“I’ll read to you...You read to me”

How “Book Buddies” increases literacy skills for kindergarteners and fosters motivation to read.

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Kindergarten

Grays Woods Elementary School

State College Area School District
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**Teaching Context**

Grays Woods Elementary School is in the State College Area School District (SCASD). It is on the outskirts of State College in a higher socio-economic area. It is less culturally diverse than other SCASD elementary schools located closer to the Penn State University campus. Grays Woods has 419 students in grades K through 5. At the beginning of the year, I had 22 students in my Kindergarten classroom, but currently I have 19. Out of those 19 students, I have 9 girls and 10 boys.

There is a range of learners in my classroom. RTII is a service that several of my students need: Response to Intervention and Instruction. There are two students who use this service for reading and three students who use this service for mathematics. Six of my students have been referred to the Instructional Support Team (IST) for academic and behavioral reasons. Three of those six are there for academic and behavioral support, and three are there just for behavioral support. One of my students attends speech therapy, and one attends occupational therapy.

The majority of students in my classroom is performing at grade level and has age appropriate skills. However, there are five students who perform above grade level in reading and language arts and four who perform above grade level in mathematics. There are also two students who perform below grade level in reading and language arts and three who perform below grade level in mathematics.

Outside of my classroom is a community of educational leaders that I admire so much and for whom I have high regard. The close-knit Grays Woods community is something that I am very fortunate to be a part of as a PDS intern in my senior
year of college. This school is a prime example of how a school with strong communication can function. (See Appendix A for Inquiry Brief)

Rationale

A new approach in the world of literacy is the implementation of The Daily Five. The Daily Five is a way to structure language literacy and allows more opportunities for student choice. According to The Daily Café website, “The Daily Five is more than a management system or a curriculum framework - it is a structure that helps students develop the daily habits of reading, writing, and working independently that will lead to a lifetime of literacy independence.” It looks much different than traditional stations, in that the students are working independently during four of the five choices: work on writing, word work, read to self, and listen to reading. The fifth choice is “read to someone,” where they have the chance to practice reading strategies with a partner. While they are engaging in their choices, the teacher is pulling small groups of students for a guided reading lesson.

While conducting short interviews with the students in my classroom, I asked “What is your favorite choice during the Daily Five?” Their responses were almost all the same; Read to Someone. I wondered why that was their favorite choice and if reading with a partner was helping them build literacy skills. This sparked my curiosity as the topic for this inquiry along with another reading time during our week, Book Buddies.

Book Buddies is a program that I had never seen before until I was involved with the State College Area School District. It is when a class of 5th grade students is paired up with a class of kindergarten students and each 5th grader has a
kindergarten buddy. Both students bring a couple of books that they can read at their instructional level and they alternate reading to each other and engaging in conversation about the books.

I was so impressed and intrigued by the way the 5th graders really take the kindergarten students under their wings and how much the kindergarten students look up to the 5th graders! As I observed Book Buddies several more times, I decided that this is a program I would like to look into for an inquiry.

First, I was so intrigued by the relationships the students were building despite the age gap that I thought that is where my focus would lie throughout the project. However, as I really started to think deeply about the many purposes of Book Buddies and how much this could help the Kindergarten students increase their literacy skills, I knew that the idea of building literacy and having enthusiasm to read was where I wanted to take this inquiry.

Before Book Buddies began, the first thing I needed to think about was what I wanted it to look like. My kindergarten class meets weekly for book buddies with a fifth grade class, but I wasn’t sure that I could accurately and effectively take data on all 46 students. Rather than trying to collect data on all of the students, I chose to have an extra Book Buddies time in the morning. This extra time consisted of eight students, four from kindergarten and four from fifth grade.

I began to analyze my kindergarten class and think about what students I would pick to participate in extra Book Buddies. Since my goal was to look at literacy skills, I decided that picking students who were still working on letter identification and sound would be in the best interest of this inquiry. However,
when I laid out the schedule for when we could all meet, that was the same time that those students would be receiving extra reading support in RTII (Response to Instruction and Intervention). My final decision on which students to pick were to choose the students who were about right in between working on letter identification and sound and being emergent readers. In the end, this was successful as well.

These four kindergarten students that were going to participate in extra book buddies also had another quality that I was interested in looking at over time. Three of the students have very little motivation to read and figure out words themselves. One student, while not always figuring out words accurately, is always thrilled to be looking at a book and reading through it. I wondered if Book Buddies would increase their motivation, because they would have not only a good model from their own kindergarten peer to watch, but they would also have those positive interactions from the fifth grade students.

The four fifth grade students were selected for a variety of reasons. Two of the students are somewhat socially awkward among their fifth grade peers and I thought perhaps being able to open up to a kindergarten student and bond over reading would be positive experiences for them. The other two students require extra support for reading. I chose these two students with the hope that they would feel a sense of comfort reading at their level to a kindergarten student. They also have bubbly personalities that I thought would be great additions to the group. All four fifth grade students are great role models for the kindergarten students. (See Appendix A for Inquiry Brief)
Wondering and Questions

Main Wondering:

How does 5th grade and kindergarten Book Buddies encourage, motivate, and increase literacy skills?

