Tutoring

Edited by Sandra Kerka
WHAT WORKS
Evidence-based strategies for youth practitioners

Tutoring

Edited by Sandra Kerka

2007
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Introduction

Sandra Kerka, Writer, LearningWork Connection

About What Works

What Works is intended to provide Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth-serving professionals with evidence-based information to support positive outcomes for youth. Each What Works contains a brief introduction that defines a topic of interest to WIA youth programs and a selection of reprinted resources that describe strategies known to increase the likelihood of youth success in the area.

Tutoring and Academic Achievement

Youth who experience difficulties with academics, especially reading and writing, need extra support and individualized attention. Tutoring programs that include research-based elements have been shown to improve achievement in reading and writing (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Well-designed and implemented tutoring works because individualized instruction caters to different learning styles and provides feedback and encouragement that are tailored to the learner’s specific needs (Fager, 1996). Students can work at their own pace, in relative privacy, and without the pressure of competition (Fager, 1996).

The heart of tutoring is diagnostic/prescriptive interaction—a cycle of assessment, feedback, and tailored instruction. In the one-on-one tutor-tutee relationship, learners have ample opportunities to practice vocabulary building, review, repetition, questioning, and other strategies focused on achievement (The Access Center, 2004).

Successful readers internalize and use fundamental thinking strategies that contribute to proficiency. Effective tutors describe and model these strategies and practice them with youth until the thinking processes are mastered. These thinking and comprehension strategies can then be applied across the curriculum to improve achievement in other content areas.

Tutoring has been shown to be effective in both face-to-face and distance settings (Houge, et al., 2006). Using distance methods can give tutoring program coordinators greater flexibility in recruiting and scheduling tutoring sessions. A sample distance tutoring session for adolescents is described in Northern State University (2006).

Tutoring and Youth Development

The intensive individualized attention of a tutor contributes to youth development goals. Tutoring has been shown to improve self-confidence, motivation, and attitudes about school (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Positive, caring relationships with adults characterize the most successful tutoring (LEARNS, 2003). Cannata et al. (2005) compare tutoring and mentoring, showing how tutors sometimes act as mentors and mentors sometimes play the role of tutors. As mentors, tutors provide emotional support and positive role models (Cannata et al., 2005; Fager, 1996). Ideally, tutors enthusiastically demonstrate the benefits and joys of literacy and share how they use it in daily life (Douglas, 2001).
Tutors foster positive youth development by empowering students to make choices (e.g., about reading material), scaffolding and gradually encouraging independence, and modeling enthusiasm. Through conversation tutors can guide youth in developing literacy skills as well as engaging in self-discovery (LEARNS, 2000). Peer and cross-age tutoring methods help both tutor and tutee practice social skills (The Access Center, 2004). The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, which uses cross-age tutoring, has been shown to encourage both tutors and tutees to stay in school. Its tenets reflect youth development principles: All students can learn, all students are valued, and all students can actively contribute to their own education and to the education of others (Cortez, 2007).

**Implementing Tutoring Programs**

High-quality tutoring programs include—

- Well-structured sessions with carefully scripted delivery of instruction
- Frequent, regular sessions (at least three times per week)
- Monitoring and reinforcement of learner progress

(LEARNS, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1997)

Considerations for developing tutoring programs include—

- Target age groups, subject, and goals
- Resources (people, facilities, time, money)
- Recruitment of tutors and matching with tutees
- Ongoing tutor training and support
- Evaluation plan

(Fager, 1996)

**Motivating Youth**

Underlying causes for low academic achievement may include fear of embarrassment or peer ridicule, doubt about the possibility of future success, or lack of engagement with subject matter or its presentation (Douglas, 2005). Tutors can overcome these concerns in the following ways: allowing youth to set goals and select activities and materials; providing consistent, positive feedback and appropriate praise that foster feelings of competence; varying media, activities, and approaches; drawing connections between academic subjects and future work and life; and accommodating individual learning rhythms (Douglas, 2005; LEARNS, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

**Peer and Cross-Age Tutoring**

Research shows that peer and cross-age tutoring are as effective as tutoring by adults (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Peer tutors are of the same age, grade, or academic status as their tutees. Cross-age tutoring involves older youth working with younger tutees (Fager, 1996). In these peer or near-peer relationships, learners usually feel freer to talk and take risks and
may be more engaged (Cortez, 2007; Fager, 1996). The tutors themselves benefit by increasing subject mastery, self-esteem, and sense of responsibility (Fager, 1996). The Access Center (2004) shows how Peer Assisted Learning Strategies improve achievement in reading and math and help integrate students with disabilities into the classroom. The Access Center (2006) provides a sample lesson for implementing peer tutoring in math. Coca-Cola Valued Youth, a cross-age tutoring program, had a significant impact on reducing dropout, especially among ethnically diverse participants (Cortez, 2007).

**Tutor Training**

Whether tutors are adults with no teaching experience or peers of tutees, intensive and ongoing training is a hallmark of high-quality tutoring programs (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Elements of effective tutor training include—

- Interpersonal skills training (U.S. Department of Education, 1997)
- Training in instructional techniques, assessment, feedback, reinforcement, and error correction (Fager, 1996)
- Opportunities for reflection and renewal, with appropriate supervision and feedback (LEARNS, 2003)

Training of adult tutors should reflect adult learning principles (DeSantis, et al., 2001). DeSantis et al. provide examples of training models, considerations for evaluating tutor training, and lists of training resources.

**Additional Reference**

Evidence that Tutoring Works


Research has consistently shown that well-designed tutoring programs that use volunteers and other nonprofessionals as tutors can be effective in improving children’s reading skills. Students with below-average reading skills who are tutored by volunteers show significant gains in reading skills when compared with similar students who do not receive tutoring from a high-quality tutoring program. Peer or cross-age tutors also show gains in reading skills. Students who are tutored (henceforth “tutees”) and tutors, in the case of peer or cross-age tutors, often demonstrate higher self-esteem and positive attitudes toward school. Among the features of tutoring programs associated with the most positive gains are extensive training for tutors, formal time commitments by tutors, structured tutoring sessions, careful monitoring of tutoring services, and close relationships between classroom instruction and curriculum and the tutoring services provided. Students with severe learning disabilities require special tutoring services, which can be provided by professionals, combined with nonprofessionals under careful supervision.

What the Research Shows about Tutoring

1. Tutoring programs that incorporate research-based elements produce improvements in reading achievement.


A British tutoring program involving 2,372 elementary and junior high students who were tutored by trained parents and peers for an average of 8.6 weeks improved their reading comprehension 4.4 times the normal rate and word recognition 3.3 times the normal rate. Four months after the end of tutoring, the average tutee was still improving at twice the normal rate in both comprehension and word recognition. [Topping, K., & Whitley, M. (1990). Participant evaluation of parent-tutored and peer-tutored projects in reading, Educational Research, 32(1), 14-32.]

Two tutoring programs in Dade County, Florida, that trained cross-age and adult volunteer tutors to work with elementary school students found that tutees outperformed a randomly assigned control group of students who were not tutored. [Madden, N.A., & Slavin, R.E. (1989). Effective pullout programs for students at risk. In R.E. Slavin, N. L. Karweit, and N.A. Madden, Eds., Effective Programs for Students at Risk. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.]

An after-school tutoring program in which low-achieving second- and third-graders were tutored for one hour twice each week by university students, retirees, and suburban mothers also generated strong improvements in the tutees’ reading skills. Two reading specialists selected the children for tutoring, recruited and trained the tutors, and monitored the tutoring sessions.
In each of two years, the tutored group outperformed a closely matched comparison group on word recognition, passage reading accuracy, and spelling. Fifty percent of the tutored children made a full year’s gain in reading while only 20% of the comparison group children did. [Morris, D., Shaw, B., & Perney, J. (1990, November). Helping low readers in Grades 2 and 3: An after-school volunteer tutoring program. *Elementary School Journal*, 91, 133-150].

Other studies have shown that carefully crafted peer, cross-age, and adult tutoring services can improve reading achievement among disadvantaged, mildly disabled, and limited-English-proficient students. [Bender, D.S., Giovanis, G., & Mazzoni, M. (1994). After-school tutoring program. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Middle School Association; Warger, C. L. (1991). *Peer tutoring: When working together is better than working alone*. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.]

2. **Tutoring can also lead to improvements in self-confidence about reading, motivation for reading, and behavior, both among tutees and among peer or cross-age tutors.**

The Partners for Valued Youth employed at-risk middle school students with limited English proficiency to tutor low-achieving elementary school students for four hours every week. After participating in the program, tutors had lower dropout and absentee rates and higher self-concept scores than a randomly selected control group. Tutees also experienced improved reading scores, lower absentee rates, and fewer disciplinary referrals. [Robledo, M. del R. (1990). *Partners for valued youth: Dropout prevention strategies for at-risk language minority students*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.]


**What Research Says about High-Quality Implementation**

Researchers who have examined multiple tutoring programs generally agree on the factors that generate the most consistent positive achievement for tutees. Six such factors are:

1. **Close coordination with the classroom or reading teacher**


2. **Intensive and ongoing training for tutors**

Tutees whose tutors participated in ongoing, intensive training throughout their participation in a Dade County tutoring program outperformed tutees whose tutors did not complete the


The importance of tutor training is reinforced by several other studies, which provide specific advice on the types of training that yield the best results. Jenkins & Jenkins (1985) point to the importance of training in interpersonal skills so tutors do not become impatient with tutees. Warger (1991) says training should include strategies for reinforcing correct responses and properly correcting incorrect responses. [Jenkins, J. R., & Jenkins, L. M. Making peer tutoring work. (1987, March). Educational Leadership, pp. 64-68; Warger, C. L. (1991). Peer tutoring: When working together is better than working alone. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.]

3. **Well-structured tutoring sessions in which the content and delivery of instruction is carefully scripted**


In a study of the use of tutorial scripts in teaching mathematics, McArthur, Stasz and Zmuidzinas found that the most successful tutors often have well-rehearsed scripts for responding to student errors. The results are general enough to apply to reading also. [McArthur, D., Stasz, C., & Zmuidzinas, M. (1990). Tutoring techniques in algebra. Cognition and Instruction, 7, 197-244.]

4. **Careful monitoring and reinforcement of progress**

A recent study of tutoring for 30 first-graders at risk for reading failure reported that successful tutor-tutee relationships were characterized by strong reinforcement of progress, a high number of reading and writing experiences in which the student moved from being fully supported to working independently, and explicit demonstration of appropriate reading and writing processes. [Juel, C. (1996). What makes literacy tutoring effective? Reading Research Quarterly, 31(3), 268-289.]

5. **Frequent and regular tutoring sessions, with each session between 10 and 60 minutes daily. More sessions a week result in greater gains.**

Tutoring programs in which tutors met with tutees at least three times a week were more likely to generate positive achievement for tutees than programs in which tutors and tutees met twice a week. [Reisner, Petry, & Armitage, 1990]

6. **Specially designed interventions for the 17 to 20 percent of children with severe reading difficulties.**

The most important strategies for improving early reading instruction and learning have been identified as creating an appreciation of the written word, developing an awareness of printed language and the writing system, teaching the alphabet, developing students’ phonological awareness, developing phonemic awareness, teaching the relationship of sounds and letters, teaching children how to sound out words, teaching children to spell words, and helping children to develop fluent, reflective reading. [Kameenui, Adams, & Lyon (1996). *Learning to read/Reading to learn* (1996). U. S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.]

Trained volunteers under careful supervision from reading or resource teachers have proved to be effective instructors for learning disabled and other students with disabilities [Azcoitia, 1989; Madden & Slavin, 1989].
Introduction

At one time or another most everyone has been involved with tutoring, though the experience may not have been part of an organized tutoring program. It is more likely that it consisted of one person informally giving instruction or assistance to another. This happens almost naturally with children in school settings whether or not they have been instructed to tutor. A common scenario might unfold like the following.

One child sighs in frustration as he attempts a challenging math problem. He can’t seem to figure it out and looks to the group member next to him. She leans over to see if she can help. She takes him through the problem step by step, until it “clicks” and he’s off and running on his own. Once he seems to get it, she only checks occasionally to make sure he is doing all right.

It is a scene that is repeated thousands of times each day in schools around the country: kids helping each other out. When educators build upon this, refine it, and mold it into an organized process, it becomes a powerful learning tool for all involved.

Making the Distinctions

It is important to note the differences between three types of tutoring. They are peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, and parent/adult volunteer tutoring. Peer tutoring can be defined as a one-on-one teaching process in which the tutor is of the same general age, grade, or academic status as the tutee (Gaustad, 1992). When the tutor is an older student, cross-age tutoring is the appropriate term to use. (It is important to note that some publications make no distinctions between peer and cross-age tutoring. Instead, they use peer tutoring as an umbrella term encompassing both.) The third type of tutoring is parent/volunteer tutoring, where adults outside the school tutor students. Each type of tutoring has attributes specific to it. These include:

Peer Tutoring

• Avoids disruptions in schedules that other forms cannot avoid. It is contained within one class with one group of children (Rekrut, 1994).
• Provides tutors and tutees with a similar language. They are closer in knowledge and status than are students and teachers. Generally both children feel freer to express their opinions and take risks (Kalkowski, 1995; Gaustad, 1992).
• Is cost effective.
Cross-Age Tutoring

• Takes advantage of the higher status inherent in the age difference, while still retaining many of the benefits of peer tutoring (Gaustad, 1992).

• Can increase tutee's self-esteem as a result of having an older, higher-status friend (Topping, 1988).

• Prevents feelings of inferiority that children may experience if they are the tutee of a same-age peer (Gaustad, 1992).

Parent/Volunteer Tutoring

• Puts parents and other community members in touch with the school.

• Creates advocates for the school and the tutoring process in general.

• Reduces distractions—adult-student pairs generally do not get as distracted as student-student pairs, thus creating less of a need for teacher supervision.

What Are the Benefits of Tutoring Programs?

There are numerous benefits associated with tutoring. As with any other school program, it is important to note that no two tutoring programs are the same. Student, school, and community dynamics all contribute to the uniqueness of any given program. Also, the scope of tutoring can vary widely from school to school. Given these differences, there are common benefits that result from tutoring in nearly any setting. The following lists detail benefits of tutoring in general, as well as benefits to the tutees, the tutors, and the teachers.

In general, tutoring

• Increases mastery of academic skills (Miller, Kohler, Ezell, Hoe I, & Strain, 1993; Kalkowski, 1995; Martino, 1993; Topping, 1988).

• Improves self-esteem and self-confidence (Rekrut, 1994; Kalkowski, 1995; Gaustad, 1992).

• Improves students’ attitudes toward school; reduces dropout rates, truancies, and tardies (Kalkowski, 1995; Cotton, 1989; Martino, 1993).

• Breaks down social barriers and creates new friendships (Miller et al., 1993; Kalkowski, 1995; Cotton, 1989).

• Provides emotional support and positive role models (Martino, 1993).

The tutees receive

• Individual instruction—lessons are tailored to individual students’ learning styles and levels of understanding (Martino, 1993; Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).

• Instruction free of competition—students progress at their own pace (Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).

• Private instruction, apart from whole class instruction (Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).

• Increased praise, feedback, and encouragement over what they might receive from one teacher (Topping, 1988).
• Closer monitoring (from the teacher and tutor) that maximizes time on task (Topping, 1988).
• Skills demonstrated instead of just verbalized (Topping, 1988).
• Companionship (Topping, 1988; Martino, 1993; Miller et al., 1993; Kalkowski, 1995; Cotton, 1989).

**The tutors receive**

• A sense of pride and accomplishment for having helped someone else (Lancy & Nattiv, 1992; Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).
• Increased academic mastery (Rekrut, 1994; Gaustad, 1992).
• A greater sense of dedication to their own instruction, so they can effectively transmit it to the tutee (Gaustad, 1992).
• Increased self-esteem, confidence, and sense of adequacy as a result of being named a tutor (Gaustad, 1992; Rekrut, 1994; Topping, 1988).
• A new or increased sense of responsibility and awareness for what teachers must do to transmit knowledge to students (Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).
• Empathy for tutees for whom learning may be much more of a struggle (Rekrut, 1994).

**The teachers receive**

• Reduced time spent on repetitive work, allowing them to carry out more technical and professional tasks (Topping, 1988).
• Increased personal monitoring of individual student progress over the monitoring they must provide during whole class instruction (Topping, 1988).
• Personal gratification in seeing the rewards reaped by both tutor and tutee (Cotton, 1989).
• Improved skills as they perform monitoring, counseling, evaluation, and record keeping functions in conjunction with the program (Cotton, 1989).

