a good opportunity for her to share her thoughts in a less threatening environment. In one clipping, where Violet was writing Santa a letter, she had a detailed conversation with her partner about Santa's reindeer:

Violet reads her paper. The two discuss why Santa uses reindeer. Violet answers, "To get around the world." Her tutor replies, " Well, why doesn't he use horses?" Violet laughs. The two look at map. Violet says, "Santa comes here in California." Tutor asks, "Where is that?" Violet answers, "Here!" as she points to the state of California.

Many clips show Violet working on the computer. On two occasions, she asked excitedly if they could go do their work on the computer. She worked intently yet slowly as she searched for the keys on the keypad. Her tutor was seen helping her when Violet allowed it or asked for it. On one occasion, Violet asked about the font size while another time her partner showed her how to add spaces with the space bar. Otherwise, Violet worked pretty independently on the computer.

Violet appeared to enjoy drawing and listening to her tutor read to her the most. In many video clips Violet was seen drawing about her writing with her tutor. Violet often asked for help in this department as she was overly concerned with everything always looking perfect. The pair was seen looking through books for ideas on pictures. In another instance, Violet was seen sitting closely, listening intently, and occasionally watching her tutor's face as she read to her. Violet appeared most comfortable sharing her crayons and lending an

ear to a good story.

Trent

The most obvious theme throughout my notes on Trent's video observations was the literacy-rich interaction. Both boys could be seen discussing topics, sharing reading and writing responsibilities, drawing objects where both taught each other a few new things, and laughing and joking around. The following video clip, taken as the boys worked on a computer story, was an example of such interaction:

Tutor spells word for Trent. Trent smiles at something tutor said and points to the top of the computer screen. Trent continues the typing. His tutor types a word. Trent is back to typing. Tutor points to screen. Trent continues typing. Tutor points to space bar. Trent smiles at tutor. The two discuss something. Trent types. Tutor points out something and tries to do the typing but Trent stops him from doing it as he wants to do it. Trent continues typing. Boys laugh again. Boys talk. Tutor types in a few letters. Trent takes over again.

Trent was very engaged during his tutoring time. In fact, even if chaos and noise were around him he continued to be engaged in his writing as he was focused on finishing his work. When work was finished he appeared to enjoy drawing pictures to go with the story. He shared the drawing responsibilities with his partner. Trent liked having someone do the pictures with him as he was quite concerned with making everything look perfect. However, during one session that I observed, Trent actually took a risk in showing his partner how to draw hands and other objects. On another occasion the two boys worked intently on drawing both their names in bubble letters and cutting them out to add to a poster they had created together.

Trent was anxious to write on the computer. In the beginning of the

study, Trent dictated most of his stories to his tutor but then he typed most of them on the computer by himself. His tutor helped him keep his spot as he transferred his paper copy onto the computer. His tutor would point out errors or help with procedures, such as printing and finding pictures. The two appeared to enjoy playing games on the computer after regular work was done. They would take turns and discover new software together.

The most important item I observed was that, at the conclusion of analyzing my notes on Trent, I noticed that he moved towards working more independently towards the end of the study.

Katerina

Out of 34 short video clips Katerina appeared to be working 21 times on-task with her tutor. Of those 21 times she was engaged mostly with verbal sharing of her ideas and stories, drawing, or working on the computer. When her partner read to her she sat and listened to the story and looked at the pictures. She appeared to enjoy any opportunity to draw and color pictures because that was what she enjoyed best. Being an elaborate and creative story teller she did lots of talking with her partner and liked it when her partner took dictation. The following notes were taken while Katerina and her partner worked on a letter to Santa on the computer:

The pair is sitting at the computer. Katerina's partner is taking dictation as she types. Katerina is looking on. Katerina turns around. Her partner turns her back around towards the computer to do some typing. Katerina gets up to ask me a question about what question to ask Santa. After a short discussion with the teacher, the two discuss it together. Katerina's partner types a question in for her. Her partner asks her what picture she wants to add. Katerina squiggles in her chair. Her partner asks her to sit down. Katerina tells her partner some more to type. Katerina engaged while sharing her ideas. Her partner

reads back what she has written. Katerina corrects her and her partner makes the changes.

She was more likely to be off-task when she was asked to do some of the reading and writing. When something was too hard for her, she resorted with silly or off-task behavior, such as playing with a pencil or sweater, moving around, or talking to her neighbors. Her partner resorted to verbal reminders to do her work or with physical touch, like turning her head towards her work or tapping her hand to get her to concentrate.

Katerina's partner made attempts to help make things easier for her. She was more than happy to take dictation and help Katerina draw pictures. She was very patient and friendly. After a few sessions of being easily distracted by others around her, she moved them behind the teacher's desk where there were little or no distractions. She was seen making an alphabet strip for Katerina to look at when she was uncertain of the formation of letters. She pointed out letters and keys on the computer keyboard.

Randy

I observed Randy smiling and laughing a lot with his partner. It appeared that he really looked up to and respected his partner as he can be seen looking intently at his face when he was talking, sitting closely as he read a book, and even occasionally sitting affectionately on his partner's lap as they worked. He appeared to be the most motivated to write after reading a story together. Most of the clips show Randy getting ideas about writing after reading books together. The following clip is an example of such an incident:

Randy's partner reads a story. Next Randy starts to flip through the book to find his favorite part. His partner waits patiently as Randy looks for it. Randy finds a part he likes and

talks about it with his partner. Randy continues to talk about it with his partner as his face lights up excitedly. Randy takes out a piece of paper and starts writing about it. Randy scoots up to sit on his partner's lap. His partner asks him a question about what he is writing. His partner rereads his favorite section to him. Randy listens intently.

Randy carried that same enthusiasm with him as they worked on the computer. When finished with a sentence on the computer, he smiled. Another smile was seen stretching from ear-to-ear when he printed two copies of a story with a picture. He took his time looking through all the pictures before deciding on just the right one. On one occasion after his partner took dictation about a story, Randy exclaimed, "Wow! That's a lot!" He was obviously proud of his work.

Student Journals

Tutees spent ten minutes each week writing in a journal about their tutoring experiences. Writing during this time was in a questionnaire format and included open ended questions asking them about the learning that occurred for that week. See Appendix D for some samples of journal entries.

Journal Response Results

Overview

All students wrote in their journals that: they liked working with their tutors, their tutors helped them learn, they enjoyed talking about ideas with their tutors and, they liked working on the computer the best. Although their journal entries were short and simple these same themes occurred frequently throughout their words and pictures.

Jim

Jim responded in his journal about his enjoyment about “playing” on the computer. He especially loved the software program called *Jumpstart First Grade* by Broderbund. He found the painting, writing, and grammar games to be easy. He stated that writing on the computer was easy and fun. According to a journal entry, Jim wrote “If you don’t write, then you don’t learn.” Jim wrote about his tutor helping him find the letters on the keyboard, which made writing much quicker. Jim liked having a buddy and the time spent together, especially if it was on the computer.

Lori

Lori wrote in her journal that she enjoyed and liked her tutor because her tutor worked with her on: writing stories, the computer, thinking of ideas to write on, talking about books, and reading. Lori stated that her buddy helped her with learning to add spaces between words, spelling long, hard words, typing stories on the computer and finding letters on the computer keyboard. Lori wrote and drew consistently about enjoying writing on the computer. Lori drew great pictures in her journal that showed her doing the above activities. All responses and pictures were very positive.

Violet

Violet drew many pictures of smiling girls working together in her journal. According to her responses, she liked working with her tutor. She wrote about doing fun stuff together, such as working on the computer, reading books, talking about ideas, and working on literacy related centers. She wrote that she liked her partner helping her with spelling, especially “big words” and writing stories. Violet stated that “It is fun. She helps me.” Violet repeatedly wrote

about enjoying working on the computer and that she learned more about how to work it.

Trent

Trent wrote a lot about having fun with his buddy on and off the computer. He stated that his buddy helped him “learn how to write” and “how to make sentences.” According to a journal entry, one of his favorite things to do was reading a story and then writing about it together. They discussed the book and made decisions together about what to write. Trent, who often gets hung up on spelling words correctly, stated that he learned how to spell new words.

According to Trent’s work journal, the best thing about the tutoring exchanges was using the computer. He especially enjoyed adding pictures to his story. They took turns typing in the story occasionally because their stories were long.

