

Encouraging Young Readers

Includes:
Final Report

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Completed for:
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Department: Canadian Studies
Course Code: CAST 481H
Course Name:
Term: Fall/Winter 2001-02
Date of Project Submission: April, 2002

Project ID: 484

Call Number:

Encouraging Young Readers – Community Research Placement

Last year I was a volunteer tutor with the Encouraging Young Readers (EYR) program. The experience was very rewarding – I learned a lot about teaching reading and I believe I made a positive difference in the life of a child. The program plays a valuable role in the community which is one of the main reasons why I sought to work with EYR for my community research project.

The first stage of the project involved looking for academic articles regarding what tutors learn about learning disabilities through their tutoring experiences. Although the search itself was tedious at times, I really enjoyed reviewing the articles I found. Learning to read is a complex process, it was fascinating to examine the different approaches used to ensure reading success. I particularly enjoyed an article about a college student who volunteered his time as a tutor for three years in a row. It was interesting to see the progression of his skills and techniques over that length of time. It demonstrated how a minimally trained person could be a very useful addition to the classroom.

Once I completed a literature review based on the relevant articles, I moved on to creating a list of potential questions for a tutor questionnaire. Whenever possible I used or adapted instruments implemented by other researchers. I also added additional questions that I believed would elicit useful information. I really enjoyed this part of the research as it combined my interest in collating information from different sources with my fascination with questionnaires.

I had the opportunity to tabulate some of the questionnaire results. I was particularly interested in finding out how tutors rated the challenges they might face through participation in the program. It seems many tutors are a little unrealistic in their expectations at the outset. Even though I have completed my part of the research, I look forward to examining the results of the post questionnaire this spring to see how the tutors' attitudes and knowledge have changed through the course of the year.

Although tutors may have unrealistic expectations in the beginning, I found they seem to adapt well to the unexpected challenges along the way. This was evident during the tutor meeting held in January and the focus group in March. Tutors enthusiastically shared their experiences and offered each other suggestions for the challenges they faced. I took extensive notes during both sessions and found them very useful as I worked on a list of potential strategies for handling common tutoring challenges. As I worked on the challenges I noticed I accumulated a lot of hands on activity ideas that could be a useful resource for tutors. So, I collated the list of challenges and strategies along with an accompanying list of activity ideas and suggestions for items to include in the tutors' book bag of goodies (given to tutors at the beginning of the year and used during tutoring sessions). I hope these lists are included in future tutor training manuals as I believe they could be a useful resource. Ideally, this resource will grow over the years as new ideas are added from other tutor experiences.

I am grateful for the practical research experience I gained through participation in this project. I have learned a lot about myself and enjoyed myself each step of the way. In addition to my own personal growth, it is very gratifying to know my work will help enhance a valuable program in our community.

Kelli Zeran Grady

Literature Review

Avramidis, Elias, Bayliss, Phil, Burden, Robert. (2000). Student teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 16: 277-293.

According to the authors' research, preservice teachers tend to have a positive attitude toward the inclusion of special needs children in the regular classroom. Despite this positive attitude, they do not believe they have an adequate level of competence to teach effectively in such an environment. The study is limited to secondary student teachers in the UK, however, the subject is relevant to the elementary school context. Of particular interest is the "three-component model of attitudes" adopted by the researchers to measure preservice teacher attitudes. The article points to the need for better training and preparation for preservice teachers to improve their confidence and experience in inclusive classrooms.

Bos, Candace S., Mather, N., Narr, R., Babur, N. (1999). Interactive, Collaborative Professional Development in Early Literacy Instruction: Supporting the Balancing Act. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*. 14(4): 227-238.

This study examines the impact of Project RIME (Reading Instructional Methods of Efficacy) on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and follows the implementation of what they learned in their classrooms. This professional development program is interactive and collaborative and is based on current relevant research. It utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods of measurement including reflective journals, interviews, course evaluations and assessments of teacher attitude and knowledge. Comparisons with a control group indicate participants in the RIME program increased their knowledge and became more positive about explicit, structured language instruction.

Brownell, Mary T., Walther-Thomas, C. (1999). Candace Bos: Informed, flexible teaching—A key to successful readers. *Intervention in School & Clinic*. 34(5): 309-315.

Candace Bos provides insight and practical techniques for teaching children with learning disabilities. She believes in flexible teaching and finding multiple ways for demonstrating learning. This article provides background information on the issues related to teaching children with learning disabilities.

Cobb, J., Allen, D. (2001). When a criminal justice major becomes an America Reads literacy tutor: A case study. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. 44(6): 556-564.

An exploration into what makes a successful reading tutor. The researchers developed a Volunteer Tutor Instructional Practice Checklist which tracks the instructional activities utilized by tutors. Although this is only a case study, it provides insight into the qualities of a successful tutor. Valuable tutor qualities include dependability, motivation, good listening and literacy skills. It also emphasizes the importance of training and teacher mentors for the success of volunteer tutors.

Conte, Anthony E. (1994). Blurring the line between regular and special education. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*. 21(2): 103-113.

This article focuses on the attitudes of preservice and inservice teachers regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom environment. Researchers employed an eight item attitudinal instrument (included in the article) to determine preservice and inservice teacher attitudes. The value of combining special and general teacher education to reflect current teaching realities is discussed.

Hedrick, Wanda B., McGee, Patricia, Mittag, Kathleen. (2000). Pre-service teacher learning through one-on-one tutoring: reporting perceptions through e-mail. *Teacher and Teacher Education*. 16: 47-63.

This article examines preservice teachers tutoring students one-on-one as part of a field-based university course. Researchers studied student teacher beliefs and attitudes

using email surveys, email correspondence between instructors and students, focus group sessions and instructors' reports. The results indicate the tutors learned and developed skills as a result of their tutoring experience. For example, they learned to adapt tutorials to enhance the learning experience of the child instead of rigidly following a set method of instruction. Through tutoring preservice teachers learn the benefits of recognizing the children as individuals with different needs.

Invernizzi, M., Juel, C. (1997). A community volunteer tutorial that works. *Reading Teacher*. 50(4): 304-311.

This is an opinion piece providing insight into a successful volunteer tutoring program. The program targets at risk readers, mainly in grade one. Information is provided on the content of tutoring sessions and student improvements. Unfortunately, it does not explore what tutors learn about learning disabilities through participation in the program.

Maheady, L., Harper, Gregory F. (1993). The Reflective and Responsive Educator (RARE): A preservice training program to prepare general education teachers to instruct children and youth with disabilities. *Education and Treatment of Children*. 16(4): 474-506.

This article explains the history of teacher education regarding disabilities. Of particular interest is teacher attitudes and how training and experience regarding disabilities improves teacher attitudes and effectiveness in the classroom (particularly in the current 'inclusionary' environment).

Mather, N., Bos, C., Babur, N. (2001). Perceptions and Knowledge of Preservice and Inservice Teachers About Early Literacy Instruction. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. 34(5): 472-482.

