Video intro

This exciting film footage is an excellent example of paired reading in practice. Shot in Glasgow, it has clips of tutors reading alongside children, which help illustrate what good paired reading techniques should look like.

See what tutors do when reading partners make errors, how they praise their partners and how they introduce effective questioning and dialogue. In addition to the examples of paired reading in action, you can watch insightful interviews from pupils, parents and teachers who talk about the benefits of being involved in a paired reading programme.

Transcript

[Music]

Volunteer: So starting a chapter on ...

Pupil: Deserts.

Volunteer: Deserts.

Both together: Deserts are one of the most ...

Pupil: Inho...

Volunteer: Inhospitable

Pupil: ...hospitable

Volunteer: Say it again.

Pupil: Inhospitable

Volunteer: Good, well done.

Both together: ... regions of the world. Although they are not all sand covered wastes, some deserts, like the ...

Pupil: Gobi

Volunteer: Gobi

Pupil: ... Gobi ...

Both together: ... in Asia, are cold for much of the year, but most deserts are found in the ...

Pupil: Tropicals

Volunteer: The Tropics

Pupil: Tropics.

Volunteer: Good.

Both together: The main difficulties of life in these deserts are to get enough water and to withstand the intense heat of the day. Some plants avoid times of drought by growing only when rain falls, then quickly dying and ...

Volunteer: ... leaving ...

Pupil: ... leave ...

Both together: ... and leaving seeds for the next fall of rain. Some, like a ...

Volunteer: ... cacti ...

Pupil: ... cacti ...

Volunteer: Good.

Both together: ... store water in their leaves and others store water in bulbs and ...

Pupil: ... tube ...

Volunteer: ... tubers ...

Both together: ... underground. The few trees survive by sending their roots far down into the soil to tap underground water.

Volunteer: Right, Crawford, if we just look at some of these diagrams ...

Pupil: Okay.

Volunteer: ... can you describe what you see in this one?

Pupil: This is like a field with big plants in them that are white ...

Volunteer: Aha, yeah.

Pupil: ... and it’s got colours in it.

Volunteer: Yeah, it’s got lots of colours in it. Is it what you expect a desert to look like?

Pupil: No.

Volunteer: What do you normally see in a desert?

Pupil: Like sand all over the place.

Volunteer: Very good, yeah. Looks a lot better than a desert usually looks.

Pupil: Mhm.

Volunteer: And look at some of these animals down here that you would find in a desert.

Pupil: Mm.

Volunteer: What’s this one called?

Pupil: A Galla monster.

Volunteer: A Gila monster, yeah.

Pupil: A Gila.

Volunteer: Yeah, looks a lot like a lizard. The next one?

Pupil: A chu... a chuck...

Volunteer: A chuckwalla.

Pupil: A chuckwalla.

Volunteer: Good. Down here?

Both together: A diamond-backed rattlesnake. A desert ...

Pupil: ... iguana.

Volunteer: Iguana, well done. This one?

Pupil: Kit fox.

Volunteer: ... fox. And the last one?

Both together: Horned lizard.

Volunteer: So that’s some of the animals that you would find ...

Pupil: Mhm.

Volunteer: ... in the desert. So we’ll move on to the next page.

Both together: Animals have also had to adapt in order to withstand drought. Many insects complete their whole lifecycle during one of the ...

Volunteer: ... infrequent ...

Pupil: ... infrequent ...

Both together: ... rainfalls.

Volunteer: Good.

Pupil: The next generation survives as eggs and pupae ...

Volunteer: Good, that’s it.

Pupil: ... until it rains again. Amphibians, like frogs and tu... tur... turtles ...

Volunteer: Not turtles ... and ...

Pupil: ... tortoise ...

Volunteer: Toads.

Pupil: ... toads ...

Both together: ... toads rest underground during the dry season having completed the three stages of their development from egg to tadpole to adult. During the brief rainy season reptiles like snakes and lizards are well adapted to the desert.

Volunteer: I was interested in getting some experience in a school because I wish to start a career in teaching myself and I needed some experience working with children.

I did an internet search and came upon Project Scotland website and it was a position for a volunteer paired reading.

The training was focused really well on the paired reading itself and there was quite a lot of good resources that we were given and we were shown all the various techniques that we could use initially and then further on down the line that we could employ and read with the children, and it was, er, prepared us really well for going into the school.

The school itself was very supportive when I came in. They were really eager to have the volunteer in and to work with the children because it is quite a problem with children and their literacy. They were appreciative of the support that I was giving in the school, and anything that I needed they were on hand to give to me.

