THE CRESTWOOD PAIRED READING PROJECT

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Dedication

To my parents who supported and encouraged me throughout this project, to my children who believed in me and who permitted me to be absent from them for lengthy periods of time, and especially to my husband David who *insisted* that I finish!

Abstract

This project measured the gains in word identification (WI) and passage comprehension (PC) made by grade one students following 9 weeks of Paired Reading (PR) practice with a parent or 8 weeks of PR with a trained cross-age student tutor.

Following training, 36 parents and children undertook to practice PR for 10 minutes a day, 5 days a week for 9 weeks. Grade 5 and 6 student volunteer tutors worked with 25 students for a maximum of 2 weekly 20-minute sessions for 8 weeks. Pre and post testing of tutees was conducted using the WI test from Basic Reading Inventory (J. Johns, 1988) and the PC test of Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised (Woodcock-Johnson, 1990).

The 57 students completing the project made an average gain of 4.5 months in WI and 6 months in PC. Students practicing with parents gained an average of 6 months in WI and 7 months in PC while those working with student tutors gained an average of 2.3 months in WI and 2.75 months in PC. Differences in the "at home" and "at school" groups were attributed to: (a) time on task, (b) the influence enjoyed by parent and student tutors, and (c) student commitment and readiness to undertake PR. On a follow-up questionnaire, 81 % of parents responding believed their child was making fewer mistakes and 84% felt their child was more confident in reading.

Suggested improvements for future projects included: (a) collecting more reading materials; (b) having teachers monitor their own students and their peer tutors; (c) adding non-parent adult volunteers; (d) clarifying ambiguous areas of the training sessions; (e) holding mid-project and follow-up meetings; (f) altering the project's length; and (g) continuing testing on a small student sample to monitor the project's effectiveness.

Acknowledgements

The Crestwood Paired Reading Project was the combined effort of a great many people. I am deeply indebted and very grateful to my colleagues for their enthusiasm and hard work. I would like to thank:

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Introduction

The Problem

Experienced classroom teachers often come to the realization that they are unable and will always be unable to give each child sufficient individual attention to make them successful, fluent readers in their first year of school. Having attempted many different schemes to assist our reluctant and struggling emergent readers, I am always looking for new avenues to explore.

Through the years I have made increasing use of peer assistance and cooperative learning techniques, attempting to make the classroom a more supportive, less competitive environment. Matching high ability students with classmates in need of tutoring and on occasion allowing students to choose their own reading buddies have both proven to be helpful. In our classroom echo reading, repeated readings, chanting, and choral reading all seem to improve fluency and word recognition.

Parental involvement in home reading programmes has been less successful, as it seems those children most in need of assistance often do not receive it. Our practice of sending home storybooks for home reading practice with limited guidance or direction is well established. Through class meetings, hand-outs and individual interviews, I have attempted to suggest helpful ways parents and children might read together at home.

Many parents have a manner that is naturally supportive and beneficial to young children learning to read, but occasionally parents are overly demanding or authoritarian creating hostility in their children and an aversion to reading. Some parents tend to overemphasize one particular part of the reading process such as phonics and need guidance to explore other productive directions. Many parents fail to realize just how important a role they can play in their child's reading success and opt to leave it entirely up to the school. Too many children find television and video games their most common diversion at home while reading is relegated only to the classroom.

The first grade classroom always contains a wide range of reading abilities and not all children are easy to motivate to practice reading. Introverted beginning readers often are reluctant to participate in a large classroom setting although they are desperately in need of practice. Weak readers must spend a significant amount of time practicing if they are to improve and giving these children the time and individualized attention they need places unrealistic demands on any classroom teacher.

A possible solution

Because one-on-one tutoring can be adapted to each child's level of ability, pace, and reading interests it seems the ideal method of ensuring

that beginning readers are actively engaged in practicing what they need to practice. While reading more about Paired Reading (PR), I became interested in its commonsense features of an abundance of praise, choice of reading materials, modelling of good reading, and avoidance of unproductive pressure and stress on both student and tutor. If parents could be trained not to be critical and impatient, children might receive help, encouragement and added attention from those most important to them. It seemed obvious that parents could play a major role in improving their child's self-confidence and enthusiasm for reading and in integrating reading into other aspects of their child's life.

Although extra practice is most important for those needing the most help, even fluent readers enjoy additional attention from the most significant adults in their life. Additional practice might build self-confidence, strengthen child-parent relationships, and transfer benefits to subject areas other than reading.

Because not all parents are able or willing to give their children additional reading practice, I thought a viable alternative might be to train senior students as substitutes. Especially if their participation did not require great sacrifice and they could realize some personal benefit, I felt some of our most responsible seniors could be convinced to serve as tutors.

Reading easy books would allow them to concentrate on intonation and phrasing and serve as good role models for expressive reading.

Thus, a plan to involve more parents in a more structured way in home reading practice and to provide parent substitutes where necessary began to take shape. The remainder of this paper documents the Paired Reading project that was developed and implemented at Crestwood Elementary School, Medicine Hat, Alberta.

Paired Reading

Introduction

Extensive research has accumulated on Paired Reading (PR) since the mid 1970's. This survey of the literature will look at the origins and strengths of the PR technique as well as practical problems that arise in its implementation. Lastly, dissenting views and critiques of this method of reading practice will be examined.

Origins

PR was first introduced in Great Britain in the mid 1970's by Roger Morgan as a remedial reading procedure. Morgan had been working to improve the speech of stuttering children by reading simultaneously with them and adapted the procedure to reading delayed children (Morgan, 1976). PR was intended to be a "simple and a general" technique appropriate for a wide range of children and their parents with only minimum training and professional supervision (Morgan & Gavin, 1988).

Morgan's plan was to increase the incidence of correct reading responses by having parent and child read simultaneously aloud, the "participant modelling" (Morgan & Lyon, 1978) assisting the child with unknown words, pacing, expression, emphasis and punctuation. Based on behavioral learning theory, his procedure included reinforcement in the

form of words of praise to be given to the child when he signalled a desire to read alone, correctly read more complex words, or spontaneously corrected errors.

The child was to remain in control of much of the method by choosing reading material which interested him, deciding when to attempt solo rather than duet reading, and deciding when to continue reading beyond the prescribed ten minute sessions. Because of this control by the child, Morgan felt PR could accommodate the child's changing self-confidence and reading performance (Morgan & Gavin, 1988).

A change in children's confidence and attitude towards reading became one of the most consistent findings in PR projects, as both parents and children found the PR technique enjoyable (Morgan,1985; Heath, 1985; Morgan & Gavin, 1988; Topping, 1989; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991). Parents appreciated the straight-forward, specific guidelines of the procedure, reducing their uncertainty about what to do to be helpful to their children (Topping & McKnight, 1984; Topping, 1987). Several studies found that in parent and child reading interactions before PR training, parents showed an unexpected lack of encouragement or use of praise as they listened to their children read (Morgan & Lyon, 1978; Heath, 1985). Parents would typically listen in silence, insist that their

children sound out or spell out unknown words, and react only to mistakes usually in a anxious, stress-creating manner. PR gave parents a more "partnering" role (Morgan, 1985), and reduced errors in children's reading by providing them with a constant cue to correct word identification. Students could signal their desire to attempt reading alone at any time by the use of a pre-arranged non-verbal signal. When children encountered an unknown word while reading alone, parents were to provide the word after only a five second delay to permit the child to use whatever decoding skills he already possessed, and then return to reading in duet.

The improved fluency with less start and stop struggling and sounding out brought improvements in comprehension (Morgan & Gavin, 1988). Researchers theorized that comprehension improved with PR for a variety of reasons: children were able to read at an acceptable pace with a continuous prompt for unknown words, without anxiety over failure or interruption to the flow of the story's meaning (Morgan & Gavin, 1988), discussion of the story and pictures occurred at natural breaks in the story's text (Topping, 1984), and children were free to make greater use of contextual clues because they were not struggling with phonetic decoding (Topping, 1985).

The Strengths of Paired Reading

The importance of practice and many opportunities to read connected, meaningful material in creating fluent readers is well accepted (Smith, 1982). PR increases the number of books to which the child is exposed and the sheer volume of reading accomplished which reinforces the skill, promotes fluency and reduces forgetting (Topping, 1984; Topping, 1989b; Swanson, 1990). Reading real books of one's own choosing is cited as one of the greatest strengths of PR and may be the major source of children's motivation to continue with the technique (Yule, 1992). To paraphrase Gillham (1986), once children learn to read for pleasure, they do.