Sub-Questions

• How do 5th graders engage the kindergarten students?

• What kind of relationships are the kindergarten students and 5th graders building?

• How do relationships between Book Buddies progress through the year?

• What is a Book Buddy?

• What could a Book Buddy be?

• How are kindergarten book buddies building literacy skills?
Data Collection

Throughout the process of discovering how “Book Buddies” benefits students, I collected many forms of data. Collecting and analyzing data was an ongoing process as I watched my students grow and learn together.

I met with my book buddies four days a week for fifteen minutes in the morning. Every Monday morning was spent selecting books only. The kindergarten students were instructed to select one book from their book collections and one book of their choice from anywhere in the library. Their book collection is used during our small group meetings during The Daily Five in our classroom. Within their book collection is a set of books at their reading level in which they know all the words and can talk about what is happening in the story. They were allowed to select another book of their choice to read after they had finished the one from their book collections. The kindergarten students were encouraged to try and read some of the words in the book of their choice, but it was meant for enjoyment and for the buddies to look through together.

On book selection day, fifth graders were instructed to pick a book from the library that they knew would be a good fit for them to read and then also one fun book. As fifth graders, I let them have more independence with their book selections because they should know at this point what is a good fit for them. Neither of the books they picked had to be something that the kindergarten student could also read. Kindergarten students can comprehend higher-level texts even though they may not be able to read the text themselves. (See Appendix B for Book Log)
Tuesday and Wednesday of every week were used as reading days. Reading days consisted of an allotted fifteen minutes for the buddies to read to each other. On Tuesday, the book buddies would read their instructional books to each other. That means that the kindergarten students read the book from their book collection to their fifth grade buddy and in return the fifth grade buddy would read their good fit book that they selected.

Every Thursday was originally set aside as an artifact day. It was my intention for the artifact making to be a form of data collection that would provide some evidence as to whether or not the kindergarten students were comprehending what their book buddies were reading to them. Some of the artifact options included making a bookmark with an illustration from the story on it, drawing a picture of a favorite character, or writing about a favorite part of the book. Both kindergarten and fifth grade book buddies were required to do this, but encouraged to work together!

Artifact Thursdays ended after just one week due to an overwhelming negative response from the students. (See Appendix E for Artifacts) They all completed one artifact from the first week, but seven out of eight students asked if they could just read to their book buddies instead of making something together. I truly thought long and hard about artifact day. I reviewed my own observation notes that I had taken that day in my journal just to see some comments made by students again. (See Appendix C for Journal) Was this something that was really necessary to have that was going to greatly benefit my inquiry? Should I make the students create an artifact if they would rather read?
As I reflected about this experience, I came to the realization that my inquiry is about collecting data on students being motivated to read and how the kindergarten students are building literacy skills such as reading the whole time, getting started right away, and their attitude about reading. I am not revolving this inquiry around building accuracy or fluency skills like knowing letter sounds, building vocabulary, playing with rhyming words, etc... Finally, I came to the conclusion that this was perfect evidence that “Book Buddies” was indeed increasing motivation to read; one of the exact purposes of my inquiry. The students didn’t want to sit and draw a picture of their favorite characters or make bookmarks; they wanted to read to each other!

During each meeting, each pairing would also take an iPad to record themselves reading to each other. Due to all of the groups being spread out when they read, it was most efficient for each group to record themselves. (See Appendix F for iPad Pictures) Thinking ahead, I knew that if I had each group record themselves reading to each other, I could not only observe each student reading, but catch any conversations they were having about the books as well. Previously, as a group, we had talked about some good conversation starters after they were done reading; talking about favorite characters and scenes, if either book buddy could connect to the story in any way, or just asking questions about their particular story to check for understanding. In reading the article, “Coaching Reading Buddies for Success,” I was able to compile a list of questions for the buddies to use as conversation starters. This article provided an in depth description of possible structures for a positive Book Buddies experience.
I also wanted to be able to capture facial expressions and tone of voice while reading. This was meant to paint a picture of how the students felt reading to each other. I wanted to hear if their tone of voice included expression, or if they were just reading to pass the time. I was also looking for that bond between the kindergarten and fifth grade students. Their facial expressions would reveal if they were happy about reading with their book buddies or if they would much rather be doing something else.

