



The Buddy Reading Program

Monitoring the effect one-on-one tutoring can have in an educational setting

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Introduction

Reading is vital and can have a huge impact on students. Many studies have illustrated that the more students read, the better they will get at it. Students who read *at least* 15 minutes a day are more likely to show academic improvement than those who do not and students who read 30 minutes a day are at the top of their classes (Johnson, 2018). The Buddy Reading Program went to a local primary school and worked with students there on their reading skills.



Figure 1. An Island School tutor and a Primary School student reading together at the read aloud station

Purpose

The goal of the Buddy Reading Program was to facilitate the development of literacy skills that are crucial for later academic success. The Buddy Reading Tutors strived to create close bonds and foster a supportive and fun environment that encouraged the Primary School students love for learning.

Methods

At the start of the semester, the primary school participants took an assessment called a running record which helped to gather data on the student's reading ability. This helped to generate an appropriate reading level for the student. At the end of the program, they took the same test to evaluate their growth. Additionally, at the end of each reading session, the students were asked how they were feeling about reading. The tutors calculated this using a Likert Scale, a scale that measured participant's feelings and attitudes about reading in general. The Likert scale used for this assessment had an image of a sad, straight and smiley face.

For 7 weeks, on Monday and Thursdays, the Buddy Reading Program went to a Primary School and worked with the students. The day began with the tutors eating lunch and playing group games. Then Island School students read with their buddy and worked through the three literacy stations: a literacy skill game, a read aloud, and a tablet station.

Results

Attitudes towards reading on the first day

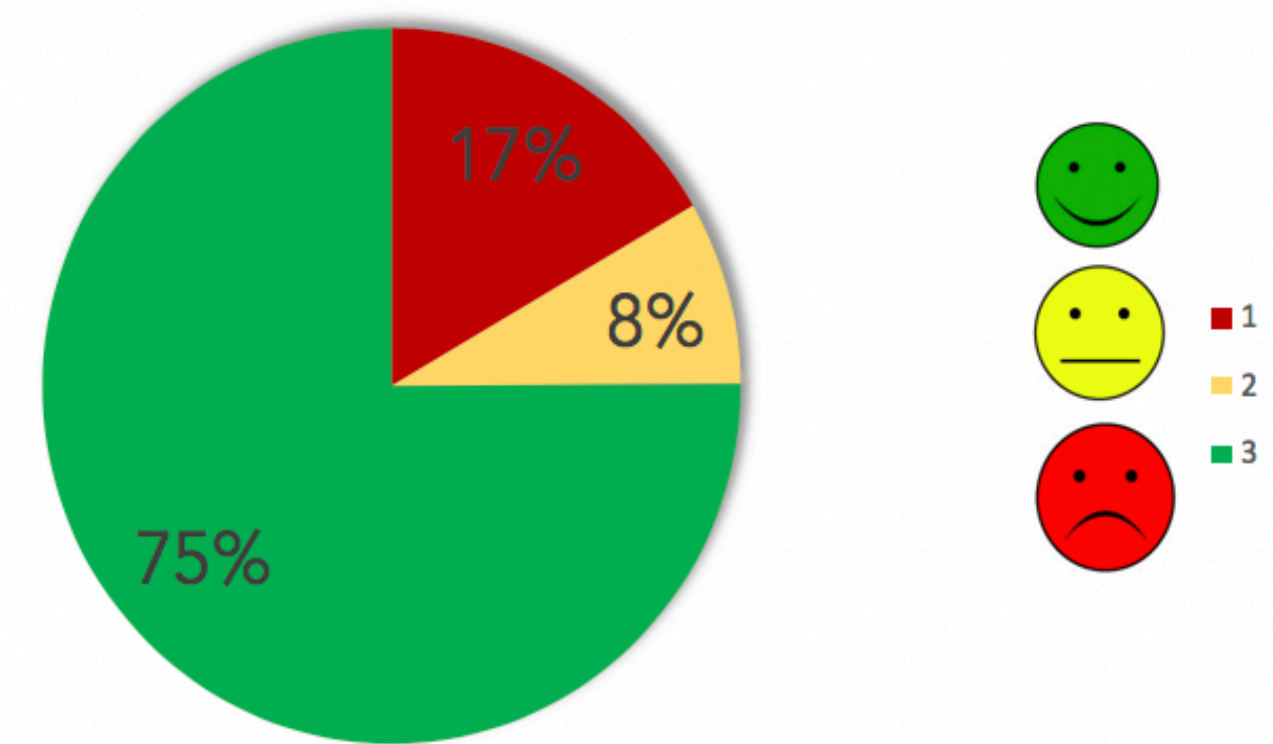


Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows that at the beginning of the program 17% of the students had negative attitudes towards reading, 8% had moderate attitudes towards reading and 75% had positive attitudes towards reading.