Trent wrote about how his buddy made him laugh and tells jokes. Trent was usually a very serious student and shy boy. It was nice to know that he laughed and played around a bit with his tutor.

Katerina

Because of Katerina’s limited writing ability she mostly drew pictures in her journal. Her pictures, although simple due to poor motor skills, drew smiling faces, computers, and books. Towards the end of her journal she drew a computer and actually some of the keys on the keyboard. The fact that she noticed the placement of letters and symbols was a great accomplishment for Katerina.

When I took dictation for Katerina she told me she liked working with her tutor, especially on the computer. She stated that she liked working on the

computer best and that her tutor helped her on it. Her tutor helped her learn to put spaces between her words, write letters, and how to “say hi and bye” and spell it on the computer.

Randy

Randy described his buddy as someone nice who helps him read books and sound out words when he’s writing. Randy wrote about his time positively, “I learned it was fun to read” and “ the best thing about writing was that I’m getting better. I’m practicing.” Randy wrote that his buddy made it easier to write. Randy stated that “Writing is important. You need to write. Then you can remember what your picture is about.”

In his journal, Randy wrote about taking turns with the writing and typing of stories. Randy had poor motor skills and this often kept him from not only doing work neatly but finishing his work. He wrote that he liked how much work that they got done together and that they wrote a lot during their time together. Randy who was often distracted, focused in more on his writing when his tutor was helping him. Randy writes, “ I learned how to concentrate. Last time I was goofing off and we didn’t get much done. We got a lot more done this time.” Having that one-on-one time allowed him to pay much more attention to his work.

As far as writing on the computer Randy mentioned that it was much easier to write on the computer than on paper and pencil because the writer can push the keys on the keyboard for the letters which makes it quicker to write.

Summary

Students had opportunities, through writing samples, interviews, video-taped observations, and journal writing, to demonstrate how working with a tutor

affected them. Students were motivated and produced better quality writing that was longer and included many of the important characteristics of good writing for a beginning writer. Interview results demonstrated that students enjoyed working with their tutor because tutors were helpful, exchanges were fun, it was good to have someone to talk to and share ideas with and, they enjoyed working on the computer with someone. Video observations show tutoring pairs were on-task working on a variety of literacy activities. One of the most apparent themes existing throughout all the data was that they enjoyed working with someone and that they liked working on the computer best. In analyzing all the data and looking closely at the essential questions, there is ample evidence that working with a tutor had a positive effect on the tutees' writing and their attitudes about writing.

Table 1**Summary Chart for Average Number of Words and Sentences Written**

Subjects	Words		Sentences		Ratio: words/sentences	
	Without Tutor	With	Without Tutor	With	Without Tutor	With
Jim	15.75	27	2.5	3.875	6.3	6.968
Lori	31.75	48.875	2.625	5.25	12.095	9.31
Violet	26	35	3.375	4	7.704	8.75
Trent	11.625	37.5	2	3.75	5.813	10
Katerina	4.85	31.75	*	4	*	7.938
Randy	13.625	36.875	1.875	4.875	7.267	7.564
Average ratio of words/sentences for all subjects					6.530	8.422

Note. * Can not always be determined from samples.

Table 2**Summary Chart for Number of Computer Written Stories in Eight Samples**

Subjects	Without Tutor	With Tutor
Jim	2	6
Lori	2	6
Violet	0	8
Trent	2	8
Katerina	1	8
Randy	0	5

Table 3

Summary Chart for Number of Uses of Descriptive Writing in Eight Samples

Subjects	Without Tutor	With Tutor
Jim	1	3
Lori	2	6
Violet	1	4
Trent	0	2
Katerina	1	3
Randy	1	3

Table 4

Summary Chart for Uses of Capitalization and Punctuation in Eight Samples

Subjects	<u>Punctuation</u>		<u>Capitalization</u>	
	Without Tutor	With	Without Tutor	With
Jim	7	7	6	7
Lori	4	6	2	3
Violet	1	7	7	5
Trent	4	7	4	7
Katerina	0	7	0	1
Randy	1	6	2	4

Table 5

Summary Chart for Number of Uses of Phonetic Spelling in Eight Samples

Subjects	Without Tutor	With Tutor
Jim	6	7
Lori	7	8
Violet	5	7
Trent	6	3
Katerina	2	2
Randy	6	1

Table 6

Ranking Results of Writing Samples by an Independent Reader

Ranking from least proficient to more proficient

Subjects	Writing Samples															
Jim	1a	6a	2a	5a	4a	7b	4b	1b	7a	3b	5b	2b	6b	8a	8b	3a
Lori	1a	2a	3a	5a	4a	7a	8a	4b	6a	3b	1b	6b	2b	7b	5b	8b
Violet	1a	3a	2a	5a	4a	1b	8a	3b	5b	6a	7a	6b	7b	2b	4b	8b
Trent	2a	8a	1a	6a	5a	6b	4a	7a	3a	7b	4b	5b	8b	3b	1b	2b
Katerina	6a	2a	3a	1a	5a	4a	8a	7a	7b	2b	5b	8b	1b	6b	4b	3b
Randy	1a	1b	5a	4a	2a	3a	7a	6a	7b	2b	3b	8a	5b	4b	6b	8b

Note. Key

= Number of Writing Sample

a = Student Working Independently

b = Student Working With Tutor

Table 7

Writing Sample Analysis for Jim Without Tutor

	WRITING SAMPLES							
Characteristics	10-96	10-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	1-97
Spaces between words		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	22	7	41	16	14	12	26	32
Simple sentences	√	√		√	√	√		√
Complex sentences			√				√	
Number of sentences	1	1	5	3	3	2	2	3
Capitalization		√	√	√	√	√	√	
Punctuation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Descriptive							√	
Spelling: copy	√	√						
Spelling: phonetic			√	√	√	√	√	√
Written on computer					√		√	
Written neatly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

Table 8**Writing Analysis For Jim With Tutor**

Characteristics	WRITING SAMPLES							
	10-96	10-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	1-97
Spaces between words	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	19	24	31	30	33	20	19	40
Simple sentences		√	√	√	√		√	
Complex sentences					√		√	√
Number of sentences	3	6	3	6	3	3	3	4
Capitalization	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Punctuation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Descriptive	√	√						√
Dictated work								
Spelling: copy	√	√						
Spelling: phonetic	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Written on computer			√	√	√	√	√	√
Written neatly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 9**Writing Sample Analysis for Lori Without Tutor**

Characteristics	WRITING SAMPLES							
	10-96	11-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97
Spaces between words	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	7	56	37	37	21	38	14	44
Simple sentences	√				√		√	√
Complex sentences		√	√	√		√		
Number of sentences	1	1	1	6	2	7	1	2
Capitalization			√		√			
Punctuation	√			√		√		√
Descriptive		√					√	
Dictated work								
Spelling: copy	√			√		√		
Spelling: phonetic		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Written on computer				√		√		
Written neatly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 10**Writing Sample Analysis for Lori With Tutor**

	WRITING SAMPLES							
Characteristics	10-96	11-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97
Spaces between words	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	34	58	33	31	77	50	38	82
Simple sentences		√		√			√	
Complex sentences		√		√	√	√	√	√
Number of sentences	2	4	4	6	9	5	3	9
Capitalization		√		√		√		
Punctuation		√	√	√	√	√	√	
Descriptive	√	√	√		√	√		√
Dictated work								
Spelling: copy		√				√	√	
Spelling: phonetic	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Written on computer	√	√	√		√		√	√
Written neatly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 11

Writing Sample Analysis for Violet Without Tutor

	WRITING SAMPLES							
Characteristics	10-96	10-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	1-97
Spaces between words	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	9	22	32	17	21	38	35	34
Simple sentences	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Complex sentences								
Number of sentences	1	4	7	2	3	7	2	1
Capitalization	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Punctuation				√				
Descriptive							√	
Dictated work								
Spelling: copy	√		√		√		√	
Spelling: phonetic		√		√		√	√	√
Written on computer								
Written neatly	√	√			√	√	√	√