Outside of the Book Buddy time, I was curious to see if the kindergarten students’ enthusiasm and skills carried over to our literacy time during class. Time-on-task was recorded every 60 seconds and being assisted by a teacher in the room was also noted. Their Daily Five choice was also recorded to compare time-on-task during independent tasks to reading with a kindergarten partner. (See Appendix D for Time-On-Task Sheet)

Lastly, during the very last week of our extra “Book Buddy” time, I conducted interviews with both the kindergarten students and the fifth grade students to hear their thoughts on book buddies. Learning skills to be a good reader and listener is something that they are familiar with, so I wanted to hear the student’s perspective of how they think “Book Buddies” is helping them. (See Appendix G for Interviews)

Data Analysis

As Book Buddies continued each week, I looked over my journal at the observation notes I had taken. Many times, even though the students were
recording themselves, I was still able to capture a part of the conversation or mannerisms with my own notes to help me analyze the students’ behaviors during book buddies. This information helped me decide if I should structure each week any differently or assist students with choosing books. For example, on February 2, 2012, in regard to two fifth grade buddies I noted: “Julia and Rachel choose low-level books with no more than 5 words on each page. Understandably they would choose this to fit the Kindergarten student, but they are the ones reading this book, not the kindergarten students.” (See Appendix C for Journal) By recording that note, I was able to conference with them about books they could choose for next time to better fit their reading level.

I took the last week of “Book Buddies” to really sit down and analyze the video footage that was captured during the times that we met. I jotted down notes of specific moments in the videos that stood out to me. I was a little bit disappointed to see that the kindergarten students didn’t read nearly as much to their partners as the fifth graders read to them. However, being read to is still effective and can be a great model for students as well.

I also had the videos from the interviews that I had conducted to analyze as well. As I watched these videos, I listened to the students' responses to see if their answers were the same to any of the questions that I asked or largely different. In my analyzing, the students all felt strongly that Book Buddies is a great experience for them and that they really enjoy spending extra time with their buddies.

There was so much different data collected on the time-on-task sheets, so I really had to narrow down what exactly I was looking for. To analyze this data, I
toted each student’s time-on-task during each of their choices to get a grand total for each day. I looked at how many times students picked to read with a partner versus independent tasks, and if their time on task with a partner depended on whom they were reading.

My criterion for time spent on task was that they were looking like they were engaged with the choice they chose. However, students sometimes look off-task and are completely tuned in, so it can be hard to evaluate. Due to this factor, I considered the student tuned in and on-task if they looked like a good reader: sitting “elbow, elbow, knee, knee”, engaging in conversations about the book, keeping a book in front of them, getting started right away, and working the entire time.

**Explanation of Findings: Claims and Evidence**

**Claim #1: Kindergarten students are on-task the majority of the time when reading with a partner.**

The most telling evidence that I collected to support this claim was from my time-on-task sheets and videos from Book Buddies. When I decided that I wanted to take a look at how reading with a partner was affecting the kindergarten students during The Daily Five in our classroom, I kept track of their time on task, recording once every minute, during all of their choices.

When I looked back over all of the time-on-task sheets that I completed, all four students were on task over 95% of the time while they were reading with a partner. In instances that they weren’t on task, they were looking around and it was very obvious that they were not tuned in to what their partner was reading at the
time, or that they weren’t totally focused on the book they were reading to themselves.

There are times during The Daily Five that the students can pick three different choices. Students are not allowed to pick the same choice more than once in the same day. Currently there are 4 different choices because “listening to reading” is not an option yet. That means that 1 Daily Five choice is not picked every day. I noted in my written observations that all four kindergarten students made “read to someone” one of the choices every single day that it was available. Those four students also began sitting and reading with each other more after we had been meeting with “Book Buddies” for some time. I believe it is reasonable to assume that this was because the extra time together made them more comfortable to read in front of each other. In one kindergarten interview, Student D stated, “I liked staying with the same Book Buddy” after being asked what she enjoyed about Book Buddies. (See Appendix G for Interviews). By staying with the same buddy, the students were able to build relationships and become comfortable with each other.

After reviewing the videos for all the time spent with Book Buddies, I could only pinpoint one instance where a kindergarten student was off-task while with their book buddy. The rest of the time the book buddies were very engaged with what they were reading to each other. They were making eye contact and even participating in discussions after the books.

Some discussions that I heard on the videos and also as I was observing during our meeting times were mainly facilitated by the fifth grade students. They would ask the kindergarten students many questions regarding what they thought
about the book, what some favorite characters were, and if they liked any specific pages or scenes the best. The videos were truly a joy to review and provided strong support for the fact that the students were engaged in the process of reading and sharing what they read together.

Another important piece of evidence I found about time-on-task was through interviewing one particular kindergarten student. A brief background on this student is that he really struggles staying on task at all points of the day. He is very energetic and has a hard time sitting still and focusing. As I interviewed him, one of my questions was “How do you think Book Buddies has helped you?” He stated: “The fifth graders helped me not be distracted. I didn’t play around when the book buddies were reading.” In response to that I asked, “How did the book buddies help you not be distracted?” He said: “They are teenagers and they aren’t distracted, so I wasn’t distracted.”

His response spoke volumes about being on task. Coming from a student who knows that he has trouble staying on task, he knew that the fifth grade book buddies were good role models for him. If the fifth graders weren’t distracted and could sit there and read, then so could he.