Attitudes towards reading on the last day

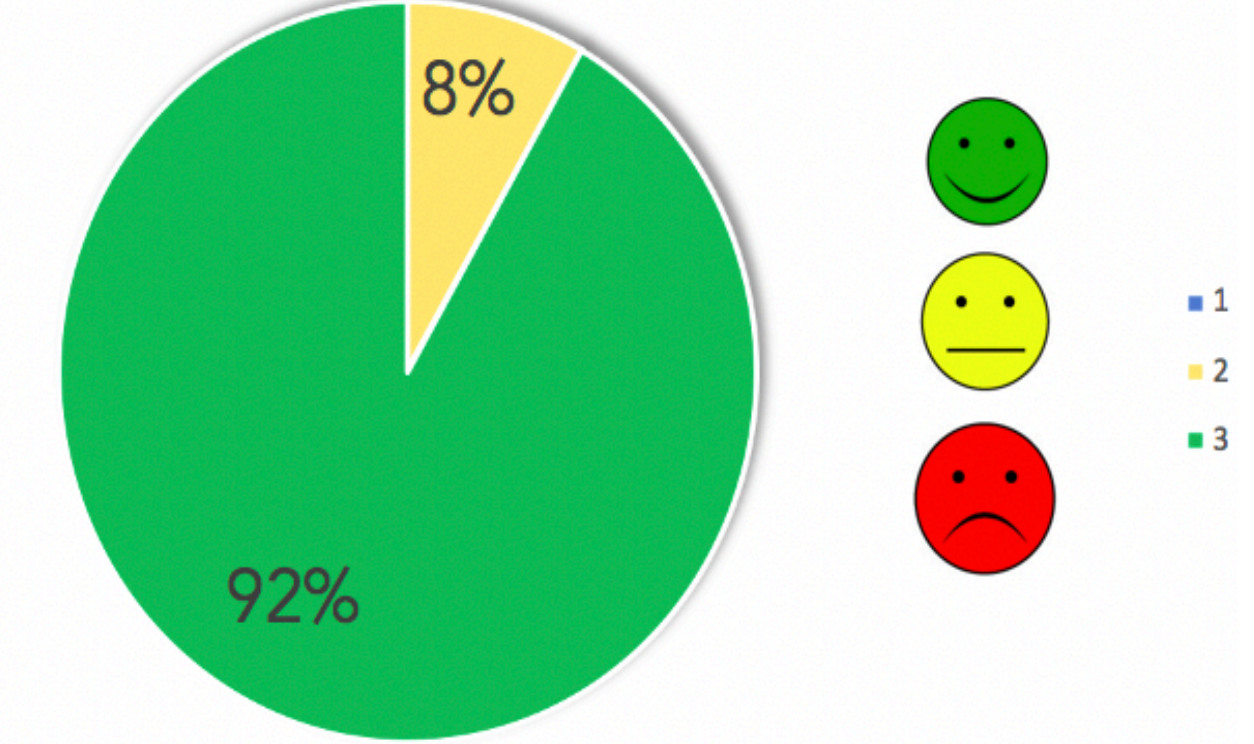


Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows that by the end of the program 0% of the students had negative attitudes towards reading, 8% had moderate attitudes towards reading and 92% had positive attitudes towards reading.