**Implementing a Program: What Does It Take?**

No school or organization implements a tutoring program the same way. However, there does seem to be consensus about items that need to be tended to, and considerations that need to be made. Following is a listing of suggested steps to take in organizing a tutoring program. (The degree to which these steps are followed will depend upon the size and scope of the program.)

1. Consider what your objectives are:
   • What is your target age group?
   • What subject area(s) will you focus on?
   • Is academic improvement your main goal, or will you also focus on self-esteem and student attitudes?

   (Miller et al., 1993; Gaustad, 1992)
2. Designate someone to coordinate the tutoring program. This person may be an employee of the school who volunteers, or it may be someone hired specifically for this position. It is important to remember that this will be a demanding, even exhausting job at times, but its rewards will far outweigh any demands (Cotton, 1989; Lancy & Nattiv, 1992).

3. Get the support of school staff and administration; without this, the program will likely never get off the ground (Lancy & Nattiv, 1992; Martino, 1993).

4. Assess what human, physical, time, and financial resources are available, and make decisions accordingly (Gaustad, 1992).

5. Outline program goals, policies, and procedures in a letter to parents. Have them sign a permission slip if their child has been selected to participate in the program in any capacity. It might also be a good idea to have an informational meeting for parents or community members. The bottom line is to openly communicate with the public (Lancy & Nattiv, 1992; Martino, 1993; Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).

6. Establish a plan for evaluating the successfulness of the program. Ideas for evaluation include (Miller et al., 1993; Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988):
   - Comparisons with a control group
   - Academic assessment
   - Measurement of social gains

7. Carefully identify tutors and tutees (Gaustad, 1992; Ellery, 1995). Again, base these decisions on the original goals of the program. All students can play the part of tutor or tutee. (Ellery, 1995; Rekrut, 1994). Some suggestions for identification of each are:

   **Tutors**
   - Recruit tutors by advertising or with informational meetings for those interested. Ask teachers and other students to nominate those individuals who have promising tutor skills (Morris, 1990).
   - Persuade potential tutors by identifying possible incentives, either intrinsic (the knowledge that they will make a difference in someone else’s life) or extrinsic (school credit for participating as a tutor).
   - Tutors should be competent in the subject(s) they tutor (Ellery, 1995; Morris, 1990; Martino, 1993; Gaustad, 1992).
   - Look for qualities that include: willingness, patience, dedication, assertiveness, and the ability to lead and instruct. Academic success alone does not make a tutor successful (Cotton, 1989; Gaustad, 1992).

   **Tutees**
   - Select students who have demonstrated need in the specified subject, and who may have difficulty learning in a whole group setting. However, avoid students with severe behavior or attendance problems while establishing the program (Martino, 1993).
   - Choose tutees that are able to accept, respect, and not be threatened by instruction delivered from a peer or an “uncertified” adult.
8. Train tutors (this step will be covered in detail in a following section) (Kalkowski, 1995; Rekrut, 1994; Miller et al., 1993; Lancy & Nattiv, 1992; Cotton, 1989; Martino, 1993; Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).

9. Pair tutors and tutees. Some studies suggest that same-sex partners are preferable, but this is not a must (Rekrut, 1994). Above all, try to pair partners whose personalities complement one another and who seem to work well together. Allow for changes if it appears that the partners are not getting along (Gaustad, 1992).

10. Make provisions for substitute tutors in the event of absences or tutors who withdraw from the program (Topping, 1988).

11. Provide ongoing support for tutors and staff involved (Gaustad, 1992).

12. Generally, schedule tutoring to take place three times a week, for 15–30 minutes each session, at 8 to 10 week intervals (Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).

13. Evaluate the success of the program (Miller et al., 1993; Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).

14. Above all, start small and expand the program gradually. Concentrate on creating an environment where tutors feel free to ask questions and voice their concerns, and where tutees feel comfortable and successful (Cotton, 1989; Martino, 1993; Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988).

**Training Tutors**

It is critical that tutors, whether they are fourth-graders or 40-year-olds, be properly trained. Do not assume that because they are honor students or adults, they are effective instructors. Without training, they will rely on personal experiences. While this may not necessarily be bad, it is possible that they could resort to damaging practices such as threats, put-downs, or guilt (Gaustad, 1992). Effective tutor training should include, but not be limited to the following steps:

1. Give tutors an overview of program structure, procedures, and goals (Topping, 1988).

2. Familiarize them with curriculum.

3. Assess tutors’ skills and comprehension before assigning them to a tutee. It is important that tutors have mastered the material enough to effectively teach it (Gaustad, 1992).

4. Give tutors background information about their tutees, but be careful not to disclose unnecessary personal information (Topping, 1988).

5. Model instructional techniques you would like tutors to emulate, emphasizing interpersonal, management, and content skills. After this, switch roles with them and give them a chance to practice these techniques with your supervision (Rekrut, 1994; Topping, 1988).

6. Teach tutors to recognize the appropriate time to demonstrate skills to tutees, and the right time to provide tutees with feedback (Topping, 1988; Ellery, 1995; Kalkowski, 1995; Cotton, 1989).

7. Make sure tutors are able to recognize areas where their tutees needs extra help (Topping, 1988).

8. Convey to tutors how valuable praise, encouragement, feedback, and reinforcement are to the success of the tutee (Ellery, 1995; Cotton, 1989; Topping, 1988).
9. Ensure tutors are trained in a specific error correction procedure. It should be quick, simple, consistently applied, and nonstressful for both tutor and tutee (Topping, 1988).

10. Train tutors to keep accurate records, as this is used in the assessment of the tutee and the evaluation of the program overall (Cotton, 1989; Topping, 1988).

11. Provide tutors with ongoing monitoring and supervision throughout the course of their tutoring experience (Morris, 1990; Topping, 1988).

12. Make sure tutors know who to talk to when they have any questions or concerns (Topping, 1988).

13. Give the tutors encouragement and praise. They need to know that they are doing a good job.

Potential Pitfalls—What to Watch For

- To keep the program running smoothly, keep an eye out for these potential problems:
- Keep the noise level to a minimum. Classrooms full of tutoring pairs have the potential to become very noisy, thus becoming ineffective (Topping, 1988).
- Monitor tutoring techniques. Tutors should use effective instructional strategies (Topping, 1988).
- Watch for tutors who are bossy or authoritarian—this is not what tutees need (Topping, 1988).
- Keep the program engaging and exciting for both tutors and tutees (Topping, 1988).
- Watch for bad tutor/tutee relationships (Topping, 1988).
- Avoid interfering with other school classes or activities (Topping, 1988).
- Make sure you keep parents and community members apprised of school activities. Those who are uninformed may misunderstand the intentions or activities of the program (Topping, 1988).
- Use tutoring to supplement instruction conducted by a competent teacher, not as a substitute for what the teacher doesn’t have time to do.

Everyday Stuff—Daily Implementation

Once the program is off and running, the work has only just begun. The everyday functioning of the program requires careful planning and organization. Remember that tutors aren’t responsible for lesson planning, scheduling, monitoring, or evaluation (Morris, 1990). These tasks fall to the program coordinator(s). Following are some helpful hints to keeping the whole thing rolling:

- Conduct regular meetings between tutors and coordinators as a way of keeping in touch and informed of developments in the program. This is also a time for tutors to receive further training as needed (Topping, 1988).
- Communicate regularly with school staff and parents/community members. Tap into both groups’ skills. Teachers can assist with lesson plans and instructional suggestions. Parents and community members can help to provide program materials, and act as ambassadors to the rest of the community on behalf of the program.
• Strive to create a warm, relaxed, and noncompetitive environment for tutoring pairs to work in (Gaustad, 1992).

• Remember that tutoring can be scheduled during class time, recess, or before or after school. It is generally felt, however, that the most successful time period is during class. This ensures all students will be present and that less scheduling conflicts will exist (Topping, 1988).

• Monitor the tutoring sessions and the program overall. Stop potential problems from becoming actual problems. Make sure to positively reinforce the work of tutors.

Conclusions

One of the better aspects of human nature is our capacity and willingness to help each other. Tutoring takes this and builds upon it, making it not only an instrument for building positive interpersonal relationships, but also an extremely flexible, cost-effective learning tool by which children on both sides of the equation (tutors and tutees) can flourish. Almost any subject can be used in a tutoring context, and students and adults of all ages can be participants (Rekrut, 1994). While it may take a good deal of organization and planning to successfully implement a tutoring program, the benefits will likely outshine these efforts, making it a worthwhile endeavor for teachers and students alike.

Regional Contacts

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References


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With the goal of designing high-quality national service tutoring programs, the Corporation’s 2003 AmeriCorps Grant Guidelines assists applicants in addressing requirements such as incorporating scientifically based approaches to reading instruction, proven strategies for curricula development, tutor training and standards for tutors. This effective practice offers some general elements of tutoring program design that incorporate these requirements and that should be used in the beginning stages of program design. Material is excerpted from the Tutoring Toolkit for AmeriCorps Program Applicants (2003) developed by LEARNS, in conjunction with the Corporation for National and Community Service. A link to the toolkit is provided, as is a listing of other related resources.

**Issue:** Developing valuable tutoring programs that are in compliance with Corporation guidelines for national service literacy programs.

**Action**

As identified in the Tutoring Toolkit for AmeriCorps Program Applicants (LEARNS, 2003), the following elements of program design should be kept in mind at the outset:

**Planned, Structured Sessions and Activities**

Children benefit from well-planned, structured tutoring sessions in which tutors employ a variety of materials and strategies to accommodate children’s varying interests, abilities, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds. A balanced, integrated approach to tutoring activities benefits children by creating a supportive, literate environment, providing access to a variety of reading and writing materials and instilling a passion for reading.

The 2003 AmeriCorps guidelines require programs to employ tutoring strategies that are scientifically based and include the five components of reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel: www.nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/NatlReadingPanel.pdf

**Frequent and Regular Sessions**

The frequency and consistency of tutoring sessions can be as important as session content in creating an atmosphere that is comfortable for tutees and conducive to learning. According to the AmeriCorps Tutoring Outcomes Study, students who met with their tutors at least three times per week “increased their reading skills scores between pre-test and post-test by 2.1 points more than their peers in programs that met less frequently.” Most children benefit from regular sessions that occur at the same time, day, and place from week to week.
Coordination with Classroom Teacher or Designated School or District Staff with Reading Expertise

Communication with classroom teachers and school or district staff with reading expertise is important for both school and community-based programs. Schools and districts have valuable knowledge and resources to support literacy programs. When program activities are coordinated with classroom instruction, children receive more consistent messages about reading and can practice the skills most relevant to their schoolwork. In addition, communication with partner schools can give programs access to important information about students and curriculum.

Member and Volunteer Training, Supervision, and Feedback

It is crucial that members and volunteers receive effective training and supervision before and during service and that the training prepares them for the actual activities they will undertake.

Volunteers and members also benefit from regular opportunities to reflect on tutoring sessions, share strategies, and ask questions. Incorporating service-learning into program design allows for structured and meaningful reflection on the impact of service on tutees, the school or site, and the broader community, and expands members’ and volunteers’ personal and professional development opportunities.

While training is key, some of the most valuable learning experiences for members and volunteers arise during tutoring sessions. To make the most of these moments, provide ongoing supervision, access to reading or instructional experts, and timely feedback.

Assessment and Reinforcement of Tutee Progress

Appropriate assessment of children’s learning and literacy development is important for all participants in national and community service literacy programs. Assessment results are useful to everyone; tutors use this data to adjust session activities, students to better understand their progress, and teachers to gain a fuller picture of students’ work with tutors. In addition to improved literacy skills, assessment can address other benefits children may experience, such as improved school attendance, behavior, self-esteem, and interest in reading.

For one example of a literacy assessment tool, see the LEARNS Literacy Assessment Profile (LLAP) online at www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/llap/index.html.

Regular Performance Measurement

Performance measurement serves the same purpose for programs that assessment does for students, allowing a program to gauge its progress and adjust practices to meet outcomes and better serve children and the community. The 2003 AmeriCorps Guidelines require applicants to identify goals and show links between program objectives, activities, training, and performance measurement tools and to track progress on a regular basis. See the Corporation’s Performance Measurement Toolkit (http://www.projectstar.org/star/AmeriCorps/pmtoolkit.pdf) for assistance with this task.
Access to Training and Technical Assistance Resources

Local trainers for tutor programs come from a variety of sources. For ideas, see Identifying Local Resources for Your Literacy Program, online at www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/startup/IDLocalResources.pdf. Programs can also tap into local resources by establishing advisory or planning committees made up of key community stakeholders, including representatives from business and community organizations, parents, local teachers, community members with reading expertise (i.e., university professors or retired teachers) and Title I coordinators. No matter who the trainer is, training content should focus on the activities tutors are expected to perform and include practice in supporting the five key reading components articulated in No Child Left Behind Act.

Positive, Caring Relationships among Children, Staff Members, and Volunteers

Positive, caring relationships underlie student and program success. Successful tutor programs foster positive relationships, which increase tutoring effectiveness and help motivate students to achieve. Relationships are developed more easily when tutors meet with the same child over time.

Family Involvement

In addition to supporting programs, members and volunteers, the Corporation for National and Community Service strongly supports parents in their efforts to be their child’s first and most important teacher(s). High quality programs provide appropriate opportunities for parents or guardians and families to get involved with student learning. Strategies for family involvement may include help for parents and/or family members to support learning at home, volunteer opportunities for families, and opportunities for families’ concerns to be heard through advisory committees or group meetings.

Context

National service literacy programs need to be in compliance with new standards for tutor qualifications, curricula development and performance measurement. See the Resources section below for guidance in meeting this criteria.

This Effective Practice posted on February 10, 2003

Source Documents


Contact

LEARNS, 101 SW Main St., Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204, E-mail: learns@nwrel.org, Fax: (503) 275-0133, Website: http://www.nwrel.org/learns/, Toll-free: 1-800-361-7890
Resources


For scientifically based reading instruction consider the National Reading Panel's report (www.nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/NatlReadingPanel.pdf) or read Put Reading First: The Research Blocks for Teaching Children to Read (www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/Cierra.pdf).

For ideas on finding local tutor trainers, see Identifying Local Resources for Your Literacy Program, online at www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/startup/IDLocalResources.pdf.

For an example of a literacy assessment tool, see the LEARNS Literacy Assessment Profile (LLAP) online at www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/llap/index.html.

For performance measurement issues, view the Corporation’s Performance Measurement Toolkit at www.projectstar.org/star/AmeriCorps/pmtoolkit.pdf.

For information about the No Child Left Behind Act, visit the website at www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov.
The Verdict Is in: Trained Tutors = Increased Student Learning


Introduction

In the past, many volunteer programs were content simply to match students with tutors after a screening and orientation period. Program staff members recognized that struggling students benefit greatly from the one-on-one attention of a caring adult, even when the benefits were not so easy to measure. Three years ago, the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Department of Education joined forces to support the goal that every child read well and independently by the end of third grade. This initiative sharpened the focus of volunteer tutoring toward specific literacy goals. However, there was minimal guiding research around the volunteer tutoring practices that help students learn.

But that was then…and now we know more. New research on tutor programs is out, and…the verdict is in: well-trained tutors increase student learning!

Ongoing tutor training and support is now a standard expectation for volunteer programs in national and community service. But programs vary widely in what, when, and how they train tutors. To help kick off a new school year, this issue of The Tutor examines key aspects in planning and implementing a tutor training plan. These are:

• Guidelines for training delivery
• Suggested content and timing for tutor training
• Tips for finding trainers
• Peer approaches to training
• Training evaluation
• Resources for tutor training

Whether you’re a tutor or a tutor program coordinator, our hope is to enhance your learning about this very important area of tutor programming.

How Do Adults Learn Best?