PR also capitalizes on parents' powerful influence over their children. Parents are best able to use praise motivating and suitable to the individual child (Bush, 1983; Morgan & Gavin, 1988) and can deliver many more hours of individualized attention than a teacher responsible for a classroom of children. Hewison and Tizard (1980) found that whether or not mothers regularly heard their children read was the home background factor most strongly related to reading achievement, more important than whether the mother read to the child, the child's I.Q., or the family's socioeconomic status. A four year study (Tizard, Schofield and Hewison,

1982) involving six schools and over 1800 students yearly in London, England showed that (a) children who received parental help were significantly better in reading than comparable children who did not, (b) most parents expressed great satisfaction in being involved, (c) most teachers in the study felt parental help was worthwhile and subsequently continued to involve parents after the experiment was concluded, and (d) small group instruction by a specialist did not produce improvement in reading of the same magnitude as did parental involvement.

Parents are becoming more involved in education as a consequence of their increasing legal right to do so and schools have found PR an effective way to utilize parents in the educational process (Sigston, Addington, Banks and Striesow, 1984; Pumfrey, 1986). PR has shown many children the great value placed on reading by their parents and given them a means of getting their parents positive, affectionate attention (Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991). Many studies have found that PR built a more positive relationship and a stronger bond of affection between parent and child (Bush, 1983; Friend, 1983; Morgan, 1985; Rasinski and Fredericks, 1991).

PR is simply too labour intensive to be practiced at school by teachers (Topping, 1985). By utilizing parental help, teachers can be free

to concentrate on other aspects of teaching and save hours of classroom time (Topping & McKnight, 1984). By capitalizing on the successful word attack strategies the child already has rather than by introducing new word-decoding strategies, PR can be practised by parents and their children without creating a conflict with techniques the teacher is using in the classroom (Morgan, 1985).

Large scale projects have shown parents are extremely positive in their evaluation of PR. In the Akron Project (Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991), which trained over 400 parents to be PR tutors, parents found improvements in reading performance, desire to read, and parent-child relationships. Many parents expressed a desire to continue PR beyond the duration of the project and some of the teachers involved felt their students were more willing to read, enjoyed reading more and acted out less during reading times in the classroom. In the Kirklees local authority project in Great Britain, 2750 children of various ages from different schools made average gains of over three times normal rates in reading accuracy and four times normal rates in reading comprehension and parents evaluated their experiences with PR very favourably (Topping, 1989b).

Of course, not all parents are able or willing to participate in PR projects, and so many attempts have been made to use other volunteers and

peers in place of parents in PR projects (Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982; Winter, 1986; Topping, 1989a; Topping & Whitely, 1990). Research has commonly found that those children acting as tutors gain as much as those being tutored (Winter, 1986). Achievement on exams, attitudes towards the subject matter, and student self-concept all tend to improve for both tutors and tutees (Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982; Topping, 1989a). The effects of tuition appear to be larger in more structured programs and projects of shorter duration (Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982), and the effectiveness of the tuition appears to increase when tutors are carefully trained (Topping, 1989a). In many peer pairings, male-male combinations produce the greatest reading improvements for tutors and tutees (Topping & Whitely, 1990). Those tutored by their parents evaluate PR more positively than do children tutored by peers or others, although they report greater difficulty in finding time to do PR regularly (Topping & Whitely, 1990; Toomey, 1993).

Peer tutoring in school may ensure that extra time allotted to reading is truly spent reading and may be a way to provide individualized instruction in a large group setting. Limbrick, McNaughton & Glynn (1985) found that even weak readers can act effectively as tutors. Children as young as 10 and 11 could easily be taught to tutor and could correctly

carry out their duties. An added benefit was the close positive relationships that developed between many children and their peer tutors.

Children are usually highly motivated to participate in PR peer tutoring perhaps because of the social interaction with older peers, the ability to read more challenging material with assistance than could successfully be read alone, and the ability to control many aspects of the PR session (Limbrick et al, 1985).

Practical Problems

Although much of the research into PR has been positive, several practical problems are pointed out in the literature. PR does require considerable teacher time to train and supervise tutors, to solve problems and clear up misconceptions, and to provide sufficient appropriate reading material. The more unskilled and insecure the PR parent groups is, the more extensive the support and follow-up offered may have to be (Topping, 1985b). For all the teacher's effort, it may be that lower-achieving children whose parents often have infrequent contact with schools, are less likely to get help or get involved at all. High-contact parents who usually don't really need the assistance often receive most of the help (Toomey, 1993). Parental illiteracy, of course, is a total impediment to involvement for some parents (Heath, 1985).

Despite the teacher's best efforts to train tutors, there is no guarantee that tutors will actually follow PR techniques once they are reading with their children at home. Research has shown that the rate of conformity to PR techniques by parents participating in PR projects may vary from 43% to 75% in projects with monitored home visits (Topping & Lindsay, 1992). Supervision of practising PR pairs must be sufficient to guarantee that it does not degenerate into mere listening to children read, for any 'taught' technique may 'drift' away and gradually extinguish (Morgan, 1989). It has been claimed that without close monitoring the initial quality of PR tends to fall off after the first six weeks (Morgan & Lyon, 1979; Pumfrey, 1986).

Providing sufficient reading material may be a problem. Most reading scheme material may not appeal to young readers because of a lack of rich vocabulary and story. Gillham (1986) found that the most popular PR books for beginning readers were real storybooks of humour and fantasy, generally one-liners of not more than 32 pages. Weak readers may only shadow or echo their parents, so parents must be certain to adjust to the child's own pace to promote full participation (Pumfrey, 1986). For more advanced readers, the material may be too adult in content if sufficiently challenging. In this case, Morgan (1989) suggests moving to

non-fiction material written for the lay adult in an area chosen by the child. With reading proficiency often comes an increase in speed that leads to careless errors, and parents must be taught to pace their young reader to prevent this while continuing positive feedback and praise (Morgan & Gavin, 1988). Every pair must try to avoid a preponderance of too easy or too difficult books or a long succession of books on a single subject (Topping, 1989a).

Since most PR projects are of short duration, teachers must solve the problem of how to encourage ongoing practice after the project terminates. Motivating students for the long term may prove a challenging task (Scoble,Topping & Wigglesworth, 1988).

Critiques in the Literature

Burdett(1986) outlines the deficiencies in much of the PR research: (a) absence of a control group, (b) absence of a second group receiving a different treatment to control for the Hawthorne effect, (c) lack of comparison of PR with and without parental involvement, and (iv) lack of follow-up to see if gains are maintained. He found that both PR and an "Individualized" reading brought positive parent responses, gains in children's confidence, enthusiasm for reading, fluency and self-correction, but that PR was more effective in reducing the rate of error, more flexible

and open to control by the child, and was easy to learn and follow. There seemed to be a saturation effect in PR for there were no significant differences in results for the study's subjects whether PR was practised at home, at school, or at home and at school.

It has been argued that this tendency for PR participants to reach saturation, as well as drift from correct technique and lose interest, may make PR most appropriate as a short-term intensive intervention strategy for those non-readers with a history of failure, rather than a long term parental involvement scheme. More traditional approaches may be better able to maintain the interest of children, parents, and teachers over long periods of time (Swinson, 1986). Winter (1991) suggests that all projects to improve children's reading succeed in large measure by changing motivation, confidence and self esteem - a Hawthorne effect. The value of extensive tutor training may be that it increases the commitment of the tutor and the involvement of a personal tutor may increase the student's interest, confidence and persistence whatever the procedure employed. Some research shows that PR tutors often fail to follow PR techniques and are especially negligent in correcting errors or using praise as PR requires (Wareing, 1985; Winter, 1988).

Hewison and Tizard (1980) point out that parents who choose to

tutor their children are a self-selected group and it is possible that simply taking an interest and an active role in their child's reading progress, and not the particular features of PR per se, brings about improvements in the child's reading. The factors that prevent parents from becoming PR tutors are likely numerous and complex, and somewhat impervious to assault by the classroom teacher eager to involve as many parents as possible.

A comparison of PR and a more relaxed reading scheme with no particular method but an emphasis on increasing positive and reducing negative feedback, showed no significant differences in the impressive results obtained (Lindsay, Evans & Jones, 1985). PR's specific teaching approach and close monitoring many not be necessary to obtain important improvements but both PR and the "Relaxed Reading" had a structured approach of specific meetings and some monitoring. This structure was credited with the improvements brought by both methods that were greater than those achieved by simpler parental involvement schemes.

Wareing (1985) found no significant gains were made by children in four different experimental groups after eight weeks of reading practice. Whether parents were trained in PR, a read-aloud method including praise and assistance with difficult words, a read-aloud method with no assistance, or a linguistic method involving reading, discussion, story retelling and

rewriting, most parents in the end used a similar method. Despite the study's findings, the majority of parents considered the project worthwhile and helpful in improving their children's attitude towards reading. In another study, (Miller, Robson & Bushell, 1986) neither the frequency of reading or the total time spent in reading appeared to significantly effect the reading gains. This suggests that further research may be necessary to determine just which elements of PR are essential and responsible for improvement in children's reading and which can safely be altered or deleted.

Toomey (1993) reviewed over 40 studies of parents hearing their children read at home and pointed out that the comparison of pre and post reading gains without a control group may show improvements due to test wiseness, a Hawthorne effect, increased attention to the children by their parents or some uncontrolled factor. Again he points out that selective recruitment, which renders random assignment of subjects to test conditions impossible, makes it difficult to attribute results only to PR techniques.