Table 12**Writing Sample Analysis for Violet With Tutor**

Characteristics	WRITING SAMPLES							
	10-96	10-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	1-97
Spaces between words	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	24	28	26	41	26	30	36	72
Simple sentences	√	√	√			√	√	√
Complex sentences				√	√	√		
Number of sentences	2	1	3	4	4	3	4	11
Capitalization	√		√		√	√	√	
Punctuation	√	√		√	√	√		√
Descriptive	√	√					√	√
Dictated work								
Spelling: copy	√	√		√				
Spelling: phonetic	√	√	√		√	√	√	√
Written on computer	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Written neatly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 13

Writing Sample Analysis for Trent Without Tutor

	WRITING SAMPLES							
Characteristics	10-96	11-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	1-97
Spaces between words		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	5	7	26	14	10	6	18	9
Simple sentences	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Complex sentences								
Number of sentences	1	1	4	3	1	1	4	1
Capitalization	√					√	√	√
Punctuation		√	√		√	√		
Descriptive								
Dictated work								
Spelling: copy	√		√	√	√			
Spelling: phonetic		√	√		√	√	√	√
Written on computer			√		√			
Written neatly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 14**Writing Sample Analysis for Trent With Tutor**

Characteristics	WRITING SAMPLES							
	10-96	10-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	1-97
Spaces between words	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	37	58	62	38	23	14	48	20
Simple sentences			√	√	√	√	√	√
Complex sentences	√	√						
Number of sentences	6	7	5	5	1	2	1	3
Capitalization	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
Punctuation	√	√	√		√	√		√
Descriptive	√	√						
Dictated work	√	√	√	√	√			
Spelling: copy	√	√	√	√	√			
Spelling: phonetic						√	√	√
Written on computer	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Written neatly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 15

Writing Sample Analysis for Katerina Without Tutor

Characteristics	WRITING SAMPLES							
	10-96	10-96	11-96	11-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	2-97
Spaces between words		√			√			
Number of words	6	2	1	8	4	0	13	*
Simple sentences	√			√			√	√
Complex sentences								
Number of sentences	1			1	1			*
Capitalization								
Punctuation								
Descriptive						√		
Dictated work								
Spelling: copy	√	√		√	√		√	
Spelling: phonetic			√					√
Written on computer					√			
Written neatly	√	√	√	√				

* Long string of letters - exact amount of words is unknown

Table 16**Writing Sample Analysis for Katerina With Tutor**

Characteristics	WRITING SAMPLES							
	10-96	10-96	11-96	11-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	2-97
Spaces between words	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	25	25	31	65	32	48	11	17
Simple sentences	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
Complex sentences								
Number of sentences	2	1	5	9	3	8	0	4
Capitalization				√				
Punctuation	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
Descriptive	√		√				√	
Dictated work	√	√		√	√	√		√
Spelling: copy	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Spelling: phonetic	√						√	
Written on computer	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Written neatly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 17**Writing Sample Analysis for Randy Without Tutor**

	WRITING SAMPLES								
Characteristics	10-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	1-97	
Spaces between words	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	7	9	15	4	5	16	9	44	
Simple sentences			√	√	√	√	√	√	
Complex sentences									
Number of sentences	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	8	
Capitalization					√		√		
Punctuation							√		
Descriptive							√		
Dictated work									
Spelling: copy	√	√			√	√			
Spelling: phonetic		√	√	√	√		√	√	
Written on computer									
Written neatly	√			√		√	√	√	

Table 18**Writing Sample Analysis for Randy With Tutor**

Characteristics	WRITING SAMPLES							
	10-96	11-96	12-96	12-96	12-96	1-97	1-97	1-97
Spaces between words	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Number of words	4	29	85	35	29	38	18	57
Simple sentences		√			√	√	√	√
Complex sentences			√	√				
Number of sentences	0	6	9	4	3	4	4	9
Capitalization		√	√	√			√	
Punctuation		√	√	√	√	√	√	
Descriptive	√				√		√	
Dictated work		√	√					
Spelling: copy	√	√			√	√	√	
Spelling: phonetic								√
Written on computer				√	√	√	√	√
Written neatly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Tutoring as an Effective Teaching Strategy

There are many effective teaching strategies, such as small group instruction, directed lessons, and modeling, to use in the teaching of writing with young students. As a teacher, I have implemented many such successful strategies in my first grade classroom. However, by including the use of fifth grade students as tutors, I was able to give my targeted students additional academic and social successes. Cross-age tutoring resulted in productive, child-centered sessions where the writing topics were meaningful to my students. Among the strengths of cross-age tutoring is the amount of meaningful interaction. In a whole class setting, my goal is to meet all students' needs, but this is often a difficult task, even in small group instruction. This study contributes to the existing knowledge base on the use of cross-age tutors as an effective teaching strategy to meet the needs and interests of each student. The following generalizations about the value of cross-age tutoring were confirmed in my study:

1. Using tutors allowed individual student needs and interests to be met.
2. Students developed their phonetic spelling skills and were engaged in the content of their work and not the mechanics of spelling, thus producing lengthier and better quality writing products.
3. Students were engaged and on-task while writing with their tutors.
4. Writing was seen as an enjoyable activity.
5. Special friendships developed between tutoring pairs.
6. Computer literacy was developed earlier in the school year with year

long benefits.

7. Effective tutoring involves appropriate training and maintenance.
8. Starting a tutoring program earlier in the school year will provide tutees with an opportunity to make academic and social gains that are beneficial throughout the year.
9. Tutors of all abilities can make successful tutors with appropriate training, feedback, and guidance.
10. Cross-age tutoring programs are very cost effective as they cost little or nothing to run and require only the time and dedication of administrators and teachers.
11. This study demonstrated the effectiveness of cross-age tutoring using computer-based writing with first graders.

Meeting the Needs and Interests of Tutees

My targeted students were individuals ranging in abilities with different interests and needs. Tutoring allowed me to differentiate the curriculum, i.e., modify lessons based on their individual needs. Tutors were able to focus their lessons around the interests and abilities of their respective tutees. For example, with tutees who had difficulty with writing, tutors either took dictation or took turns writing to lessen the work load. For tutees who were very capable of writing but needed assistance with editing or spelling, the appropriate help was given when needed or asked for. Motivation to write was high and writing about their own interests was easy to do in a one-on-one setting because the pair had control over the books they read and the topics they wrote about. In a regular classroom setting, differentiating the curriculum to meet all abilities and ranges is possible but difficult to do. For example, I can not take written dictation with

all the students who need it and still have time to talk about editing skills with a few students. It takes me much longer to get around to my whole class and address individual student issues. I found tutoring to be an efficient way to maximize my instructional minutes and to help meet the special needs of each child.

In picking my six targeted students, I purposely chose three with special needs, such as low attention spans, attention seeking, poor fine motor skills, and/or lacking in social and academic skills. I wanted to see if there would be as much success as with the three targeted students whom I saw as average students. On reflection, I think that I had hoped that tutoring would help these students with special needs and that their problems would go away. Although not as much success was seen in my special needs students, compared to the other three targeted students, some gains were made. For example, Jim and Katerina, who had low attention spans, produced more writing with a tutor than without. Violet who had difficulty in social situations, still had occasional problems with her tutor, but she stated that she enjoyed working with a tutor and was seen occasionally meeting her with a smile and once even hugged her. Katerina was able to produce and finish work when she was allowed to dictate her ideas to her tutor, whereas in class she struggled to put words on the paper. Tutoring allowed these students to be successful and did allow for some badly needed one-on-one time.

Students with special needs would definitely benefit from extra support from trained school personnel. However, school budgets are limited and don't provide adequate support for trained personnel to work with students with special needs. Using cross-age tutors to teach these students is a valuable

alternative.

Effects on Independent Work

When I first started this study I originally wanted to add to my research a consideration of what effect tutoring had on targeted students' independent writing. However, there were many variables affecting student growth. For example, students were naturally expected to mature over time. Students were also exposed to a variety of writing activities and lessons in the regular classroom setting. Analyzing growth on just the impact of cross-age tutoring was impossible. However, this study does show ample examples through writing samples, observations, student journals, and in interviews that students were positively affected by tutoring. I think the improvements I saw were noteworthy and important to discuss. In the following sections, the comparisons I make are to classes that I have taught in the past using similar teaching strategies, minus the cross-age tutoring.

Improvements were seen throughout this four-month study. I noted that, compared to previous classes, these students: produce more writing, were more focused on the content of their stories, transitioned to the use of phonetic spelling more quickly, were more engaged and on-task, looked forward to writing more often, made special friendships, and developed their computer literacy earlier in the year.