Training volunteer tutors allows you to model the many concepts tutors need to know to be successful, such as addressing multiple learning styles and providing a wide range of activities to keep the audience engaged. The Corporation for National and Community Service’s Principles of

1The Abt Associates’ study of 68 AmeriCorps tutoring programs across the country identified tutor training as one of four effective practices that correlated with higher student learning gains. In fact, when tutors received preservice and ongoing training, students showed significantly higher gains in reading skills (Moss, Swartz, Obeidallah, & Green, 2001). www.americorps.org/research

In a meta-analysis of 29 separate studies, researchers from the University of Texas and the University of Miami found that tutors who receive intensive training are more effective in improving reading skills (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2000).
Adult Learning provides a useful framework for designing training. These principles suggest that training coordinators:

- Incorporate input from trainees to establish the objectives for training
- Provide opportunities for self-assessment so that trainees can identify gaps between what they know and what they need to know
- Draw on the knowledge, skills, and cultural background of trainees
- Clearly state objectives at the beginning of a session and provide opportunity to revise those objectives
- Incorporate input on sequencing activities and check in frequently to see that needs are being met
- Plan training activities that emphasize learning by doing
- Take different learning styles—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.—into account
- Establish a learning environment that encourages participation
- Select a physical environment that is conducive to learning
- Include evaluation and feedback on trainees’ progress in acquiring needed competencies
- Include opportunities for evaluation and feedback on trainers’ skill and overall training design

Go by Train: A Bit of Etymology

The word train, derived from the Old French trainer, came into use during the 15th century and literally means to draw or drag. While the notion of dragging tutors into service sounds neither pleasant nor appropriate, the word’s origin points the way to more current applications.

The word train implies movement, a transporting from one place to another. Despite program differences and training needs, the end goal of training is the same: to take your program volunteers and participants from where they are today and deliver them to a place where they become more effective tutors.

What Training (and When) Helps Tutors Be Effective?

Needs Assessment. When designing a training plan, it’s important to start at the beginning. Conducting a needs assessment is crucial to determining what training topics will be most useful to tutors, as well as the areas in which they feel they need the most support. A needs assessment can also provide information on what kinds of training volunteer tutors have received in the past and their perceived challenges, strengths, and weaknesses. Involving project site(s) and school teachers in your needs assessment can further strengthen the training plan. Project STAR (www.projectstar.org) and the National Service Resource Center (www.NationalServiceResources.org) have sample assessment surveys available on their Web sites.

Training Content. Our interaction with education projects across the country during the last four years has exposed us to a rich array of local and regional models for tutor training. Below, we’ve organized common training topics into four general areas or tracks.

- Program Operation—training related to your project, its goals, and your connection with national service
- School or Site Culture—training to help tutors and mentors interact with, and contribute to, the educational goals of a school or out-of-school time site
• **Learning Support**—training in educational content areas, such as literacy, computers, and math
• **Learner Relationships**—training that helps volunteers build a positive relationship with learners, incorporating both research and strategies

**Where Are Tutor Trainers?**

Tutor trainers come from a variety of sources, ideally from the expertise in your own community. Ask team members to share the work of looking for trainers; review the possibilities and make selections as a group. Both program partners and tutors can assume some aspects of training, perhaps involving a local expert; some areas of training, however, are better left to the experts. You can also draw on school partners for training, and may even want to build training into your memorandum of understanding. When scheduling trainers, keep in mind that variety can only enhance your program. Conduct a broad search, focusing on four main resource pools:

- Staff from partner schools and school districts (e.g., reading specialists, Title I staff, teachers, social workers, etc.)
- Your own and other national service program coordinators
- Staff from your sponsoring organization
- Professionals from community organizations (youth-serving, juvenile justice, health and human services, etc.)

Before your search, here are two key questions to ask yourself and your partners:

- What do we want our tutors or mentors to know and be able to do? (Think KSA: Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)
- Who are the adult educators who have a reputation for expert and engaging work in these areas?

**Developing your own training capacity**

The LEARNS partnership provides project staff members with state and regional training in strategies and materials for many of the topics on the training calendar. In addition, LEARNS provides training resources, including many ready-to-use session activities, the LEARNS Literacy Assessment Profile (LLAP), and PDF versions of back issues of *The Tutor* on our Web site: www.nwrel.org/learns. You can contact the LEARNS partners by phone, at 800-361-7890 or 800-930-5664, or via e-mail at learns@nwrel.org or learns@bnkst.edu. Additional resources are available free to national service programs through the National Service Resource Center at www.etr.org/nsrc.

**Training resources outside your project**

School district staff members are critical to training tutors to enter the school culture and to support curriculum and student achievement goals. If your project is located within a larger sponsoring organization (a college or university, a national volunteer or community-based organization), staff at these sites have important expertise to share. In addition, organizations and professionals who serve your learner populations can support your training efforts. The table below provides a partial list of training sources:
**Who knows about…**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner relationships?</th>
<th>School or site culture?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• School counselors</td>
<td>• School administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers, including special education teachers</td>
<td>• School clerical and support staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Staff from youth and social service agencies</td>
<td>• Classroom teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Juvenile justice staff</td>
<td>• School specialists (reading, psychologists, librarians, counselors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child and mental health specialists</td>
<td>• Parent organization members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mentoring project staff</td>
<td>• Parents of tutees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Higher education faculty</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project operation?</th>
<th>Learning support?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Project directors and coordinators</td>
<td>• School or district teachers and specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Board members</td>
<td>• Title I reading specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff from other national service projects</td>
<td>• Higher education faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volunteer association or organization staff</td>
<td>• Retired teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Corporation for National and Community Service or State Commission staff</td>
<td>• Graduate students in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training and technical assistance providers</td>
<td>• School or city librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• State and local councils (e.g., literacy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Professional organizations (for specific subjects, i.e., math, computers, history)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Training Models from the Field**

The LEARNS staff invited three experienced program directors to share their training models, topics, challenges, and best strategies with us. Three programs—AmeriCorps, the National Senior Service Corps, and Federal Work Study—mobilize a range of senior, college student, and community volunteers. Here are three varied approaches to training that are shaped by the programs’ goals, students served, and the characteristics and backgrounds of the tutors.

**Regional Youth Service Corps AmeriCorps (RYSC) (www.tcfn.org/rysc)**

Based in rural Washington state, RYSC AmeriCorps is working to improve its tutor training program. RYSC has 38 full-time members who work side-by-side with students at local elementary schools to help struggling readers. RYSC is also piloting an innovative Math Corps program based on the Washington Reading Corps model.

In the past, the training of AmeriCorps and VISTA tutors was handled by the school sites, while the local Education Service District (ESD) provided training in the state’s education standards. While these training programs were useful, it was decided that tutors needed to acquire skills and knowledge before beginning their service rather than sporadically throughout the year.

Beginning in 2002, RYSC will coordinate its own tutor training, including three weeks of preservice training featuring a strong leadership development component and a variety of strategies for reaching students with different needs. Following the preservice training, members will gather twice a month to add new skills to their tutoring repertoire.

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“**What has been missing is the collaboration between sites…We plan to address the issue by being the coordinators between the sites. Each site will contribute a component to basic training…The schools will receive a huge benefit from their collaborative efforts.**”

—Melanie Ogryzek, RYSC-AmeriCorps
Experience Corps (www.temple.edu/cil)

A National Senior Service Corps (NSSC) program based in Philadelphia, Experience Corps enlists 140 volunteers to provide literacy tutoring to K-3 students in 13 local schools. Because the average age of tutors is 68, training must be tailored to meet the needs of senior volunteers, many of whom have not stepped into a classroom for many years and whose memories of what school was like vary dramatically from today’s reality. According to Rob Tietze of Experience Corps, addressing the similarities and differences between the past and present allows the tutors to make “a very easy transition into the school environment, and it really helps allay any fears they may have.”

Tutors receive six days of preservice training during which they gain an understanding of literacy stages and how to support literacy development. They also learn the stages of child development, how to plan an instructional approach and work with teachers, and the dynamics of working as a team. Once tutors begin their service, they receive further training that focuses on any specific needs that arise.

Cleveland State University (www.csuohio.edu/career/amreads.html)

One challenge of operating a tutor program at a commuter school such as Cleveland State University in Ohio is building a sense of community among tutors. Not only do most of the 50-60 tutors in the program live off campus, they also tutor off campus. They often lack opportunities to gather and build esprit de corps.

As a result, the four yearly programwide tutor training sessions become vital for providing tutors with a sense of what it takes to work with others. To meet training needs, program coordinator Kathy Beal sets up sessions that are hands-on and efficient, and that provide as many practical and relevant tools as possible in the brief time available.

A key component of the tutor training is a tutor toolbox and manual. Both are filled with hands-on activities and are designed to give tutors a resource that will take them beyond what they can learn during four one-day training sessions. Between sessions, Beal visits each of the 15 school sites and attempts to spend an hour on the job with each tutor at least once each quarter.

“Our basic goal is that children feel so comfortable in that setting that they are thrilled to learn…to come in every day and work with that tutor.” —Rob Tietze, Experience Corps

Evaluating Tutor Training

Why evaluate training?

Evaluation is a tool for making decisions, assessing quality, and ensuring future success in reaching program goals. Most organizations, including the Corporation for National and Community Service, value careful evaluation as part of the process of continuous program improvement.
Incorporating program, trainer, and participant (self-) evaluation into training provides valuable feedback that can help programs identify what’s working, what isn’t, and where to go next.

Training evaluation can provide:

- Useful insight for improving the quality and effectiveness of future sessions
- Opportunities for peer-to-peer feedback and professional development
- Validation of or challenge to trainers’ instincts regarding efficacy of methods and materials
- Confirmation of the importance of participants’ opinions
- Information for programs on future training needs
- Data to report on program and volunteer development

**Approaches to training evaluation**

Within programs, evaluation of tutor training can take place immediately after training, in weekly meetings, during follow-up phone conversations, and in a variety of other forms, including:

- Written evaluations
- Reflection activities
- Informal questions, feedback, and discussion
- Pre- and post-session “tests” of participant skills or knowledge
- Self-assessment checklists

**Satisfaction v. impact**

Evaluation of tutor training should function on multiple levels, and a distinction should be made between satisfaction and impact. Good evaluation tells you how participants rate the quality of the training, but also whether or not they are learning and using the material presented.

Evaluating participant satisfaction through a written feedback form or a structured reflection activity will tell the trainer and/or program staff whether or not participants liked what they did and how they did it, and whether they found it relevant to their work as volunteer tutors. This can also include feedback on materials, facilities, specific activities, etc. Generally, feedback on participant satisfaction is immediate and easy to gather.

Evaluating the impact of training is more difficult. One way to evaluate impact is to measure whether and to what degree participants learned the new skills and strategies presented in the workshop. This can be accomplished through role-plays or games that require use of the skills presented, or by observing tutoring sessions. It is important to emphasize that such activities are not meant to “test” tutors, but rather to determine whether the training has been successful in conveying the intended knowledge and skills; adequate practice in a supportive environment is key to ensuring that tutor training has its desired impact. (Indeed, practice is an important part of a good training session.)

Programs also need to evaluate the long-term impact of training, which includes learning how, and to what degree, tutors actually use new skills and strategies in practice, and how those practices support overall program goals. While more difficult to capture, this information can be gathered through follow-up surveys, action plans, or ongoing reflection activities such as journals or discussion meetings. These tools can provide programs with valuable information about training transfer and the subsequent use of materials and strategies presented.
**Evaluation design**

Deciding how evaluation will fit into a training plan or session should be part of the initial planning process. By considering all learning styles and integrating evaluation methods and tools into training design, programs can ensure that the feedback they receive provides the most complete picture possible.

The following steps can guide training evaluation design:

- Agree on what your program hopes to learn from the evaluation and why.
- Review program objectives and desired training outcomes.
- Distinguish outcome-focused evaluation (were objectives met and outcomes achieved?) and quality assessment (were participants pleased with training design and delivery?).
- Consider the kinds of feedback you will need in order to determine whether training approaches or content need immediate revision.
- Consider methods that might be used to evaluate the long-term impact and value of the training.
- Create a plan for reviewing and aggregating evaluation results, identifying situations requiring discussion or action, and sharing this information with trainers and other staff to improve future sessions.

(Adapted from McKay, Cabrales, & Borrego, 1998)

**Tutor Resources**

There is a wide range of free resources available to national service tutor programs. Following is a brief sampling of resources developed by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the U.S. Department of Education, and/or LEARNS.

The following documents can be ordered through the National Service Resource Center (NSRC), online at www.etr.org/NSRC/pubs_distribution.html, or by phone at 800-860-2684, ext. 260.

**Tutor training**

*On the Road to Reading: A Guide for Community Partners.* Addresses the knowledge and skills necessary to support reading tutoring programs. Topics include how most children learn to read, how tutors can help young readers, and how community partnerships support the progress of literacy.


LEARNS Videos: Lisa and Crystal: Learning to Read; Rosa and Melany: Reading in English; and Yolene and Blayn: Reading Comprehension. Depicts actual tutoring sessions, allowing viewers to observe, analyze, and discuss the strategies and activities used. Discussion guides are included with all videos.
Assessment

LEARNS Literacy Assessment Profile (LLAP). Serves as a comprehensive, easy-to-use tool for capturing the reading and writing progress of children who work with tutors in national service programs and provides a system for programs to report achievement data to funders.

Program support

Growing a Volunteer Tutor Program: Engaging Communities To Support Schools. Offers advice for the critical start-up year of a volunteer tutor program. Addresses tutor recruitment, training, and support, among other issues.

Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time. Helps programs become more effectively involved in enhancing the quality of out-of-school time programs for young people aged five to 14. Included are ideas and suggestions, resource lists, tip sheets, and other materials that can be used in training members and volunteers.

Web resources

LEARNS: www.nwrel.org/learns. Offers downloadable resources, including games, training activities, and practical tips and strategies for literacy, mentor, and tutor programs. Also available are back issues of The Tutor, on topics such as Reading Aloud to Build Comprehension, Working with Preschool Children, and Motivating Reluctant Adolescent Readers.

Bank Street College of Education: www.bankstreet.edu/literacyguide/. Includes resources, services, and research around literacy and other issues related to education, children, and families.

U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov/pubs. Provides access to a wealth of information for teachers, administrators, policymakers, researchers, parents, students, and others with an interest in education. Offerings include reports and studies on research and practice, newsletters and journals from the department, and an online publication ordering system.

National Service Resource Center: nationalserviceresources.org. Provides services, resources, and links for programs funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service. All the products listed above are available through NSRC.

America Counts Tutoring Road Map: www.ed.gov/americacounts/roadmap. Includes suggestions and materials for building and sustaining high-quality mathematics tutoring and mentoring programs.

National Mentoring Center: www.nwrel.org/mentoring. Offers a wide range of resources, including Strengthening Mentor Programs, a downloadable training curriculum, and free technical assistance packets.

References


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LEARNS at the Bank Street College of Education, 610 West 112th Street, New York, NY 10025, Toll-free phone: 1-800-930-5664, Fax: (212) 875-4547, Web: www.bnkst.edu, E-mail: learns@bnkst.edu.