Lower Primary Running Record

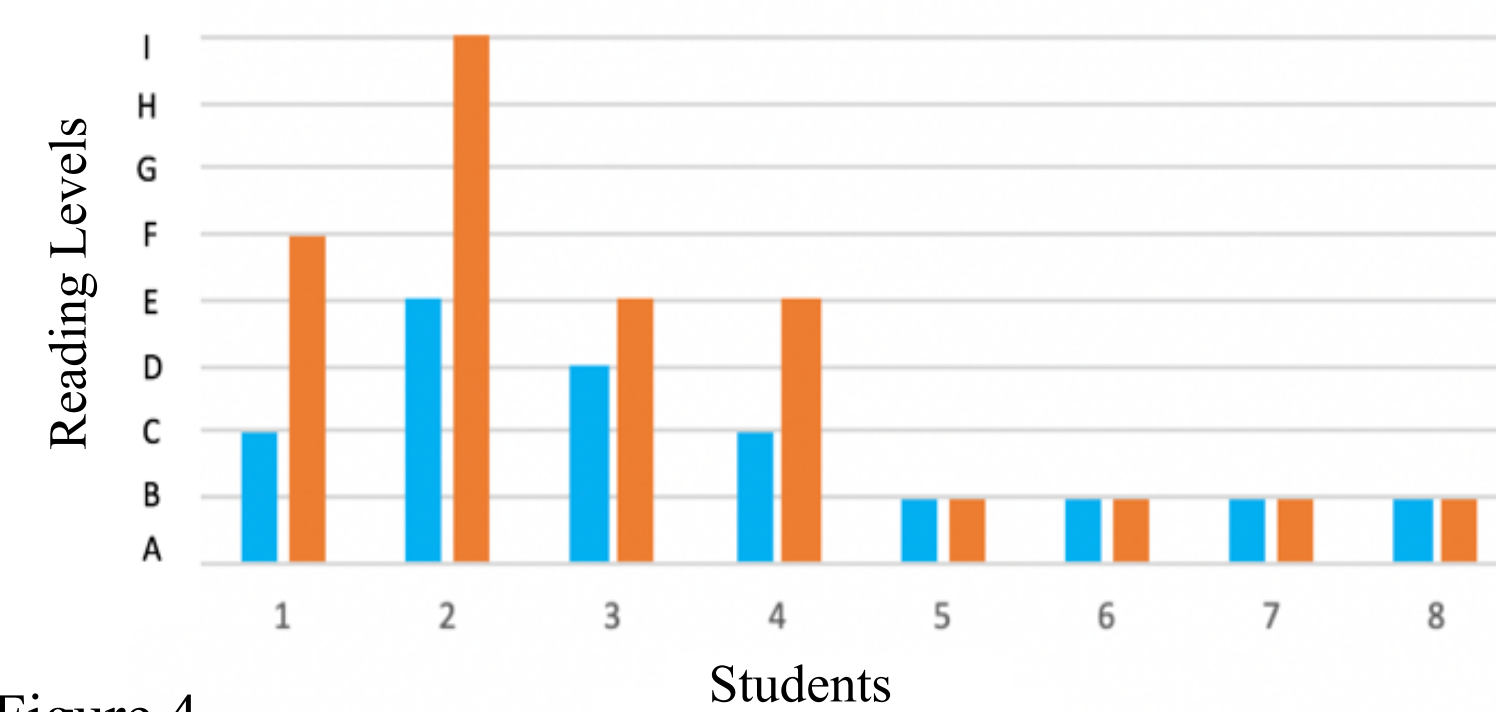


Figure 4.

Figure 4 shows the results of Lower Primary's running records. Students 1-4 all showed increase in reading levels whereas students 5-8 did not. They did however demonstrated growth within their reading abilities, but not enough to grow an entire reading level. The blue bar is the pre-test and the orange is post.