Writing

Having the tutors work with them on sounding out words allowed tutees to have a lot of phonetic practice. Feedback occurred more frequently and their ability and confidence level grew. Spelling was a frequent topic of discussion in student interviews. Because they had someone to assist them with spelling and

editing concerns, they were able to focus on the content of their stories, thus producing longer, better products. Being assisted on a regular basis made an impact on their independent work.

For example, I noticed that this group of students used their phonetic spelling more often than other classes in my past. Typically, in the beginning of the school year, it has always been difficult for first graders to feel comfortable using their phonetic or “best guess” spelling when writing. There has always been a struggle with students who want to spell words correctly or not at all. This is a common characteristic for an emerging or beginning writer. Students at this stage often copy words from dictionaries, word walls, or repeatedly ask the teacher or others to spell things for them. They lack the phonetic background and confidence to write on their own. These students are slowed by the mechanics of spelling, whereas, once they start spelling using their phonetic knowledge, their rate of writing increases because they can concentrate on their ideas and not their spelling. The transition time varies from one student to another.

Using phonetic spelling is seen as an important step in the development of a young writer. Phonetic spellers are developing writers who are more independent and able to really concentrate on their ideas because they are not overly concerned with having correct spelling all the time. It is my goal to move my students towards more phonetic spelling. Using tutors helped me achieve this at an earlier time of the year.

Working On-Task

When observing my students as they write in the regular classroom setting, I noticed that although most concentrated on their writing, they took

longer to do their work and were more easily distracted. For example, a neighbor might ask for a pencil or ask a question about last night's soccer game. Many quickly stopped writing if there was a student outburst or if I worked nearby with a student. Some students spent time waiting for me to assist them with their individual questions. There seemed to be more interruptions and a lot more things around to distract them. I spent time each writing session reminding some to get back to work or to stop talking with their neighbor or playing with an object. With their tutors, I had fewer incidents where I had to remind them of what the task was. My students were very involved with their tutors. I believe that because they had instant help whenever needed and because the topics they wrote were of interest to them, they were more engaged and on-task.

Attitudes

This year, writing was seen as an enjoyable activity for most of my students. My students seemed to become very comfortable with writing and even as they worked independently, they enjoyed writing often during the day. My students were often disappointed when for some reason the day's schedule cut their writing time short. In year's past, writing was sometime seen as a chore and students would moan at the introduction of a writing assignment. Being given special time with their tutors gave them an environment in which to practice their writing successfully. I felt this success gave them confidence to write independently and with enthusiasm.

Special Friendships

My tutees always asked me, "Are our buddies coming today?" There would be an atmosphere of excitement knowing that they were coming and a

very positive feeling pervaded as the tutors entered the room and the tutoring sessions began. They commonly referred to their tutors classroom as their “buddy” class. Students stated in interviews that they liked working with their partners, tutors were nice and helpful, sessions were fun, it was good to have someone to talk to and share ideas, and that it was better to work with someone than working alone.

A sense of community developed over time and friendships grew. I could hear students on the playground say hello or see tutoring partners talking at lunch. Students exchanged Christmas and Valentine cards. As seen in video taped sessions, many hugged hello or goodbye and some sat in laps as they worked. At the conclusion of our program, many students were disappointed and wanted their tutors to continue coming. My students were given the opportunity to have the friendship of an older student that might not have happened in a regular school setting.

Computer Use

Students were always very enthusiastic about writing on the computer whether it was with or without their tutor. However, I noted that it took them longer to write on the computer, and their questions or problems took longer to be addressed, when they worked independently. I noticed that with their tutor they received more one-on-one instruction on how to use the computer and the programs. As a teacher, in the past, it has taken me a few weeks to get everyone on the computer to teach them a new software program. Even just working with five students on the computers, I found myself running around from computer-to-computer showing students the different components. With a tutor, they are given instant help. Compared to classes of my past, this group learned

how to log-in and off the computer, access programs, find a picture, change a font size, and print their stories in just four months. With their tutors, they also were able to explore many more software games of interest to them. Becoming computer literate in the beginning of the year has allowed them to continue to become much more knowledgeable about computers and software throughout the year.

Starting a Tutoring Program

Knowing that the tutors had a positive effect on tutees' writing development, I feel that such tutoring projects would benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year. Teachers may wait to start tutoring programs until their routines, schedules, and students are well established in school. My study started in October and ended in January. I believe that by starting at the beginning of the year, students will begin improving more quickly. Although programs that start mid or late year still are beneficial, by starting a tutoring program earlier, students are given an additional "jump start" in learning.

Maintaining Tutoring Programs

Starting and maintaining a program took work. For example, training had to be given to tutors, partners had to be matched up, and schedules had to be adjusted. I felt, however, that the work was effective, and in the long run an efficient use of my time as a teacher. Once tutors and tutees were trained and periodically given mini-lessons on needed areas, the program ran quite smoothly. The significance in devoting time to tutoring programs is supported by published results of research. My own time was limited and I feel that more progress for both the tutees and the tutors could have been made if I have had more time to address issues that came up. I felt a camaraderie with the tutors as

we both had the same goal in mind - helping the younger students.

Choice of Tutors

All the tutors used by my first grade class were considered by their own teacher to be average or low in ability. The fifth grade teacher and I purposely left out his top ten students out of the program. We did so for two reasons: (1) we were inspired by the research stating the academic and social gains for lower achieving students and, (2) the cooperating teacher wanted his higher achieving students to work on the school newspaper and other projects in the school.

My targeted students had average students working with them and they were effective. A few students in my class, not involved in my study, had tutors who were very low academically or very immature. These tutors were not very effective. The tutees still enjoyed working with them, but they were not the role models I had expected. They needed more guidance and training than I could provide. Perhaps with more training time and debriefing sessions, these specific tutors too, could learn to be more effective.

Implications for Other Educators

Arranging tutoring partnerships in schools is quite attainable if teachers and administrators are motivated and dedicated to creating and maintaining a program. As evidenced by my study, as well as other published studies, cross-age tutoring has been demonstrated to be an effective teaching strategy in today's classroom. Additionally, cross-age tutoring programs cost little or nothing to run. No additional certificated or classified personnel are required and materials, such as writing supplies already exist and are budgeted into a school's financial plans. Cross-age tutors have been used successfully in many

subject areas. Cross-age tutoring is therefore a cost effective strategy for all educators to consider.

Future Studies

My study was limited to a sampling of six students in my first grade classroom. Most of the existing literature reports work with older students. More work with younger learners is needed and would compliment the existing knowledge. Future studies should examine more students from a variety of abilities and backgrounds.

Most studies carried out recently have been examined through a qualitative approach. A balance of quantitative and qualitative research might help define our understanding of variables that operate on the effectiveness of cross-age tutors.

It would be beneficial for future studies to consider and compare the effects of programs where: (a) length and time of the tutoring programs vary, (b) programs starting at the beginning and mid-year are compared, (c) tutors range in ages and abilities, (d) bilingual tutors work with limited English speakers, and (e) classes with and without technology are compared.

Conclusions

It was my intent to contribute to the knowledge base in the area of cross-age tutoring. With one-on-one time, twice a week, my students improved the quality and length of their writing. With tutoring the tutees can have academic achievement and meaningful time on-task with feedback occurring more frequently (Bar-Eli & Raviv, 1982). Students attitudes and motivational levels increased due to opportunities for increased participation and success that were possible through interactions with their tutors. Peer-based strategies have

been demonstrated to be successful in increasing the academic skills of students, with evidence of gains for both tutees and tutors, and corresponding improvements in student attitudes, self concept, and social skills (Cartledge, Gardner & Giesecke, 1993; Delquadri, Greenwood, Stretton, Hall, 1983). My targeted students were given opportunities that I wasn't able to give them on a regular basis. They received help based on their individual needs and interests. They were able to use computers more frequently and learned software at a much faster pace with someone teaching them one-on-one. Effects on these six students can't be generalized to all students but the information gained is nevertheless valuable. In replicating components of my study and modifying conditions to meet their needs, other teachers can benefit from cross-age tutoring and provide additional success for students. I will continue to use cross-age tutoring as an integral part of my own instructional plan, providing students with meaningful, student-centered lessons.