A lot of them have improved in their confidence reading in front of the class. Some test results they’ve had have also come back in national tests have also improved and I’ve had a lot of feedback from the teachers saying that they’ve noticed a difference in the classroom.

It depends on the child mostly. Some of them like to read non-fiction and others like to read fiction. It was mostly boys that I was reading with, so they enjoy books about football and sports, and sometimes we’d take a book from the class that they were reading and read that.

Sometimes the children’s interests included sports and they would like to read about things like that, so we’d take in a newspaper like that, maybe read the back page, maybe about a game that happened at the weekend or during the week. We also read different things like joke books that you wouldn’t normally recomme... that you wouldn’t normally read with the children. And also if they’d written something in class they would bring that along to sessions and they would read that with me as well.

Because I’m starting a course in teacher training, it was as a direct result of doing the volunteer paired reading in the school. It really came through in the interview that I’d had, and it’s made me a lot more confident to go in and work with children of various ages, and hopefully when I start the course it will make a real difference.

The main message I take away from working at King’s Park Primary is that I’m able to work with children and make a real difference in their education and help them along.

Pupil: We’d go around the library picking what kind of books I like.

Interviewer: What sort of books do you prefer to read?

Pupil: Non-fiction books.

Interviewer: Why do you prefer non-fiction?

Pupil: Because it tells you facts and everything about the world.

Interviewer: What do you enjoy most about your paired reading times with Mr Connor?

Pupil: Well we get to know how to read better and how, like, when you’re older it will help you in your lifestyle.

Interviewer: What’s different about the reading sessions that you do with Mr Connor to the reading that you do in the class with your teacher?

Pupil: It’s because it’s one-to-one and then it helps you, then I can ... it’s harder because you’re out and then you may get nervous in the class.

Interviewer: Do you feel nervous reading in front of people in the class sometimes?

Pupil: Yeah.

Interviewer: How has your reading got better since you started having paired reading time?

Pupil: Well I’ve got, like, I’ve got to do, like, I can say more words and I can ... while we’re reading I couldn’t, like, read it and now I can read it better.

Interviewer: Who’s noticed that your reading’s improved and what was said?

Pupil: My mum has noticed that my reading’s improved because she used to say I read like a robot.

Interviewer: And what does she say that you read like now?

Pupil: She says I read perfect.

Interviewer: What would you say to other pupils who were interested in having a paired reading partner?

Pupil: Well it’s fun and you can read and then you can ... it can help your lifestyle like I said.

Teacher 1: I selected the pupils by looking first of all for boys and for boys that weren’t particularly interested in reading and that were in general under-achieving in reading, and that’s how we picked them.

Teacher 2: It was very interesting when we first discussed the paired reading sessions with the children and their parents. We could see that some were more enthusiastic initially than others, but within a few weeks all the children had come to look forward very much to their paired reading sessions.

Teacher 1: It’s raised the pupils’ self-esteem, that’s been the biggest benefit for that, and they’re able to ... they’re much more confident than they were. It’s also impacted on their writing, their writing is much more rich, their vocabulary is better and the way that they phrase their work is much better. And also because it’s given them more confidence, they’re able to participate actively in learning situations and a lot more productively than they had before.

Teacher 2: If another school approached me for my opinion of Scotland Reads I’d have to say please get behind me in the queue. It is absolutely wonderful. I think that in terms of value for money, a human being, a dedicated human being is the very best resource a school can have.

Teacher 1: The children benefit from it, the teachers benefit from it, and before I came here I spoke to all the teachers in the school and there’s not one that has anything but praise for it.

Parent 1: When I was told about the paired reading project I was quite happy, I was really delighted. I thought, oh, good, my daughter is going to get the help that she needs to help with her reading.

Parent 2: Initially I just thought what a great idea, what a wonderful opportunity for my son to improve his reading skills and ability. He wasn’t confident at all, and I just thought great, if it helps George then I’d be more than happy.

Parent 1: Now after she’s gone, experienced the paired reading project, now she’s happy, she’s really enthusiastic, now she enjoys reading. She’ll actually take a book and actually read the book herself without me having to ask her to go and read. She really enjoys reading now, she enjoys reading to me. She’s much more happier, she’s just more sociable, more happy in herself, and that’s improved her confidence a lot.

Parent 2: I would encourage any parent that’s given the opportunity to have this one-to-one reading scheme to do it, absolutely do it. It’s wonderful, a great experience.

[End of Recording]