Based on recent research indicating the importance of early, systematic instruction in phonological awareness, this article examines whether preservice and inservice teachers are adequately prepared to teach this method in the general classroom. Researchers adapted the Teacher Perceptions Toward Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS) assessment (DeFord 1985) to determine perceptions of code-based instruction and implicit, meaning-based instruction. To examine their knowledge of the structure of the English language, researchers utilized the Teacher Knowledge Assessments: Structure of Language (TKA:SL). Tables are included with all of the questions and results, comparing the differences between preservice and inservice teachers. They conclude most preservice and inservice teachers are not sufficiently prepared to teach basic skills to struggling early readers.

McCutchen, D., Abbott, R., Green, L., Beretvas, S. N., Cox, S., Potter, N., Quiroga, T., Gray, A. (2002). Beginning Literacy: Links Among Teacher Knowledge, Teacher Practice, and Student Learning. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. 35(1): 69-86.

This in-depth study explores the impact of explicit instruction in phonological and orthographic awareness on the knowledge and practices of kindergarten and first grade teachers and their students. The experimental group received two weeks of summer training and ongoing support throughout the following school year. The article provides extensive explanation of the methodologies used to measure teacher knowledge, teacher practice and student learning. Some of the methodology could be useful for our study.

Shade, R., Stewart, R. (2001). General Education and Special Education Preservice Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion. *Preventing School Failure*. 46(1): 37-41.

This study examines the attitudes of preservice teachers (both general and special education) toward the inclusion of students with mild learning disabilities within the regular classroom. The study examined attitudes before and after preservice teachers

completed a course focused on inclusion. In most areas the preservice teachers exhibited more positive attitudes after completion of the course. The importance of this type of course is emphasized based on the current reality of the increased inclusion of children with mild learning disabilities within the general classroom.

Sprague, M., Pennell, D. (2000). The Power of Partners. *Clearing House*. 73(3): 168-170.

This is a good article discussing what preservice teachers should learn about inclusion and how to teach the concepts to them. A university class concerning special needs students did not give preservice teachers enough experience or confidence in handling an inclusionary classroom. The new course linked the university with a local school proficient in this area. Preservice teachers gained more practical knowledge and confidence. Pre and post surveys were conducted but the questions were not provided in the article.

Winzer, M., Altieri, E., Larsson, V. (2000). Portfolios as a Tool for Attitude Change. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*. 19(3/4): 72-81.

Preservice teachers in this study created portfolios requiring them to watch movies, read books and research articles about people with disabilities. It challenged them to think about their preconceived notions about disabilities and adjust these notions based on their research.

Ziegahn, L., Hinchman, K. (1999). Liberation or reproduction: Exploring meaning in college students' adult literacy tutoring. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE)*. 12(1): 85-101.

Using an ethnographic approach, this article focuses on what tutors learn through the tutoring process. Unfortunately, it does not explore the issue of learning disabilities. The

areas and stages of tutor development are interesting and provide some understanding into the benefits tutors experience through tutoring.

Encouraging Young Readers – Issues & Suggestions

How are children chosen for the program?

Tutors are very interested in learning how children are chosen for the program – perhaps a meeting could be arranged with each tutor before they begin tutoring sessions to let them know why their child is in the program (specific concerns, reading level & expectations). A copy of the previous year's summation report would also be helpful if the child is participating in the program for the second year in a row.

Expectations

Tutors seem unclear about the appropriate reading/writing levels for children in grades two and three. Is there a Web site they could consult or printed examples they could see at the beginning of the year to clarify the expectations (i.e. an Appendix in the training manual)?

School Support

Some tutors feel isolated in their school. Perhaps more should be done to make them feel welcome and comfortable enough to approach staff (particularly teachers) for support. A teacher-tutor meeting at the beginning of the year could be helpful (help give tutors some direction). Perhaps teachers could provide samples of reading material at the child's current level, any concerns regarding possible learning disabilities and suggestions for appropriate activities.

Tutoring Location/Distractions

Finding a quiet place to tutor is a concern. Distractions range from music room noise to tutoring in the library while the child's class is present. Some children are tutored in the hall or in storage closets. Tutors and children prefer quiet, private locations that are suitably equipped for learning. Are schools doing enough to provide tutors with an appropriate space for tutoring?

Computer Program (Kidspiration)

There are mixed reviews regarding the computer program. Success and enjoyment seems to depend on the interest and attitude of both the child and the tutor. Several tutors mentioned wasting a lot of time trying to gain access to a computer. Can the schools better support tutors in this regard by providing easier/more convenient access?

Paperwork

Tutors seem unclear as to why they keep notes about all the tutoring sessions – they assumed someone would check them. Should someone look at them? Perhaps an experienced member of the EYR program could look through these notes, offer suggestions and look for possible signs of learning disabilities based on tutor comments. Otherwise, should tutors be told at the beginning of the year that these sheets are simply for their own benefit... and what these benefits are?

Transportation

Unfortunately, the time commitment is challenging for tutors relying on public transportation to reach distant schools. Bus schedules are unreliable and routes are long. Could tutors be better supported in this regard? Is there any possibility for carpooling, for example?

Resources

Could the EYR program and/or the schools provide a box of resources for the tutors? Items such as puppets, games and popular books could be very useful. Also, a list of useful online resources (i.e. web addresses) could be useful for tutors.

Tutor Training

Tutors seemed to learn the most through their tutoring experience and sharing these experiences with other tutors and experienced staff in the program (i.e. January tutor session). Therefore, perhaps tutor training could be adjusted in the future. For example:

- 1) Beginning of September tutor receives and reads training manual (including a comprehensive challenges & strategies section and activity suggestions).
- 2) Tutor meets with the resource teacher and/or classroom teacher of the child they will tutor. Tutor is advised of the challenges the child faces including any LDs or suspected LDs. Last year's summation report is provided (if the child was in the program last year).
- 3) Tutoring begins in September. This takes advantage of the tutor's lighter schedule (and keen attitude) at the beginning of the year.
- 4) First major training session conducted after 3 – 4 weeks of tutoring. Tutors have a clearer idea of the challenges they are facing so they will come to the training session armed with questions. If this method is used, smaller group training sessions would be necessary to allow everyone adequate chance to speak and ask questions.
- 5) Perhaps tutors could have access to their own On-Line Message Board (password protected) to share questions and concerns with each other. EYR staff could check this board and offer assistance as well.

Do tutors learn about Learning Disabilities through participation in the program?

Without the benefit of reviewing the post questionnaires, it is hard to determine how much tutors learn about learning disabilities through participation in the program. My sense is that the most important factor for learning about learning disabilities is through tutoring a child who has one. This is complicated by the fact that many tutors were unclear about the symptoms/types of LDs so they were unsure if their child had an LD or not.

I believe tutors would benefit from knowing a little more background information about the child they are tutoring. (For example: Is the child diagnosed with a learning disability? If not, is a learning disability suspected? If so, what is the nature of the disability? Does the tutor need to adjust expectations or session planning in any way?). Also, perhaps the tutor manual could contain a list of the most common learning disabilities and their symptoms (i.e. a reference for tutors).