Morgan (1989) admits that there are some parent-child pairs whose dysfunctional relationship does not permit any type of positive reading interaction, some relatively few who simply do not like the

technique or enjoy the experience, and some who do not achieve an improvement despite a valiant effort.

Whatever the shortcomings of many PR research projects and despite our apparent inability to attribute the success of PR to its particular features, it seems the PR package as a whole works for a great many children and their parents. Significant improvements in reading are usually obtained in relatively short periods of time with minimal use of teacher time or school resources (Barrett, 1986; Barrett, 1987). The common effects of PR such as significant increase in reading accuracy, even greater increases in comprehension, and positive reports of enjoyment and simple implementation, are reported in many parts of the world, regardless of age or ability of tutees, the nature of reading problems present or the variety of reading materials available (Morgan, 1989). The long term effects may not yet be sufficiently researched but the short term benefits seem clear.

The Crestwood Paired Reading Project

Getting Under Way

The Crestwood Paired Reading Project began in the fall of 1996 as a suggestion by a first grade teacher for a classroom project. The modest proposal met with enthusiasm when presented to the school principal who suggested that it be expanded to include all three grade one classes and the extended grade one (readiness) class. He wished to avoid the possibility of disgruntled parents in other classes who might not want to be excluded.

Expanding the project to this extent required the cooperation of additional school personal and we agreed to enlist the cooperation of our Reading Resource Room teacher, the grade-one teacher aide, and the other grade one teachers with the provision that the grade one teachers should decide for themselves whether or not they wished their students and their parents to be involved. Our kindergarten teacher, on maternity leave at the time, wanted to be involved and later came to parent and child training sessions and acted as an additional support person.

When all expressed an interest in the project, a proposal was next presented to the Crestwood School Advisory Council when I attended the regular monthly meeting in October 1996 as the staff representative.

Following the Council's blessing, I began steps to have our proposal formally accepted by the University of Lethbridge as a culminating project for my Master of Education degree.

The Council presentation sparked interest among some parents whose children were not in first grade and I was subsequently asked to give an evening presentation to parents. On Nov. 18 a notice (Appendix 1) was sent home inviting parents of children in grades two to six to attend on Nov. 20 a short evening session explaining the basic tenets of PR. During our regular monthly school staff meeting on Nov. 20 I gave a short presentation and passed out a handout giving an overview of PR, reasons for having a PR project, and factors that make PR successful, so that the entire school staff would be informed about PR, the parents' meeting to be held that night and those planned for the future.

A gratifyingly large and enthusiastic group of parents attended the meeting that night and many stayed beyond the planned one hour to ask additional questions and watch more video-taped examples of children and tutors practising PR from the training video prepared by the Northern Alberta Reading Specialists' Council Paired Reading: Positive Reading Practice (1991). A hand out summarizing PR techniques was distributed and those who wished to, were encouraged to try PR techniques on their

own. We learned later that several parents and their children had begun PR. Some parents came to me to report on their child's progress and the family's enthusiasm for PR. One mother reported that the only reading battles going on at home now were over which parent got to do PR with the children since both parents found it so enjoyable. Another father's interest in reading with his child had been rekindled and he was now willingly sharing the job with his spouse as she happily reported. The Nov. 20 meeting piqued interest in the upcoming grade one project and served as training for me in presenting PR to parents.

Because we had no idea how many grade one students might eventually be participating in the project and because we wanted parents and their children to be ready to begin PR immediately after they received training, we began testing all grade one children and several grade one readiness children on Dec. 9. We reasoned that if the children later chose not to be involved in PR, their test scores could be used by classroom teachers as part of their report card evaluation and if the children were PR participants we would have pre testing in word identification and passage comprehension completed in time for an early January project starting date. Eighty-eight students were tested between December 9 and January 22, 1977.

The time-line agreed to by school personnel required that training of those involved in the project should be completed by the end of the first week of school after Christmas vacation. Some chose to take home the training video while others waited to attend the parent presentations and learn along with parents and students. During the first week of school in January an invitation (Appendix II) was sent home to invite parents to attend one of two parent-only information nights and one of two parent-and-child training sessions.

Typically miserable January weather did not deter parents from attending on January 15 and 16, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 7 to 8 p.m. Forty-three parents signed the attendance sheets and many stayed to raise questions and ask for clarification (Appendix III). Some were anxious to begin immediately but agreed to wait a week for the Parent-Child training sessions. Coffee and donuts were offered to make those attending feel welcome. Each night a school administrator and several teachers joined us to provide support and demonstrate interest in the project.

Balloons, banners, and brightly coloured reading posters greeted parents and children in the library on the following Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Those school personnel involved wore "Partners in

Paired Reading" buttons and again offered cookies and drinks. We felt our hospitality and decor might make participating in the project more enticing to young students. After an initial explanation of PR, the viewing of short segments of the training video, and a question-and-answer period, parents and their children spread out in the library and adjoining classrooms to practice PR under the supervision of the grade one teachers, our teacher aid, and the kindergarten teacher. Twenty-minutes later we reassembled in the library for parting comments and contract signing by children and parents (Appendix IV). All those who wished to join us took a recording diary and a summary sheet to remind them of the steps to be followed in PR (Appendix V). Participants agreed to practice PR for ten minutes a day five days a week until the beginning or end of Easter holidays which ever suited their family most conveniently.

Once the size of our parent-child PR group was established at thirty-five PR pairs, classroom teachers began to decide which children not yet in the program might benefit from PR practice with a student tutor. At the same time I made a short presentation to the six classes of grades 5 and 6 students to interest them in becoming trained PR tutors. A sign-up sheet in the office gave us the names of seventy-four students willing to attend a noon hour meeting, listen to a short lecture and watch the training video.

The training of our seventy-four candidates took six noon hours as I wanted to make attendance as convenient as possible for our already very busy senior students. After consulting with the grade five and six teachers, and considering the number of times they agreed to be available for PR, I chose twenty-five of those who had been trained to begin as tutors and an additional two students to act as substitute tutors and supervisors. Our subjects for the study now consisted of sixty PR pairs, thirty-five practising at home with parents, another twenty-five at school with student tutors. While the Parent-Child pairs had agreed to read for 10 minutes a day 5 days a week, we asked our student tutors to commit to 15 to 20 minute sessions twice a week during lunch hour.

During PR Practising

Monitoring the at-home pairs fell to the classroom teachers in most cases. By recording time spent reading and any concerns or problems they encountered in their recording dairy, parents were able to receive feedback every week when the dairies were returned to teachers for their comments, answers, and words of encouragement. Occasionally parents spoke directly to me to share an amusing anecdote or ask my advice as director of the project, but for the most part the demands from parents were minimal once the project was under way.

At parent-teacher interviews in February, PR parents were polled to see if they wished to attend a follow-up meeting as we had initially planned. Parents, almost unanimously, did not feel another meeting was necessary and so we continued to address concerns on a one-to-one basis as they arose. Later in the course of the project when it became evident that parents' greatest worry by far was the fact that their children now preferred to read 'solo' and did not often require or want the support offered by 'duet' reading, I sent home a short memo reassuring parents that solo reading was our goal and that if their child was now capable of that they should just continue to listen, record time spent reading, and praise such independence.

Supervising PR pairs at school was an entirely different challenge. Our large student body of 570 students makes Crestwood a very busy place at noon hour. Many activities, sports, choirs, and clubs have been established to keep students occupied and these frequently conflicted with time for PR. To their credit, our tutors were for the most part very conscientious in arriving at the library at the agreed upon time to meet their young partners. In several cases, however, they found their reading buddies absent and the supervisors and I had to attempt to find the missing children. Because lunch hour for grade one students begins twenty minutes

earlier than it does for other students, the first grade members of the PR pairs had to wait for their older tutors to eat lunch and in the intervening minutes other diversions often presented themselves and students simply forgot about PR. The average number of minutes spent on PR reading weekly for school pairs was also affected by school holidays and special celebrations and events which sometimes involved the entire school over the noon hour.

Twenty-five pairs meeting twice a week meant that fifty supervised PR practices should have occurred every week. Two student supervisors and I attempted to track down missing students, monitor practices, and offer advice and support as necessary but, of course, the task was more demanding than we had anticipated. The student supervisors each worked two noon hours a week as did student tutors and I acted as overseer and chief cheerleader five noon hours a week. It soon became evident that our model was seriously flawed and several changes must be made before the project begins again next year.

We rewarded tutors and students with "Partner in Paired Reading" buttons in the second week of PR practice at school, and handed out free food vouchers from a local sandwich shop in the fourth week of the project. We held a pizza party as a final reward for our dedicated student

tutors at the project's completion.

As we had hoped several student pairs developed a special bond of friendship with their PR partner spending time together outside of PR practice. One grade five student was invited to his grade one partner's birthday party and attended! Unfortunately not all had such rewarding experiences as their comments in the recording diaries indicated but perhaps they have a better understanding of the trials and tribulations faced by their own teachers who also sometimes encounter uncooperative students.