**Claim #2: Book Buddies and reading with a partner increases motivation to read.**

My evidence of this claim is largely based upon my own written observations and what I saw in the videos of the book buddies reading together. Motivation to read is a huge part of being a good reader and building literacy skills. If students
don’t have motivation to read, then they won’t push themselves to figure out words and stretch their thinking with comprehension.

Three of the kindergarten students I chose to participate in Book Buddies really lacked the motivation to read. I am thrilled to be writing that sentence in the past tense. Those same three children came literally running to me every single morning asking when we would be reading with our book buddies. They couldn’t wait to pick books out of their book collections or from the library to read. This excitement also showed when I would say “It’s time to head to the library, kindergarten buddies” and every morning they would beat me to the library and would be sitting waiting for their book buddies and me.

One particular instance of increased motivation in the videos was when it was a kindergarten student’s turn to read, but she wanted to read a book that the fifth grader had selected for herself. They had decided together that she would be trying this book first and she was thrilled to be doing so. The kindergarten student did a fantastic job and needed just a little bit of support from the fifth grade buddy. It was so refreshing to see reading with a partner being so beneficial for the student though. When she didn’t know a word, the fifth grader would help her sound it out and they would continue on with the story. I can say at this point in the year, after a recent running record, that this kindergarten student would now be considered an emergent reader. In connection to the “End of Kindergarten Learning Standards” set by the State College Area School District, this child has met expectations when identifying letter names and sounds, demonstrating comprehension, and retelling a known story. She has increased four guided reading leveled books since the
beginning of the year and can read simple texts containing high frequency words independently.

With having newfound motivation to read, this same kindergarten student had a very special moment with her kindergarten peers as well. This happened during PSSA testing when the fifth grade book buddies were unavailable. She had picked a book from the shelf in the library and told me that it was a really good fit for her. I have to be honest and say that I wasn’t sure when I flipped through it that it was going to be the best fit for her, but I wanted her to try since she was so excited.

She asked the rest of her kindergarten book buddies if she could read them a book, and they were all excited to hear the book. Being excited to listen to a book being read is also an aspect of motivation, another cornerstone of the Daily 5. The book was entitled “D.W. Rides Again” by: Marc Brown. She opened the book, began reading through it, and held it like a teacher would for a read aloud. She stumbled over some words, but was quick to sound them out herself or set the book down and ask for some help by her peers.

While I know that two of these examples were based on one student, I have other positive observations for increased motivation from the other students as well. However, if I can say that Book Buddies helped this one student increase her motivation to read then I would say that this inquiry was successful. That one little girl will take those skills with her for the rest of her life and most likely remember the time that she spent with a partner reading and learning together.
Reflections and Implications for Future Practice

Book Buddies is a program that I will keep in my teaching repertoire forever because I think it has a huge impact on the students. They love it because they can read to an older or younger peer and because of the positive relationships they build with one another. The younger students look up to the older book buddies for so many reasons.

One thing that I would change if I could do this again would be to have more time set aside for the kindergarten students to read to the fifth graders. Even though they were taking turns reading books, the fifth grade students had much more airtime than the kindergarten students did. I realize that is because they have much longer books to read, but I would like the time spent reading by each book buddy to be around the same amount of time.

I also wonder how my findings would have changed had I been able to use the students in my kindergarten classroom who are still working on letters sounds and identification, rather than the students who are just hitting the baseline for being an emergent reader. If they had been at RTII during this time, would I have seen more growth? Perhaps Book Buddies wouldn’t have been as much help to them as I think it would have been. Next time I try Book Buddies, I would like to include all of my students to compare students’ growth from the program at different reading levels.

Also, when I have my own classroom and try Book Buddies again, there are some things I would like to try to complement the program. In addition to reading with the buddies, I would like to incorporate other subjects as well. When I was
brainstorming ideas for this inquiry project, I had written in my original plans that I wanted to try different subjects during our extra book buddy time, but as I continued to map out the schedule, there just wasn’t enough time right to incorporate other subjects.

Some ideas that I have for the future are having Science Buddies and Writing Buddies, which would look very similar to pen pals. Students can be the best teachers at times and can really make a difference when working with a younger peer. I really feel that allowing time for peers of different ages to work together benefits both age groups and is fun.
References


Appendix
Appendix A: Inquiry Brief

Context

Grays Woods Elementary School is in the State College Area School District. It is on the outskirts of State College in a higher socio-economic area. It is less culturally diverse than other SCASD elementary schools located closer to the Penn State University campus. Grays Woods has 419 students in grades K through 5. At the beginning of the year, I had 22 students in my Kindergarten classroom. Currently, there are 19 students in room 22; one student moved back to her home country of Japan, one student moved away from the area, and another student was taken out of Kindergarten for a variety of reasons.