Upper Primary Running Record

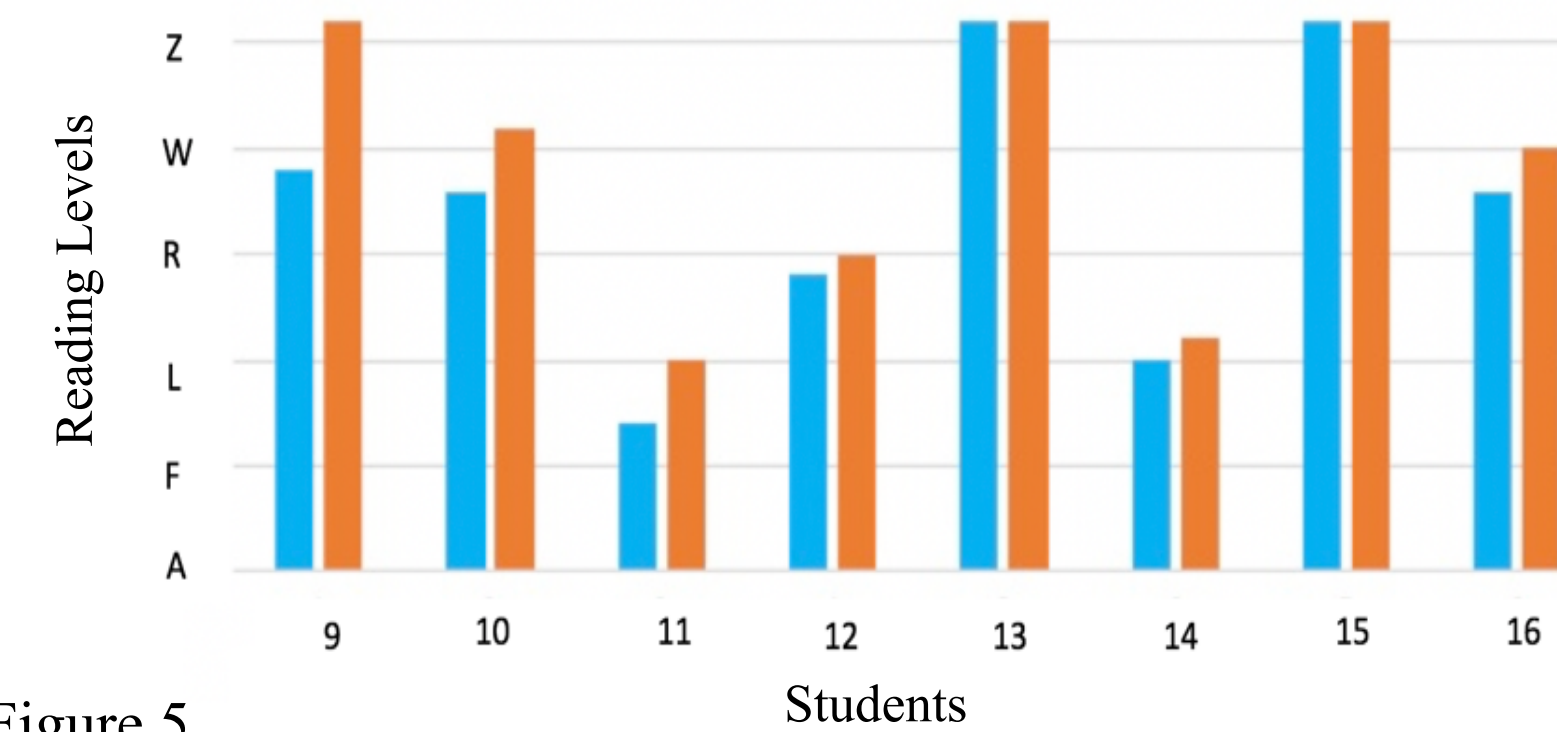
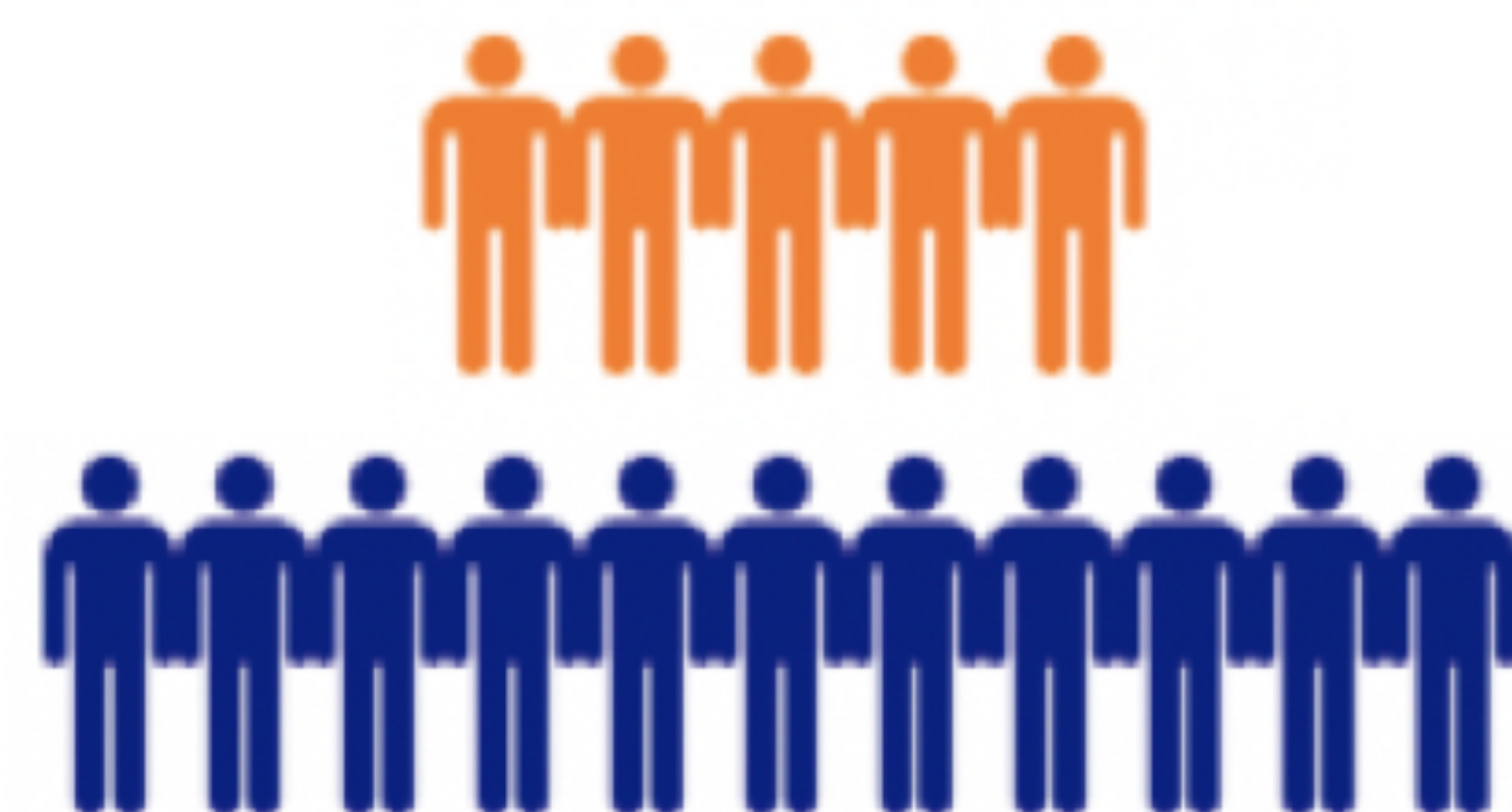