We used a number of means to evaluate the success of our project and each warrants a closer examination.

Pre and Post Instruments

The Basic Reading Inventory (Johns, 1988) was chosen for the word identification test because it is made up of graded word lists and passages that begin at the preprimer level. The three forms of the Inventory (A,B,C) permitted us to chose different forms for pre and post testing to assess growth. Independent, instructional, and frustration word identification (WI) levels were determined from the student's performance, and these in turn were extrapolated to grade equivalent

scores using the scores listed for the instructional range.

Because the graded word list tests provide for a second attempt at analysis for mispronounced or unknown words and have sight words from the Revised Dolch List marked, it is possible to obtain a sub-score for the total words identified, percentage of words recognized instantly, words analyzed, and Dolch (basic sight) words identified. Sight words are those words that a reader identifies immediately upon seeing them without stopping to analyze using phonetic or structural analysis. It is extremely important for all children in elementary school to be competent in sight word knowledge so this was considered an informative subscore. It seemed likely that a significant number of first grade children might show no improvement from pre-primer to primer or from primer to first grade level in so short a time, yet might show improvement in total words correctly recognized, words recognized instantly or Dolch core-vocabulary words identified.

Graded word lists allow the teacher to investigate some of the student's word analysis skills and the extent of their basic Dolch vocabulary, but do not assess ability to comprehend. They are only a limited indication of reading level, and are admittedly a very unnatural reading situation. As well, some students have great difficulty with words

in isolation yet are able to decode them correctly in context while others can decode words in a list that confuse them in context. If the goal of reading is to reconstruct meaning from print, the mere correct pronunciation of words from a list may be an insufficient indicator of ability to read. Consequently a passage comprehension test was also administered individually to each child.

The passage comprehension test chosen was Subtest 23 Passage Comprehension of the <u>Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised(WJ-R)</u>(1990). The WJ-R is widely known and used for educational and research purposes and contains two parallel forms, Form A and Form B, to permit pre and post testing within a relatively short period of time. Subtest 23: Passage Comprehension begins with items requiring the student to point to a picture represented by a phrase and moves to short passages where he must identify a missing key word using syntax and semantic clues. Students use either the grammatical structure of language and/or the meaning of the words and phrases in predicting what might come next. At the early levels illustrations also give context clues to the children. Children use their knowledge of the content obtained from the context clues to predict a meaningful word for the word that has been deleted. The word of course must be in the students oral vocabulary.

Because it is individually administered, testing time per student is greater than for other group-administered tests, but the quality of the data obtained is more useful.

The WJ-R can be used to provide information about the effectiveness of specific school programs and curricular experiments (Woodcock and Mather,p.9) such as Paired Reading and its continuous-year feature provides norms based on data collected anytime in the school year. The WJ-R provides a great deal of information for each test: raw score, w score (a special transformation of the Rasch ability score), the standard error of measurement for each w score, an age score, and a grade equivalent score. The grade equivalent score was chosen for reporting purposes because of its relative ease of explanation to parents and teachers not familiar with the interpretation of standardized test scores. Scoring procedures yield grade equivalent scores directly from the test records without reference to norm tables. For calculating means, the w scores were used because they are generally considered more appropriate for statistical calculations. The WJ-R (p. 58) manual states that "At any level, the statistically preferred metric may be used for calculation purposes and the results (such as a mean or standard deviation) then converted into another metric in that level for reporting purposes" so the mean w score

was converted back to grade equivalent score for reporting.

Testing Procedures

Pre testing was carried out by the school's experienced Reading Resource Room teacher, the grade-one teacher-aide, and the writer (after our initial training and observation by our RRR colleague). Post testing was done entirely by the teacher-aide. The pre testing rooms were the Reading Resource Room when it was not is use and the most remote end of a quiet hallway during class time. Post testing was conducted in the same end of the hallway and in a corner of the entrance vestibule to provide a relatively quiet spot with adequate lighting and ventilation.

As the rapport between testers and students may affect performance, we relied on our familiarity with the students because of our daily or very frequent contact as well as our conscious efforts to converse before beginning testing to relax subjects. On one occasion, pre testing was discontinued and the student removed from the study when testing seemed to be stressful for the student.

Students were encouraged to respond even when the test items appeared difficult. As the manual suggests, frequent comments of "fine" and "good" enhance rapport,and are permitted (Woodcock and Mather,

p.31). In the first stages of pre testing examiners incorrectly estimated appropriate starting points in a few cases, requiring that extra items be given. Thereafter, pre testing for all students was begun at the lowest preprimer level.

During the word identification tests, the word lists were covered with a window card enabling the children to view only one word at a time. Beginning primary-grade children may well become frustrated just from seeing all of the words on a list, and subsequently may not make much of an effort to pronounce the words.

Post testing was a shorter process in some cases, because we had a more reliable estimate of appropriate starting point due to pre testing. As students are often disappointed by stopping in mid-page, the test requires examiners to always continue to the end of the page. Some students expressed a wish to continue even when they had reached their ceiling level (the level at which a subject has 0% chance of responding), and in some cases, the examiner had to assure unhappy students that they had done extremely well and were not expected to complete the entire test because it was a test for students of all school grades.

Admittedly test results may give only a narrow reflection of a student's level of development and can be influenced by a multitude of

factors including the student's attitude towards testing, poor rapport with the examiner, the student's health, and distracting elements in the surroundings. As well, a student's interest, intelligence, motivation, personal self-image and personal learning style may influence test results. In the present study, two of the three examiners had limited experience in administering the instruments chosen and this must also be a factor. Because no important decisions or changes to students' educational programs were made on the basis of the testing done, it was felt these shortcomings were not crucial. The changes in student reading ability, interest, active involvement, and success were also evaluated by parents, student tutors, and the grade one students themselves by means of follow-up questionnaires.

Follow-up Questionnaires

Parent as Tutor Responses. Following the completion of the project in April, questionnaires (Appendix VI) were sent home to the thirty-five parents of first-graders who had acted as tutors as well as to four parents of extended grade one students who had joined our group and participated in some form of PR with their children. Thirty-eight of the thirty-nine questionnaires were returned and analyzed by mid-May.

Seventy-one percent of the parents responding reported that their

child was keeping a steadier flow when reading out loud and 73.6 % felt their child was reading more. Seventy-six percent reported that their child was now reading a greater variety of books. Eighty-one percent believed their child was making fewer mistakes while 84 % felt their child was more confident in reading.

Several parents added written comments to their questionnaires. Some commented on the positive changes in attitudes towards reading:

> "Excellent program. I really enjoyed this time with my child. It was very heart warming and pleasing to watch his progress. He became so proud and his self esteem grew immensely... He is now way more sure of himself and we hear him reading everywhere we go..."

The special features of PR were praised:

> "We have had no unhappy reading times. They have always been positive and pleasant times where before using the 'sounding-out-each-word' method was awful. He wants to read and to be able to read and he wants to go to the library. We are going to keep doing PR the 5 days or more per week. I thank you for teaching us about this method!"

The increased time spent reading and spent together was mentioned:

> "My child and I both enjoyed the program. I feel it has really given my child an excellent grounding towards his reading career, which we as a family feel is very important....I think we will continue on our own as we both enjoy the reading and the togetherness. Thanks for the opportunity to participate..."

> "PR increases the time we spend with our children. Its been very good for our child"

> "Excellent Program. My child was excited about it and would

remind me if I forgot. We started a habit and are still continuing. He sometimes reads up to 45 minutes. He has started to read silently for his enjoyment and is also going to the library and reading on lunch hours occasionally. Thanks for allowing us to participate...

"I have noticed steady growth over the past few months in my child's reading. Certainly, reading every night has been beneficial....the more exposure a child has to reading and good literature, the better reader the child becomes."

Several parents were very pleased with their child's reading ability after completing PR:

"I am truly amazed at my child's level of reading! On his own he has picked up a chapter book with infrequent pictures, text that is printed close together on the page and a plot that is clearly intended for upper elementary students. He is already 30 pages into the book and anxious to read more. I only wish I could have used PR with my other two children when they were in grade one."

"The PR project gave my child a chance to broaden her word list. Some of the words she knows are unbelievable for her age. She has a nice flow to her reading and good expression....Overall, I think it is a good program for every child. Regardless if the child liked or disliked reading, the encouragement from mom or dad and teachers gives the student a positive attitude. Just reading with mom or dad one on one makes them feel important."

Parents often pointed out how difficult it was to keep a regular commitment to PR in their busy schedules :

"Although we were both willing at the beginning I found it difficult to do this program every day plus meet other obligations"

"This benefited my child, but we have had so many things going on right now that we are not reading as much, but when summer vacation and fall comes we will definitely get into reading more again."

"Although we tried to be consistent in reading times, we often were not able to fit it in. I know we would have had better results accordingly."