A Tutor Training Calendar

This edition of *The Tutor* includes a sample training calendar with suggested topics for each track, divided among the months of the project year. The questions listed under each topic suggest information or skills that the training session might address. Ideally, programs will have time for intensive preservice training at the beginning of the year; and those programs that don’t may not begin to work directly with students until late September; therefore, the suggested topics for August and September address key preservice issues. Recognizing that priorities regarding the content and sequence of training are affected by conditions at each site, we suggest you use this calendar only as a starting place for planning your own training schedule. Additionally, a blank training calendar template can be downloaded from the LEARNS Web site at www.nwrel.org/learns/.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Tutor Training Calendar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>August</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program Operation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Program introduction</strong> What are the mission and goals of the program? What are volunteers’ roles and responsibilities? What does the calendar year look like?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>School or Site Culture</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>School policies, operating procedures</strong> What are the school’s or site’s volunteer policies and protocol for entering the school and working with students? Who can help?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Learning Support</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Basic subject strategies, I</strong> Where can tutors go to learn what they need to know about the subjects they are tutoring?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Learner Relationships</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Child/youth development</strong> What are appropriate expectations for the physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development of targeted students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reporting systems</strong> What reporting systems will track program outcomes and what is the responsibility of the tutor?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>School or site orientation</strong> When can we establish a time for tutors to meet teachers and staff, find their space, and establish systems of communication?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Planning a tutoring session</strong> What mix of activities will be varied and motivating, while helping to meet learning goals?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Basic subject strategies, II</strong> What advanced strategies will continue to build academic tutoring skills?</td>
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<td><strong>October</strong></td>
<td><strong>Forming teams</strong> How can tutor teams collaborate to support each other and sustain high-quality service?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Connecting with school curriculum</strong> How can tutoring support established instructional goals for each child?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Subject strategies, II</strong> What advanced strategies will continue to build academic tutoring skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cultural sensitivity</strong> What information will help tutors relate sensitively across cultures?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>November</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community outreach</strong> How and where can volunteers find support and resources in the larger community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Connecting with teachers</strong> How can we improve communication systems to help tutors support classroom teachers?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Identifying strengths</strong> How can we identify and build on the unique assets of each child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Meeting challenges</strong> What additional information will help tutors meet particular student needs or challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December</strong></td>
<td><strong>Celebration</strong> How will we share successes and celebrate achievements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Family activity planning</strong> How can we reach out to engage families in the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Multiple ways to learn</strong> What information helps tutors address different pathways to learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Vacation strategies</strong> How can tutors support students through the school vacation with activities that maintain progress and contact?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>January</strong></td>
<td><strong>Midyear reflections and reporting</strong> What activities and reports (see September) will assess learner progress at midyear?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Family follow-up</strong> What special efforts will continually involve families to support their child’s learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Enrichment resources</strong> What additional projects and activities can support tutors in planning sessions?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Student check-in and goal setting</strong> How can we engage learners in assessing their own progress?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>February</strong></td>
<td><strong>Team development</strong> What challenges exist within tutor teams, and how can teams be empowered to address them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Trouble shooting</strong> What challenges have arisen with scheduling, relationships, space, etc., and how can we resolve them?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Applying achievements</strong> How can tutors help students extend new skills into their daily assignments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Supportive relationships</strong> How can we build on what we have learned so far about preventing and addressing ongoing behavior challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Program Operation</td>
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<tr>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Big-picture discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What social, economic, and political conditions affect</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>our tutors and the work we are doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Local networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In what ways can we collaborate with other local tutoring programs to share lessons learned and resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Year-end evaluation/celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What final reports demonstrate progress, and how will we celebrate their completion?</td>
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<tr>
<td>June/July</td>
<td>Final reflection/evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How well did we meet program goals and objectives and what improvements can we plan?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A note about word choice: While most tutoring programs base volunteer activities at school sites, an increasing number are also engaged in out-of-school time and community-based organizations. Though the topics presented here often focus on school settings, they also apply to any site where tutoring occurs.
Off in the corner Derek slumps, books nowhere in sight. A little nervous as a new tutor, you pull up your chair to chat—about last night’s storm, his band, your meeting schedule … whatever. You share a funny editorial about junk food you read on the bus, then ask, What do you like to read? Derek looks up: Don’t read. Only if I have to—in school. I hate reading.

Now your worries begin: How’s he doing in school? Will he graduate? Can he get a job? As you begin your service as a tutor or mentor, it is likely you will ask yourself: What can I do to motivate my student to read and build his confidence and literacy skills?

Your concern is real. Derek represents the large population of teens (one in four nationwide) who are reluctant readers with low literacy skills. In response to this critical need, the Corporation for National and Community Service targets literacy support, particularly for disadvantaged youth, as a focus for education volunteers. This issue of The Tutor provides tutors and mentors with:

• Suggestions for successfully engaging adolescents in literacy
• Guidance for coaching youth in reading comprehension
• A planning model and examples of literacy support across the curriculum
• Strategies for building vocabulary across the content areas
• Ideas and resources for mentoring teens in the benefits and joys of literacy

What Students Say...

In interviews with researchers (McCray, 2001), low-level readers challenged the common myth that middle school readers are apathetic, choosing easier activities over reading. These students were doubtful about their future success as adults, but still hoped their reading skills would improve, saying to their teachers:

• I would learn more if I read more for myself.
• Understand that I am afraid to read and the fear makes me crazy.
• Sit down and read with me during or after school, because I don’t want the other kids to think that something is wrong with me.
• Don’t put me in reading groups. I would rather you work with me by myself.
• Bring me more books, and let me read things that I want to read.

What Can Tutors and Mentors Do?

You can provide many positive supports that directly address these student concerns, including:
The Big Picture: Adolescent Literacy as a National Concern

According to the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 32 percent of the nation’s adolescents have the literacy abilities necessary to succeed in school and become lifelong learners, and 42 percent have “basic” skills. The lowest performing 26 percent are cause for great concern: These teenagers may not be able to add up the total cost of purchases on an order form, locate information in a newspaper article, fill out a Social Security card application, or find an intersection on a street map (Reder, 1998).¹

More than one-third of the nation’s juvenile justice population reads below the fourth-grade level. The National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals have issued a joint policy statement about the importance of a comprehensive literacy agenda to future prospects of the nation’s youth (Ferrandino & Tirozzi, 2004); many secondary schools are now launching schoolwide literacy initiatives, and incorporating literacy support in dropout prevention programs. Tutors and mentors can play an important role in this national effort.

¹ Data from 2004 show little change from 1999 in average reading scores for 13- and 17-year-olds; data from 2005 not available at this printing.

1. **Self-determination and creative expression.** Offer youth voice and choice in selecting reading materials from their personal interests. While reading, engage youth in setting goals, selecting activities, and ordering tasks for tutoring sessions. Reward completed assignments with self-selected reading, creative writing, art projects, or cartooning.

2. **Self-confidence and achievement.** Struggling adolescent readers are often sensitive about their lack of skill. Tutors can foster feelings of competence by coupling praise with specific information about progress: Good progress today, Abe. You remembered to check out the charts and headings as you previewed the text, and your predictions were solid. As students’ confidence increases, try to engage them in self-assessment, asking them to reflect on their own improvements.

3. **Diversity.** Adolescents thrive on variety, so changing activities and materials pays off. Ask youth to identify several topics of interest and look for a variety of resources (books, magazines, websites, newspapers, CDs, videos, and pictures). Alternate among verbal, written, collaborative, and silent activities, incorporating games, art, music, and technology to liven things up.
4. Physical activity. Recall this familiar scene—the drooping bodies of teens at their desks and the explosion into the hall when the bell rings. Adolescent growth spurts create a restless energy that demands physical activity. Organize stand-up activities using white/black boards, flip charts, butcher paper, and sticky notes. Break up the session with a walk to find resources, incorporating computer work, outdoor observations, and media center visits. Some adolescents respond well to standing up, even pacing, as they read.

5. Positive social interaction with peers and adults. Young adults desperately want to identify with and be accepted by their peers (Scales, 1991), so group collaboration can inspire literacy work. Although adolescents may not show it, they also need feedback from adults who like them, respect their efforts, and serve as role models (Scales, 1991). In your one-on-one role as a tutor or mentor, you can fulfill young adults' need for ongoing, consistent, and caring relationships with adults.

Job One in Adolescent Literacy: Coaching for Reading Comprehension

If you ask a really good swimmer to describe his thinking process as he swims, you'll get answers like, I don't think, I just do. Good readers are also on automatic pilot as they move through text; they have internalized important thinking strategies and use them automatically. But poor readers are like this seventh-grader: Look, I just don't get it, so let's drop it. Like what should I do, anyway? I don't have a clue…

What do successful readers do? Like swimming, reading is an active process that requires participation to make meaning. Proficient readers use fundamental thinking strategies to understand text. They:

- Activate prior knowledge
- Analyze formats
- Visualize
- Form predictions
- Make inferences
- Generate questions
- Monitor understanding
- Fix confusion
- Synthesize content

Researchers agree that the most powerful help for struggling readers includes explicit instruction in these thinking strategies, such as:

- Naming and describing each strategy
- Modeling each type of thinking (see “What are think-alouds?”)
- Practicing with youth until they can use each strategy independently (Beers, 2003, p. 27).

What are think-alouds? When conducting a think-aloud the tutor models her thinking process as she reads, shifting the tone/style of delivery between the actual text and her thoughts, so the youth senses the difference. For example, the tutor reads: Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in the bloodstream. (The tutor lowers voice, turning toward youth.) Waxy, that makes me think of candle wax, how it puddles and sticks to things. What image comes to your mind? Struggling readers gain skills from observing what effective readers think about as they read.

For additional ideas about group literacy work with teens, contact us at learns@nwrel.org or learns@bnkst.edu. For general information on tutoring small groups, visit: http://www.nwrel.org/learns/tutor/sum2002/sum2002.htm
How Can Tutors Help? Planning Scaffolded Reading Experiences

Poor readers often lack the automatic thinking strategies that lead to text comprehension (see chart, p. 35). Guided conversations about reading, with opportunities to identify, practice, and internalize key mental habits, will improve their skills. A scaffolded reading experience refers to a plan of activities (before, during, and after reading) to engage readers in specific thinking strategies as they encounter texts.

Picture a scaffold on a building—a framework that anchors the structure and gives workers access; it’s temporary and when workers no longer need it, the scaffold comes down. A reading scaffold is built by the tutor as he explains, demonstrates, and coaches specific thinking strategies; the structure supports the development of comprehension as the student reads. Gradually, the coaching (scaffold) is withdrawn as the reader achieves independent use of the strategies.

Not Just for English Class: Literacy Support across the Curriculum

Literacy coaching can occur in many contexts. It can be an integral part of tutoring in other content areas and a range of out-of-school time activities. We can see one approach to incorporating literacy coaching into a science unit through the weekly tutoring log below. Keeping a session-by-session record of tutor/tutee interaction is important—documenting your tutee’s work and progress, guiding a replacement if you are absent, or providing samples of your work to other tutors and supervisors.

Working with middle and high-school students sometimes requires tutors to learn something new or brush up on forgotten information. When Vadim, a seventh-grader, brought books on the weather to his tutor, Sharon, she didn’t remember much about the topic. To prepare, she found some resources, like *Weather for Dummies*, at her public library. Her record of a week’s work, including tutoring plans and notes about her student’s responses, is on page 36.

Looking over this schedule, we see that Sharon’s tutoring plan incorporated several effective practices. She:

- Took initiative to learn about the topic herself
- Located additional resources
- Planned sessions around Vadim’s concerns and classroom expectations
- Incorporated literacy support—both comprehension strategies and vocabulary work
- Integrated “daily use” resources (the taped TV forecasts)
- Added hands-on activities (drawing clouds, tornado in a bottle)

Building Vocabulary across the Content Areas

Many adolescents, especially English language learners, benefit from focus on specific vocabulary. Vocabulary development and reading comprehension are interdependent: The best readers have the largest vocabularies and poor readers typically have limited vocabularies. Simply identifying an unknown word and looking it up in the dictionary is an ineffective way to increase vocabulary. But when students use vocabulary words repeatedly to construct meaning in new text, they learn and retain word meanings longer (several studies cited in Allen, 1999; Stahl, 1999; and Beers, 2003).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activate prior knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Recall previous experience and knowledge, making connections with text content, meaning, and style</td>
<td>What has happened in your life that is like this story? What have you read about or seen that relates to this topic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analyze formats</strong></td>
<td>Predict characteristics and content of a book based on a review of formats—organization, graphics, and presentation of the text</td>
<td>Based on the title, cover, table of contents, headings, charts, tables, and pictures, what do you think this book is about? Can you predict what will be in each section?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visualize</strong></td>
<td>Identify and describe mental pictures and images that occur to the reader as text is read</td>
<td>What pictures or images pop into your head about a desert? Can you imagine what the scene/person/item looks like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form predictions</strong></td>
<td>Apply growing knowledge of author and content to predict story developments or upcoming content</td>
<td>What clues are in the story about what will happen next? Based on the information we’ve read, what else will the author(s) discuss?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Make inferences</strong></td>
<td>Combine analysis of the text with what you know of the world to form educated guesses about meaning</td>
<td>What is the characters’ relationship, based on how they’re acting? How will information in this graph influence public choices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generate questions</strong></td>
<td>Wonder about text—What’s the purpose, why this detail, what’s missing, and what remains to be learned?</td>
<td>What questions do you have about what’s coming up in the story? Does the chart on this page make you wonder about anything else?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitor understanding</strong></td>
<td>Identify points of confusion about the text and analyze why they occur</td>
<td>Where did you lose track of what’s happening in the story? Are there terms/ideas you don’t understand on this page?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fix confusion</strong></td>
<td>Apply fix-up strategies for areas of confusion so that reading can continue</td>
<td>Can you reread that paragraph and look for clues about what’s confusing you? What words do you need to know more about to be able to move on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synthesize content</strong></td>
<td>Identify main ideas, summarize content, identify contrasts, and make comparisons</td>
<td>Can you summarize the main points of this article in a few sentences? How are the main characters in each story the same? How are they different?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Scaffolded Reading Plan for Weather Unit: Week One

*(Vadim brought textbook on water/weather. He needs help understanding terms and concepts, is working with a team in school, and wants ideas for a report.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Session Plan</th>
<th>Student Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Monday</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analyze text structure; Review both books with V, look at headings, read the charts, talk about pictures. Ask: What is his team doing in school? What parts of these books are most important?</td>
<td>V says team members will be weather forecasters, each member to create a different forecast and weather map.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Monitor understanding</strong>: Where is V most confused? Where is the best place to start?</td>
<td>V confused by cloud types &amp; high/low pressure, needs to know how to read weather prediction maps (synoptic charts).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Notes</strong>: Look on Internet for weather forecast sites, videotape weather forecasts; next session, review cloud types, high/low pressure.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visualize: Work with cloud names/pictures helping V to associate cloud image and name; then draw cloud types with chalk on dark paper (save and label). Discuss connection between cloud types and high/low pressure.</td>
<td>V could remember best when we “drew” cloud types with our hands first, then on paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Form predictions</strong>: Show tapes of weather forecasts; discuss the high/low pressure parts (rewind if needed). Look at synoptic chart in textbook; work with V to connect satellite picture (from TV) with textbook weather charts; try to predict weather based on high/low pressure areas. Show him Internet sites that will help.</td>
<td>V wants topic ideas for his weather report—interested in tornadoes (has been in one). Others he likes: sunny/hot and ice storm.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Notes</strong>: Bring in outside resources on weather conditions/reports. Review chapter vocabulary.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Choosing vocabulary words. Vocabulary work in tutoring sessions will be most successful using the texts your student is reading. Remembering adolescents’ sensitivity and need to feel confident, which question would you ask: What words don’t you know? What words do you need help with? What words would you like to know more about? The final choice is best—this question puts the learner in charge and challenges her to learn more.

Beyond the Dictionary: Strategies for Finding Word Meanings

As you read together, ask your tutee to identify words she wants to learn more about. Before using the dictionary, introduce basic strategies for figuring out word meanings from the surrounding text. Prompt your student to:

• Substitute some other word that would make sense
• Reread the sentence(s) before and after the word for clues
• Identify parts of the word she recognizes
• Look for other words in the passage that might be related, refer to something similar, or are synonyms or antonyms

Once struggling readers understand how to approximate word meanings from context clues, they will begin to pick up vocabulary as they read (Stahl, 1999). At this point, more reading time and broader selections will be the main ways readers learn new words. However, English language learners and other students with low language exposure will also benefit from direct vocabulary instruction.

Word Cards: Collecting and Reusing Vocabulary throughout Your Year

When students create word cards they go deeper into the significance and uses of a word, and accumulate a tangible “deck” of vocabulary words—satisfying evidence of progress as the pile grows throughout the year. Word cards take time, so selections should be limited to words critical to current reading. Troposphere might be an important word to a study unit on weather,
accomplice for a crime novel, and obsolete for a unit on industry. To create word cards, ask your student to write the word at the center of an index card, filling out each corner of the card as illustrated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD: obsolete</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEFINITION: out-of-date, no longer useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYNONYMS: ancient, outmoded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTONYMS: popular, in use, up-to-date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILLUSTRATION: Gramps’ old record player is obsolete, because they don’t make records anymore.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Return to these cards (shuffle the deck each session) and use the words regularly and in different contexts to make efforts pay off. For our example, obsolete, here’s a follow-up conversation you might provide: Okay Jason, if I go through my desk drawers, I’ll find some obsolete stuff—like old checkbooks from banks in other cities. What obsolete stuff do you hang onto?

**Group adaptation:** As each student accumulates a personal word deck, allow him to share with peers, drawing cards and creating new contexts for using the word during group meetings. Students will pick up additional words from each others’ collections.

**Word Trees: Mapping Relationships from Root Words**

Another effective approach to vocabulary development is working with word families—ones that share similar roots, prefixes, or suffixes. Knowledge of root words provides students with powerful tools to predict meaning for many similar words (Beers, 2003). If you are working on a unit about transportation, port is an important root word to consider. To create a word tree, draw a tree (or use template: www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/middleupper/tree.pdf) and write the root word on the trunk, along with definitions. Ask the student to:

- Add a branch for every word he can think of that contains the root word
- Write each of these words on a branch, along with a definition
- Add a sentence using the word
- Add twigs to the branch for people you hear using the word

Here are just a few additional root words that have many derivatives in secondary curriculum: hydro-, hypo-, geo-, bio-, astro-, arch-, tract-, phono-, meter-, and tox-.