There is also a range of learners in my classroom. RTII is a service that several of my students need: Response to Intervention and Instruction. There are two students who use this service for reading and three students who use this service for mathematics. Six of my students attend IST (Instructional Support Team) for academic and behavioral reasons. Three of those six are there for academic and behavioral support, and three are there just for behavioral support. One of my students attends speech therapy, and one attends occupational therapy.

The majority of students in my classroom are performing at grade level and have age appropriate skills. However, there are five students who perform above grade level in reading and language arts and four who perform above grade level for mathematics. There are also two students who perform below grade level in reading and language arts and three who perform below grade level in mathematics.
My classroom has 10 girls and 11 boys. Out of these students, there are a couple social leaders. One young girl is usually the leader of games during recess and free time. She is well liked and her opinion about what the class should do is respected. There is also one boy who dictates most of the behavior in the classroom. Once he begins making noises, interrupting during class, or acting out, the other students start to follow suit. He is the leader of the pack when it comes to behavior and often times is found leading his peers in a game of football during recess.

Outside of my classroom is a community of educational leaders that I admire so much and for whom I have high regard. The close-knit Grays Woods community is something that I am very fortunate to be a part of as a PDS intern in my senior year of college. This school is a prime example of how a school with fantastic communication can function.

Rationale

A fresh topic in the world of literacy is the implementation of The Daily Five. The Daily Five is a way to structure language literacy and allows more opportunities for student choice. It looks much different than traditional stations, in that the students are working independently during four of the five choices: work on writing, word work, read to self, and listen to reading. The fifth choice is “read to someone,” where they have the chance to practice reading strategies with a partner. While they are engaging in their choices, the teacher is pulling small groups of students for a guided reading lesson.
Many school faculty members are seeing increasing benefits to the program. However, some parents care to take a different standpoint. I had the opportunity to listen to a parent of a student in my own class explain why she does not agree with The Daily Five. One point that stands out to me is that she doesn’t think the kindergarten students are getting enough social interaction during the literacy workshop time currently and can’t see how her child is benefiting.

While I understand that this parent is concerned, there are many other times during the day and week where our kindergarten class has optimal social interaction. In fact, it is so gratifying to see the student’s personalities blossoming as the year continues on. Book Buddies is an opportunity for students to socialize, not only with their kindergarten peers, but with a class of 5th graders as well.

Book Buddies is a program that I had never seen before until I was involved with the State College Area School District. It is when a class of 5th grade students is paired up with a class of kindergarten students and each 5th grader has a kindergarten buddy. Both students bring a couple books that they can read at their instructional level and they alternate reading to each other and engaging in conversation about the books.

I was so impressed and intrigued by the way the 5th graders really take the Kindergarten students under their wings and how much the Kindergarten students look up to the 5th graders! As I observed Book Buddies several more times, I decided that this is a program that I would like to look into for an inquiry.

First, I was so intrigued by the relationships the students were building despite the age gap that I thought that is where my focus would lie throughout the
project. However, as I really started to think deeply about the many purposes of Book Buddies and how much this could help both the Kindergarten and 5th grade students read more fluently and accurately, I knew that the idea of building literacy and having enthusiasm to read was where I wanted to take this inquiry.

However, before I settled on just that wondering, I still wanted to talk to some of my PDS peers and other teachers about their experiences with Book Buddies. I wanted to find out if the way Book Buddies is run at Grays Woods is pretty universal throughout the district or if each elementary school and classroom has a unique way of implementing it. For the most part, it was run the same way.

Seeing as I kept getting the same kind of feedback, I wondered how I could spice up my inquiry and tweak the program a bit. After doing some research on the Internet about how schools nationwide are having students across grade levels learn together, I decided that I wanted to add another component. Rather than just having the Book Buddies read together, once a week I decided to have them create an artifact together about one book that they explored together that week. Some examples of these artifacts might be a bookmark, an illustration, or a writing sample.

What I am expecting to find currently through the inquiry is a variety of information regarding literacy and relationships. I feel that the 5th grade students are fantastic role models for the Kindergarten students. They will encourage and motivate each other to expand their literature choices and vocabulary, work on writing, and enjoy each other’s company. It is my hope that throughout this inquiry I will find many ways to make the Book Buddy program even more beneficial for students and ways to perhaps expand the program to other subjects.
Main Wondering

How does 5th grade and Kindergarten Learning Buddies encourage, motivate, and increase literacy skills?

Sub-Questions

• How do 5th graders engage the Kindergarten students?

• What kind of relationships are the Kindergarten students and 5th graders building?

• How do relationships between Book Buddies progress through the year?

• What is a Book Buddy?

• What could a Book Buddy be?

• How are kindergarten Book Buddies building literacy skills?

Timeline

Overall Timeline Notes

• Write down every book that K students and 5th graders choose for data collection

• Every Thursday collect artifacts in the Learning Buddies Folders

• Alternate video/audio recording. Record students reading one day and the next day make observation notes.