Some parents found that their child showed a strong preference for either solo or duet reading and did not use a balance of the two:

> "Often times I felt it wasn't a paired reading 'experience' in that my child almost always wanted to read on her own. It is now to the point where we sit together and she reads."

> "My child did not challenge himself when PR. Very seldom did heread alone. He waited for tutor to give unknown words. His sight vocabulary stayed (no growth in this area). Comprehension showed growth."

One child took turns reading solo with his parents :

> "My child hasn't been interested in reading in duet but prefers taking turns - the majority of our reading has been done this way."

As we suspected, some children were not yet sufficiently proficient in reading to make PR a happy experience and for them, listening to stories was more developmentally appropriate:

> "My child became easily frustrated with some books and would give up. I wanted to keep learning fun so I didn't push it. Although we didn't meet the requirements as were outlined at the beginning, we did read when she was willing... My child still prefers it best when I read as then she can look at the pictures and listen. Otherwise what tends to happen is that she is following along with my voice but she doesn't look at the words as we say them. When this is brought to her attention than she becomes frustrated and wants me to read because she wants to look."

One parent commented on the difficulty of finding appropriate reading material and took action to remedy the problem:

> "Sometimes found difficulty finding easy enough material at the public library. A lot of the books...much too hard. Books like the Dr. Seuss and Rookie Reader - boring or too simple. I have talked with the library in the hope that they will get more easy reading material. Idea books like Picture Readers, Hello Reading and All Aboard Reading worked well."

Many parents expressed a commitment to continue:

> "I will continue to read with my child as often as possible. She finds reading difficult and it is more enjoyable with help. I think the project was excellent."

Student Responses. Thirty six of the thirty-nine students who practised PR at home also completed a questionnaire (Appendix VII) with their parent's assistance in some cases. Both parents and students were asked to be very honest in answering the questions posed so as to truly assist us in evaluating the project. Seventy-five percent claimed they were more interested in reading and 69.44 % reported that they were more willing to read and were reading more. Eighty-six percent felt they were enjoying reading more while 88.8 % said they were making fewer mistakes when reading out loud and were now reading different kinds of books.

A few students also added their own comments to the questionnaires. Some simply expressed their opinion about PR :

> "I like it. Sometimes I make mistakes".

> "I hope we can do more paired reading in school more often."

> "Paired Reading is fun."

Other children pointed out an aspect of PR they disliked :

> "Solo reading is better than duet reading."

> "I like to read good. I liked reading with my Mom and Dad.I didn't like to read every day."

Staff Questionnaire Responses. All teaching staff and administrators, and any teaching assistants or secretarial staff who might have been in some way affected by the project were asked to complete a follow-up questionnaire (Appendix VIII). Seventeen people chose to do so. Not all seventeen individuals answered every question because some felt able to express an opinion on only certain aspects of the project. Thirteen of the respondents rated the project as very worthwhile while three people felt it was somewhat worthwhile. Eleven people strongly agreed and three somewhat agreed that PR should become a regular part of Crestwood's grade one program. Twelve people were very interested in participating in another PR project while two were somewhat interested and one was not very interested. The only question with a more balanced array of responses was "How intrusive was the PR project on you usual classroom routine? Here eight individuals felt it was not at all intrusive, six found it not very intrusive and three admitted it was somewhat intrusive. Respondents were asked to put completed questionnaire anonymously into an envelope in the school's office and were encouraged to add any comments or suggestions they had. Nine staff members chose to add hand-written comments.

Two people suggested that pre and post testing may not be

necessary each year and the programme would then be less intrusive. Some felt that PR should be incorporated into the Grade one programme if the final results showed it to be worthwhile. While some people felt it was difficult to enforce peer tutor sessions several agreed that if the tutors were properly following PR the younger students would benefit. It was suggested that perhaps parent volunteers could be used in some capacity during school hours to lessen the noon hour confusion as well as make this program available to those students who were likely to benefit most from the additional help.The greatest advantage one teacher found was that so many parents were now so much better informed about how to work with their child at home. Someone wondered who would organize the project every year. Would we draw straws or just put the present coordinator permanently in charge? Another colleague felt these PR concepts could be useful for other grades as well. The prospect of an ever widening circle loomed. The comments generated much more reflective thought about the future of PR at Crestwood and pointed out several issues that would have to be addressed.

Reporting Our Results

By mid-May, questionnaires had been collected and tabulated from parents, students, peer tutors, and staff members and all post testing was

complete. Table I shows the pre and post scores and gains made in word identification and passage comprehension by the ten first grade students who began the project with the recommended threshold WI level of 1.4 (G.E.) and practised PR at home with parents. Table 2 gives the same information for the remaining twenty-five students practising PR at home who began with lower WI levels while Table 3 reports on the twenty-two students who had completed PR at school with student tutors.

One ' at school' participant had moved away during the project, and two 'at school' participants from the extended grade one class had withdrawn from the project. Four extended grade one students had practised variations of PR at home with their parents but their data was not included in the analysis because, as readiness students, they had not yet begun regular grade one reading programs in school.

As Tables II and III indicate, a total of 45 of the 57 participants began with a grade equivalency (G.E.) of less than 1.4 (fourth month of grade one) in word identification (WI) as measured by the instruments used. We had hypothesized that children in the very early or emergent stages of reading might not show major gains during the short duration of the PR project and had therefore used the Basic Reading Inventory (Johns, 1988) because of the finer analysis offered by its sub-scores. In fact,

Table 1 : Gains in WI and PC for parent-tutored students with threshold WI

Student ID	Word Identification								Passage Comprehension				Gain in Word ID		Gain in PC
	Grade Equiv.		% Correct		% Instant		% Dolch		G.E.		G.E.				
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	W Score	Post	W Score			
A 1	1.5	4.0							2.2	466	3.1	481		2.5	0.9
A5	2.5	3.0							4.2	493	4.4	494		0.5	0.2
A7	1.8	4.0							2.4	470	3.4	485		2.2	1.0
A8	1.4	1.4	75	95	35	70	67	93	1.7	456	2.7	475	%C +20 % I +35 %D +26	0	1.0
A13	1.6	2.3							1.7	456	3.1	481		0.7	1.4
A17	2.0	2.5							2.2	466	2.9	478		0.5	0.7
A19	1.6	2.2							1.6	452	4.0	491		0.6	2.4
A26	1.8	3.0							1.7	456	2.7	475		1.2	1.0
A28	2.5	3.0							2.6	473	3.4	485		0.5	0.8
A31	1.7	2.5							2.4	470	2.9	478		0.8	0.5

A (1) students ("at home" with threshold WI) average gain in WI   *=0.95*
A (1) students average gain in PC   *=1.0*

All A students average gain in WI   0.6
All A students average gain in PC   0.7

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Table 2 : Gains in WI and PC for parent-tutored students with less than threshold WI

Student ID	Grade Equiv. Pre	Grade Equiv. Post	% Correct Pre	% Correct Post	% Instant Pre	% Instant Post	% Dolch Pre	% Dolch Post	G.E. Pre	W Score	G.E. Post	W Score	Gain in Word ID	Gain WI	Gain in PC
A2	-1.0	-1.0	15	50	15	50	9	64	1.2	425	1.4	442	%C +35 % I +35 %D +55	0	0.2
A3	-1.0	1.3							1.2	425	1.6	451		0.3	0.4
A4	-1.0	1.8							1.5	446	2.0	463		0.8	0.5
A6	-1.0	-1.0	5	60	5	40	9	82	1.1	419	1.3	437	%C +55 % I +35 %D +73	0	0.2
A9	-1.0	1.4							1.4	441	1.9	459		0.4	0.5
A10	-1.0	1.5							1.3	430	2.7	475		0.5	1.4
A11	-1.0	1.5							1.3	436	1.7	455		0.5	0.4
A12	-1.0	-1.0	5	45	10	40	9	64	1.1	412	1.4	442	%C +40 % I +30 %D +55	0	0.3
A14	-1.0	2.0							1.5	446	2.7	475		1.0	1.2
A15	-1.0	1.4							1.5	446	1.9	459		0.4	0.4
A16	-1.0	-1.0	10	20	0	15	9	27	1.1	412	1.2	423	%C +10 % I +15 %D +18	0	0.1
A18	-1.0	2.5							1.4	441	3.1	481		1.5	1.7
A20	-1.0	1.3							1.4	441	2.4	471		0.3	1.0
A21	-1.0	1.8							1.3	430	1.7	455		0.8	0.4
A22	-1.0	1.3							1.3	430	2.2	467		0.3	0.9
A23	-1.0	-1.0	10	55	10	35	18	82	1.1	412	1.3	437	%C +45 % I +25 %D +64	0	0.2
A24	-1.0	-1.0	30	40	10	20	27	64	1.3	430	1.5	446	%C +10 % I +10 %D +34	0	0.2
A25	-1.0	-1.0	0	55	0	40	9	64	1.3	430	1.3	437	%C +55 % I +40 %D +55	0	0.0
A27	1.2	1.0	85	70	30	65	73	82	1.4	441	2.2	467	%C-15 % I +35 %D +9	-0.2	0.8
A29	-1.0	3.0							1.3	436	3.4	485		2.0	2.1
A30	-1.0	-1.0	30	60	15	50	36	91	1.2	425	1.7	455	%C +30 % I +35 %D +55	0	0.5
A32	-1.0	1.5							1.3	436	2.9	478		0.5	1.6
A33	1.1	3.0							1.4	441	4.0	491		1.9	2.6
A34	-1.0	-1.0	45	65	20	40	55	73	1.3	430	2.0	463	%C + 20 % I +20 %D +18	0	0.7
A35	1.0	1.6							1.2	425	1.6	451		0.6	0.4