**Group adaptation:** Students have fun with word trees; they like to see who can create the most complicated ones, and creative use of the words in sentences provides entertainment. Creating word trees on butcher paper and posting them on walls can be a productive after-school activity, especially if students work on different root words and share their progress.

**Word Sorts: Recognizing Relationships among Key Concepts**

Word sorts, done with sticky notes or index cards on the wall, can be a nice break from reading text. Because the activity requires sorting words by their characteristics, content areas that
require analytical thinking work well. Word sorts need to be planned in advance. To create a word sort for your youth, start with index cards or sticky notes in two different colors:

- Select a subject area and identify 15–20 words common to the subject, but with different characteristics
- Write one word each on sticky notes or index cards of the same color
- Stick or tape them to the wall in random order
- For a closed sort (tutor determines the categories) write the categories for the sort on a second color of sticky notes/cards and tape them to the wall in a row
- For an open sort (youth determines the categories) ask the student to study the words and create the category cards
- Sort the words by grouping the word cards under the categories

Here are examples for science and math: **Meteorology:** stratus, temperate, sunshine, cumulonimbus, wind, tropical, lenticular, polar, fog, cirrus, snow, Mediterranean, hail, stratocumulus, savannah, desert, and thunder. **Closed sort categories:** clouds, climates, weather. **Open sort categories:** weather forecast, places with weather, words I don’t know.

**Geometry:** Circle, diameter, angle, radius, rectangle, area, pi, trapezoid, square root, oval, ellipse, axis, equation, semi-circle, parallelogram, triangle. **Closed sort categories:** round figures, angular figures, computations. **Open sort categories:** things I can draw, terms I know, what to learn.

Word sorts are particularly effective for content area learning because they encourage students to analyze and create categories for groups of related words. The tutor also gains insight into how the youth thinks about words. Word sorts can be accomplished in many different ways; often, there is no totally “right” answer to a sort, but the activity encourages focused dialogue about what words mean. Appropriate resources for the subject area (dictionaries, textbooks, manuals) are critical tools to have on hand, so that areas of uncertainty can be investigated and resolved.

**Group adaptation:** In an out-of-school time setting, students can work on word sorts in teams, observe other student versions, and share observations about their choices. Once the group understands how word sorts work, they often develop enthusiasm for creating their own versions.

**Concept Definition Map: Help with Common Academic Words**

Many words are commonly used in classrooms across the content areas; students who have trouble with them may suffer confusion in many academic areas. Think of how often we use words/phrases like: compare and contrast, integrate, regulate, summarize, calculate, categorize, compute, and search the Net. Providing an opportunity for students to talk about these words and form broader concepts about their meaning can provide needed confidence and boost academic performance.
A concept definition map is a way of charting what these core academic words mean, how they are used in different contexts, and also what they are not. To create a concept definition map, ask students to work from their own knowledge first, and then consult resources to:

- Write the concept word in the center box
- Write the definition in the box above it
- Write synonyms or similar words down the righthand side
- Write antonyms or dissimilar words down the lefthand side
- Write examples of the word (different contexts) in the three bottom boxes

See an example and download a template at: www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/middleupper/cdm.pdf.

**Mentoring Youth in the Benefits, Skills, and Joy of Literacy**

My Daddy can’t read, and I can’t read that good, and I guess I won’t be able to help my kids to read neither if I don’t get better at reading. —Shane, middle school student (McCray, 2001)

Many teens lack adult role models with strong literacy skills. Mentors or tutors can fill the gap by showing enthusiasm for the contributions of reading—practical, entertaining, enriching—to everyday life.

**Share the value/joy of literacy in your life.** Each time you meet, share something you have read recently that was useful, educational, or just fun (jokes/cartoons, music or movie reviews, instructions, advertisements, news articles, Web searches). *Example:* On a Friday, show the top picks from the weekend entertainment section of a newspaper, reading aloud what you’d like to do and telling why. Then ask your youth to choose an event and do the same thing.

**Provide guidance for use of learning resources.** If possible, take your youth to the public library, browse through a nearby book store, and search the Internet, community directories, or phone directories for learning resources that can be fun, interesting, or useful. *Examples:* Help your youth get a library card, search for books, videos, and CDs, and find out where various resources are located. Conduct an Internet search on a topic your youth adores, visiting sites and making notes about the best ones. Identify a skill your teen would like to learn, and work through the Internet, libraries, or community education programs, to make a plan for learning that skill.

**Model enthusiasm for learning new words.** Demonstrate ways you expand your own vocabulary with a sense of challenge and enjoyment. Here’s a story one tutor told about learning a word that stumped him: *I heard it on a Cajun record—lagniappe. It sounds like “LAN-yap.” The song went, Sittin’ on the porch, spittin’ through my tooth-gap; wavin’ at the neighbors, smilin’ too for lagniappe. I finally found it in a dictionary of slang. It’s Creole—mixed African and French. Lagniappe means a dividend or something extra, from little presents shopkeepers in New Orleans gave to customers. Louis Armstrong sang about it, too. The tutor shared this word, the slang dictionary, and*

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3 For additional discussion on this topic, see the Winter 2000 *Tutor,* “Motivating Reluctant Adolescent Readers” at http://www.nwrel.org/learns/tutor/win2000/index.html
the zydeco song with his mentee; it led to their looking at song lyrics, developing lists of slang words, and a discussion about Spanglish as another example of a creative language mix.

**Demonstrate ways books are a pathway to learning.** Everyone has books that have influenced their ability to make choices or do something well; find the ones you treasure, share them and the reasons you value them (could include how-to manuals, self-help books, cookbooks, reference books, magazines, joke books). Encourage your youth to build a collection of books significant to her.

You may face unexpected challenges as you interact with your adolescent tutee or mentee; students often bring unique personal needs and challenging backgrounds to their reading tasks. As you consult with them and create your literacy plans, remember that adolescents beginning their adult lives will need to read and write more than ever before; they will need literacy to cope with ballooning information systems and the requirements of jobs, households, and personal lives. Finally, with appropriate support, their improving literacy will feed their imaginations so they can create the lives they envision.

**Resources for Tutors**

**Comprehension coaching:** To enhance your understanding of the key thinking strategies and coaching methods, start with Beers, *When Kids Can’t Read, What Teachers Can Do*, and Harvey/Goudvis, *Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*.

**Vocabulary support:** For additional ideas targeting specific vocabulary strategies, great additional resources are: Allen, *Words, Words, Words: Teaching Vocabulary in Grades 4–12*, and Beck/McKeown/Kucan, *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*.

**Book Selection Aids**

Meaningful content for adolescent readers:


Harvey, S., & Goudvis, A. (2000). *Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding* (Stenhouse Publishers). Useful annotated bibliographies for comprehension strategies, p. 197; teaching content in history, social studies, science, music, art, and literacy, p. 207.

Reviews, categories, and ratings of young adult books can be found online at: Book Links, a searchable index from the American Library Association: http://cs.ala.org/BookLinks/search.cfm

**References**


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How can you motivate adolescents who have never turned on to the magic of reading?
Tutoring teenagers is as much about building self-confidence as it is about teaching skills. Low self-image and feelings of powerlessness trouble so many adolescents who are not motivated to read in school.

Adolescents who have disengaged from reading probably had difficulty learning to read in the primary grades, according to most research. At this critical age, they missed the pleasure of getting lost in a story or discovering new information in books. By their teen-age years, reading becomes an activity imposed on them at school. As adults, they might read well enough to get by, but they miss the personal satisfaction and professional benefits that good literacy skills provide.

Critical literacy is a state of being “wide-awake,” says educator and author Maxine Green, in Landscapes of Learning. We can think of tutoring, then, as awakening a young person to the expansive world of print information, literature, and the infinite possibilities of reading, writing, and talking. Here are 14 questions to consider as you prepare for your unique tutoring situation.

1. **What activities establish a good relationship?**

   “Learning to read begins with the reader,” says noted literacy educator, Paolo Freire. Low-key get-acquainted conversations can provide an informal reading profile of your student. Direct questions, like “what are your grades in English?” will put a student on the spot. Instead, ask about their school preferences, activities with friends and family, passions and preoccupations. Consider taking notes about any interests that might involve reading or suggest literacy activities. Also, you can ask for teachers’ suggestions concerning learning style preferences and personal needs, and for ideas on appropriate reading and teaching materials.

   Both experience and research show that no single strategy works when it comes to teaching reading, because each reader is unique. If we accept the student as our guide, we can custom-design literacy activities to raise self-confidence, bring meaning to reading, and create a mutually satisfying tutoring relationship.

2. **Are you willing to be flexible and collaborate?**

   Choice and control are key issues with adolescent learners. If a tutoring schedule and atmosphere promote collaboration and flexibility, the student gains a voice in determining what, where, when, and how the “work” gets done. Ask the student to discuss his feelings about the tutoring sessions. Are they held at a good time and place? Would he choose to change anything? What does he hope to get out of the tutoring? Some decisions must clearly be yours, like what
you can and cannot offer and established start and end times. If you are prompt and dependable, those expectations will also extend to the student. Collaborate with the student to make a calendar of meetings and check that you both have a copy. Clear expectations on both sides will go a long way toward building a relationship based on trust.

3. **What are the “learning rhythms” of your student?**

Learning rhythms will emerge during the tutoring sessions. Does a student go strong for 15 minutes and then feel restless, or does she have a hard time settling down? After a few sessions, this knowledge can help structure your work time. A warm-up conversation about a news event, a school issue, or a recent movie usually creates a good beginning, especially if you convey personal interest. Good language skills are modeled when you ask questions, listen carefully, and give clear responses, creating an easy but meaningful give and take.

If your student’s attention flags mid-way in the session, take a break and work on something fun that relates to language. Some possibilities are: creating a dictionary of local slang, playing word games for 10 minutes, or exchanging stories about something that happened to you during the week. Each of you might write a short poem or reflection on the same subject to read aloud, reinforcing the connection between reading and writing. Or play “story starters,” where one person writes a sentence and the other adds to it, passing it back and forth to create a story.

Sleepy? Wake up with a short walk outdoors or down the hall, where you can build a conversation around a topic that your student chooses. Asking about favorites often unleashes opinions (favorite movies, hangouts, CDs, or types of music). Following up with open-ended questions, such as “What do you like (or think) about…” spurs students to use their language skills to support their opinions.

4. **What choices can you give the students?**

Teenagers who have disengaged from learning often feel they lack control over their lives. This is especially true for students who have negative attitudes toward reading. Ask your student to bring into the tutoring session any reading he likes to peruse, whether a catalog, comic book, or magazine. He can choose a time in each session for reading this material, and also choose whether he wants to read to you or have you read to him. Allowing students control and choice in reading material will most likely engage adolescents with the topic and help them to find pleasure in the written word.

Seek the help of librarians and teachers to find high-interest, age- and skill-appropriate books that encourage readers to enter the experience and perspective of others, including all fiction genres: horror stories, fantasy, science fiction, or romance. Topical magazines will appeal to students’ individual interests (e.g. race cars, fashion, bodybuilding, etc.) Comic books can motivate less proficient readers with colorful and creative artwork.

5. **What strategies encourage independence and engagement?**

Your most difficult challenge may be to instill in your students a sense of their own reading power and autonomy. Many discouraged readers feel that reading is nothing more than a search for the “correct” meaning or being able to answer the questions at the end of the story. The text is in control, the student is the passive recipient, and it is her job to try to figure out someone else’s meaning.
In *Literature as Exploration*, Louise Rosenblatt describes reading as a “transaction,” maintaining that young readers must feel free to deal with their own reactions to what they are reading in order to find meaning in the text. Each young person brings to his or her reading “personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition.”

How can students become active players in their reading “transaction”? You might ask her what she sees, feels, thinks, or remembers as she reads. Encourage her to relate her reading to her own experience, or to that of others she knows. Sharing your own reactions and experience can sometimes establish a lively conversation. Other mediums, such as a drawing or music, allow students creative opportunities to express personal connections between life and literature.

6. **What connections will make reading matter?**

Resistant adolescent readers often do admit that literacy skills can be useful in helping them to understand themselves and others, and to solve real-life problems. They may suspect this is true for other people but have no idea how it applies to them.

As a first step, help your student distinguish between the two kinds of reading: reading for information (e.g., job notices in the newspaper) and reading for the vicarious “living through” experience of a novel or story.

Next, focus on useful reading by going over an article from a newspaper on a provocative topic that affects your student. Discuss possible responses to the article and help him follow up with a literacy activity: writing an article or a letter to the editor, making a phone call or a speech, or collecting a photo essay. Choices also exist that are more creative and personal: poems, song lyrics, drawings, and sculptures. Bring in examples of music, poetry, artwork, or cartoons that were produced as a response to a public event.

If a student is looking for a summer or after-school job, use the classifieds to make a list of names and numbers. You might collaborate on a letter of application and a resume, and role-play a job interview. Experiencing the payoff of good literacy skills in the outside world can spark an adolescent’s desire to become an active reader and writer.

7. **Can you model your own enthusiasm?**

Though every family has its own literacy traditions, some reluctant adolescent readers missed having adults read to them as children. They may also have lacked books or magazines in their house. Perhaps they did not observe siblings curled up in a chair and absorbed in a story, or a parent using a reference book to answer a question.

To fill in this gap, think of ways you can model your own love of language. What personal reading material can you share in the tutoring session? You might discuss your own reading habits, or convey a love of language by talking about where words come from, how they change and are transformed through time. Working together on puzzles or word games can also enliven a session.

Does your learner show interest in diverse cultures? Then you might focus on the oral tradition of literature by playing a recording of an African American or Native American storyteller. There are many other examples of oral, dramatic, and visual language, such as Indonesian puppetry or
Japanese Kabuki Theater. And, of course, you can always discuss the language of popular movies and music.

8. What outside resources might help?

Once you know your student’s interests, look for a variety of resource materials that promote reading for information AND pleasure. Try collecting CD covers, flyers for musical groups, photographs with text, or short newspaper items. If your student reads magazines, or might like a particular one, you can find a copy, read it, bring it to the session, read an article together, and give the student the magazine.

If you’re tutoring a student in a particular subject, various sources will help her understand the topic, from National Geographic to Web sites on the Internet. Linking new knowledge to a familiar idea helps a student understand and integrate reading content.

9. How can you build confidence and pride?

Maintaining a portfolio of your student's work can be a confidence builder. Students can contribute poetry, stories, song lyrics, and journal entries—anything that represents effort and progress. Contribute your own thoughts by adding margin notes of encouragement or writing your student a letter.

A portfolio of student work is often used to document developing skills, new knowledge, and broadening interests. It can also be a creative representation of the tutoring relationship. Keep the portfolio or journal until the tutoring year is over. Then, you might present it with a special card, or make a gift of a new journal or binder to encourage continued practice.

10. How can conversation develop literacy skills?

Talking can be a powerful tool of self-discovery for a teenager, especially with a sympathetic listener. Many young people with reading difficulties simply haven’t had enough experience using words to express their ideas and points of view, especially in structured or crowded settings. (According to some researchers, students spend, on average, three hours in a school day sitting passively while their teachers talk.) Conversing may be difficult at first, because adolescents are often uncomfortable with an adult they don’t know well, especially those perceived as authority figures.

If conversations are a structured part of each tutoring session, barriers will gradually break down. You might schedule five minutes at the beginning devoted to an agreed-upon subject or explore a casual question such as, “How was the concert last week?” Open-ended questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer are the best conversation boosters. During these conversations, you will be able to convey the pleasure of talk while staying alert for opportunities to teach literacy skills, such as listening, creative language use, and articulation of meaning. Good eye contact, positive posture, and an interested expression may encourage the student to ask you questions.

A big help to reluctant learners is the constant reminder that, when it comes to spoken language, there is no “correct” or “incorrect” English, only language that is adapted to different situations. Use the analogy of clothing to demonstrate the point. What one wears to school is
determined by certain social and school rules (e.g. standard English), and may be very different from what one wears to a sporting event or a dance club (e.g. non-standard English).

11. Are there ways to connect reading and writing?
Reading and writing skills develop together, so if an adolescent has trouble reading, he will often have trouble writing as well. A literacy-rich tutoring environment can suggest various strategies to encourage writing. Again, you can begin with your student’s interests. If he is involved with grandparents or older relatives, you might work on an oral history project. Work together on a set of written questions for a taped interview. When you both listen to the interview, you can look for other ways to transform spoken language to written materials. You might transcribe the tape and make a booklet with text and photographs that your student can give to family members.