Self-Esteem

Based on a couple of comments tutors made during the focus group session, it seems children who improve their reading skills may experience a boost in self-esteem. Perhaps they are more willing to take risks in their reading (less afraid to sound out or guess at a word)? I wonder if this boost in self-esteem is related to a child's rapport with his/her tutor? How important is the tutoring relationship to the child's development?

Activity Suggestions, Challenges & Strategies

* Based on notes from the tutor session in January, Focus Group comments and my own research and experiences. *

ACTIVITY IDEAS (Help child remember words/Improve Confidence/Have fun!)

- Use **Flashcards** to practice words (make them using blank index cards)
 - Include words the child can read easily so the process isn't too frustrating
 - Turn it into a game by mixing in a few "Johnny Jump Up" cards into the flashcards (pictures of a person jumping in the air) – when you come to a Johnny Jump Up card, the child quickly jumps up then sits back down again (alternative actions could be included)
 - Time the child to see how quickly he/she can read the flashcards – use progress chart or bar graph to keep track of improvements
 - Put Challenge words on cards – Play a game where the child reads the words and keeps the cards of all the ones he/she read correctly (you keep the others). At the end see who has the most cards – keep track of scores from week to week. Put a check mark, star or sticker on a card each time it is read correctly. Once the card has a certain number of stars (i.e. 3), remove it from the Challenge words and save it in a Review pile. Add new words to the Challenge cards as necessary.
 - Make a deck of cards using Challenge words (each Challenge word should be written on two cards). Play a game of **Concentration** by mixing up the cards, turning them upside down and taking turns flipping over a couple at a time looking for matches. The child keeps a match if he/she can read the word. If the tutor gets a match, the child can take it away by reading the word correctly.

- **Hockey Word Shootout** – Have the child pick 5-10 words that he/she finds difficult (i.e. from a story you read together). Have the child write the words out with different coloured special pencils. Time the child to see how long it takes him/her to read the list. Make a chart (graphs) and record his progress (3-4 times). Have child take this home to share with parents. At the end, have the child pick one word out of the initial ten words and add it to his/her "Hockey Word Shoot Out" list. Tape a piece of construction paper with the word onto a sponge puck that he/she can shoot into a net. (game idea courtesy of Amy Lance)

- Use **Play dough**
 - Create a word using play dough and have child try to guess the word by feeling it with his/her eyes closed
 - Have a race forming words using play dough
 - Read a story together then use play dough to create something from the story
 - Make circles and sticks with play dough and have child practice forming the letters 'b', 'd', 'p' and 'q' with them

- **Word game** – Give the child a letter and see how many words starting with that letter he/she can say or write within a certain time period (try using an egg timer). Note: You could use the letter die from a game of 'Scattergories' to choose a

- letter or have child write out letters on small pieces of paper and pick one out of a hat
- Create or adapt an existing game to incorporate the words your child is working on (i.e. a board game where you pick a card from the 'Challenge Word' pile when you land on a certain square – if you get it right, go again)
 - Play **Hangman** using Challenge words
 - Play **Junior Scrabble** or **Boggle**
 - Play Word (or letter) **Bingo** – the Resource Teacher may have one you can borrow or you can make your own using your child's Challenge words
 - Create a **Word Find** or **Crossword** together using Challenge words – make copies of the finished product so the child can share it with family members, the teacher, etc. → If the child enjoys this type of activity, keep a folder of completed Word Finds & Crosswords throughout the year so he/she has a fun activity book at the end of the year (look over the book together and congratulate the child for the increasing difficulty of the words used)
 - **I Spy** – Play I Spy with sounds. For example, I Spy with my little eye something that starts with 'm'.
 - **Book Scavenger Hunt** – Make a list of words and pictures to find in a book. How long does it take to find them all?
 - **Funny Sentences/Stories** – Write names, action words and places on separate pieces of paper OR cut out words from magazines and newspapers. Have child pick several words and create a silly sentence or story with them.
 - Spell a word out loud and see if the child can guess what it is before you get to the end
 - Have child spell Challenge words using play dough, sparkles, pudding, rice, magnetic letters, coloured pens, chalk on the blackboard, etc.
 - **Reverse roles** – the child is the 'tutor' and listens to you read as he/she follows along in the book – make a couple of obvious and silly mistakes so the child can correct you
 - **Write a sequel** to a favourite book
 - Practice printing – put an **overhead sheet** over a sheet with words, have child trace the letters – wipe off sheet when done (reusable)
 - Have child **type** Challenge words on computer
 - Create an **action** to go with challenging words
 - Read poetry together – **add actions**
 - **'Rate a Book'** – Have child rate the books read during tutoring sessions and keep track of them in a booklet. Draw stars or use stickers to indicate how good it is
 - Make a **dictionary** together – add to it each week (and refer to it as necessary)
 - Listen to **books on tape** and read along together
 - **Jump up and down** or **clap** while spelling words out loud
 - Go on a **"Word Hunt"** through the school looking for words (have child write down the words you find together)
 - Make a **'Cootie Catcher'** together
 - Make **puppets** based on the characters from a story then perform a puppet show together
 - Make a **mobile** based on a story

- Change the words to a familiar nursery rhyme
- Read a story for a younger child onto a tape, ring a bell when it's time to turn the page
- Create letters and words using string or yarn
- Make an **Accordion Book** – Fold a long strip of paper in the shape of an accordion and glue on a front and back cover
- Make holiday cards for family members, friends or teachers (i.e. Hallowe'en, Christmas, Valentine's Day)
- Create a **Comic Book** together
- **Comic Strip Shuffle** – Cut out the boxes of a comic strip and mix them up. Child reads each box and tries to figure out the proper order.
- Write a letter to a friend or family member – child can bring it home and mail it
- Teach child **'Pig Latin'** – Select a word (i.e. 'fun'), take the first letter and move it to the end of the word (i.e. 'unf') than add 'ay' to the end (i.e. 'unfay'). Try making whole sentences using Pig Latin.
- **Symbol Stories** – Have child 'write' a story using only symbols. Next, 'translate' the story into words.
- **Interview** – Have child print a list of interview questions then tape record him/her 'interviewing' you. For fun, pretend you are a famous person and make commercials as well.
- **Journalist** – Prepare a 'news story' based on a book. Record it for 'radio' or print it in a 'newspaper'

ASSESSING CHILD'S READING LEVEL & PROGRESS

- Talk to the child's teacher(s) to find out his/her reading level
- Use Fry's word list to check sight word progress
- Have child write a letter to you each week so you may gage his/her writing development

CHILD DISLIKES READING

- Maintain a positive attitude about reading and make a special effort to locate reading material the child will find interesting
- Make learning fun – try some of the suggested '*Activity Ideas*'

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

- Keep each activity short and to the point
- Use a wide variety of activities
- Include some tasks that require a lot of moving around or interactivity (i.e. play dough, black board)
- When reading a story, stop every once in a while to discuss what's happening and predict what might happen next (i.e. comprehension questions)