Week of Feb. 13 – Feb. 17

• Plan where buddies will meet

• Ask librarian about selecting books on Mondays

• Collect systematic observation notes during regular “Book Buddies.”
• Make “Learning Buddy Folders.” 1 folder for 5th grade artifacts and 1 folder for Kindergarten artifacts.

Week of Feb. 20 – Feb. 24 (First week implementing)
• Monday: Students pick 2 books each (1 instructional and 1 theme book)
• Tuesday: Meet with buddies- read their instructional book
• Wednesday: Meet with buddies- share their theme book
• Thursday: Meet with buddies- Artifact Day

Week of Feb. 27 – Mar. 2 (Non-Fiction Week!)
• Monday: Students pick 2 non-fiction books each (1 instructional and 1 theme book). Instructional book can come from their book tub in the classroom.
• Tuesday: Meet with buddies- reads their instructional book
• Wednesday: Meet with buddies- share their theme book
• Thursday: Meet with buddies- Artifact Day
• K interviews- What is a learning buddy? What books are your favorite to listen to or read?

Week of Mar. 5 – Mar. 9 (Spring Break)
• Analyze and organize data
• Continue looking for sources

Week of Mar. 12 – Mar. 16 (Fiction Week!)
• Monday: Students pick 2 fiction books each (1 instructional and 1 theme book)
• Tuesday: Meet with buddies- read instructional book
• Wednesday: Meet with buddies- share theme book

• Thursday: Meet with buddies- Artifact Day

Week of Mar. 19 – Mar. 23 (Buddy Book Making Week!)

• Students will have all week to work with their Book Buddies to make a book based on a favorite book they read together or one that they make up on their own.

Week of Mar 26. – Mar 30. (Science Week)

• Video students doing a science project together. Are both students benefitting? In what ways?

Week of April 2 – April 6

• Work on inquiry draft and continue to analyze data

Week of April 9 – April 13

• Work on inquiry paper and continue to analyze data

Data Collection

Observation

• Anecdotal notes during the days where buddies are reading to each other to gather data on how students keep each other engaged and what kind of conversational talk is happening throughout the Book Buddy time.

• Time on task observations on the student who is listening to a peer's book to calculate time engaged in the book.

• Time on task during The Daily Five to gage student engagement during partner and listening tasks.
Interviews

- I will interview 4-5 Kindergarten students to find out how they feel about Book Buddies. What do they think a book buddy is? If they had more time with their book buddy, what would they like to do?

Student Work

- Each week, we have an artifact day with our book buddies. This includes making a picture, book mark, or writing about one of the books they heard that week. I am looking for an artifact that shows comprehension of the book they chose. The time on task observations throughout the week will relate to the comprehension of the books.

Reflections

- Each week after looking over my observation notes, artifacts, videos, etc... I will reflect on things I could have done differently or things that went really well during each day of Book Buddies. These reflections will be noted in a handwritten reflection journal.
Appendix B: Book Log

Week of 2/20/12

Jared
- A Children's Book About Snooping By: Joy Berry
- Buzz Boy and Fly Guy By: Tedd Arnold

Julia
- Dinosaurs Dance By: Larry Dane Brimner
- A Children Book About Showing Off By: Joy Berry

Mitch
- A Children's Book About Being A Bad Sport By: Joy Berry
- Where the Sidewalk Ends By: Shel Silverstein

Rachel
- A Children’s Book About Overdoing It By: Joy Berry
- What Good is a tree? By: Larry Dan Brimner

Week of 2/27/12

Jared
- A Children's Book about Being Lazy By: Joy Berry
- Plateosaurus By: Dougal Dixon

Brandon
- Fun With Paper By: Sylvia (from Book Tub)

Mitch
- Sports Magazine
- Stegosaurus By: Dougal Dixon

JJ
- Fun With Paper By: Sylvia (from Book Tub)

Julia
- One day, Two Dragons By: Lynne Bertrand
- Ocean Floors By: Weekly Reader

Megan
- Coral Reefs By: Weekly Reader
- At the Park (from Book Tub)

Rachel (absent)

Jillian (absent)

Week of 3/12/13

Jared
- Being Mess By: Joy Berry
- Runny Babbit By Shel Silverstein

Mitch
- Where the Sidewalk Ends By: Shel Silverstein
• Big Goof and Little Goof By: Joanna and Philip Cole

Julia
• A Light in the Attic By: Shel Silverstein
• Arthur’s Family Vacation By: Marc Brown

JJ
• We Can Go By: Ellen Geist

Brandon
• What Is It? By: Ellen Tarlow

Megan
• Dinner (Scholastic Sight Word Book)
• D.W. Rides Again by: Marc Brown

Jillian
• My Cats By: Ellen Robinson
• Arthur’s Teacher Trouble By: Marc Brown
Appendix C: Journal

2/21/12

• Julia picks books by the same author as Rachel
• All students choose books by Joy Berry
• Mitch selects a book of poems
• Jared selects a comic
• Julia and Rachel choose low-level books with no more than 5 words on each page. Understandably they would choose this to fit the Kindergarten student, but they are the ones reading this book, not the kindergarten students.