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Appendix A

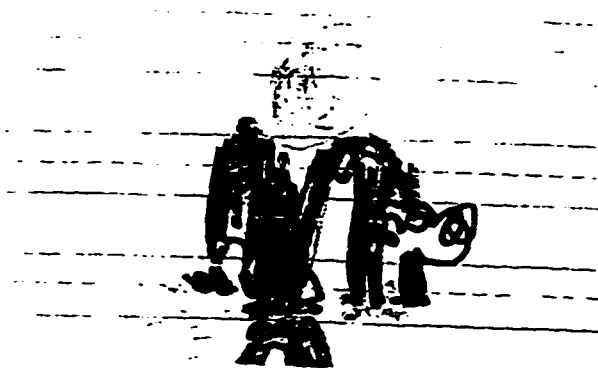
Student Writing Samples

Jim's Writing Samples Without a Tutor

Once I went to a (7a)
jet stoishon with
my dad in a car.
We were hungry
and then we got
ther and we did a
luup,

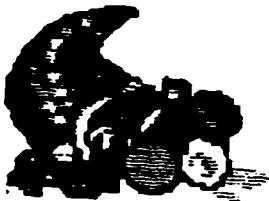


10-2796 (23)
ON Halloween I u
Trick or treat!



31

I wet to my uncle house with a car.
I plade with my
cugin. We aet chicken
and turkey. We dance with
my cusins cugin then I wet
home . The end
jun suh.



I went to my — — (7b)
cussin — houe — and
playde games. — —
and then I — aet —
rice. and then I — —
went home. — — —
— — — — — — —

Lori's Writing Samples Without a Tutor

(80)

Jan 28

WHAT ME AND MY
SISTER WOULD DO ON
A WINEERS DAY I WOULD
MAKE SNOW HOUSES
THEN MAKE A
SNOW DOG

(32) ONCE THERE LIVED
A NICE CAT IN
THE TOWN HE WAS
POOR VAIKY DOOR
HE GED 123 45
HE WAS VAIKY KLEV
WAS A NICE CAT
SED THE LADY
IN THE DRESS
AND IN THE NAT
+ NI E MO

Lori's Writing Samples With a Tutor

WHEN I GROW UP I WANT, TWO (6b)
DOGS TO MAKE PUPPIES. I WANT
TWO DOGS TO BE DACHSHUND, I
WANT TO BE AN ANIMAL
DOCTOR. I WANT VISIT MY MOM
AND DAD. AND ALL MY
RELATIVES. WHEN I GROW UP
I WANT A TWO STORY HOUSE
AND A POOL.

In the snow we dug snow
houses. out of snow and
sticks, my foot sepps
showed in the deep snow.
we had to dress warm,
because it was cold out side.
I wour my snow boots and
my mittens, and my snow
hat. and then we went on
the ski loft. then
we went off for
are skiing class.
its fun. then we
act lunch. what
we act chips,
and we drank
choclete milk. we
also act hot dogs.



Violet's Writing Samples Without a Tutor

My MOM and Ma Dad wer tocing

we wer slypina

(o.o)

thin we got up

and gather up roue percsins

and thin we eat bere Dis

and thin we opinde the percsins

and thin we plad with fou percsins

The plaber has a black nos and a yellow L

white ish and snow browne is (S)

and it has black ipy and his big

and Ther is brown gras Froud in and it is ~~white~~

Violet's Writing Samples With a Tutor

I hav three pepe in
my potment my
brathr my dad and
i me and i licke
living wit my dad i
playe with my (3b)
brathr

Kity

(8b)

The kity is white and
black. It has a pink
nose. It has red
flowers ner it. the
kity white wiskers. The
kitty has wide maize
eyes The kity has potty
ers . It is sitting on a
blueish grayeishi and
red carpet. The kity is
very and fluffy. The
kity is sofft. The kity
sters at me. The kity

looks very happy .The
kity has a white spots
bethen his eyes.

Trent's Writing Samples Without a Tutor

I'm a m a Army man. I have a helmet
for to wear on my head. Face painting
to look mean. There are trees in the
Army. I have tall grass. The background
of my picture is brown.

Sincerely

Dear Monica

What do you like to eat what do you
like to play I like to play soccer I like
to eat pizza Do you have brothers or
sisters? Write me back soon.
Your pen pal,



(46)

Dear monica (4a)
Hi Ho! Ho! Ho! merry
Christmas! what do you
want? Love

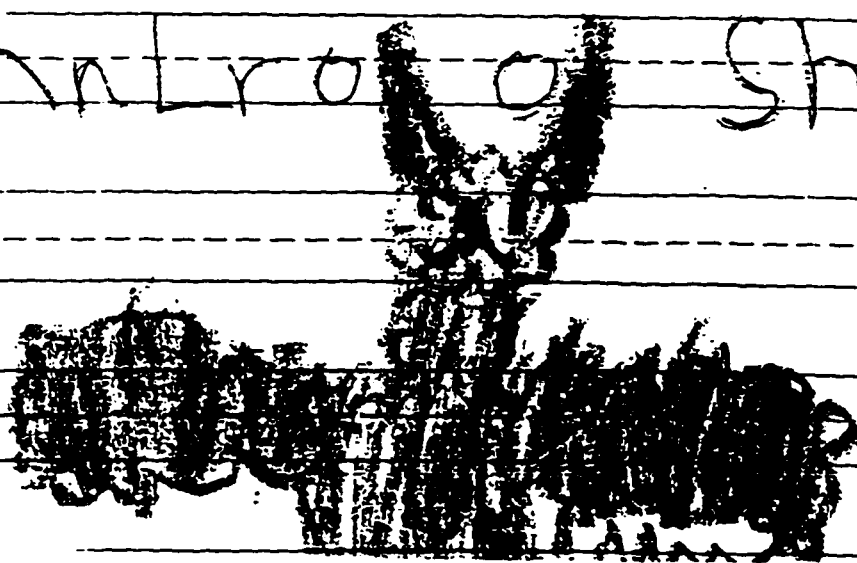
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November 4-9-96

(2b)

the Motru prop

Intro of Shaphorns





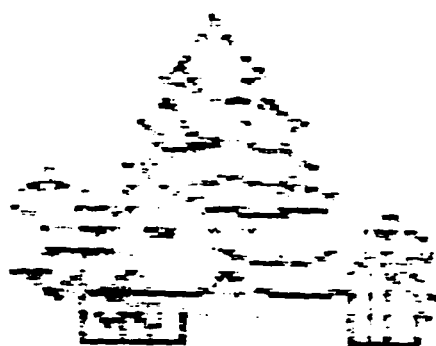
2b

halloween

my favorite part of the story was:
when they went trick or treating, and
got the apples, and when papa bear did
the jack-o-lantern.

5b

Dar Santa Claus,



I want four pupes, a
bunny, a real mokey, a
biarbi, and batararina.
I think you skuold bring me
this toys and animals
because I've been good.

Are the elves real ?

Fromik.

Katerina's Writing Samples With a Tutor

ROG PEMARY
MY DAD B MAA
DOG. NKOS PEMARG.
4a

Dear Yarenytt appy friend



5a

dear Wakotah, 56

I like pykka.
Do you have any
pets? I have 9
pets: 2 birds, 2
lizards, 2 cats, 1
dog, 1
snake, and
one rat.
love



I will wear socks in the
snow.hat and mittins on
my head and hand and a
jacket. i see a sled on the
snow. i will go sleiding and
i will make a cast in the
snow.



Appendix B

Excerpts of Interviews Arranged by Child and Topic

Jim

Working On-Task

January

I: How did the writing go today?

J: Good.

I: How was it compared to last time? Did you do better or worse?

J: I did better this time.

I: Why did you do better this time?

J: Because it was really good.

I: Why was it really good? What helped you finish?

J: I paid attention.

I: You concentrated. How did your sentences turn out?

J: Fine.

January

I: Did you finish your work?

J: Yeah.

I: Why do you think you finished your work?

J: I concentrated and listened to my buddy.

Spelling Assistance

January

I: What did your buddy help you with?

J: Sounding out the words.

I: Is it nice to have a buddy to work with?

J: Yes!

I: Why?

J: Because they help us do it correctly.

January

I: What did your tutor help you with on the computer?

J: He helped me sounding out the words and helping me find the letters and helping with words I don't know.