CHILD IS FREQUENTLY/EASILY DISTRACTED

- Be proactive in your efforts to keep the child on track (i.e. be aware of probable distractions and try to minimize them)
- Keep desk clear of any supplies or activities you are not currently using

- Turn desk away from hallway view and other students
- See if there is a quieter and/or less visually distracting area where you can work together
- Keep child focused while reading by using a ruler to highlight the sentence he/she is reading (can also do this while you are reading to him/her)
- Have child close eyes and imagine everyone's invisible

FIDGETING

- Use more kinesthetic activities – See '*Activity Ideas*' for suggestions (i.e. play dough activities)
- Give child play dough or a stress ball to squeeze while reading or listening to stories

CHILD AVOIDS CHALLENGING ACTIVITIES

- Have back up plans in case your scheduled activities are not working well
- Suggest the book bag of fun things - have child choose something then try to link it back to your lesson plan
- Flip back and forth between easy & challenging activities
- Break activities down into more manageable parts
- Provide a reward for tackling a challenging activity (i.e. lots of positive reinforcement, play a special game the child enjoys, stickers, small treat, make a bracelet or necklace together with a bead added for each challenging activity the child tackled, create a chart and put on a star for each challenging activity – when a certain number of stars are earned, offer a small reward)
- Ensure you are giving the child activities at the appropriate level of difficulty

CHILD ONLY WANTS TO READ 'EASY' BOOKS

- Begin every session with a familiar or easy book but follow it with something more challenging
- Do not give child too many choices (i.e. give two books to choose from rather than several)
- Offer some kind of positive reinforcement for trying something harder
 - Make a necklace or bracelet together – add a bead for every challenging book the child reads (or add a fancy bead for challenging books)
 - Keep a progress chart of all the books the child reads – give a fancy sticker for each challenging one he/she reads
- Try to find challenging books on interesting topics (cater to the child's interests)
- Read a challenging story to the child and have him/her retell it to you

INABILITY TO FINISH PROJECTS

- Break larger projects down into smaller steps
- Flip back and forth between different activities
- Provide a reward for finishing a large project (i.e. lots of positive reinforcement, show off the work to the principal or resource teacher, take a photo of the child with his/her work, play a special game the child enjoys, stickers, small treat, see if it can be put on display anywhere, etc.)

- Joint authorship – child and tutor write alternate sentences or chapters

CHILD IS BORED OR LACKS MOTIVATION

- Vary activities as much as possible – Refer to ‘*Activity Ideas*’ for suggestions
- Introduce a new activity each week even if the ‘tried and true’ seems to be working
- Quickly move from one activity to the next in order to cut down on idle time
- Find topics the child is interested in or relates to (i.e. hockey, soccer, dinosaurs, monsters)

CHILD IS EASILY DISCOURAGED/LACKS CONFIDENCE

- Point out the difficult words your child was able to read without any assistance and offer genuine praise
- Work on activities that play up the child’s strengths – particularly at the beginning of the session
- Refer to ‘*Activity Ideas*’ for fun activities that can boost the child’s reading vocabulary and confidence
- Read inspiring books such as “You are Special” by Max Lucado

READING COMPREHENSION

- Have child predict what a story is about by looking at the pictures first
- Every few pages, stop the child while he/she is reading and talk about (or draw) what has been read and predict what will happen next
- Randomly cover words in a story and have child guess the missing word using clues from the story
- Ensure the reading material is at the appropriate level (not too hard)
- Is child **reading too slowly**?
 - Have child read poetry and clap along to the rhythm – increase the speed of your clapping to subtly encourage faster reading
 - Have a reading race to encourage faster reading – time child to see how quickly he/she can read a story/page/poem
- Is child **reading too quickly/rushing**?
 - Have child read poetry and clap along to the rhythm – slow down the speed of your clapping to subtly encourage slower reading

CONFUSION OF LETTERS (i.e. b and d)

- Provide child with ‘bed’ picture – the b is the headboard and the d is the footboard – when the child has trouble with these letters, remind him/her of the ‘bed’
- Practice forming letters using different materials (i.e. play dough, sparkles, coloured pens, etc.)
- Have child make several circles and several straight sticks with play dough or pipe cleaners – line up the circles then ask child to add the stick to the circle to make certain letters (i.e. ‘p’, ‘q’, ‘d’, ‘b’) - Variation: write circles on a blackboard or on a sheet of paper or make circle in pudding, rice or sparkles

CHILD CONFUSES SIMILAR WORDS (i.e. 'there' & 'these')

- Use flashcards to practice similar words – have child use them in a sentence
- Make silly stories or poems where mixed up words cause funny things to happen then talk about how important it is to read words carefully to ensure proper meaning
- Play games using similar words (i.e. Word Bingo, Concentration)

READING WORDS THAT DON'T SEEM TO MAKE SENSE

- Acknowledge how frustrating it is that all words cannot be read or spelled correctly using phonics
- Remind child that some words just need to be memorized – keep track of the words your child struggles with and try some '*Activity Ideas*'

CHILD ONLY WANTS TO 'PLAY' ON THE COMPUTER

- Have child teach you games or activities on the computer by reading the dialogue boxes and showing you examples
- Avoid superfluous activities (i.e. a lot of time can be wasted just looking for a favourite picture)
- Have a planned activity or use an activity relevant to the words & concepts you are currently working on together
- Occasionally offer computer play time as a reward for finishing a large project or tackling challenging activities
- Take charge of mouse if child is too obsessed with 'clicking'
- Become familiar with program BEFORE your tutoring session so you have a clear idea what you're going to do

CHILD IS TIRED

- Have child lie down or put head down and relax at the end of the session while you read a book
- Find out if the child is hungry – a snack could provide an energy boost
- Talk to the teacher to see if this is a common problem and see if he/she has any suggestions

PARENTS AREN'T INTERESTED IN CHILD'S WORK (i.e. throw it out)

- Keep a folder of the child's work and "Certificates of Achievement" (awarded by you for progress) and refer to it often to remind the child of his/her progress and how proud you are of his/her achievements
- Make a point to share the child's achievements with school staff (i.e. principal, teachers, or even the secretary, other tutors, volunteers, etc.) so they can celebrate the child's progress and provide positive feedback

CHILD IS SHY OR UNCOMFORTABLE SHARING THOUGHTS

- Provide child with a special book for writing thoughts, feelings, likes, dislikes, etc.

CRYING OR TANTRUMS

- Talk to teacher to see how he/she normally handles this type of behaviour with the child
- Be aware of the types of things that may cause a tantrum (i.e. child may be frustrated, tired or hungry) so you may take steps to prevent it from happening (i.e. eat a snack together, provide child with more assistance or stop doing an activity if it is too difficult/frustrating)
- Give child a special book to write and/or draw a picture of how he/she is feeling
- Ask the teacher or principal to intervene if the child's behaviour is too difficult to handle

CHILD INSISTS READING IS EASY (Despite difficulties)

- Child may require more challenging reading material/activities
- Talk with child to find out what exactly is easy about it – is he/she turned off a book because it seems to 'babyish'?

