



Evidence-Based Intervention: Paired Reading

1. Introduction

Paired Reading is a 'scaffolding' approach in which a Tutor (more fluent and accurate reader) and Tutee (less fluent and accurate reader) begin by reading aloud together. The Tutor gradually withdraws and leaves the Tutee to read aloud alone.

The Tutor is given specific training including techniques to use for intervening when the Tutee falters or makes an error and training on the use of regular praise and encouragement.

For this intervention, the Tutors will be other students, the role of the adult is to facilitate and supervise the intervention.

2. Purpose of Intervention

Paired Reading intervention can improve reading accuracy, fluency, reading comprehension and confidence.

Comprehension can be improved by the tutor helping with unknown words.

This is an easy intervention to implement requiring minimal planning – both the Tutor and Tutee benefit. Feedback shows that pupils really enjoy working as a pair and schools have commented on improvements in social skills as well as improved reading skills.

3. Target Audience

It is suitable for school years 1 and upwards (if no longer decoding to read).

The Tutor is a pupil typically 2 years older who will benefit from an opportunity to develop confidence as well as their own reading skills. They do not need to be working above age-related expectations for reading.

4. Who Can Deliver the Intervention

For this intervention, the Tutors will be other students, the role of the adult is to facilitate and supervise the intervention.

Teachers, teaching assistants and parent helpers can facilitate this intervention once trained.

5. Session Structure

Each session follows a structured approach with the Tutor and Tutee reading together, with support reducing when the Tutee feels confident to read alone. Signals are developed to ensure that support is given when needed. Questions are asked to develop comprehension skills and a reading record is completed after each session.

6. Frequency and Duration

5 minutes of actual reading daily in pairs or three times a week for 15mins for a period of 12 weeks.

7. Key Principles

Praise is a key element to this intervention as the intention of it is to increase reading enjoyment alongside fluency and comprehension with regular feedback also given.

8. Training and Implementation



A Tutor Power Point is provided to support the more accurate readers in developing their relationship with their Tutee and to support them with feedback. Support staff prepare sessions by collecting books earlier in the day.

9. Evidence and Outcomes

According to Ward, Crawford, and Solity (2017), several instructional principles significantly enhance human learning. Among these, three are particularly relevant to the Paired Reading intervention:

Distributed Practice (Spaced Practice): This principle advocates frequent, shorter practice sessions over longer, less frequent ones to improve the acquisition and retention of learning.

Contextual Diversity: This involves teaching pupils to apply new skills back into the classroom (word of the week or guided reading for example).

Direct and Explicit Instruction: This principle is directly applied in Paired Reading. The Tutor provides explicit modeling by reading in tandem with the Tutee, after which the Tutee practices independently once they are confident in their abilities.

Hattie (2023) found that peer tutoring has the potential to accelerate achievement of the pupil being tutored as well as the tutor.

This intervention was used as part of the Delivering Better Value programme in Suffolk. Tutees made on average 9 months progress in reading accuracy; 7 months progress in reading rate; 10 months progress in reading comprehension and 4 months progress in spelling. Tutors made on average 8 months progress in reading accuracy; 10 months in comprehension and 8 months in spelling.

10. Pupil Feedback (from the DBV Programme)

Tutees:

'My tutor has been kind and helped me when I've been stuck on words'

'It's really good, my tutor has helped me to read lots of long words. My reading has got better'

Tutors:

'I've worked on my concentration and taking in what he was reading'

Families:

'More willing to read at bedtime. A definite improvement in his vocabulary'

11. Further Information and Resources

Barton St Peter's Paired Reading study, (2018). <https://www.appliedpsychologies.com/post/narrowing-the-gap-with-paired-reading>

Hattie, J. (2023). Visible learning: The sequel: A synthesis of over 2,100 meta-analyses relating to achievement. Taylor & Francis.

Keerthirathne, W. K. D. (2020). Peer learning: an overview. International Journal of Scientific Engineering and Science, 4(11), 1-6.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ward, J., Crawford, S. & Solity, J., (2017). Applying assessment through teaching and instructional psychology: An alternative model of service delivery to raise attainment in primary schools. Educational and Child Psychology, 34(1): 94-109. DOI: 10.53841/bpsecp.2017.34.1.94

