Introduction
The Cross-Age Literacy program enables students to experience success as readers as they reinforce literacy attainment strategies using children’s books with younger children in local feeder schools. Teachers partner with a local elementary school for monthly 9th grade/1st grade literacy sessions. Students read a children’s book (When I Was Young in the Mountains), create their own book based on their Chicago experiences, and plan and implement reading activities for their “little buddies.” Freshmen develop literacy skills and confidence, “little buddies” gain a mentor and friend and build their literacy skills, and elementary schools build stronger relationships with their neighboring high school.

Project Goals
- Students will develop writing and editing skills as they create their own books based on When I Was Young in the Mountains.
- Students will build relationships with local elementary school students.
- Students will gain confidence in their literacy skills.
- Students will learn how to plan and implement a long-term project.
- Student will become meta-cognitive learners by developing and implementing reading activities for their “little buddies.”
- Students will reflect on their experience.

Procedure/Project Sequence
1. Teacher identifies a feeder elementary school partnership. Community organizations can help with this process.
2. Teacher schedules monthly dates with elementary schools for Cross-Age Tutoring program.
3. Students read When I Was Young in the Mountains, by Cynthia Rylant.
4. Students create their own “When I Was Young in Chicago…” book.
5. Students practice reading their text with classmates.
6. Teachers introduce literacy attainment strategies including phonemic awareness, prediction, sight words, autobiographical development, etc.
7. Students plan an ice-breaker and reading activities for “little buddies” focusing each session on one literacy attainment strategy and utilizing a variety of children’s books.
8. Classes travel to elementary schools and implement lesson plan.
9. Students write reflections of and evaluate collectively their experience.
10. Students plan follow-up lesson plan for their “little buddies.”

Community Partner/Resources
Logan Square Neighborhood Association
2840 N. Milwaukee Avenue
Chicago, IL 60618
GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs)
http://www.gearupchicago.org

Addendum

Standards

This project addresses the following Illinois Learning Standards for Language Arts and Social Emotional Standards.

Language Arts
1.B.4b Analyze, interpret and compare a variety of texts for purpose, structure, content, detail and effect.
1.B.4c Read age-appropriate materials with fluency.
1.C.4a Use questions and predictions to guide reading.

Social Emotional
1.A.4b Generate ways to develop more positive attitudes.
2.A.4b Use conversation skills to understand others’ feeling and perspectives.

The suggested duration of this project is 6 months (once a month for six months).

Preparation: Read *When I Was Young in the Mountains*, write their own *When I Was Young in Chicago* books, and plan monthly ice-breakers and reading activities for “little buddies”

Action: Implement literacy attainment activities with “little buddies” at feeder elementary school

Reflection: A reflection is written after each trip to the elementary school and a longer reflection is written at the end of the six-month program. Reflection also takes place as students evaluate their performance at schools and seek ways to improve their practice.

Cross-Curricular Connections

Connections with Drama, Art and History could be made during this project.