SOCIAL OR FAMILY PROBLEMS

- Offer a non-judgmental ear if the child mentions social or family problems
- Write down what child has to say in your notes
- Provide child with a special book for recording thoughts (words and/or pictures)
- Talk to the teacher, resource teacher and/or EYR staff if you are concerned about the child's wellbeing

CHILD ABSENT FROM SCHOOL ON TUTORING DAYS

- Ensure the classroom and resource teachers have your phone number so they can contact you if your child is absent on a tutoring day

END OF TUTORING – CHILD MISSES YOU

- Teach child a skill (i.e. origami, making "cootie catchers", card trick, magic trick, etc) that he/she can do independently when tutoring is over as a reminder of you
- Make a book together about each other – what you like to do, favourite stories, etc that can serve as a memento when tutoring ends
- Give child a special card and note when tutoring is over reminding child of fun times, accomplishments, etc. (EYR will provide a sample letter)

Tutor Book Bag Contents – Ideas

- Multi-coloured pens
- Markers
- Fancy pencil & eraser
- Play dough
- Magnetic Letters
- Blank index cards
- Variety of stickers
- Construction paper
- Small notebook
- Lined paper
- Plain white paper
- Dice
- Glue Stick
- Scissors
- Blank cassette tape (to record child reading)
- Small treats (ensure child does not have allergies)
- Pipe cleaners
- String & beads for making necklaces
- Package of pudding
- Bag of rice or sparkles
- Tray or Baking sheet (for pudding, rice, sparkle and magnetic letter activities)
- Overhead sheets & Erasable markers

Responses from Focus Group March 2, 2003
TCSCR
6:30 – 7:45

Note: Names of tutors & children removed. The session was led by Kelli. The notes were taken by Kelli and Mary then Mary transcribed them.*

Present: W____, K____, J____, Kelli and Mary

Introduction, first name of child tutoring and grade level of child

- W – King Edward – F____ Grade Two
Was a little below grade level
He's about in the middle of grade level now
English is his second language
He definitely progressed
- K – St. John's – C____ Grade Three
Told that he had ADHD
Was a good reader
Not below his grade level
Was enthusiastic and loved to read
Couldn't even tell he was ADHD
- J – St. Peter's – B____ Grade Three
Hasn't been told that he has a learning disability
Child can't sit still for more than three minutes
Maybe he has ADHD?
He's "interesting"
Could read very little at the beginning of the year
Reading has improved a bit
He didn't really like "Richard Scarry" books
We had to incorporate games to keep interest
I bought Dr. Seuss books on E-bay
He's reading better now – can do 10 to 12 pages
He likes Math
He is smart for his age
He wrote down each number from 0 to 16, 000 on his own time
He had definitely progressed
- W – my child didn't like the Dr. Seuss books or Joke Book
He was interested in origami books – got very excited over them

Question: Was the program realistic to expect of tutors? Was it realistic of tutors to expect of school?

J – depends on student
Sometimes stayed longer (on computer) because he was on a role
Sometimes we needed more games
I'm not very organized
Regarding the weekly summary – until early February I didn't really keep track

W – it was hard to structure time
I tried to jot down a few things
45 minutes was a good amount of time – depending on the child

K – I looked at the summary when I was planning my lessons
Notes afterwards were more useful

J – spontaneous
Didn't want to go to great lengths to prepare
Sometimes student suggested stuff to do
Preparing should be up to the tutor
Kidspiration – child didn't like it after a couple of times

K – different activities – keep a log of what you did

J – child not too interested
Can't give him the mouse because you'll never get it back
Didn't take the time to familiarize with Kidspiration
Child liked the microphone

K – mixed reviews of Kidspiration
Didn't help with reading per se
Boring
Student liked to click things
Loves computers in general but not Kidspiration

W – too advanced for activities
Tried to use as reading response activity

Question: What was your impression of the computer activities?

K – fun but not mandatory

W – felt that there were more important things to be doing

K – important component

J – ain't in the butt to use it at St. Peter's – by the time you get to the computer 10 minutes has gone by

Question: What understanding did tutors gain of school realities?

- W – wish we had a better workspace – we were working in the hall
- K – talk with teacher in the beginning
What level are they at and where is the child now
Knew this going into it
- W – need to have more contact with the teacher
Teacher was not interested
Wish we had more contact
- K – nervous about teacher-tutor conference but then it didn't happen and I wished it did
- J – didn't know I was supposed to talk to the teacher – seen her a couple of times
I saw the resource teacher more
I was told to not try and see the teacher because she doesn't support the program
Room (breakfast room) getting the keys was a hassle
We invented a spy game going through the halls (lots of looking for key)
- W – kids sat with us and talked with us
We heard kids yelling and stuff
Child focused through
- J – my school has good contact with the student and parents
Parent- teacher (resource teacher) relationship
The principal was really cool
- W – I felt that there were more people coming and going – people didn't know who you were
there were a lot of volunteers
At least three student teachers
- J – no volunteers – Just EYR
- W – at first I checked into the office but they didn't seem to care
- K - never saw the principal or vice principal
I talked to teacher and resource teacher
I had to sign in with the secretary – implemented around January – only the teacher knew I was there
I liked to have contact – if you have problems, you are able to go to someone
- W – thought that the crosswalk guy was the principal
I would have liked to have more contact with the teacher but didn't want to

interrupt the class

It depends on the teacher – if they're going to support you

I don't know if the teacher had a clue what it was all about

Question: What understanding did you gain about reading?

W – I didn't know anything about teaching reading before

K – a lot of things that Deborah had to say was interesting and helped me out

The meetings

Experience has taught me a lot

Things I take for granted helped my

I picked up on the little subtle things

"Magic Power" learning to read

The way they you can interpret personality

W – some things sound the same but spell differently

You don't realize that you learn these things

Sometimes it's hard to explain confusing concepts to children

J – I agree

Sometimes it was hard to explain because that's the way it is

I'm not a very good speller myself

"C" "K" "Q" why do you use when you do – I'm not sure

I agree with W about the beginning meeting – it was useful but you don't

really know why it's useful – I understood it but it was kind of over my head –

experience was what really worked for me

Hard to explain the "way it is rule"

Maybe we should have had a short pre-preparation meeting and then a longer one once we had started tutoring

W – I liked when we got together to share ideas

Video with A___ was really useful

Maybe should have shown "trouble kids" for ideas – it would have been helpful

I found that positive reinforcement worked well

J – should have showed a video when a child wasn't so good (i.e. running around, yelling)

I found that giving Candy was an incentive

Question: What understandings did you gain of learning styles?

