



# Partners in Learning: How Researchers Can Support the Needs of Teacher Participant-Partners

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## INTRODUCTION

- Engaging in a positive relationship with teachers is essential to the success of school-based research studies
- Teachers need to feel empowered and supported when researchers seek to implement interventions in their classrooms
- Researchers need to employ best-practices for integrity of (1) data and (2) teachers as participant-partners
- Participant-partners = active participants in a study and critical agents of its successful implementation
- After a recently and successfully implemented elementary-school program, we learned about key components to ensuring a mutually-beneficial partnership

### The aims of this study are to:

- Gain a better understanding of teachers' needs for support in program implementation
- Share lessons learned during and after the program about how to meet the needs and goals of teachers when partnering in school-based research



## PARTICIPANTS

- 45** Teachers participated and provided feedback on the Arthur Interactive Media Buddy Project (Hilliard et al., 2016)
- 6** Elementary Schools
- 4** grade levels (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup>)
- 2** socio-economically and racial/ethnically-diverse school districts in the Greater Boston area

## METHODS: STEP 1

Teachers completed 8-20 sessions with their students in one of two programs as part of the study:



### The ARTHUR Interactive Media Buddy Program

Cross-age buddy pair social, emotional, and character development curriculum that uses interactive media based on characters from the PBS series ARTHUR (n=28)



### The MARTHA SPEAKS Reading Buddies Program

Cross-age buddy reading program based on the PBS series MARTHA SPEAKS (n=17)

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## METHODS: STEP 2

After completing the program in their classrooms, teachers were asked to complete a survey regarding their experiences with the Buddy Program highlighting the following factors:

- Program completion and satisfaction (Likert scale, "Not at all" to "Very")
- Top 3 barriers or challenges experienced during implementation
- Reflections on what they liked most and least about the project

## RESULTS

- 83%** of teachers reported a high rate of program fidelity, having completed all program sessions
- 75%** of teachers in the intervention group reported high overall program satisfaction
- Common challenges: perceived time constraints prior to and during the intervention
- Teacher's recommendations for improvement:
  - More comprehensive teacher training
  - More explicit guidance with specific program components
  - Time-management tools related to program implementation and the use of research tools

*"Time is very limited in the classroom, [I had a challenge with] finding and managing when to 'teach' the lessons within our vigorous curriculum."*

## CONCLUSIONS

For a successful (and less burdensome) school-based program implementation, researchers should include:

- Resources for time management related to the project including:
  - Roadmaps for quick references to different sections of the program
  - Ways to access and organize materials quickly
  - Recommendations on selecting times of day for implementing the program
  - Planning for unforeseen logistical challenges
- Strategies and ongoing support that can help teachers deal with time constraints, including access to a project liaison for real-time troubleshooting and support
- Provide clear differentiation between program and research components

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