12. Do cultural differences require special sensitivity?
If you are tutoring an English language learner, take time to learn about your student’s culture. News clippings or magazine articles about the “home” country might open up a desire to communicate. Ask the student to teach you a few words of her language and incorporate these words into each session.

Or you might share some music from her country, and then she could translate the lyrics for you. Consider working together on a version in English or translating the lyrics of an English song into her language. Explore every opportunity to bridge cultures. Librarians and teachers can help you select reading and other materials that dispel stereotypes, support the development of healthy self-esteem, reinforce cultural identity, and promote a sense of inclusion.

13. How do you incorporate reading aloud in tutoring sessions?
Many reluctant readers actually enjoy reading aloud, especially in a setting away from the classroom and their peers. Hearing a novel or story read aloud can be a riveting experience for the listener, especially when read with expression and excitement. Reading aloud can also help an underprepared reader direct his energy and focus his attention in a tutoring session.

Give your student the choice to either read aloud to you, or you to him, or you can take turns. Encourage your student to stop the reading at any point and discuss the story. What would he do if he were in the situation of the protagonist? How would he change the story? If the story continues, ask your student what he thinks will happen next. By inserting one’s self into the text, a reader engages in the story and begins to experience the wonder of an alternative world. Reading a to-be-continued story as part of the tutoring session also promotes a sense of accomplishment as your student sees the progress made.

Just as children love to hear their favorite stories again and again, older readers may benefit from hearing a story, poem, or particular passage more than once. Emphasize that rereading a text is an integral part of learning for everyone. It not only helps one better understand the text, but allows time for savoring the details and considering larger issues.

14. How can you focus on the positive?
Since you are not responsible for testing or giving grades, you can be especially encouraging and positive about a student’s literacy work. If you recognize specific skill development—good
thinking, creativity, tone, rhythm—praise will help reinforce further development. Just remember that adolescents probably won’t welcome inappropriate, excessive, or false praise. You might notice when he arrives on time, remark that you enjoyed your last conversation, say you’ve been thinking about what he said, or find an article that supports her point of view. These interactions will create a positive and trusting tutoring relationship, adding meaning to literacy activities.

Evaluating skills and measuring progress is always important, but you can encourage your student to examine her own work, critique strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for improvement. Progress will be visible if you use the portfolio to keep a record of skill development and goals. When goals have been achieved, such as the number of books read, what interesting rewards or celebrations can you plan?

**References and Recommended Reading**


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Tips for Reading Tutors


Reading is the basis for learning and school success. While reading is learned primarily in the classroom, many students need extra time and help. Research shows that tutoring is a great way for individuals and groups outside school to support learning. Effective tutoring requires appropriate training and careful planning. This brochure presents some basic tips for reading tutors.

How Tutoring Helps

For the Learner

• Creates a more favorable atmosphere for learning (particularly through the use of one-on-one instruction).

• Provides more time on task, increased opportunities to read and immediate feedback.

• Allows for immediate, positive and corrective feedback to help the learner stay on track and not repeat errors.

• Can increase reading performance.

• Can improve motivation and decrease frustration.

• Enhances interpersonal skills as a bond is established with the tutor.

• Allows for individual monitoring of progress to ensure that learning is taking place.

For the Tutor

• Establishes important skills such as patience, trustworthiness and responsibility.

• Provides an opportunity for community service.

• Enhances interpersonal skills.

• Increases the tutor’s own reading performance as a result of tutoring.

Tips for Reading Tutors

Be positive. Praise goes a long way with learners who struggle in reading. Provide positive feedback when correct responses are made (“Great! The word is Sequoia.”).

Be attentive. Stop learners immediately after an error. Show them what to do and provide them an opportunity to do it correctly (“That word is ‘trouble.’ What word is this?”). Try not to use the word “no.”

Be precise. Provide clear and direct instructions (“Say this word” rather than “Would you say it?”).
**Be mindful of mistakes made during the session.** Record learner performance. Review anything that learners miss. Remember, learners “should say it like they know it.”

**Be diligent.** Work from the beginning to the end of the tutoring session.

**Be innovative.** Keep tutoring sessions lively and dynamic.

**Be focused.** Try to ignore minor misbehavior. Only recognize good behavior.

**Be patient.** Show learners that you care about them through your commitment and encouragement.

**Be on time.** Arrive at least 15 minutes before the tutoring session begins. Make sure plans for the session and materials are ready so the session may begin as soon as the student arrives.

**Be committed.** Once you have begun to tutor a student, remain with that student throughout the year.

**Be results-oriented.** Gather learner performance data on a daily basis, and chart the data (using graphs, stars, etc.) to allow a visual display of improvements made in the program.
With the passage of No Child Left Behind, education professionals are seeking research-supported practices that are applicable in classrooms and facilitate access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities. Peer tutoring incorporates research-supported practices with individualized instruction, which can be adapted to meet individual student needs. This brief introduces peer tutoring, an instructional method that facilitates access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities. Targeted audiences include state and local technical assistance (TA) providers, administrators, and educators. This brief provides (1) a definition of peer tutoring; (2) a brief description of three examples of peer tutoring, including how it promotes access to the general education curriculum and evidence of effectiveness; and (3) references for follow-up information.

It should also be noted that the references included in this brief have been cross-referenced with the extensive literature reviewed on peer assisted learning by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) as of July 2004. Eight references in this brief have been reviewed by the WWC, thus far. Of those eight, two passed the WWC criteria for evidence standards in the area of Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (Fantuzzo, J.W., Davis, G.Y., & Ginsburg, M.D., 1995; Fantuzzo, J.W., King, J.A., & Heller, L.R., 1992).

**Peer Tutoring**

Peer tutoring is an instructional strategy that consists of student partnerships, linking high achieving students with lower achieving students or those with comparable achievement, for structured reading and math study sessions. According to Rohrbeck, Ginsburg-Block, Fantuzzo, and Miller (2003), peer tutoring is “systematic, peer-mediated teaching strategies” (p. 204). There has been extensive research on peer tutoring. Studies show:

- Use of cooperative learning structures and “group reward contingencies” can increase social motivation (Johnson, Maruyama, Nelson, & Skon, 1981; Wentzel, 1999; Slavin, 1990).

- Level of engagement influences student motivation to achieve classroom goals (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

- Peer tutoring is an economically and educationally effective intervention for persons with disabilities that can benefit both the tutor and tutee, socially and educationally by motivating them to learn (Miller & Miller, 1995).

- Peer tutoring interventions were more effective or showed greater gains for (a) students in grades 1-3; (b) urban settings; (c) low socioeconomic areas; (d) minority students; (e) school-wide prevention programs; and (f) when students controlled tutoring sessions (Rohrbeck, et al., 2003).

- Peer tutoring gives teachers the capability to accommodate a classroom of diverse learners to improve academic achievement across ability levels and content areas (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982; Cook, Scruggs, Mastroper, & Casto, 1985; Johnson, Maruyama, Nelson, & Skon, 1981).
This brief discusses three research-supported peer tutoring strategies: Cross-Age Tutoring, Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), and Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT). Variations exist among these strategies (e.g., some have flexible structures; others have very specific directions for implementation) but the underlying theory is consistent. The chart below provides a brief comparison of approaches.

### Comparison of Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Cross-Age Tutoring</th>
<th>PALS</th>
<th>RPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Area*</td>
<td>Multiple content areas</td>
<td>Math &amp; Reading*</td>
<td>Multiple content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Student</td>
<td>Tutor or Tutee</td>
<td>Tutor &amp; Tutee</td>
<td>Tutor &amp; Tutee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Interaction</td>
<td>Expert/Cooperative</td>
<td>Cooperative/Competitive</td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Reward</td>
<td>Social Reinforcement</td>
<td>Social Reinforcement &amp; Earn Points</td>
<td>Social Reinforcement &amp; Earn Points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Research exists in these content areas. Approach may be used in other areas.

The following sections discuss each of these three peer tutoring approaches.

### Cross-Age Tutoring

Cross-Age Tutoring is a peer tutoring approach that joins students of different ages, with older students assuming the role of tutor and younger students assuming the role of tutee (Scott-Little, 2003; Hall & Stegila, n.d.). Student pairings may include a variety of combinations such as elementary students with high school students or older students with disabilities with younger students with disabilities (Miller & Miller, 1995; Hall & Stegila, n.d.). There are no stringent tutoring procedures established for Cross-Age Tutoring; however most tutors do engage in some type of training. These training sessions vary in range; some are scripted, others have few preset guidelines. Training sessions tend to include a discussion of goals, problem solving strategies (academically and behaviorally), and appropriate feedback and reinforcement strategies (Barbetta & Miller, 1991). Tutors become models of appropriate behavior, organizing work, asking questions, demonstrating self-management, encouraging social interaction, and facilitating better study habits (Gaustad, 1993; Cohen, 1986; Barbetta & Miller, 1991; Miller & Miller, 1995).

### Key Points

- Tutoring procedures are unstructured.
- Tutors generally participate in some type of training.
- Math effects stronger than reading.

### How Cross-Age Tutoring Facilitates Access

Cross-Age Tutoring actively engages both tutors and tutees with disabilities in their education and gives them a feeling of control over academic outcomes (Kalkowski, 1995). Cross-Age Tutoring has been applied with students with varying disabilities (Utley & Mortweet, 1997). By involving students with disabilities in their education and giving them self-management tools students can generalize motivation into other areas. Students can use their skills to participate in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), thereby taking an active role in their future (Miller & Miller, 1995). Students can practice appropriate social skills while being academically engaged (Barbetta & Miller, 1991).
Evidence of Effectiveness

There has been considerable research on the outcomes of Cross-Age Tutoring. A meta-analysis conducted by Cohen, Kulik, and Kulik (1982) reported moderate improvements in tutee and tutor achievement, tutor self-concept, and attitude towards the content area. Math effects tended to be stronger than in reading. Student achievement fairied better in short, structured approaches (Kalkowski, 2001). Other studies report:

- Cross-Age Tutoring results in “learning academic skills, developing social behaviors and discipline, and enhancing peer relationships” (Greenwood, Carta, & Hall, 1988, p. 264).
- Cross-Age Tutoring enhances the social skills of the student involved in the sessions (Foot, Shute, Morgan, & Barron, 1990; Utley & Mortweet, 1997).
- Students benefit academically through practice and communication and self-esteem increases through social interaction and contribution to classroom learning (Gaustad, 1993).
- Cross-Age Tutoring can enhance self-esteem among older students who provide individualized instruction to tutees, and result in a more cooperative classroom and an improved school atmosphere (Gaustad, 1993; Gerber & Kaufman, 1981; Kalkowski, 2001; Schrader & Valus, 1990; Topping, 1988; Utley & Mortweet, 1997).

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

Unlike Cross-Age Tutoring, PALS is a structured peer tutoring program. PALS was developed in 1989 by Dr. Lynn Fuchs and Dr. Doug Fuchs (2001) in conjunction with Dr. Deborah Simmons. The strategies were derived from the Fuchs’ interest in developing a peer-mediated instructional strategy that incorporated elements of other research-based methods including Class-Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT), Classroom-Based Measurement (CBM), Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), and Reciprocal Teaching. Developers used these methods to enable a wider range of students to participate and increase success in school.

PALS offers specific programs in math and reading. Reading PALS is available for preschool through 6th grade and for 9th grade through 12th grade, with variations available for some grade levels. Math PALS is available for kindergarten through 6th grade. In both content areas, the PAL strategies are designed to complement and not replace existing classroom reading and math curricula and instructional methods. In this structured peer tutoring program students pair off into player and coach roles to promote an equitable exchange; students exchange roles of player and coach during tutoring sessions.

The pairing of higher- and lower-achieving students is intended so students gain knowledge from each other through practice and reinforcement (students are still within the same skill level, there is not a huge discrepancy between ability levels). Teachers must carefully describe how the PALS strategies are done and how they relate to a particular lesson; they must closely monitor the roles taken on by each student, and interject when instruction is needed (Fuchs, Fuchs,
Thompson, Svenson, Yen, Al Otaiba, Yang, McMaster, Prentice, Kazdan, & Saenz, 2002). Reading and Math PALS are each briefly discussed below.

**Reading PALS**

Reading PALS pairs students in a systematic way. First, students are ranked according to reading competence. Next, each student in the class is paired with another student. The pairs consist of one higher- and one lower-achieving student. The higher-achieving student always reads first, as a model for the other student. Students are monitored as they engage in the lessons.

The chart below describes the typical format for a Reading PALS lesson:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 1: Partner Reading</th>
<th>The higher-achieving student reads aloud while their partner follows along correcting mistakes. After five minutes the students switch roles and reread the same selection.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Paragraph Shrinking</td>
<td>Students must state the main idea in ten words or less which encourages them to display and monitor comprehension while taking turns reading one paragraph at a time. They earn points when the goals of the exercise are met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Prediction Relay</td>
<td>A partner predicts what information will be in the next half page of text, and then reads out loud to find the information. This reading exercise includes use of the prior tasks (i.e., correcting errors and summarizing the text).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pairs earn points for every correct prediction and for appropriate summaries.


**Math PALS**

Math PALS can be applied to many diverse learners at varying skill levels. According to Drs. Doug & Lynn Fuchs (2001) this approach uses structured interactions between students to encourage high-level feedback while in pairs. These interactions increase the level of participation on topical areas through verbal rehearsal, until the process becomes routine, and verbal rehearsal is no longer needed. In these activities students learn that strategies can be applied to other content areas. Students get step-by-step feedback through their interaction during tutoring sessions. The tutoring sessions are reciprocal with students taking turns as tutor and tutee.

During PALS sessions, the program developers encourage teachers to assist students in making connections between the material presented and math concepts. They indicate that with structure and guidance from teachers, students can move past basic concepts and questions into conceptual knowledge. Methods that have enhanced conceptual math knowledge include: providing real-life examples, discussing meaning and answers to problems, and the use of manipulative or concrete representations.
Below is a typical format for a Math PALS lesson:

There are two parts to PALS sessions in which the students work through math problems and activities.

**Task 1: Coaching**—Each of the partners work on math problems in a specific area (i.e., addition and subtractions). The “coach” questions the “player” in order to guide the activity. The “coach” has been trained in how to correct the “player.” This activity should last 15–20 minutes.

**Task 2: Practice**—All students receive a worksheet containing problems they just went over; some as difficult and some less challenging problems. Once they have completed the worksheet, they exchange papers and score them. This activity should last 5–10 minutes.

*Students earn points based on their cooperation, explanations, and accuracy.*


Researchers and teachers are continually modifying and adapting Reading and Math PALS to suit the variety of situations in which learning takes place. Stephenson & Warwick (2002) have found that PALS is easily adapted to different settings, and that, overall, peer tutoring is an effective approach to improved student outcomes.

**How PALS Facilitates Access**

PALS provides students with disabilities access to the general education curriculum and integrates them into the classroom without using a disproportionate amount of instructional resources.

PALS enables teachers to integrate more strategic instruction during tutoring sessions because teachers can meet the individual needs of students with peer tutoring (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Mohler, Beranek, Spencer, Boon, & Talbott, 2001). PALS utilizes the inherent ability differences of students in various skill levels within the classroom setting. “An important advantage of [PALS] is that various groups of children in the same classroom can operate on different levels…. Teachers, in effect, can implement many ‘lessons’ simultaneously and can address… the needs of many students with learning disabilities” (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Burish, 2000, p. 85).

Reading and Math PALS give teachers tangible strategies to implement in their classrooms, which assist them in meeting the needs of their diverse learners. Students are taught to develop their skills through specific techniques. They are encouraged to review and ask questions during tutoring sessions based on the teacher’s instruction. Students generate questions and draw conclusions through reciprocal peer interaction. The reinforcement they receive while working in groups motivates learning. These sessions create a classroom where student pairs can work on different levels and on different types of problems (i.e., word problems or counting) or at varying reading levels. Teachers can meet the individual needs of students while keeping the entire class engaged.


**Evidence of Effectiveness**

PALS learning strategy not only strengthens students’ academic skills, it gives many students the opportunity to practice their social skills with peers in a natural setting (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001; & Rivera, 1996). Teachers can create and simultaneously implement different lessons to address a greater range of learning needs (Fuchs et al., 2000). Other research shows:

- High-, average-, and low-achieving students, and students with learning disabilities make greater progress in reading in PALS classrooms than in typically structured classrooms (Fuchs, et al., 2000; Mastropieri, et al., 2001).

- In elementary grades, children’s reading competence can improve when they work collaboratively on structured learning activities. Student collaboration enhances success because the interaction can strengthen academic and social achievement (Fuchs, et al., 2002).