W – I learned theory about learning styles through teacher education

Through tutoring, I realized that he was kinesthetic – need to experience it

- K – my child was all over – anything applied to him
 Visuals were the best
 General not – learning about them – I used it in a university presentation – it worked really well – useful knowing style and using strategies
 After about 4 sessions I picked up on his learning style and could tell what level he was comfortable at
 I think he was more advanced than others
 I think it would have been harder for him to read if I hadn't picked up on his learning style
- J – definitely the kinesthetic approach, just “reading didn't”
 I incorporated a lot of games
 Write on the board and say it
 We played with play-dough a lot
 He liked to close his eyes and “feel” a word
 The blackboard was really important
 Flash cards were good
 We had a tile floor and incorporated games
 Cue cards were important
 He's not really a listener but if you did an activity, he would follow along
 Fry paper – we did that together
 If I let him do the check marks, he would last a lot longer

Question: What have you learned about Learning Disabilities?

- W – I have taught kids with Learning disabilities but don't believe that F has LD
 He also had a tutor at home
 I don't know how kids are picked but I think some kids could have used it more
- K – I found reading-wise that he was an excellent reader – knowing that he had ADHD makes sense to me
 It happened quite a bit that he's gone to the principal's office for fighting but he was really good with me
 He's fine one on one but has lots of trouble at recess
 One day he said to me “guess what, I didn't get in any fights today”
 Outside of tutoring context, I learned what ADHD is like
 If he didn't have Ritalin he had a glazed over look and I had to rework my plans and make my lessons more kinesthetic
 As long as he had Ritalin, he was great
- J – I don't know about this program learning about LD
 I think he may have ADHD – glazed over look
 I don't think he's on any medication
 I never saw him interact with other kids or adults
 I don't think the program has taught a lot about LD – practicum work is more useful

**Question: Did you learn anything through the training or group sessions about LD?
Was it introduced?**

J – I don't recall too much of that

W – I don't really recall it from the first session

K – group sessions – other tutors talked about LD
Learned what a different disability would include
At the beginning, we learned how to teach to various levels

W – Would help to know what grade level standard is
He definitely improved

J – maybe should have links to a website of examples of reading level

K – summation report – C did this last year – would have been an asset to know
his interest etc. in the beginning
Information about child should be passed on from one year to the next
I had the opportunity to talk to C's tutor from last year and that helped me
understand him better

W – Last year's information should have been passed on
I don't know about the number of sessions
We should have wrapped up
We've done about 25 sessions
Other kids have more of an attachment issue

J – what is expected to be handed in?
Weekly business

Question: Overall what did you learn through this tutoring experience?

W – it was a good experience except that my school was so far away
I learned a lot about teaching reading
I like it
We did origami – he's better than I am – we made a puffed up pumpkin one-day,
he was very excited
His reading improved so much
We were able to move onto chapter books
Not afraid to try words he doesn't understand
His self-esteem increased

K – self-esteem – it helped him a lot
In the beginning he was not very confident with trying different expressions when

reading and now he likes to do it
He had more faith behind reading
I learned a lot from C and I think he learned
“Fantastic experience”
Bus routes were a hassle though

J – buses were trouble

W – I made some friends at the bus stops

J – I think I learned a lot about early literacy and how to teach a student who knows little about reading
He still needs help with reading but I have seen him grow – he can read 2 pages by himself
Unless games was involved he wouldn't pick up paper and read
We didn't get to harder chapter books
I have seen him grow throughout the year
He couldn't spell scorpion and tarantula but can now (because it interested him)
Hard to find books on these topics at an elementary school level
At the first sessions, we read the dictionary because I didn't know where to start from
Learned about where to start from and what are problems “ph” why does it make an “f” sound “Because God said so” I was a Catholic school so I figured I could get away with it

Question: Were you surprised at the first session? Did you know how or where to start?

K – my surprise was that I was impressed – he was more advanced than I expected
When I got there, he had no problem reading
I encouraged him to find harder words to read

W – I didn't really have any expectations in the beginning – at first we just got to know each other
Some things seemed simple to me but I was surprised he didn't know the word

EYR Questionnaire ** FINAL DRAFT**

Prepared by Kelli Zeran Grady

Gender: ___ Female ___ Male

→ Study by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) found “Female teachers held more positive attitudes than male” (285)

Age: ___

→ LDAO questionnaire asked for respondents’ age. Do perceptions/opinions/knowledge change with age? Is this question worth asking (i.e. are any participants over the age of twenty-five)?

What is your current year of study at Trent?

___ 1st year ___ 2nd year ___ 3rd year ___ 4th year ___ other

→ I am curious to know if students with more education have more confidence/perceived competency.

What is your major? _____

→ Study by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) “found that those undertaking science courses held significantly less positive attitudes towards inclusion than those undertaking humanities courses” (289)

What are your career objectives?

In what ways do you feel your experience as an EYR tutor’ might help you in your preferred career?

→ Hedrick et al (2000) asked the question “How did you decide to enter the field of education?” (Appendix A, 61) and the EYR 2000-2001 Tutor Post Questionnaire asked “Are you applying to a Faculty of Education this year? If so, in what ways do you feel this experience might have been helpful?” It is possible not all tutors plan to become teachers. The case study “When a criminal justice major becomes an America Reads literacy tutor” by Cobb and Allen (2001) provides interesting insight into why someone who does not plan a career in teaching may still benefit from the tutoring experience.

Reflect on the university courses you have taken. Which ones have best prepared you for tutoring and how have they prepared you?

→ Hedrick, McGee and Mittag (2000) asked pre-service teachers (prior to the commencement of tutoring), “List the education course(s) you have taken prior to this semester” and “Reflect on the courses you have taken. Which ones have best prepared you for tutoring and how have they prepared you?” (Appendix A. Pre-course e-mail survey, 61). Also, the LDAO government report (1st draft, May 2002) indicates future teachers should “complete undergraduate courses in exceptionalities and other related subject areas (e.g. child development, atypical development, language development)” (9). I wonder how many tutors have taken such courses and would list them as beneficial. It would also be interesting to see how the answer to this question changes from ‘pre-tutoring’ to ‘post-tutoring.’ Hedrick, McGee and Mittag (2000) found “After the

completion of the tutoring, students tended to cite courses not originally predicted as contributing to their tutoring experience” (56).

What expectations do you have for tutoring?

→ Question from Hedrick et al. (2000: 61). It may provide insight into tutor motivation and optimism.

Have you done any tutoring in the past? If so, please describe your experience.

→ Question from Hedrick et al. (2000: 61). Do tutors with previous experience have more realistic expectations? Are they more or less optimistic?

Have you worked with learning disabled or special needs children in the past?

Please Explain.

→ LDAO asked pre-service teachers “Did you gain any experience with special education/learning disabled children during your practicum?” and “Have you worked with learning disabled or special needs children prior to entering the pre-service program?” (113).

In your opinion, what kind of students have trouble with reading?

→ Hedrick et al. asks “In your opinion, what kind of students have trouble with this subject area?” (2000:61). Do tutors possess misconceptions? Will they answer this question differently at the end of the year?

What would make you more confident in your ability to help a child with learning disabilities learn to read?

→ This question is inspired by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) who posed an open-ended question asking respondents “what would have been needed in order to make their responses more positive” in their answers to the “affective scale” used in the survey (287). Responses included: more knowledge, experience, strategies, support, etc.