A(2) students ("at home" with less than threshold WI) average gain in WI =0.464

A(2) gain in PC =0.6

All A students average gain in WI =0.6

All A students average gain in PC =0.7

Table 3 : Gains in WI and PC for peer-tutored students

	Word Identification								Passage Comprehension				Gain in Word ID	Gain in PC
	Grade Equiv.		% Correct		% Instant		% Dolch		G.E.		G.E.			
Student ID	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	W Score	Post	W Score		
B1	-1.0	-1.0	5	35	0	35	9	64	1.1	419	1.3	437	%C +30 %　0	0.2
B2	-1.0	1.3							1.1	412	1.2	428	0.3	0.1
B3	-1.0	1.3							1.3	430	1.9	459	0.3	0.6
B4	-1.0	1.5							1.2	425	1.6	451	0.5	0.4
B5	1.2	3.0							1.6	452	2.9	478	1.8	1.3
B6	-1.0	1.3							1.1	419	2.2	467	0.3	1.1
B7	-1.0	-1.0	35	65	25	50	36	73	1.2	425	1.3	437	%C +30 %　0	0.1
B8	-1.0	-1.0	35	50	15	40	27	64	1.3	430	1.6	451	%C +15 %　0	0.3
B9	1.3	1.4							1.6	452	1.6	451	0.1	0.0
B10	-1.0	-1.0	0	30	0	25	0	36	1.1	412	1.1	417	%C +30 %　0	0.0
B11	1.3	1.5							1.6	452	2.7	475	0.2	1.1
B12	-1.0	-1.0	50	60	30	45	55	64	1.3	436	1.3	437	%C +10 %　0	0
B13	1.0	1.4							1.4	441	1.9	459	0.4	0.5
B14	-1.0	-1.0	0	25	0	20	0	36	1.1	419	1.3	433	%C +25 %　0	0.2
B15	-1.0	1.3							1.1	412	1.4	442	0.3	0.3
B16	-1.0	-1.0	45	55	20	35	45	73	1.1	419	1.6	451	%C +10 %　0	0.5
B17	1.4	1.8							1.6	452	2.2	467	0.4	0.6
B18	-1.0	1.0	40	75	20	40	45	100	1.2	425	2.2	467	%C +35 %　0	1.0
B19	1.7	1.8							2.8	477	2.4	471	0.1	-0.4
B20	-1.0	-1.0	10	60	0	45	9	82	1.1	412	1.4	442	%C +50 %　0	0.3
B21	-1.0	-1.0	5	50	0	45	9	55	1.3	430	1.3	437	%C +45 %　0	0.0
B22	-1.0	1.4							1.5	446	1.9	459	0.4	0.4

B Students ("at school") average gain in WI =0.23

B Students average gain in PC　　　　=0.275

twenty-one participants did not change to a higher level in WI and we had to examine sub-scores to find differences between pre and post scores. One student scored two months lower on the post test.

Thirty-two of the 57 children began with less than a G.E. of 1.4 in passage comprehension (PC) and 5 failed to show an improvement. One child scored 4 months lower on the post test.

Despite these starting points and the number of children who did not show a gain, the average gains in WI and PC were encouraging. The entire group made an average gain in WI of 4.5 months and an average gain of 6 months in PC in the approximately three months that elapsed between pre and post testing. The group of 35 students practising PR at home with parents gained an average of 6 months in WI and 7 months in PC. Notably the ten children who began with a WI of 1.4 (G.E.) made an average gain in WI of 9.5 months and an average gain in PC of 1 year 0 months (Table I)! The remaining 25 'at home' students made an average improvement in WI of 4.64 months and an average gain of 6 months in PC.

Eighty percent of the children in the 'at home' group showed a greater than expected gain in PC while only 45 % of the ' at school' group did so. Sixty percent of the 'at home' group made a greater than expected gain in WI but only 22.5 % of the 'at school' group made such a gain. This

difference between the two groups was pronounced but not unexpected. The average gains for the entire group, at 4.5 months for WI and 6 months for PC, were reassuring but some of the individual gains were dramatic. The greatest individual gain made in WI was 2 years 5 months by a student in the 'at home' group and 1 year 8 months by someone in the 'at school' group. Gains in PC ranged up to 2 years 6 months ("at home") and 1 year 3 months ('at school').

Our results were first presented to the Crestwood School staff at the May staff meeting (Appendix IX) and then individual student results were delivered to each classroom teacher for distribution to parents (Appendix X) as promised.

Discussion and Recommendations

Our first attempt at a large-scale PR project brought a degree of success for the participants and a valuable learning experience to its organizers. PR was useful to many of our average, above average, and remedial readers just as Morgan(1989) claims it usually is. The pronounced difference in results between those who practised PR at home and those who worked with student tutors at school can be attributed to a number of factors: the number of sessions held and the time spent on task, the influence enjoyed by the two types of tutors and such student variables as the commitment of the tutees to the project and the tutees' varying degrees of readiness to undertake reading practise.

Time on Task

Both parent and student tutors were asked to keep a record of the number of minutes of practise during each session. An examination of the diaries kept during the project showed a startling difference in time on task for each of the two groups. 'At school' pairs often met only once a week and sometimes missed entire weeks, while several 'at home' pairs practised not only the five times a week agreed to in the contract, but often six or seven days in a single week. 'At home' pairs were also much more likely to read beyond the prescribed 10 minutes in a session, while 'at school'

pairs stopped abruptly at 20 minutes and most often read for 15 minutes. Our goal for next year must be to increase the amount of time actually spent reading for peer partners, and perhaps to counsel some parent-child partners not to overdo it!

Differences in parent and peer tutoring

Naturally, their parents are the most important and influential people in most children's lives. The effects of their enthusiasm for reading and the quality time they spend with their children cannot be duplicated by peer tutors. We can attempt to involve a larger number of parents, and increase the time peer pairs spend reading but cannot hope to entirely overcome the advantage enjoyed by parent-child pairs. By involving more fathers in PR, we may help to undue the cultural connection that may exist between boys' susceptibility to reading failure and the view that reading activities are feminine (Heath, 1985; Topping, 1989b). Next year the use of personal invitations, decorated with their children's artwork, may increase both parental interest and pressure from the children to participate.

Differences in "at home" and "at school" tutees

Our 'at home' and 'at school' groups also began largely with very different reading abilities. Many, but not all, of our 'at school' tutees were

selected for participation by their teachers because they were most in need of remedial reading assistance, not because they were most interested in having a reading buddy. In the projects to come it may be wise to alter our criteria for participation in peer tutoring to consider those most willing to participate in order to avoid disappointing our earnest peer tutors who become understandably frustrated by their truant young students. After investing time and effort to become trained, our tutors deserve cooperative partners.

Building on the first project

While 74 student tutors attended training, only 25 were formally used in the first project. We now have a large group of grade five trained tutors who will be returning to Crestwood as grade six students in the coming year and, with a refresher course, they may be willing to act as tutors in the next project. Given the benefits that are possible for both tutors and tutees (Winter, 1986), we may wish to use as many older students as possible. If we concentrate on training a new group of grade five tutors each year, we can maintain a group of more experienced tutors to lead and counsel fresh recruits and act as substitute tutors to replace those absent or required at another activity.

We now have posters and banners that can be reused or serve as

models for replacements and we can be well stocked with "Partners in Paired Reading" buttons before the next project begins. Boxing up our display at the end of each project should save time and only consumable materials such as balloons and recording diaries will be produced as each project begins.

Improvements for the Future

Miller et al (1986) found that second and third PR projects showed a significant improvement over first attempts. Certainly there are several areas that should be examined in our project.

Reading Materials. We now have a better idea just which reading materials will be popular with children for PR practising, and a conscious effort can be made to collect titles from the public library as well as our school library for our classroom PR collections. In my own classroom, I plan to try sorting and colour coding popular PR selections into tubs to give children some direction as to level of difficulty while still permitting freedom of selection.

Peer Tutoring. Monitoring peer tutoring was, without a doubt, the most unwieldy aspect of the project. In the projects to come, placing classroom teachers in charge of their own students and their peer tutors

would spread the burden more widely to all those teachers who wish to be involved in peer tutoring. By changing the meeting place from the library to individual grade one and two classrooms , teachers can better monitor attendance by their students and adherence to PR techniques.