- Math PALS shows positive results in low- and average-achieving students, and students with learning disabilities. Students are able to elaborate and create more meaningful memories of concepts through their peer interactions and activities (Fuchs, et al., 2001).

- The questioning that occurs within the pairs generates deeper understanding that creates meaningful abstract representations (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Phillips, Karns, & Dutka, et al., 1997).

- PALS structured format, student reciprocal collaboration, and reinforcement are structured to facilitate learning (Fantuzzo, King, & Heller 1992).

- Teachers using Math PALS reported, “devoting more time to one-to-one instruction, less time to independent seatwork, and more time to peer-mediated instruction, and relying more on systematic reinforcement methods” (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995, sec. 4).

- Reading and Math PALS strategies may assist teachers in preventing and alleviating many of the social problems (e.g., low self esteem, discipline issues) related to children, adolescents, and young adults (Hall & Stegila, n.d.).

**Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT)**

“Reciprocal Peer Tutoring is an intervention strategy combining self-management methods, group interdependent reward contingencies, and reciprocal peer teaching to promote academic and social competency” (Fantuzzo & Rohrbeck, 1992 p. 3). RPT is a collaborative learning strategy in which students alternate between the role of tutor and tutee. Unlike the previous peer tutoring strategies discussed, RPT may involve more than a one-to-one relationship. Students alternate roles while in pairs or groups. RPT has a structured format where “students prompt, teach, monitor, evaluate and encourage each other” (Fantuzzo, King, & Heller, 1992, p. 332). Students are part of the educational process and are able to prepare instructional materials and receive feedback from peers. The alternating structure is designed to utilize group reward and interdependence to maximize learning and motivation. Group rewards are earned as all individuals in a group make progress. Students can select their rewards and goals from a list of teacher-prepared choices. Furthermore, students are accountable for monitoring and evaluating peer performance (Fantuzzo, et al., 1992; Pigott, Fantuzzo, & Clement, 1986). The idea is to “increase student choice

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**Key Points**

- Two or more students may be grouped together
- Structured format
- Students monitor and evaluate each other.
and participation in the management of their own group interdependent reward contingencies and reciprocal peer teaching methods” (Fantuzzo & Rohrbeck, 1992, p.3).

Below is a typical format for an RPT lesson:

Peer tutors present tutees with a problem to solve using a flashcard with the answer on the back. The student computes the problem in writing on a worksheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the Tutee Responds Correctly</th>
<th>If the Tutee Responds Incorrectly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Try 1</td>
<td>Tutor praises student and goes to the next problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutor provides structured help (suggestions are on the back of the flashcard) and coaching, then the tutee attempts Try 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try 2</td>
<td>Tutor praises student and goes to the next problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher aid or teacher is called to coach (Help) the tutee in the correct-solution model, then the tutee attempts Try 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try 3</td>
<td>Tutor praises student and goes to the next problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutee tries to solve the problem independently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After 10 min. the pairs switch roles and continue for another 10 min. Once the tutoring is completed, a 16-problem quiz covering what was practiced is given. Individual goals are combined with group goals and are rewarded if they met or surpassed the predetermined goals. Once five “wins” (goals) are achieved the pair can select a reward.

(Fantuzzo, Davis, & Ginsburg, 1995; Utley & Mortweet, 1997)

**How RPT Facilitates Access**

Recently RPT has been used with students with mild disabilities in regular education settings and pullout programs to meet the individualized needs of students (Maheady, 2001). The cooperative role reversals are beneficial because students have a chance to be both the tutor and tutee (Fantuzzo, Riggio, Connelly, & Dimeff, 1989). The roles are equitable, which can promote an environment of acceptance. RPT gives students the opportunity to make choices throughout the learning process. By making choices, students enhance their self-management skills, and enhance control over learning and cooperation with others (Fantuzzo, et al., 1995; Fantuzzo, & Rohrbeck, 1992). Reciprocal tutoring and rewards motivate students for their teams’ achievement. Rewards can be used as positive reinforcement to shape appropriate behaviors academically and socially within the classroom (Fantuzzo, et al., 1992). They can also motivate learners to participate and achieve in difficult content areas.

**Evidence of Effectiveness**

“The Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT) intervention was developed specifically for urban, elementary school classrooms” (Fantuzzo, et al., 1995, p. 273). Like other peer tutoring approaches discussed, the reciprocal interactions in RPR promote social competence and peer acceptance (Fantuzzo, et al., 1995; Fantuzzo, et al., 1992; Heller & Fantuzzo, 1993; Pigott, et al., 1986), improves academic achievement, and decreases disruptive behavior (Utley & Mortweet, 1997). Other research findings show:

- RPT strategy resulted in greater improvements in cognitive gains, lower levels of subjective distress, and higher course satisfaction than students who received an attention placebo or participated in an independent unstructured learning format (Fantuzzo, et al., 1989).
- RPT has been successful with at-risk students and students with mild disabilities (Fantuzzo, et al., 1992; Maheady, 2001).
Structured peer tutoring combined with group rewards tend to produce greater gains than unstructured peer tutoring without group rewards (Fantuzzo, et al, 1992; Utley & Mortweet, 1997).

The combination of a structured, reciprocal-tutoring format and group-reward contingencies for mathematics performance yield the highest academic gains in math (Fantuzzo, et al., 1992). Students can self-manage their behavior when they are actively participating in learning. They are choosing their goals and rewards (Fantuzzo & Rohrbeck, 1992).

Students engaged in these structured activities reported higher levels of competence and positive conduct than students in unstructured activities. Students may enhance intrinsic motivation with RPT (Fantuzzo, et al., 1992).

Students experience more control over their progress (Fantuzzo & Rohrbeck, 1992).

Conclusion

Peer tutoring is an effective educational strategy for classrooms of diverse learners because it promotes academic gains as well as social enhancement. Programs can be successfully implemented at the classroom-level or on a wider scale at the school- or district-level. With administrative support and professional development, peer tutoring can help teachers cope with challenges such as limited instructional time, multiple curricular requirements, and appropriate social engagement among students. Students engage in active learning while staying abreast of the progress they are making. They are held accountable for their achievement, and motivated by social or tangible rewards. A goal of peer tutoring is to create self-managed learners with high self-esteem.

Peer tutoring is particularly advantageous in inclusive classrooms because it allows teachers to address a wide range of learning needs and engages all students simultaneously. Regardless of ability level, students can engage in and learn from the lesson. Furthermore, the collaborative learning aspect of the strategy encourages positive social interaction between students in a classroom. By including traditional instructional strategies along with peer tutoring, teachers can utilize the ability differences inherent in an inclusive classroom, and promote accessible and successful learning for all.

Further Resources

Peer Tutoring & Cross-Age Tutoring

Classwide Peer Tutoring: Information for Families: http://cecp.air.org/familybriefs/docs/PeerTutoring.pdf


Peer Mediated Instruction: http://www.cast.org/ncac/PeerMediatedInstructionandIntervention2953.cfm


Student Grouping for Reading Instruction: http://www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests/ed434435.html


**PALS**

Materials on PALS Reading and Math (manuals, training scripts, videos, student materials, brochures) are available from the following websites:

http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/pals/
http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/pals/manuals.html
http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/reading/peer_assisted.html

Information on workshops and training sessions can be found at http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/pals/outreach.html

NOTE: The developers of PALS recommend a one-day on-site training workshop for implementation. Depending on the workshop chosen, the presenter’s fee ranges from $1,000-1,500 plus travel expenses. All workshop participants need a PALS teacher manual. A site license can be purchased for any number of manuals at a cost of approximately $10-15 per manual. (If 20 teachers participate, the cost would be $200 plus copying costs.) Follow-up training is available. There are few additional costs necessary for a teacher to begin using PALS with students. (For more information visit the website listed above or call (615) 343-4782 or send an e-mail at PALS@vanderbilt.edu.)

**References**


For additional information on this or other topics, please contact The Access Center at accesscenter@air.org. The Access Center: Improving Outcomes for All Students K-8. The Access Center is a cooperative agreement (H326K020003) funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, awarded to the American Institutes for Research, 1000 Thomas Jefferson St. NW, Washington, DC 20007; Ph: 202-403-5000; TTY: 877-334-3499; Fax: 202-403-5001; e-mail: accesscenter@air.org; website: www.k8accesscenter.org.

This report was produced under U.S. Department of Education Grant # H326K020003 with the American Institutes for Research. Jane Hauser served as the project officer. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred.
What Is Peer Tutoring?

Peer tutoring is an instructional strategy that consists of pairing students together to learn or practice an academic task. The pairs of students can be of the same or differing ability and/or age range. Peer tutoring encompasses a variety of instructional approaches including Cross-Age Tutoring, Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), and Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT). Variations exist among instructional approaches. However, the underlying theory is consistent: peer interaction can have a powerful influence on academic motivation and achievement (Light & Littleton, 1999; Steinburg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Wentzel, 1999). The research base also suggests that socialization experiences that occur during peer tutoring can benefit both the tutor and tutee by motivating students to learn and increasing their social standing among peers (Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Martinez, 2002; Rohrbeck, et al., 2003; Miller & Miller, 1995). When students understand the benefits of peer tutoring and have the tools to become effective tutors and tutees, they make greater progress than those who are not given any instruction on how to work together (Fuchs, L.S., Fuchs, D., Hamlett, C.L., Phillips, N.B., Karns, K., & Dutka, S., 1997).

Additionally, peer tutoring allows teachers to accommodate a classroom of diverse learners including students with learning disabilities. This instructional strategy increases response opportunities for students, provides additional time for positive feedback, and increases the amount of time a student is on-task (Maheady, 2001). Regardless of achievement level, content area, or classroom arrangement, peer tutoring demonstrates effectiveness in facilitating progress in the general education curriculum (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982; Cook, Scruggs, Mastropieri, & Casto, 1985; Johnson, Maruyama, Nelson, & Skon, 1981).

What Does Peer Tutoring Look Like for Math?

Teachers can simultaneously engage all students in learning and practicing basic math or problem-solving skills using peer tutoring. This instructional strategy reinforces math facts, computational skills, and math concepts. Examples of math content suited for peer tutoring include addition, subtraction, multiplication, number concepts, vocabulary, measurement, and fractions. This list is not exhaustive: most math content can be practiced using peer tutoring.

How Is It Implemented?

The process for implementing peer tutoring depends on the specific instructional approach you choose. Regardless of the strategy you choose, it is important to follow the process strictly to ensure positive outcomes for all students. The general process for implementing a peer tutoring lesson is outlined below, but to learn more specific information about the strategies, here are some sites you can visit PALS (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/pals/) and Cross-Age Tutoring (http://www.crossagelearning.net).
The general process of implementing a peer tutoring lesson is the following:

1. The teacher trains students on the process of peer tutoring and strategies for fulfilling their role of tutor or tutee.
2. The teacher assigns partners.
3. Students retrieve their tutoring materials prepared by the teacher.
4. Students follow a highly structured tutoring procedure, in which tutors present material previously covered by the teacher, and provide feedback to the tutee.
5. Students switch roles after the teacher's signal. The tutee becomes the tutor.
6. The teacher circulates around the room, monitoring and providing feedback.

Peer tutoring is a strategy that can be used with students with a wide range of disabilities and at all grade levels. However, successful implementation necessitates training all students in the process and roles of peer tutoring. This training should describe how both tutors and tutees benefit from peer tutoring. Notably, the tutor advances his or her skills through the process of constructing an explanation of the problem for the tutee.

Using an analogy is a good way to help students realize the mutual benefits of peer tutoring.

The following basketball analogy is one way to illustrate the benefits. When a struggling player has trouble with his or her free throw, he or she asks a better player to help them. The better player analyzes the other's throw, determines what it is that makes a good free throw, and formulates an explanation for how to throw the basketball. Through this activity, both students' free throws are improved.

In addition, students must be taught methods for seeking help, such as directly asking for help, and continuing to ask for help until they understand. If students do not feel comfortable directly asking for help, the tutor and tutee could develop a signal system. The tutee could signal the tutor when he or she needs help. Examples of signals are pointing to the self, pointing to the tutor, or taps on the hand, book, or table.

Students also must be taught how to offer help. Some ways to offer to help are as follows:

- Pay close attention to your partner. If it seems they need help, offer help.
- Explain to your partner how he or she can find the answer, rather than giving the answer.
- Construct another explanation if the first explanation does not help.
- Ask your partner to repeat your explanation back to you to find out if he or she really understands.

**Tips for Successfully Implementing a Peer Tutoring Lesson**

1. Design lessons to reinforce skills already taught to students.
2. Identify specific learning objective to be presented by tutor.
3. Teach students how to be tutors.
4. Provide a script of prompts for the tutor.
5. Provide necessary flash cards or lists of skills to the tutors.
6. Provide a daily log to record tutoring session.

**Examples**

The following is an example of using peer tutoring to reinforce a math lesson for third grade regarding understanding fractions as parts of unit wholes.

**Tutor:** The purpose of this lesson is to understand fractions as part of a whole. (Tutor states the learning objective.) You will practice writing a number as a fraction by looking at the parts and the whole in different examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture #1</th>
<th>Fraction Sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="#" alt="Picture #1" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Fraction Sheet" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tutor:** Look at Picture #1. Tell me how many small squares there are in the picture.

**Tutee:** Four small squares

**Tutor:** Good! This is the number of small parts in the whole figure. Write that number in the square at the bottom of the fraction sheet.

**Tutor:** Now, how many of those small squares are shaded?

**Tutee:** One small square.

**Tutor:** Great! This is the number of shaded squares in the whole figure. Write this number on the top in the shaded square of the fraction sheet.

**Tutor:** Now we want to name this fraction by using the number of shaded squares and the number of small squares. What are the numbers?

**Tutee:** 1 and 4

**Tutor:** That is correct! To name the fraction we say 1 out of 4. The bar divides the parts on the top with the whole on the bottom. Another way is to say it is that 1 shaded square out of 4 squares means ¼, or one fourth.

*In this example, you are defining parts of a whole (a fraction) and establishing a definition of division by explaining the symbols and relationship of the numbers. You are moving the child from a concrete to an abstract form of the concept.*

**Tutor:** Let’s try another example with 6 circles and 5 shaded.
Go through the process several times until the tutee understands the name and the concepts of parts of a whole.

After a few more pictures, the roles should switch.

The second example not only shows a different shape from the first example but also a random arrangement of circles. Students may have an incorrect assumption that a visual of a fraction must be connected or arranged in a specific order. The tutor should practice until he or she achieves mastery. It is important to practice many different examples with different visuals for students to master the concept of fractions, reading fractions, and writing fractions.

The following is an example of using peer tutoring to reinforce a math lesson involving reading and understanding a chart. This form of peer tutoring would work best with cross-age tutoring or pairing a highly skilled tutor with a lower-skilled tutee.

**Tutor:** The purpose of this lesson is to read, to identify parts of a chart and to interpret information from a chart in order to solve a problem or answer a question. (Tutor states the learning objective.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apples picked at the orchard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each stand for four apples.

How many apples did Natalie pick?
Tutor: Look at the chart and tell me what you see.

Tutee: Apples and names of people.

Tutor: Good! What is the title of this chart?

Tutee: Apples Picked at the Orchard

Tutor: Do you know what orchard means? (Explain words that are unfamiliar to students to make the exercise more meaningful.) What does the picture of the apple below the chart show?

Tutee: The picture of the apple stands for 4 real apples.

Tutor: What do 2 apples and 3 apples show you?

Tutee: 2 apples mean Tamara has 8 apples and 3 apples means that Raj has 12 apples.

Tutor: How do you know that? Can you show me with a picture or tallies?

Tutee: For one apple, I have 1 1 1 1. That is 4. For 2 apples, I have 1 1 1 1 1 1 1. That is 8.

Tutor: What does the mean?

Tutee: I think it means that she ate the apples.

Tutor: What does the question on the right ask you?

Tutee: It wants to know the number of apples Natalie picked. Not the number of apples she ate.

Tutor: So what is your answer?

Tutee: 4 apples since one apple stands for 4 apples.

This example includes a discussion of the key components of a chart (title, names, and symbols). The example also allows the student to translate symbols of apples into numbers and then multiple these numbers. The title and the sentence below the chart help the student understand what the symbols represent. Without this information, the simple question, “How many apples did Natalie pick?” cannot be answered correctly. In addition, this example requires a conversation between the tutor and tutee about new vocabulary.

Upon attempting and answering the question wrong, the tutor might come up with a real life example to help explain the problem.