What are the characteristics of children with learning disabilities that you might encounter with the child you are tutoring?

→ Question used in EYR 2000-2001 Tutor Post Questionnaire. Also, LDAO asked pre-service teachers “What are learning disabilities?” and “What are warning signs, indicators or characteristics of a learning disability a primary teacher may see?” (113). Kavale and Reese provided a list and “asked LD teachers to indicate which features they believed best characterized LD” (148).

What are three teaching/learning strategies that you might use to help address the needs identified in the previous question?

→ Question from EYR 2000-2001 Tutor Post Questionnaire.

Do you believe a course in special education, exceptionalities and/or learning disabilities should be a mandatory component of all pre-service teacher programs? Please explain.

→ LDAO asked pre-service teachers “Does your pre-service program require you to take a course on special education or exceptionalities?” and asked a similar question regarding learning disabilities (112).

Do you know of any organizations that provide assistance for learning disabled students to classroom teachers, students and their families?

→ LDAO asked pre-service teachers this question (113).

The following is a list of potential challenges you may face as a tutor. Please rank them from 1 to 14 with 1 representing the challenge you are most concerned with and 14 representing your least concern.

- Discipline
- Motivating child
- Relations with child’s parents
- Relations with child’s teacher(s)
- Access to materials and supplies
- Preparation time for tutoring sessions
- Planning activities for tutoring sessions
- Effective use of different tutoring methods
- Knowledge of learning disabilities
- Paperwork
- Adequacy of tutoring environment
- Slow progress of child
- Adequacy of guidance and support
- Relations with child

→ This list is inspired by Whitaker (4). It could provide insight into tutor expectations/concerns/confidence. Differences in pre-tutoring and post-tutoring responses to this question should show the differences between expectations and reality.

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Final Copy

with changes / additions
made by Deborah Berrill.

Pseudonym _____
Date _____

EYR Tutor Questionnaire
2002 - 2003

1. What expectations do you have for tutoring with EYR?

2. Were there any university courses that prepared you for tutoring? If yes, please explain.

3. Have you done any tutoring in the past? If so, please describe your experience.

4. Have you worked with children with learning disabilities or special needs in the past? Please describe.

5. In your opinion, what are the reasons students have trouble with reading?

6. What are three warning signs, indicators or characteristics of children with learning disabilities that you might encounter with the child you are tutoring?

7. What are three teaching/learning strategies that you might use to help address the needs identified in the previous question?

8. What does it mean to say that a child is an auditory learner? Please explain and give several examples of strategies you might use.

9. What does it mean to say that a child is a kinesthetic learner? Please explain and give several examples of strategies you might use.

10. What are three things you might do to improve the self esteem of a child with reading difficulties?

11. What are several strategies you might use to ensure that a child has success in a reading task?

12. Is it a good idea to talk about what a book might be about before reading it with your child? Please explain.

13. The following is a list of potential challenges you may face as a tutor. Please rank them from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the challenge with which you are least comfortable with and 10 the one with which you are most comfortable.

- Behaviour problems
- Motivating the child
- Effective use of different tutoring methods
- Knowledge of learning disabilities
- Knowledge of reading approaches
- Knowledge of different learning style approaches
- Slow progress of the child
- Relationship with the child
- Keeping the child's attention
- Self esteem issues

14. As best as you can, please define the following terms as they relate to students with learning disabilities:

Learning disability:

Program modification:

Classroom accommodation:

Inconsistent performance:

Dyslexia

Dysgraphia

ADHD

Assistive technology

Phonemic awareness

Information processing

15. List any computer functions or software you know which could support a child who is struggling in their reading or writing.

16. On a scale of 1 (not useful) to 4 (very useful), indicate the value of each of the following in assisting a child struggling in reading.

	Not useful		Very useful	
A. Additional time from the classroom teacher.	1	2	3	4
B. Reading at home.	1	2	3	4
C. Improving on task behaviour	1	2	3	4
D. Use of computer software	1	2	3	4

The following section deals with issues of inclusion and integration of students with disabilities in the mainstream classroom.

On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), please indicate the answer which most closely reflects your position. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Inclusion offers mixed group interaction which will foster understanding and acceptance of differences.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a student with special needs.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The challenge of being in an ordinary classroom will promote the academic growth of the child with special needs.	1	2	3	4	5
4. As a teacher, I would accept responsibility for teaching children with severe learning difficulties within a whole school policy.	1	2	3	4	5
5. As as teacher, I will change my teaching processes to accommodate children with severe learning difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5
6. As as teacher, I will engage in developing skills for managing the behaviour of children with severe learning difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Most students with disabilities will make an adequate attempt to complete their assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Integration of students with disabilities will necessitate extensive retraining of general classroom teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Integration offers mixed group interation that will foster understanding and acceptance of differences among students.	1	2	3	4	5
10. It is likely that the student with a disability will exhibit behaviour problems in a general classroom.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
11. Students with disabilities can be best served in general classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The extra attention students with disabilities require will be to the detriment of the other students.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The challenge of being in a general classroom will promote the academic growth of the student with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Integration of students with disabilities will require significant changes in general classroom procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Increased freedom in the general classroom creates too much confusion for the student with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
16. General classroom teachers have the ability necessary to work with students with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The presence of students with disabilities will not promote acceptance of differences by other students.	1	2	3	4	5
18. The behaviour of students with disabilities will set a bad example for students without disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
19. The student with a disability will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a general classroom than in a special classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Integration of the student with a disability will not promote his or her social independence.	1	2	3	4	5
21. It is not more difficult to maintain order in a general classroom that contains a student with a disability than in one that does not contain a student with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Students with disabilities will not monopolize the general classroom teacher's time.	1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
23. The integration of students with disabilities can be beneficial for students without disabilities.					
24. Students with disabilities are likely to create confusion in the general classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
25. General classroom teachers have sufficient training to teach students with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Integration will likely have a negative effect on the emotional development of the student with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Students with disabilities should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom where possible.	1	2	3	4	5
28. The classroom behaviour of the student with a disability generally does not require more patience from the teacher than does the classroom behaviour of the student without a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Teaching students with disabilities is better done by special rather than general classroom teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Isolation in a special classroom has beneficial effect on the social and emotional development of the student with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
31. The student with a disability will not be socially isolated in the general classroom.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for participating in this research!!

EYR Questionnaire Results

1. What expectations do you have for tutoring with EYR?

→ I sorted the answers into categories (some tutors gave more than one answer).

Gaining experience and helping a child were the most frequently mentioned expectations.

- Experience (working with children/teaching) – 20
- Help child/make a positive difference – 18
- Learn about LDs & how to help children with LDs/literacy problems - 12
- Learn strategies for teaching reading – 9
- Personal reward/fulfillment - 7
- Personal learning/development of teaching skills – 4
- Patience – 1
- Learn what child goes through – 1

2. Were there any university courses that prepared you for tutoring? If yes, please explain.

→ Almost half of the tutors did not list any courses. Some tutors are still in high school so they have not had the opportunity to take university courses yet. It would be interesting to know if any university tutors would provide the name of a course now that they have some tutoring under their belt (i.e. have they come to realize the value of any previous courses that they hadn't anticipated?). For those who did respond, many listed psychology courses.