2/27/12

• Julia and Jillian talked about good books and engaged in conversation the whole time
• When Mitch realized it was just book picking day: “Oh man, we aren’t reading with our buddies at all today.”
• Megan came running over to me this morning: “When are we going to do extra book buddies?”
• Mitch chose a magazine this week. He is very aware of different types of literature.
• All students are not thrilled about making an artifact together, they all comment about how they would rather be reading!
• Daily 5 with Kindergarten: Megan and JJ chose to sit by each other the whole time and Brandon and Jillian read to each other.

3/14/12
• No 5th grade book buddies this week. They are taking the PSSA’s during our reading time and there was not another time to meet. Just Kindergarten met.

• Jillian is unsure about the words in an Arthur book, so Megan says to her “Here, let me read you this book instead.” This is huge for Megan. Several weeks before book buddies started, I did some running records with her. She did not want to read the books and was not confident in her reading at all.

• Brandon loves Shel Silverstein poems and chose to look through some of his books. After he flipped through some books and found them a bit hard for him to read, he asked if I would read to him.

• Megan picked the book “D.W. Rides Again” and read through it fluently.

• JJ looked through pictures only.

• All K students wanted to listen to Megan read, but two began doing something else every time Megan would start to read. She replies with: “You have to be a good listener if you want to hear my book.” Jillian says: “We’ll wait for you two to be ready.”

3/15/12

• Brandon and JJ look at a book together

• Megan asks group if she can read them a book and holds the book like a teacher read aloud.

• JJ moves and sits with Megan to hear her story.

• Jillian tries out a book Brandon can read called “What is it?” She decides his book is also a good fit for her because she can read the words.

• JJ doesn’t attempt to solve words on his own. He looks at pictures instead.
• Brandon talks himself through a book and makes up words he think goes with the pictures. This is a big step for him to do with a book that is not a good fit for him due to the words. Usually he flips through the pictures quickly and moves on. He took his time, really examined the pictures, and made up his own story.
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*Note:* Each column represents a different group, and the rows are likely to represent different data points or measurements.
Appendix E: Artifact Samples
Appendix F: iPad Pictures
Appendix G: Interviews

KINDERGARTEN INTERVIEWS

Student A

What are some of the things you liked about spending extra time with book buddies?
A: I liked picking out new books and doing crafts. I liked everything.
Was there a particular book you enjoyed reading with them?
A: A Light In the Attic
Do you think spending time with the book buddies helped you read?
A: Yes
How do you think it helped you?
A: Because now I know all the books in my bag.
Did you use any Daily 5 strategies to help you read with book buddies?
A: I used the pictures if I was stuck on a word.

Student B

What did you think about Book Buddies? What did you like about it?
A: I liked reading books to them.
Did you use an Daily 5 strategies?
A: Use the Pictures
Do you think extra book buddies helped you be a better reader?
A: Yes

Student C

What did you enjoy about Book Buddies?
A: Reading I Spy, Sam I Am, and I Can See.
What is your favorite choice in The Daily Five?
A: Read to Someone
Do you think Book Buddies was helping you read?
A: Yes. I wasn’t getting distracted. I wasn’t playing around when the book buddies were reading.
Why do you think the Book Buddies helped you not be distracted?
A: Because they are like teenagers and they weren’t distracted.
Would you like to continue extra Book Buddies?
A: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!

Student D

What did you enjoy about Book Buddies?
A: I liked staying with the same Book Buddy.
Did you have a favorite book?
A: I liked *D.W. Rides Again* By: Marc Brown
Do you think spending time with book buddies helped you read better?
A: I was learning new words.
Did you book buddy help you do that?
A: They helped me read the new words that I didn’t know.
Did you use any other strategies from The Daily Five?
A: I made my voice a little louder. (reading with expression)
Would you like to continue extra Book Buddies?
A: Yes!

**FIFTH GRADE INTERVIEWS**

Student E

Did you enjoy extra Book Buddies in the morning?
A: Yes
What did you enjoy?
A: I like reading to the kindergarteners.
Do you think Book Buddies helps the kindergarteners read better?
A: Because it’s 5th graders who are reading to them and we are older than them.
Were there any books that you and your Book Buddy really enjoyed?
A: We really enjoyed reading about ocean floors.

Student F

Did you like spending time with Book Buddies?
A: Yes
What did you enjoy?
A: I really like reading with them. I like to read Dr. Seuss books and ask them if they know anything about those books.
Do you think Book Buddies helps kindergarteners read better?
A: Yeah maybe because they get to read out loud to someone.
Do you think Book Buddies helps you?
A: Yeah and it helps me get along with kindergarteners. I am not usually around kindergarteners and it helps me talk to them.