Computer Use

January

I: What did you do on the computer?

J: We wrote on the computer.

I: Was it fun to work on the computer?

J: Yeah - the pictures are cool! Instead of writing a word you could put a picture for that word. There was a picture of a snowball so I just put the picture.

I: Did you learn that today?

J: Yeah.

I: Did your buddy help you?

J: Yeah.

January

I: When you were on the computer what did you like best?

J: Writing was fun because with writing we could write stories using pictures. It also could read it to you what you wrote.

January

I: Did you do anything with your buddy on the computer?

J: Yes.

I: What?

J: *Read, Write, & Type, Children's Writing and Publishing, Jumpstart, Kids Works, and Kid Pix.*

I: What was it like on the computer?

J: It was fun 'because I got to do a lot of stuff like painting, stamp center, and noises.

I: What did your buddy teach you about computers?

J: He taught me how to find some letters on the keyboard and how to use some games.

Lori

Spelling Assistance

October

I: Did you do most of the writing yourself today?

L: I did all of it.

I: You did. That's wonderful. Now how did your buddy help you today?

L: When I got stuck at a word she told me.

I: Did you learn anything today?

L: Yes.

I: What was that?

L: Well, in Halloween. I spelt Halloween it wrong and she told me I did it wrong and then I learned that it wasn't spelled like that.

November

I: What story was easier for you to write - the one by yourself or the one with

your buddy?

L: The one with my buddy.

I: Why was that easier?

L: Because when you are alone and you have a big word you don't know how to spell it without help.

November

I: How did your partner help you this week?

L: When I spelled a word wrong.

December

I: What did you do this week?

L: We went on the computer.

I: What did you do on the computer?

L: We wrote a note to Santa.

I: What did your buddy help you with?

L: The writing. I got stuck on a word and she helped me sound it out.

I: How did it work today when you didn't have your buddy?

L: It was more harder.

I: Why was it more difficult?

L: When you are trying to spell a hard word and someone is with you they can help you spell it. When no one is with you then they can't help you spell it.

January

I: Why do you like working with a buddy?

L: Um, because she can help me sometimes. I don't know how to spell very big words and when I need help on a big word she helps me.

January

I: What did your buddy help you on today?

L: Nothing. Cause I could do everything.

I: Do you like having a buddy there just in case you do need help?

L: Yeah. Because if you get to a really big word and you don't know how to spell it then you could ask your buddy to help you sound it out.

January

I: What was the best thing about having a buddy?

L: She helped me spell big words. I really don't know how to spell big words. She sort of helps me.

January

I: What did your buddy help you with?

L: Big words, sounding out, and teaching me stuff from bigger grades.

Computer Use

October

I: What was so good about the computers?

L: My buddy helped me when I got stuck.

I: How did that work out? How did that make you feel?

L: Good.

October

I: Did you finish printing it up yet?

L: No.

I: Are you excited about being able to print it up?

L: Yeah.

I: Why do you like to print it up?

L: Because it's fun.

I: What is fun about printing stories?

L: You can take it home and then have a wonderful book at home.

November

I: Good morning. What did you do with your buddy this week?

L: Uh..... We did writing about what I did on my vacation - Thanksgiving vacation.

I: What did you do in order to do all that? Did anything help you?

L: We did the pictures. We made it on the computer. Make the picture. And make all the border. And reading about it.

December

I: What did you do this week?

L: We went on the computers.

I: What did you do on the computers?

L: We wrote a note to Santa.

January

I: What fun things did you do with your buddy?

L: Computers! I liked writing and playing on the computer.

January

I: Did you do anything on the computer with your buddy?

L: Yes. We typed stories and wrote about animals. We worked on that paragraph thing. We added pictures. I knew how to do all the other stuff.

January

I: Good morning. What did you do today with your buddy?

L: Today we wrote on the computer, first I did the first part and my buddy did the second part.

January

I: Today is January 22 and we met with our buddies and we wrote about stories about snow. Who would like to tell us how it went with your buddy or what you did?

L: Today we went on the computer and started writing a story and then the computer froze on me and then I had to start all over and when I started my other one I put different parts. I added new parts.

I: Why did you chose to go on the computer instead of writing it on the paper?

L: Because when I am writing and I don't know a word then I can just put in whatever I want on the computer.

January

I: Hello L, how did it go with your buddy today?

L: We typed on the computer our story. She helped me type what I wrote on my paper on the computer and it was faster. And we got done.

I: What else did she help you with on the writing part before you got on the computer?

L: She helped me write, helping me figure out stuff to write and she helped me type it on the computer.

Editing

November

I: What did your partner help you with today?

L: When I accidentally forgot to type a word, she reminded me. I guess that's all.

I: Did she help you with capitals and periods?

L: Yes. She also helped me draw a picture.

Violet

Enjoyment of Her Partner

October

I: What do you like about your partner?

V: That she's really nice.

I: Sounds like you guys are good friends now!?

V: Yes.

I: How does it feel having a friend?

V: Good.

November

I: How did today go with your buddy?

V: Good.

I: What was good about it?

V: That I got to work with her.

I: What was good that happened when you were working together?

V: Because I like working with her.

I: Why do you like working with her?

V: Yes.

I: What does she do that you like?

V: Lots of things. Like she'll be nice to me.

I: What did she do that was nice?

V: She helps me sound out words. She likes sitting next to me.

January

I: Did you enjoy working with your buddy today?

V: Yes.

I: Why?

V: Because she is very nice and she helps me with stuff.

January

I: What was the best thing about having a buddy?

V: Having her to help me.

I: Did you enjoy each other?

V: Yes.

I: What did you enjoy the most?

V: Working together on things.

January

I: Anything else you want to let me know about your buddy?

V: That she is nice!

I: What is nice about her?

V: That she is a nice girl and she helps me and she is nice to me.

I: Will you miss her?

V: Yes.

I: How come?

V: Because I really liked her being my buddy.

Computer Use

October

I: Good morning. Did you have a good morning with your buddy?

V: Yes!

I: What was so good about it?

V: That we went on the computer and we both got to spell some things.

I: You did! Was the spelling hard or easy?

V: Easy.

I: Why was it easy?

V: Because I knew how to spell most of the words.

October

I: What's the best part about that story?

V: That we worked on the computer together.

October

I: What did your buddy do to help you today?

V: Like, she helped me sound out the words that I didn't know how to spell.

I: Were you excited you got to use the computer or would you have rather used a pencil and wrote it on a piece of paper?

V: I was excited that I got to use the computer.

I: How come?

V: Because I like using the computers.

I: What so like able about it?

V: Because like, that sometimes they are fun to write on.

November

I: What did you learn this week?

V: I learned how to work on the computer and to add pictures to the writing on the computer.

I: Was that the first time you learned that?

V: Yes.

I: When you go on the computer by yourself next time do you think you will remember how to do it?

V: Yes.

December

I: When you wrote your sentences for the story, did she help you with something?

V: Well, she kind of told me the letters and I wrote them on the computer. She helped me make sure there were spaces and everything.

I: Did she help you add spaces?

V: No, she taught me when to use spaces. She helped me with a few, where to put the periods and everything.

January

I: Good morning. What did you do with your buddy today?

V: We worked on the computer.

I: What did you work on?

V: We wrote a story.

January

I: How did you and your buddy get along today?

V: Well, I wrote all the words and it was easier writing it on the computer.

I: Why was it easier on the computer?

V: It's easier than writing on a piece of paper. When your writing on the computer and I get stuck on a letter I can't write I could just do it with the key.

January

I: Did you do anything on the computer?

V: We wrote stories and did our work on it.

I: What was it like?

V: It's more easier because maybe you write faster and you get done with your work more.

I: What did your buddy teach you on the computer?

V: She taught me how to get to the writing place and how to use the computer. Now I know!

The Ease of Working With a Partner

October

I: And what did you learn today working with your partner? Did you learn anything new today?

V: Yeah. When you work with a partner it is much faster.

I: Why is it much faster?

V: Because like if you work alone then it would be slow because your the only person but when you have two, you can do it at the same time.

January

I: Would you rather work alone or with a buddy?

V: With a buddy. It is more easier. You can learn how to spell words easier.

January

I: Do you want to continue having buddies come or do you want it to stop?

V: I want them to come because if we don't have buddies, the teacher can help

us but not all the time 'because you might be helping someone else but your buddy can always help you.