Teachers and tutors should keep in mind that drilling skills helps the tutee master math concepts but peer tutoring should move beyond drilling skills. This example illustrates peer tutoring as a discussion of vocabulary words, symbols, numbers and their relationship. With a combination of visual representation, communication of the process, and a description of the math concept, a student with disabilities will benefit from the peer tutoring process. This combination can result in mastery of a math concept.
Bibliography


For additional information on this or other topics, please contact The Access Center at accesscenter@air.org.

The Access Center: Improving Outcomes for All Students K-8

The Access Center is a cooperative agreement (H326K020003) funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, awarded to the American Institutes for Research 1000 Thomas Jefferson St. NW, Washington, DC 20007 Ph: 202-403-5000 | TTY: 877-334-3499 | Fax: 202-403-5001 | e-mail: accesscenter@air.org website: www.k8accesscenter.org

This report was produced under U.S. Department of Education Grant # H326K020003 with the American Institutes for Research. Jane Hauser served as the project officer. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred.
Purpose

First developed by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) in 1984, this cross-age tutoring program takes students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school and places them as tutors of younger students. Given this role of personal and academic responsibility, the tutors learn self-discipline and develop self-esteem, and schools shift to the philosophy and practices of valuing students considered at risk. Results show that tutors stay in school, have increased academic performance, improved school attendance and advanced to higher education. The program has helped schools keep 98% of program participants in school, more than 12,300 young people who were previously at risk of dropping out. The lives of more than 220,000 children, families and educators have been positively impacted by the program. The key to the program’s success is in valuing students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school and sustaining their efforts with effective, coordinated strategies. The program is flexible—readily adaptable to individual schools—but careful design and assessment have shown that certain elements are critical, such as paying tutors for the work they do or having experienced content area teachers serve as the program’s teacher coordinators.

Major Components

Seven important tenets express the philosophy of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program.

- All students can learn.
- The school values all students
- All students can actively contribute to their own education and to the education of others.
- All students, parents and teachers have the right to participate fully in creating and maintaining excellent schools.
- Excellence in schools contributes to individual and collective economic growth, stability and advancement.
- Commitment to educational excellence is created by including students, parents, and teachers in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.
- Students, parents, and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow students to learn, teachers to teach, and parents to be involved.

Five Instructional Components

Classes for Tutors. Tutors meet with their secondary school teacher/coordinator once a week in order to: develop tutoring skills that enable them to become successful student tutors; reflect on and celebrate their successes and contributions, thus developing self-awareness and pride;
and improve reading, writing and other subject matter skills enabling them to teach these skills to elementary school students. This class, coupled with the actual tutoring sessions, which occur four times a week during the same class period, is offered as an elective or as a state or local credit course.

**Tutoring Sessions.** Tutors tutor a minimum of four hours a week for one class period a day. The student tutors earn a minimum wage stipend for their efforts. Their primary responsibility is to work in a one-to-three ratio with tutees. Tutoring young children (at least a four-year grade level difference) forces the tutors to use all difficult task of teaching.

**Educational Field Trips.** At least two to three times throughout the year, students are invited to explore economic and cultural opportunities in the broader community. The field trips are an opportunity for career awareness by exposing the students to a variety of professional environments about which they would otherwise not have concrete insights. They can make more connections between what they are learning in school and what they will need to know to work as professionals.

**Mentors and Role-Models.** Adults who are considered successful in their fields and who represent students’ ethnic background are invited to participate. Career and leadership awareness is developed through five guest speakers who model a variety of professions and experiences.

**Student Recognition.** Students are acknowledged for the efforts and contributions they make while fulfilling their responsibilities as tutors. Throughout the year, students receive certificates of merit and appreciation; are invited on field trips with their tutees; receive media attention, and are honored at a luncheon or supper. Through these events, students experience the importance of their tutoring to the school, the district, and their community.

**Support Components**

**Curriculum.** A primary goal of the curricular framework is to prepare secondary school students to tutor elementary school students. The objectives are improving the students’ self-concept, tutoring skills, and literacy skills.

**Coordination.** Periodic meetings are held to coordinate all activities, facilitate communication among personnel and provide first-hand information for monitoring the program. Coordination is formalized through the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program implementation team at each participating site. The team includes the teacher coordinators at the secondary school, the counselor, the evaluation liaison, the family liaison, an elementary school receiving teacher representative, and the principals of the participating schools.

**Staff Enrichment.** Training and other instructive or enriching experiences strengthen the individual program components. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program includes training and technical assistance by IDRA in response to the participants’ needs assessments. Staff enrichment is achieved through technical assistance and inservice.
**Parent Involvement.** Efforts to inform and involve families in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program communicate to the tutors' families that the school takes their children's education seriously and values the families' contributions. Parent meetings and sessions, a minimum of four per year, are conducted bilingually or totally in the language of the parents.

**Evidence of Effectiveness**

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was extensively researched in 1989 using a longitudinal, quasi-experimental design with data collected for the treatment and comparison group students before tutoring began, during implementation, and at the end of the first and second program years. The results from this research study showed that the program had a statistically significant impact on the dropout rate, reading grades, self-concept, and attitudes toward school. Only one tutor out of 101 (1%) dropped out of school toward the end of the second year of the program compared to 11 students of the 93 comparison group students (12%). Similar results were found for reading grades, self-concept and attitudes toward school with the tutors outscoring the comparison group.

http://www.youthdevelopment.coca-cola.com/ach_cvpy.html

*The National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities is housed at the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Cooperative Agreement No. H326Q030002. The content therein does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the US Department of Education, nor does mention of other organizations imply endorsement by those organizations or the U.S. Government.*
The primary role of a mentor is to provide constant, caring support across all areas of the young person’s life. As the relationship with the mentee develops, taking on the temporary role of tutor may be a natural extension of the mentor’s role, just as a parent may act as a tutor, or a teacher may have some of the qualities of a mentor. Knowing when tutoring help is needed and useful, how much time to spend on tutoring and homework help, and when to turn to professionals for more assistance can all help the mentor preserve the positive mentoring relationship while improving the mentee's academic outcomes.

The following table compares what mentors and tutors do. Reading the table and the comments shows that both mentor and tutor endeavor to win the mentee/tutee’s trust. Both focus on the needs of their charge. Both work at building self-confidence. Both help with problem solving, although the mentor tends to focus on subjective, personal, and social issues such as self-esteem or relationships, while the tutor is more objective, focusing on academic subjects.

Clearly, there is much overlap. A tutor who is helping a discouraged student successfully cope with a challenging subject is giving that student encouragement and self-confidence, normally a mentor’s role; and a mentor can offer homework help, study tips, and insight into the need for studying unpopular subjects, and can help an at-risk student gain confidence.

One strategy that can help a mentor with the tutoring role is to express early in the relationship the desire to help the youth with his grades. The mentor should ask the youth how interested he is in receiving that kind of help. Some mentees may be more ready to work with their mentors on schoolwork than others. The important thing is not to force the youth into an excessive regimen of academic activities.

**Mentors as Tutors: How Can You Help?**

Mentors who have developed a positive relationship with their mentee have many opportunities to promote learning and academic success. As you begin to take on the role of tutor with your mentee, review the following list of ways in which you can be most helpful:

- Be patient.
- Offer encouragement and praise.
- Correct mistakes in a positive manner, not with a critical tone.
- Avoid comparing your mentee with someone else.
- Identify and celebrate progress—no matter how small.
- Share your mentee’s progress with the teacher and parents.
- Talk about attending school every day.
### Similarities and Differences between Mentoring and Tutoring Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentors</th>
<th>Tutors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A mentor is a trusted and faithful friend, who listens, supports, and guides a young person on a consistent basis over a specified period of time.</td>
<td>A tutor is a trusted peer or adult who offers one-on-one support for the purpose of improving student achievement and attitude toward school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mentor focuses first and foremost on the needs of the mentee with input from program staff, parents, teachers, and counselors.</td>
<td>A tutor focuses first and foremost on the needs of the tutee, with input from program staff, parents, teachers, and counselors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mentor focuses on building a friendship as basis for meetings.</td>
<td>A tutor focuses on improving academic achievement or a life skill as basis for meetings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A mentor can engage in a wide range of activities with his or her mentee, including:  
  - Exploring personal values  
  - Developing youth assets  
  - Setting short- and long-term goals  
  - Helping the mentee make positive choices  
  - Helping with college preparation and planning  
  - Participating in sports and recreation  
  - Providing homework assistance  
  - Arranging for job shadowing opportunities  
  - and more | A tutor can engage in a variety of educational activities with the tutee, including:  
  - Developing reading and math skills  
  - Getting organized  
  - Brainstorming ideas for assignments  
  - Assisting with homework  
  - Studying for tests  
  - and more. |
| A mentor meets with the mentee on a regular basis, over a specified period of time in a variety of locations. | A tutor schedules sessions on a regular basis, over a specified period of time at school. |
| Mentors come from all walks of life; they can be older peers or supportive adults. | Tutoring is undertaken by a broad array of community members, from the very old to the tutee’s peers. |
| A regular schedule is important to both mentoring and tutoring, as is adhering to (often mutually agreed to) rules. |

Although the activities may look different, sometimes tutors fill a mentoring role and sometimes mentors fill a tutoring role. The key differences are that tutors focus mainly on one aspect of the youth’s life—academics—while mentors focus on relationships first and foremost.
### MENTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A mentor generally has to make a 2-month commitment to the mentee.</th>
<th>A tutor generally makes an informal school-year commitment to the tutee.</th>
<th>Mentors commit to a lengthier match (including summer months) and often sign formal contracts to this effect; they also formally agree to more stipulations and policies than tutors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication often delves deeply into the mentee's personal life, is based on the trust that forms between the match, and adheres to a strict code of confidentiality.</td>
<td>Communication centers on academic success (but can delve into the realm of the tutee's personal life).</td>
<td>Both mentors and tutors need good communication skills such as being good listeners and being able to explain complex concepts and ideas clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors are encouraged, when appropriate, to get to know the mentee's parent(s) and to get prior permission for match activities.</td>
<td>Tutors are encouraged to get to know the family through activities such as family literacy nights.</td>
<td>Mentors often interact with parents directly on a regular basis, whereas tutors may only interact with parents occasionally at special events (if at all).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Talk to your mentee about finding a place in the home, an uninterrupted time in the evening in which to do homework.

- Encourage the use of the library.
- Encourage your mentee to read.
- If appropriate, share your mentee's goals with his or her teacher.
- Show teachers that you support their goals.
- Keep track of your mentee's progress in school. Periodically talk to the teacher to see how your mentee is doing—and ask if there is some way that you can support your mentee's improvement in school.
- First and foremost, remain your mentee's advocate.

Adapted with permission from *Elements of Effective Mentoring: A Mentor Training Manual for the In-School Volunteer Mentor* (Wilmington, DE: Creative Mentoring, 2001).

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Components of an Adolescent Distance Tutoring Session

**Reading for Fluency/Comprehension Questions**

This practice consists of repeated and monitored oral reading, frequently referred to as repeated rereading (Samuels, 1979) as well as assisted reading (Rasinski, 2004; Rasinski, Padak, McKeon, Wilfong, Friedauer, & Heim, 2005). The tutors simply ask the adolescents to read a predetermined set of 180-210 words from the young adult literature (http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.htm) three separate times while timing each reading to determine their progress. After three attempts the rereading opportunities end whether or not the adolescents met their “words per minute” goals. In addition the tutors have the adolescents read silently while they read the 180-210 word passage making sure to read with “appropriate accuracy and rate but also with good and meaningful phrasing and expression” (Rasinski, et al., 2005, p. 27). This fluency practice is short, yet it provides an opportunity for the adolescent to practice reading more fluently.

**Phonetic Instruction/Morphemic Analysis**

To our knowledge there is no accepted definition for word study even though it has been used in various contexts involving instruction with elementary age students; therefore, we have defined word study for our purpose as instruction that is comprised of the study of our written language such as written individual sounds, syllables, or morphemes and is designed to increase the adolescents’ reading and spelling abilities. Due to the age range of the adolescents tutored (12-19 years old), each individual word study is different based on the needs of each adolescent.

**Guided Reading**

In order to enhance comprehension with authentic text, instruction in the form of guided reading is completed (15-20 minutes). In this component of tutoring, secondary teacher candidates use questions about the young adult literature to guide and monitor the adolescents’ progress. This question-and-answer instruction is designed to enhance students’ ability to respond to questions in a more advanced fashion and, consequently, improve their ability to learn as they read. For example, during guided reading, the adolescents were asked to look in the text to find answers to questions they could not answer after an initial reading. This process is designed to help adolescents determine a purpose for their reading, focus their attention on what they wanted to learn, monitor their comprehension, evaluate content, and relate what they learned to what they already knew.

**Writing**

This component of tutoring requires the adolescents to demonstrate their knowledge in a written format (5-10 minutes). The goal is to assist adolescents cultivate and revise their thoughts until writing became a way of investigating and learning. Since we are limited in time we
have eliminated three elements of the writing process (prewriting, revising, and publishing) and focused solely on composing and editing (Gunning, 2006).

**Chapter Book**

Finally, tutors spent time (5-8 minutes) reading aloud from selected young adult literature (http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.htm) covering a variety of age-appropriate topics. Teacher candidates were encouraged to initiate discussions that focused on creating connections between events or characters in the story and events and people in the adolescents’ lives, as well as talking about words and their meanings, summarizing sections of the story, and evaluating the literature in order to promote further understanding and nurture a love of reading (Bean, 2003).

**Sample Distance Tutoring Session—Spring 2006**

A sample video illustrating this lesson is available at http://www.northern.edu/rc/pages/Reading%5FClinic/Fluency_1_quality.mpg

**Plan for Today:**

**2:30-2:40 Reading for Fluency-Comprehension Questions**

I will ask Bailey to reread a passage from p.167 in *Hush*, starting with “That back straight’s…” and ending with “The others are wearing running…” (Total words = 160). She will be asked to reread it until she can do so in 1 minute or less, or until she has done it 3 times. Then Bailey will orally re-tell what happened in the passage that she read for today (p.166 through p.174). She will be asked the following comprehension questions: p.168 “What is the importance of Evie’s thought, In the distance, I can see the Rocky Mountains, Lulu’s smiling face, my grandmother holding Matt Cat in her arms?” p.171 “What does the following thought reveal to us: I am no longer who I was in Denver, but at least and at most—I am?”

**2:40-3:00 Phonetic Instruction/ Morphemic Analysis**

*Instruction*: I will review open and closed syllables and introduce the consonant-le syllable.

*Sentence Dictation*: Bailey will demonstrate understanding of the rule by writing sentences utilizing several of the words listed at the end of this lesson. She will also break up additional words into open and closed syllables.

I will review open and closed syllables and introduce the consonant-le syllable to Bailey. [Rules are listed on the next page.] She will then proceed to break apart words provided to her into open, closed, and consonant-le syllables. We will review her answers as well as spelling when we have gotten through all of the words. Bailey will demonstrate her skills by writing the following sentences: The little maple tree swayed in the wind as its leaves fell and crumbled on the ground. Her husband loved to compose music and read the Bible.

**3:00-3:15 Guided Reading**

I will ask Bailey to read aloud pages 175-180 from *Hush* (http://www.jacquelinewoodson.com/ya.shtml). I will read some of the dialogue and ask her to imitate me with proper tone inflection. At the appropriate places, I will ask Bailey the following questions: p.175, “What does Mr. Green mean when he says, I was gone for a while, but I’m here now?”; p.177, “Why does Evie speculate...
that each member of her family is a runner?”; p.180, “How would you finish the author’s last sentence?” “Why does she end the book in this manner?”

3:15-3:20 Writing

I will review any errors found in Bailey’s last written assignment. I will ask Bailey to write a paragraph utilizing the new words that we discussed today. She will also come up with five more words and break them up into open and closed syllables. Bailey will fax her response. I will make any necessary corrections and review it with her during our next session.

3:20-3:30 Chapter Book

I will read pages 33-48 from Four Perfect Pebbles (http://www.fourperfectpebbles.com/) and ask the following questions as they arise: p.33, “Why do you think the Germans wanted the Blumenthals (Jews) out of Germany within three months?”; p.46, “What seems to be the unifying theme over the last few pages?”

Rules

Closed syllable: lax vowel; ends with a consonant
Open syllable: ends with a tense vowel sound; ends with a vowel
Consonant-le syllable: unaccented final syllable containing a consonant plus l and silent e

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Open syllable</th>
<th>Closed syllable</th>
<th>Consonant-le syllable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
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References


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