Student G

Did you like spending time with Book Buddies?
A: Yeah
Do you think Book Buddies helps you?
A: Yes, it makes me better at reading.
How do you think it helps you be better at reading?
A: The more I read and practice.
Do you think Book Buddies helps the kindergarten students?
A: Yeah because they are pretty little and it could help them by reading with us.
Were there any specific books that you and your book buddy enjoyed?  
A: Scaredy Squirrel  

Student H  

Did you like spending time with Book Buddies?  
A: Yeah. I like my buddy a lot. He is a good reader, but sometimes it gets tiring because they want to play with the iPads sometimes.  

Do you think Book Buddies helped the kindergarten students be better readers?  
A: Yeah. At the beginning of Book Buddies they were really into reading and they have improved a lot. I think it’s a really good benefit. I think they do a lot better reading when they’re with people, like reading to somebody and not reading alone.  

We can help them.  

Do you think Book Buddies helps you?  
A: Not really. It doesn’t really help me because I can read already.  

Were there any book you really enjoyed reading with the Book Buddies?  
A: The Cat in the Hat
Appendix H: Annotated Bibliography

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY


This book explains in great depth what it means to actually be engaged in reading. “In this book ‘engaged reading’ refers to the joint functioning of motivation, conceptual knowledge, strategies, and social interaction during literacy activities (Guthrie & Anderson, 1999).” Having a defined explanation of reading engagement will help me as I take observation notes and record time on task on the Learning Buddies. I will be looking at engagement when they are reading and when they are listening to their peer.


The Daily Café website helped me gather more details about what students are suppose to get out of reading with a partner and general reading instruction. Gail Boushey and Joan Moser use the daily CAFÉ as a guide to engage and immerse their learners in reading and strategies to read. I wanted to have a firm understanding of these strategies so that this could be another tool for the book buddies to use together. The kindergarten students know how to use the strategies out loud and I wanted them to be able to share that with the book buddies and hopefully guide a conversation from it.

Reading The Daily 5 provided insight on the “read to someone” piece of this literacy structure. It guided me in understanding how to instruct students to be productive while reading with a partner. The authors of The Daily 5 talk about trusting children and allowing them to be independent when discovering their reading abilities. This can happen while students are reading in Book Buddies as well, especially with older role models.


The kindergarten students that I selected to participate in my inquiry were students that were still working on some of letter identification and sounds, but were just on the borderline of being emergent readers. This guided reading book allowed me to have a better understanding of books that would be a good fit for these students who are in between these stages. It also provided “focus points” to remember when you are reading a book. These focus points ended up being great tools for the fifth graders. They were able to ask questions that could activate prior knowledge about a specific topic, discuss the story line and illustrations, and support the kindergarten students in their reading.

Kindergarten Literacy is a book that focuses on assessment. While I wasn’t doing any type of formal assessment during Book Buddies, it did help me as I was looking for ways to analyze my data. When I was in the process of finding ideas for students to show comprehension of the stories they were reading to each other, this book helped me pick appropriate level writing and illustration sample prompts and criteria to analyze them.


This is an instructional book that has a variety of activities and reproducible patterns related to engaging students during reading. Activities range from Kindergarten through 5th grade and could be used across the curriculum. I am using this book as a tool to collect artifacts from the students each week in a creative way. So all of the patterns I give them for a writing or picture sample won’t be hand drawn by me, they can have nice and neat black line copies for each activity.

This book is a literacy gem. It covers many strategies to use while teaching phonics and spelling, as well as examples of student word from writer’s workshop and printables in the appendix. I am connecting this book to the activities that we will be doing every Thursday on artifact day. I am wondering if it is important for students to hear each other read as well as watch each other write. We can use the ideas in the appendix of Word Matters to create Learning Buddy Dictionaries, where the students pick out an interesting word from their book and we keep adding on each week.

Creating Fluent Readers is an article that discusses students’ reading fluency and ways to assess the different aspects of fluency. Motivation is an underlying piece of reading with fluency. Without the desire to read and stretch your skills, a student won’t read with expression, phrasing, or worry about pacing. This article dissected each dimension of reading with fluency and I was able to use these dimensions when looking for motivation with my book buddies.

This article is a great guide to starting a Book Buddy or Learning Buddy type of program with your students. There are tips for choosing good fit books and what kind of conversation the older peer should engage in with the younger peer. A connection that I was really making to the article for my own personal growth was a section entitled “Coaching the Reading Buddies.” I am currently in the process of trying to decide what type of extra tips or directions I should give the 5th graders to enhance the Learning Buddy experience. This reminded me of some strategies that I can briefly cover with the 5th graders to help them keep the Kindergarten students engaged.


This article paints a clear picture of why listening to adults and peers read text leads to reading success. Children’s listening comprehension is typically at least 2 grades above their own reading comprehension. No matter if they understand every word they are hearing, they can still make sense of the story. Listening to words helps emerging readers learn new vocabulary and use words in ways they may not have used them before. Listing comprehension is something that is crucial during Learning Buddies because 50% of the time is spent reading out loud and the other 50% of the time is spent listening to your buddy.