Spelling Assistance

October

I: What do you like about your partner?

V: That she's really nice. She spells some things and she wants me to spell some things. And sometimes if she draws the picture she lets me color part of it. And whenever she'll want to color one of my pictures I'll let her.

November

I: Did you talk a lot about your book and the describing words?

V: Yes.

I: Did it help to have someone to talk to?

V: Uh huh. We were talking about the project we were doing. She was helping me.

November

I: Why do you like working with a buddy?

V: If I get stuck on a long word my buddy can help me.

November

I: What did you like the best about your project?

V: I learned new words and I liked writing about it.

December

I: Good morning. How was it this week with your buddy?

V: Good.

I: What did you do?

V: We wrote letters.

I: Why was it good?

V: Because she can correct it if it was wrong.

I: Does it help you to have someone correct it?

V: Yes. I like that.

January

I: When your buddy came today did you tell her about your story with the pictures?

V: Yes.

I: Did it help to talk to somebody?

V: Yes.

I: Why?

V: Because I had someone to talk with if I had problems because maybe she helped me figure out some of the words.

January

I: Good morning. What did you do today?

V: I wrote two stories.

I: How did your buddy help you today?

V: She helped me sound out words.

I: Is it nice to have someone able to do that?

V: Yes.

I: Why?

V: It's easier.

I: Why is it easier?

V: Because if you get stuck sounding out the word your buddy can help you sound out the word that you are getting stuck on.

I: So you wrote your story. What did you like about your story?

V: I like it because there is lots of writing and I like writing.

I: Did your buddy help you with any ideas? Did you talk about your ideas?

V: Yes. She told me some of her ideas and I wrote them down.

I: Do you like being able to talk to somebody and sharing those ideas?

V: Yes.

I: How come?

V: Because she helps me to get more ideas.

Trent

Sharing Ideas

November

I: Did you draw pictures before you wrote your story?

T: Yeah.

I: Did you tell your buddy all about your pictures?

T: Yeah.

I: Did it help to have someone to talk to?

T: Yes, it helped because when you can't make something that is really hard, you can ask your buddy and he can show you how to draw it.

December

I: Did you do a lot of talking about your ideas?

T: Yeah.

I: Did it help you to have someone to talk about them?

T: Yeah.

January

I: What did your buddy help you with?

T: He helped me think of ideas.

I: Was it nice to have someone to share ideas with?

T: Yes.

I: Why?

T: Sometimes when you are running of ideas, your buddy probably has a few.

I: After you got your ideas down, did he help you get your ideas down on the paper?

T: Yes.

Spelling Assistance

November

I: What did your buddy help you with your writing?

T: He helped me with some words.

T: He did half of it and I did the other half. He did the names and this and this and I did the rest of it.

November

I: After you did your storyboard, did he help you write your sentences?

T: Yes.

I: What part was he most helpful with?

T: He helped me sound out words and he helped me think of things to write down.

December

I: What did your buddy help you with today?

T: He drew with me and I forget.

I: Did you work on the writing part together?

T: Yeah.

I: What did he help you with when you were writing?

T: He helped me with the words.

I: What did you like about having him there today?

T: He helped me out.

I: With what?

T: Drawing, writing, and typing.

January

I: After you shared your ideas, did he help you get your ideas down on the paper?

T: Yes.

I: What did he help you with in that part?

T: He helped me sound out words.

January

I: What do you like the best about your buddy?

T: He helps me write, read, and type. He helps me sound out words when I have trouble.

I: Would you rather work alone or with a buddy?

T: With a buddy.

I: Why?

T: They help you read, write, and sound out words.

Computer Use

November

I: What else did you do this week? You wrote a letter today what about on Monday?

T: We went on the computers.

I: You worked pretty hard on the computers. What were you working on?

T: Working on a story about Thanksgiving.

December

I: What did you enjoy doing with your buddy when he was here?

T: The computers.

I: Why?

T: Because we got to go on the computers.

I: Did he teach you anything about computers?

T: Yes. He taught me - I can't think of it.

I: Did you learn how to add pictures?

T: Yes.

I: Did you already know how to change the size of the letters or did he help you with that?

T: He helped me with that.

I: Did he help you how to print or log out?

T: I already knew how to do that.

I: When he was here, what did you think about your work?

T: I think they were good.

I: Your right they were good! What did you think that was good about them?

T: Because he helped me and when we were finished I liked it.

Katerina

Help With Work & Dictation

November

I: How did you make your picture?

K: With my colors.

I: Did you buddy help you?

K: Yes. She drew the picture and I colored with my colors.

I: How did it feel to have somebody to share the work with?

K: Good.

I: Why?

K: Because I like coloring.

I: What do you like about your writing this week?

K: It's good.

I: Why is it good?

K: Because it was hard for me to do it.

I: What was hard about it?

K: To make everything (words).

I: When you usually write in your journal do you write this much?

K: No.

I: Do you like when you are able to write more words?

K: Yes.

January

I: Did you tell your buddy all about your story?

K: Yeah.

I: How was that? Did you like sharing your story?

K: Yes.

I: Why?

K: Because sharing is a beautiful part.

I: What did your partner help you with?

K: My partner helped me with the letters.

I: After you finished your storyboard, what did you do next?

K: Write.

I: You wrote some sentences.

K: I didn't write it, she wrote it for me but I typed it in on the computer.

I: You told your buddy what to write. Did you like that?

K: Yeah, cause it is wonderful, you can learn.

I: What did you learn?

K: I learned how to spell "hi" and "bye" and writing.

Computer Use

October

I: What did you like about today?

K: Everything.

I: What is everything? Why don't you tell me one thing you liked?

K: The computers.

November

I: Why did it feel good today?

K: Because I get to do all the writing on the computer.

I: What was fun about working on the computer?

K: The computer.

I: What did you like about it?

K: The words.

I: Was it easier to make the words on the computer?

K: Yeah.

I: Why?

K: Because I had a paper to copy from and my partner circled the word I was on so I could type the words more faster.

January

I: Good morning. What did you do with your buddy today?

K: We went to the computer.

I: What did you like about the computer?

K: Writing.

I: Why do you like writing on the computer?

K: It is easier.

I: Why?

K: Because it gots letters and you push it and it's different from a pencil.

I: What did you like about your buddy today?

K: She helped me find the letters.

January

I: O.k. K, what did you work on this week?

K: The computer.

I: What did you do on the computer?

K: We wrote and it was wonderful.

I: Why?

K: Because I get to do all the work and I can learn.

January

I: What did you enjoy the most about the computer?

K: Writing. 'Cuz you could do space, pictures.

I: Why don't you like to do stories on paper?

K: Because it is too hard.

I: Why is it hard?

K: Because on the computer all the letters are there and you just press one and with the paper you have to really write them and if you don't know what the letter "j", you can't see the "J" and you think oh which one is the "J" but on the computer you could just push "j."

January

I: What did you do on the computer?

K: So much work that we didn't always finish it.

I: What else?

K: She taught me to print big words or little words.

I: What else?

K: She taught me a button to make capital letters.

January

I: What do you like the best about your buddy?

K: I like to go on the computer.

I: Why?

K: It is more fun than writing with a pencil.

Randy

Receiving Help

November

I: Is it nice having your buddy around to help you?

R: Because he is nice.

I: What else?

R: Because they help you.

I: Later on today when you finish your pen pal letter by yourself, because you didn't finish it yet, what will that be like doing it by yourself?

R: It will be harder.

I: Why will it be harder?

R: Cause there's not somebody around to help you sound out the words.

November

I: What are you going to do with that picture?

R: We are gonna write about it.

I: Did you start your writing and what did you and your buddy work on so far?

R: We wrote about the dinosaur. We made sentences about it.

I: How did your buddy help you with that?

R: He helped me sound out the words.

I: Was that easy or hard?

R: It was easy when he sounded out the words for me.

I: What did you learn today?

R: I learned different kinds of words.

November

I: Did you like having someone help you with your work?

R: Yeah, because it's easier.

I: Why? What makes it easier?

R: Because he helps.

November

I: Why do you like your buddy so much?

R: He's nice.

I: What does he do that's nice?

R: Help me with my work.

I: How do you feel about your work when it is all done?

R: Good.

I: Why does it feel good?

R: Because he helps me.