Non-parent volunteers. Not all parents may consider themselves a good reading model and some may have past school experiences which make them reluctant to participate. The recruitment of adult non-parent volunteers is an avenue not yet explored in Crestwood's PR Project and may be well worth investigating especially for those students most in need of reading practice.

Training. Feedback from parents has shown us a few areas of the presentation and training which should be altered. Parents need to understand that not all children will be ready for all aspects of PR and those who remain emergent readers may benefit most from a shared reading experience with little or no correction or solo reading by the child. As Swinson (1986) emphasizes, we must stress that most children move from a shared reading method to PR and then on to quite independent reading with adult assistance only when a difficult word is encountered. This latter method of parent-child reading can maintain participants' interest over longer periods of time. In the current project, the guidelines

given to parents were likely too rigidly presented, for several parents were unsure whether they could resort to shared reading when their child seemed unable to participate fully in PR or whether they could permit their very capable child to use only solo or independent reading. If more structured programs have greater effects on those participating (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik,1982), we must be careful to present a range of acceptable participation without appearing to lose all structure and permit any form of parent-child interaction at all. Expanding our training to parents of first and second grade children may also increase the number of parents participating and the number of children who have sufficient reading ability to benefit most from PR.

Although parents in the current PR project felt it unnecessary to hold a follow-up meeting after the initial training sessions, a meeting held mid-way through the project or earlier may serve to bolster up sagging interest and increase commitment even if there are no misconceptions or problems to be solved or shared by the group. As well, a meeting held at the conclusion of the project may more effectively relay information and culminate the project. This year teachers were charged with disseminating final results as they saw fit, and not all parents may have received their child's individual results.

Length of project. Given the 'saturation effect' experienced by some of our participants and mentioned in the literature (Morgan & Lyon, 1978) it may be worthwhile to experiment with the duration of our next PR project. Beginning a little later would permit more time after Christmas vacation for preparation, would give students a longer opportunity to achieve a threshold reading level before undertaking PR practising, and would perhaps sustain the participants' interest until the end of the project at Easter break.

Testing. To minimize intrusions into other teacher's classrooms, pre and post testing on only a small sample of future participants drawn from the author's own class could readily be done by the experienced teacher aide. Choosing a random sample or choosing students from all ability levels is manageable but testing the entire class would provide scores which could assist in report card writing. It is possible to investigate students' attitudes towards reading and monitor PR's impact using more easily administered and scored group instruments such as McKenna and Kear's (1990) survey of attitudes towards reading, which requires only 10 minutes of class time and can be use with children in grades one to six. Maintaining records over time may help to monitor the effectiveness of the on-going project.

Unanswered Questions and Commitment for the Future

Many questions remain for further investigation. Additional studies in the PR field may tell us: which components of PR are crucial, which children will benefit most, at which stages of PR most improvement occurs (Morgan, 1985), what is the optimum frequency and duration of PR sessions, which instruments measuring improvement used in PR studies are most appropriate, how prominent is the Hawthorne effect, and how much training and monitoring of practising pairs is necessary to achieve the desired results.

Prentice (1987) argues that the four factors affecting the ease with which young children read quickly and easily are:

(a) the choice and availability of suitable materials,

(b) parental involvement,

(c) the teacher's role as facilitator and supporter, and

(d) within-child factors such as motivation and self-image.

PR seems to deal effectively with all four factors with simple, easy to follow techniques and provide improvement in a relatively short period of time. Many of the factors which appear to affect success in education:

social class, material circumstances, size of family, number of books in the home, and parents' newspaper reading habits are beyond classroom teachers' influence but PR provides an effective means of improving children's' reading attainment which is perhaps the "best single predictor of subsequent school achievement" (Hewison & Tizard, 1980). Many of the participants of our study expressed the view that whatever the reading gains of particular children or the group as a whole, the greatest and most lasting benefits have been more social and attitudinal: the improved relationships between parents and children, the improved parent-school relationships and the increased enthusiasm for reading and self-confidence in our first grade students. This alone is sufficient justification to continue the Crestwood Paired Reading Project!

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10 MINUTES OF HOME READING PRACTICE A DAY CAN MAKE YOUR CHILD A BETTER READER!

PAIRED READING, a simple and effective home reading technique, offers positive improvements in children's reading. It takes only 10 minutes a day, five days a week for as little as six to eight weeks!

A recent research study in Edmonton Public Schools showed that children, on average, improved at twice the expected rate in word recognition and at almost four times the anticipated rate in reading comprehension when home Paired Reading practice supplemented classroom reading instruction.

You are invited to attend a one-hour information/ video presentation outlining how you can use this easy-to-learn, enjoyable method with your child!

Paired Reading for Grades 2 to 6
Wednesday, November 20, 1996
7 to 8 p.m. Crestwood Cafeteria

Appendix II: Invitation to Parents
10 MINUTES OF HOME READING PRACTICE A DAY CAN MAKE YOUR CHILD A BETTER READER!

PAIRED READING, a simple and effective home reading technique, offers positive improvements in children's reading. It takes only 10 minutes a day, five days a week.

A recent research study in Edmonton Public Schools showed that children, on average, improved at twice the expected rate in word recognition and at almost four times the anticipated rate in reading comprehension when home paired Reading practice supplemented classroom reading instruction.

Crestwood School is pleased to announce that a Paired Reading Project will take place this term. Grade-one teachers, with Mrs. Carter as project coordinator, will offer you:

a)   an introductory workshop, and a parent-child training workshop with an opportunity to practice the basic steps.

b)   a handout to remind you of the simple steps to follow in Paired Reading.

c)   a diary to record your reading over the 9 weeks of the project.

d)   a followup session to check that you are "on the right track" and to answer any questions you might have.

e)   a Paired Reading book display in the school library to encourage your child to choose interesting reading materials.

f)   individual feedback on your child's progress after the project is complete as well as overall results of the project as a whole. Confidentiality and participants' anonymity will be maintained.

We look forward to working with you to make Paired Reading a successful reading experience for your child.

*Please read the enclosed letter and send back your response form.

Appendix II (continued)

Dear Grade One Parent,

We invite you to join our Paired Reading project. All training will be provided at two workshops so it will be important that you and your child attend these sessions.

A.PARENTS ONLY Paired Reading Workshops   Please choose one:

Date: <u>Wednesday, Jan.15</u>   OR   Date: <u>Thursday, Jan. 16</u>
Time: 7 to 8 p.m.   Time: 7 to 8 p.m.
Place: Crestwood Library   Place: Crestwood
Library

B. PARENT-STUDENT Paired Reading Workshops Please choose one:

Date: <u>Wednesday, Jan. 22</u>   OR   Date: <u>Thursday, Jan. 23</u>
Time: 7 to 8 p.m.   Time: 7 to 8 p.m.
Place: Crestwood Library   Place: Crestwood Library

*Please ask your child to choose a book to bring to this workshop. Let the choice be the child's!

We look forward to seeing you at the Paired Reading Sessions.
                                    Sincerely,

                                Mrs. Karen Carter

Please return this slip to your child's teacher.

- -

My child and I plan to attend the Paired Reading Sessions.

     Circle: YES   NO

PARENT-ONLY session choice:_____

PARENT-CHILD session choice:_____

Name of parent:_____ Name of child:_____
Teacher:_____

Appendix III : Questions asked by parents at initial meeting

1. Can I start right away before next week's Parent-Child night?

2. Will you explain PR to the children or must the parents?

3. What if the child wants to re-read the same story over and over?

4. What if the child wants to discuss the story forever as a way of avoiding reading?

5. If parents are interested and willing to sign a PR contract, how do we get our children to feel the same way about PR?

6. Will teachers change their teaching in the classroom to more closely match PR?

7. In the 50's we were told not to point when reading, is it really O.K. now to use a clear ruler or finger to guide reading?

8. Can the minutes recorded for PR be used for "Read around the World"?

9. Are the children doing this already? My child already does duet reading at home.

10. Will you explain the role of the grade five and six tutors?

11. If the child chooses a book far beyond his capabilitiles, what can I expect the child to do it duet reading?

12. Do we come with our own books next week?

13. Can the child choose the same story repeatedly?

14. When do you stop? When does the child no longer need PR?

Appendix IV: Paired Reading Contract

PAIRED READING PROJECT CONTRACT
(Parent and Child)

Child's name:_____

Teacher:_____

Parent's name:_____

Home telephone number:_____

We would like to register as participants in Crestwood School's Paired Reading Project

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN

1. I agree to my child having reading tests at the beginning and conclusion of the project to measure his/her growth in word recognition and reading comprehension. I expect to receive information on my child's progress at the conclusion of the project.

2. I agree to engage in Paired Reading for 9 weeks and will contact my child's teacher should difficulties emerge in meeting this commitment.