Figure 5.

Figure 5 shows the results of Upper Primary's running records. Every students reading level increased, except the ones who started at the highest level possible. The blue bar is the pre-test and the orange is post.



5 out of 16 students grew 3 or more reading levels

The top performing student grew 5 reading levels

On average, students grew 1.56 reading levels

Discussion

Both the smiley face assessment and the running records illustrated a huge improvement in the student's attitudes and reading levels. At the end of the study, the smiley face assessment showed that 92% of the students felt happy about reading (Figure 3). Students who are excited and have a positive attitude toward reading will be more motivated to read on their own (Merga, 2017). This is important since students who read at least 15 minutes a day see positive gains in their literary achievements (Johnson 2018).

The post running record assessment showed an improvement in the student's reading levels. The data revealed that students who started at a higher level improved more than the students who started at a lower level (Figure 4/5). For those students that did not improve a whole reading level, they still showed notable improvement in their reading skills. The results show that the hypothesis can be accepted.

It is important to acknowledge the pivotal role the Primary School teachers played in the research project and its results. The Primary School teachers, who taught the students 5 days a week, are a major factor in the building the literacy skills of the primary students. The positive results illustrate the significance of reading and that it has an enormous impact on a student's academic achievements. It is evident that a study like the Buddy Reading Program can be an effective strategy to educate and improve the literacy skills of students at risk of reading delays.

Acknowledgments

Primary School Teachers
 Primary School Students
 Kelsey Goodwin, *Teaching Fellow*
 Ariel Potter, *Outreach Coordinator*
 Kimberley Probin, *Early Childhood Literary Instructor*
 Chilly Sample, *Outreach Intern*



Figure 6. The Island School tutors who supported the Buddy Reading Program

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