January

I: Do you like your writing when you are writing all by yourself?

R: No.

I: How come?

R: Because it is harder.

I: Why is it harder?

R: There's nobody to help you

January

I: What do you like best about your buddy?

R: He helps me when we are working.

I: What did he help you with?

R: Writing. He helped me sound out words I didn't know.

Help With Concentrating & Finishing Work

November

I: Did you get a lot done today?

R: No.

I: How come?

R: Because I was goofing off.

I: Were you having fun?

R: Yeah.

I: What do you plan on doing next time?

R: Concentrate.

I: So you can finish and so you can get stuff done when your buddy is around.
Is it nice having your buddy around to help you?

R: Because he is nice.

I: What else?

R: Because they help you.

I: Later on today when you finish your pen pal letter by yourself, because you didn't finish it yet, what will that be like doing it by yourself?

R: It will be harder.

I: Why will it be harder?

R: Cause there's not somebody around to help you sound out the words.

December

I: Did you get all your work done today?

R: Yeah.

I: Why did you get your work done?

R: We were concentrating.

January

I: Is it easier for you to concentrate when you have a buddy?

R: (Nods his head yes)

I: Why?

R: Because he helps me.

January

I: Did you guys get your work done today? How did that work today?

R: We finished the writing and we finished the picture. And I saved my work on the computer.

I: How did the writing go this time?

R: Good.

I: Why was it good?

R: Because I could concentrate.

I: Why was that?

R: Because it was quieter.

January

I: Did you get a lot of your work done today?

R: Yeah.

I: Why do you think that?

R: 'Cuz we were concentrating.

I: What helped you concentrate?

R: 'Cuz my buddy whenever I needed help he could tell me spell.

I: What did he do when you didn't need him?

R: He would read a book.

I: Was it peaceful while you were working?

R: Yeah.

January

I: How did your writing go on the computer?

R: Good.

I: Why did it go good?

R: 'Cuz we were concentrating. My buddy helped me.

Computer Use

December

I: What did your buddy do to help you today that was different?

R: He wrote what I told him to write.

I: Did you have a lot of ideas to share?

R: Yeah.

I: How did it help you to have him write your ideas down?

R: Because it was easier.

I: Why was it easier?

R: It was easier for me because sometimes it's hard for me to sound out the words.

I: Is it sometime hard for you to write down the letters on the paper?

R: Yes.

I: So it was easier to have him write down your ideas?

R: Yes.

January

I: What about you Randy? What did you do today?

R: I went on the computer.

I: Why did you choose the computer?

R: 'Cuz I just chose the computer.

I: Why didn't you just chose to do it with pencil and paper?

R: The computer is easier.

I: Why?

R: You just push a button and you get it on the screen.

Appendix C

Samples of Notes From Video Observations

One Sample From a November Viewing

Jim

Jim talking to partner. Partner talking to neighbor. Jim holding glue, playing with glue. Partner takes glue. Jim shows partner a picture. Jim walks away to get paper. Jim drawing on paper. Partner drawing on another paper. Talking while coloring. Partner talks to neighbor. Jim talks to partner. Jim acting out something from the book. Jim talking and acting out scene. Partner looks on but then looks at neighbor. Jim and partner back to coloring. Jim talking to partner as partner watches him.

Trent

Trent on computer. Trent typing on keyboard. Partner points to key. Trent and partner talk about something. Partner watches as Trent types. Partner points to screen and types in a letter. Partner spelling word for Trent. Trent smiles at something partner said and points to the top of the screen. Trent continues typing. Partner types a word. Trent back to typing. Partner points to screen. Trent types. Partner points to the space bar. Trent smiles at partner. Discuss something. Trent types. Partner points out something and tries to type but Trent wants to do it. Trent typing. Boys laugh again. Talking. Trent types. Partner types a few letters. Trent takes over again.

Lori

Lori and partner on rug drawing picture and writing. Partner asks her a question. Lori looks through book. Partner points to first picture and ending picture in book. Lori flips through book. Both leave. Come back. Start working

again. Engaged in coloring picture on poster. Talking as working.

Katerina

Katerina and partner sitting in a corner spot. Talking. Katerina watches partner point to letters. Katerina writing. Partner looking on. Partner shares their picture with neighbors proudly. Partner shows Katerina picture in book. Partner talking and flips through book. Katerina grabs book. Partner stops her and flips open to a page. Katerina starts writing. Partner shows her the alphabet strip.

Violet

Violet and partner working at desk. Violet writing. Partner pointing to a book. Partner watches Violet. Violet drops paper and stops working. Partner rolls her eyes and sighs. Violet starts working again but then plays with paper. Violet starts writing again. Partner looks on. Violet asks her partner a question. Her partner starts talking with her. Violet starts writing again. Partner looks on. Partner points to something on the paper. They talk for a brief second. Violet starts writing again.

Randy

Randy coloring picture. Randy asks partner something. Partner responds. Both back to working. Randy asks for help and partner starts helping with picture. Randy starts coloring again. Randy puts markers and the writing board away. Randy and partner look at pictures together.

One Sample From a December Viewing

Randy

Randy looks through folder for paper. Partner helps him sort through folder. Randy shows him the paper to work on. Partner points to the spot where

Randy should start.

Jim

Jim working at desk. Talking about writing. Jim writing. Jim having a hard time listening to his partner and settling down. His partner not very patient today. Partner points to Jim's paper. Jim starts writing. Discuss something. Jim starts but stops. Partner says, "Just Write!" Jim starts writing. Jim distracted by his neighbor. Jim starts writing. Jim starts yelling karate stuff. Partner turns back to Jim. Partner turns back around and faces Jim and says, "Stop goofing around and start working!" Partner puts hand on Jim's shoulder and looks him in the eye. Jim starts writing again.

Lori

Lori working at the computer. Lori intently typing. Partner points out indentation to Lori. Lori types. Partner points out where she is on her paper copy so Lori can keep her spot. Lori continues to type.

Trent

Trent writes down idea from board. Partner talks to him about it. "I like. . . ." Partner suggests ideas and tells him to write down stuff he likes. Trent writes. Partner looks on patiently. Partner tells him to add a word to the sentence. The two joke around for a minute. They talk some more. Trent goes back to paper. Partner helps him sound out word. Partner asks Trent what he likes to eat. Trent replies. Partner helps Trent sound out "pizza."

Jim

Partner trying to explain to Jim to change a sentence so it will make better sense. Partner reads it to Jim, "Dear, Hi Andy." Partner tells him that it doesn't make sense and that he should just say "Dear" or "Hi." Jim doesn't

want to change it at first but eventually does. Jim gets up. Partner goes and brings him back to his seat.

Katerina

Katerina and partner working at the computer. Partner taking dictation. Partner doing most of the work typing on the computer. Katerina looking on. Katerina turns around. Partner turns her back towards the computer to type. Katerina gets up to ask me a question about what to ask Santa for. Katerina, partner, and I discuss ideas. Both girls discuss it some more. Partner types one in for her. Partner asks her what picture she wants to add.

Appendix D

Samples From Student Journals

1-8-97

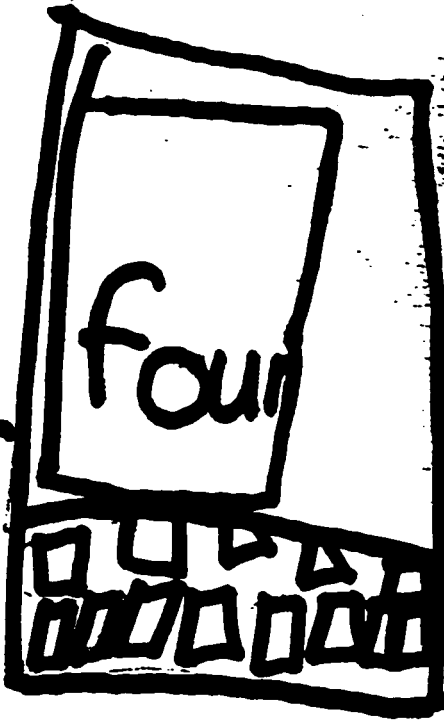
I hat fun
wit mi Buddiez



Jan 2

I like
writing
on the
computer

with
my
buty.





We worked on stories on the computer. She helped me with writing stuff on the computer. I liked working on the computer. We played with the building blocks on the computer.