3. I recognize that a followup session would be useful to check that my child and I are on the "right track", and will attend one feedback session.

4. I understand that confidentiality and participants' anonymity will be maintained.

5. I understand that my child and I may withdraw from the project at any time without prejudice.

_____
(Signature)

My contact person at the school is _____

STUDENT

1. I agree to take reading tests at the beginning and conclusion of the project to measure my growth in reading. I expect to receive information on my progress at the end of the project.

_____ (Student's signature)

Appendix V: Paired Reading Summary Sheet

PAIRED READING: REVIEW STEPS

At the first Reading Session
1. Student and tutor agree on reading times
2. They also agree on a starting signal
3. Tutor reviews how technique works

Before Reading
4. Student chooses reading materials and can change them at any time
5. Find a quiet spot away from distractions

Reading in Duet
6. Always begin by reading together
7. Non-critical correction of errors works best: if an important error is made, the tutor says the word and the student repeats it. Small errors that do not affect the meaning are not corrected for emergent readers.

Reading Solo
8. Student and tutor agree on a solo reading signal
9. Tutor praises the student when solo is attempted
10. Tutor continues to offer support and praise during solo reading

Return to Duet Reading
11. Tutor corrects student's mistake (gives word/ student repeats it). Return to duet reading until the student signals to go solo again.

"Talk"
12. Remember to relax and talk about what you have read!

Appendix VI: Tutor Followup Questionnaire (from Brailsford, A. and Brimacombe, M. (1991) *Paired Reading: Positive Reading Practice.*

PAIRED READING: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Tutor Checklist

Tutor's Name _____ Student's Name _____

PLEASE UNDERLINE WHICH IS TRUE FOR YOU

A.   Is your student...

(1) reading more	about the same	reading less
(2) staying with the same kind of book	about the same	reading different kinds of books
(3) understanding books more	about the same	understanding books less

B.   Is your student...

(4) less confident in reading	about the same	more confident in reading
(5) more willing to read	about the same	less willing to read
(6) less interested in reading	about the same	more interested in reading
(7) enjoying reading more	about the same	enjoying reading less

C.   When reading out loud, is your student...

(8) making more mistakes	about the same	making less mistakes
(9) keeping a steadier flow	about the same	stopping & starting more
(10) reading in a lifeless, boring way	about the same	reading with more life and expression

D.   Would you like to...   **CHECK ONLY ONE**

(11) Continue Paired Reading as often as now?	☐
(12) Continue Paired Reading but not so often?	☐
(13) Continue tutoring but in a different way?	☐
(14) Tutor in another area, like math or writing?	☐

On the back of the paper, please add any other comments about the usefulness of Paired Reading, the progress of your student, etc.

(Adapted by M. Brimacombe from Topping & Whiteley, 1990, p. 31)

Appendix VII: Student Followup Questionnaire

PAIRED READING: WHAT DO YOU THINK? Student Checklist
PLEASE UNDERLINE WHICH IS TRUE FOR YOU.

<u>Are you...</u>

1. reading more	about the same	reading less
2. staying with the different same kind of book	about the same	reading kinds of books
3. understanding books more	about the same	understanding books less

<u>Are you...</u>

4. enjoying reading more less	about the same	enjoying reading
5. less interested in reading	about the same	more interested in reading
6. more willing to read	about the same	less willing to read

<u>When reading out loud, are you...</u>

7. making more mistakes mistakes	about the same	making less

<u>Would you like to ...</u>

                                                            Check Only One

Continue Paired Reading as often as now?   _____

Continue Paired Reading but not so often?   _____

Continue reading practice but in a different way?   _____
On the back of the paper, please add any other comments you would like to make about Paired Reading.

Crestwood Paired Reading Project - Staff Questionnaire

Please place completed questionnaires in the marked envelope in the office and check off your name.

1. How worthwhile was the PR project in your opinion?

Very worthwhile
Somewhat worthwhile
Not very worthwhile
Not at all worthwhile

2. How intrusive was the PR project on your usual classroom routine?

Very intrusive
Somewhat intrusive
Not very intrusive
Not at all intrusive

**3. Do you agree that Paired Reading should become a regular part of
Crestwood's grade one program?**

Strongly agree
Somewhat agree
Do not agree
Strongly disagree

4. Would you be interested in participating in another PR project?

Very interested
Somewhat interested
Not very interested
Definitely not interested

**Please add any comments and suggestions you may have regarding this
Paired Reading project or those that may be conducted in the future.**

Appendix IX : Report presented at May staff meeting

Paired Reading Summary Report   May, 1997

Thirty-five grade one students and four extended grade one students practised Paired Reading (PR) at home with their parents while twenty-two students participated at school with grade 5 and 6 tutors. Pretesting was completed by Jan. 22 when the "at home" group began their eleven weeks of PR. The "at school" group began in a staggered manner over the next two weeks and concluded at the end of March. "At home" participants continued until April 7, the end of Easter holidays, at which time post-testing began.

38 of the 39 parents who participated at home have completed a follow-up questionnaire and :

71   %   of parents responding report their child is keeping a **steadier flow** when reading out loud.

73.6 %   of parents responding feel their child is **reading more**

76   %   feel their child is now reading **different kinds** of books

81.6 %   report their child is making **less mistakes**

84   %   believe their child is **more confident** in reading

36 of the children who practised PR at home also completed a questionnaire and:

75   %   report they are **more interested** in reading

86   %   say they are **enjoying reading more**

88.8 %   feel that they are making **less mistakes** when reading out loud and are now reading **different kinds** of books

After **3 months** of PR those students practising PR at home with parents made an average gain of **6 months** improvement in word identification and **7 months** improvement in passage comprehension. The group working at school with older students gained more than two but less than three months in both areas (**2.3 months** in Word Identification and **2.75 months** in passage comprehension). The average gains for the entire group were **4.5 months** in word identification and **6 months** in passage comprehension.

The greatest individual gains made by students in 3 months in the "at home" group was **2 years 5 months** growth in word identification and **2 years 6 months** growth in passage comprehension.

The greatest individual gain made by a single student in the "at school" group was **1 year 8 months** in word identification and **1 year 3 months** in passage comprehension.

Appendix X: Individual reports given to participating parents
Paired Reading Summary Report   May, 1997

Thank you for your participation in our Paired Reading Project! We are now ready to report to you the results of your hard work!

38 of the 39 parents who participated at home have completed a follow-up questionnaire and

73.6 % feel their child is **reading more**,
81.6 % report their child is making **less mistakes** and
84 % believe their child is **more confident** in reading.

36 of the children who practised PR at home also completed a questionnaire and:
86 % say they are **enjoying reading more**
88.8 % feel that they are making **less mistakes** when reading out loud
         and are now reading **different kinds** of books

After **3 months** of PR those students practising PR at home with parents made an average gain of **6 months** improvement in word identification and **7 months** improvement in passage comprehension. The average gains for the entire group (PR at home plus PR at school) were **4.5 months** in word identification and **6 months** in passage comprehension.

Individual Report

In word identification, _____

_____

In passage comprehension, _____

_____

Some parents added written comments to their follow-up questionnaires and here are a few direct quotes (used with permission):

"We have had no unhappy reading times. They have always been positive and pleasant times where before using the 'sounding-out-each-word' method was awful. He wants to read and to be able to read and he wants to go to the library.

We are going to keep doing PR the 5 days or more per week. I thank you for teaching us about this method!"

"My child and I both enjoyed the program. I feel it has really given my child an excellent grounding towards his reading career, which we as a family feel is very important....I think we will continue on our own as we both enjoy the reading and the togetherness. Thanks for the opportunity..."

"PR increases the time we spend with our children. It's been very good for our child"

"Excellent Program. My child was excited about it and would remind me if I forgot. We started a habit and are still continuing. He sometimes reads up to 45 minutes. He has started to read silently for his enjoyment and is also going to the library and reading on lunch hours occasionally. Thanks for allowing us to participate..."

"I have noticed steady growth over the past few months in my child's reading. Certainly, reading every night has been beneficial....the more exposure a child has to reading and good literature, the better reader the child becomes."

"Excellent program. I really enjoyed this time with my child. It was very heart warming and pleasing to watch his progress. He became so proud and his self esteem grew immensely... He is now way more sure of himself and we and hear him reading everywhere we go...I love the transformation this PR program has created in our child..."

"I am truly amazed at my child's level of reading! On his own he has picked up a chapter book with infrequent pictures, text that is printed close together on the page and a plot that is clearly intended for upper elementary students. He is already 30 pages into the book and anxious to read more. I only wish I could have used PR with my other two children when they were in grade one."

"The PR project gave my child a chance to broaden her word list. Some of the words she knows are unbelievable for her age. She has a nice flow to her reading and good expression....Overall, I think it is a good program for every child. Regardless if the child liked or disliked reading, the encouragement from mom or dad and teachers gives the student a positive attitude. Just reading with mom or dad one on one makes them feel important."

Appendix XI : Photographs of Crestwood students practising Paired
Reading