- No/Did not respond – 18
- Psychology – 10
- Con-Ed courses - 6
- English – 3
- Physics for teachers – 3
- Sociology – 2
- Math for teachers – 1

3. Have you done any tutoring in the past? If so, please describe your experience.

- Yes – 32
- No – 8

4. Have you worked with children with learning disabilities or special needs in the past? Please explain.

→ Some tutors have much more experience than others but it is still encouraging to see the majority of tutors have at least some experience.

- Yes – 31
- No - 9

12. Is it a good idea to talk about what a book might be about before reading it with your child? Please explain.

→ Now that the tutors have received some training, I would expect more positive responses to this question. Reservations for this technique include the fear of giving away too much of the story and making it too easy to read.

- Yes – 30
- Possibly – 5
- No – 3
- No response – 2

13. The following is a list of potential challenges you may face as a tutor. Please rank them from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the challenge with which you are least comfortable with and 10 the one with you are most comfortable.

→ I sorted through the rankings and found the following trends:

(Note: Two tutors – Paige & Shelby - did not properly rank the list so I did not include their results)

Tutors were **Most Uncomfortable** with:

- Behavioural Problems (23 ranked it 1, 2 or 3)
- Knowledge of Learning Disabilities (23 ranked it 1, 2 or 3)

Tutors were **Somewhat Uncomfortable** with:

- Slow progress of the child (14 ranked 1-3; 16 ranked 4-6; 8 ranked 7-10)

Tutors were **Most Comfortable** with:

- Motivating the child (28 ranked 7-10)
- Relationship with the child (30 ranked 7-10)
- Keeping the child's attention (21 ranked 7-10)
- Self esteem issues (22 ranked 7-10)

Tutors were **fairly evenly split** over their level of comfort for the following:

- Effective use of different tutoring methods (10 ranked 1-3; 14 ranked 4-6; 14 ranked 7-10)
- Knowledge of reading approaches (12 ranked 1-3; 15 ranked 4-6; 11 ranked 7-10)
- Knowledge of different learning style approaches (10 ranked 1-3; 12 ranked 4-6; 16 ranked 7-10)

→ I think these expectations are worth exploring in the focus group. From my experience, I found the items the tutors feel comfortable with were the ones that provided tutors with a great deal of concern last year (i.e. motivating child, keeping child's attention). I wonder if this has taken some tutors by surprise?

15. List any computer functions or software you know which could support a child who is struggling in their reading or writing.

- Could not name a program/function – 25
- Familiar with at least one program/function – 15

→ This links to the next question. It appears tutors require more experience/knowledge of computer programs.

16. On a scale of 1 (not useful) to 4 (very useful), indicate the value of each of the following in assisting a child struggling in reading.

Note: I did not include the results for 'Isobel' because it was not clear which numbers she selected.

→ **'Additional time from the classroom teacher'** received mostly positive responses: 27 ranked it 4; 11 ranked it 3 and 1 ranked it 2.

→ Tutors were almost unanimous in their strong belief in the value of **'Reading at Home'**: 39 ranked it 4 and one ranked it 3.

→ **'Improving on task behaviour'** may have been a little vague for some tutors (i.e. perhaps they weren't sure what it meant). Two did not respond at all; 3 selected 2; 19 selected 3 and 15 selected 4. So, most tutors think it is important but, apparently, not as important as reading at home.

→ **'Use of computer software'** had the fewest number of tutors rank it as 4 (8 tutors). The majority selected 3 (27 tutors) and the remaining 4 tutors chose 2. It would be interesting to know if any of these tutors have since used any computer programs with their child and if it has changed their opinion. Last year I used a Reader Rabbit program with my child a couple of times and was impressed with the results: he had more fun and made more progress. Also, my own children have learned a great deal from cd roms. I wonder if the lack of overwhelming support from the tutors is due to lack of experience using such programs with kids (not many tutors had an answer for question #15) or if my experience is not typical.

Kelli's Notes – Tutor Session – Jan. 12, 2003

Introductions – tutor comments regarding children

- short attention span
- enthusiastic
- fun, great attention span
- fun, next to music room (challenge)
- do a lot of things at once
- loves to read, fun
- enthusiastic
- attention span, near loud class
- bored easily
- social situation (challenge)
- polite, enthusiastic, speech problem, good attention span
- good bond
- fun, enthusiastic, distracted by music room
- mom visited for session – positive impact
- flash cards to help jog memory
- responsive, wrote sequel to book, Kidspiration program is good
- short attention span
- great sense of humour, likes to read joke books

Resource Teacher Feedback

- a lot of children in the EYR program have learning disabilities (particularly those in gr. 3)
- tutoring helps to identify LD's

Knapsacks

- loves the play dough – makes letters, use with BINGO, spell out words, form letters
- tutor form letter then child put hand over it with eyes closed and guess it
- races making words with play dough
- p's & q's game – make circles and lines with play dough then turn them into b or d, p or q, etc. (note: the word bed with a corresponding picture helps kids remember the difference between b & d – available from resource teacher)
- use play dough to make things from stories (i.e. witch's nose)
- many of the kids are kinesthetic learners so play dough is useful
- try practicing printing using overhead sheets and erasable markers – trace what is printed on a sheet underneath

Computer – Tutor comments

- hard to get into library to use it but enjoyed it
- wrote a story – pictures to go with it
- new to computer, story, made books, some recording

- trouble with letters – look for words on the computer with those letters
- spending more than 20 min at a time on it
- can take awhile on the computer
- about half of the tutors are spending one hour tutoring instead of 45 mins → if the session is going well, they will stay for an hour
- prefer more time (more than 20 min) on computer so not rushing
- full tutoring session can be spent on the computer once you get there, set up & use it (more of a problem at certain schools, it appears)
- microphone – use it to make radio announcements, good program
- used it 5 or 6 times – losing interest, getting distracted, printed out graphics → using it more as a teaching resource now
- at St. John's & Queen Elizabeth schools – can't print anything out
- using earphones (explained how to use them)
- tutoring in computer room so only spending 20 min on computer (convenient)
- child wants to take stuff home to teach his little sister (wants to print it out)
- used it 4 or 5 times – wrote Christmas story, gets distracted, losing interest → disheartened by Resource teacher – hard to get into rooms, use computer, etc.
- St. Peter's – library always locked
- used it so much – getting sick of some activities
- use for reading comprehension – trouble finding the right picture
- haven't used it yet
- steps to get on computer posted by computer or given to tutors at beginning of year would be helpful
- used once – enjoyed it, haven't used one much before
- King George – earphones not working
- Kidspiration – helpful – use pictures and sounds a lot – likes to explore, click all the buttons, can be distracting
- the “clickers” are a challenge
- child in charge of microphone, tutor in charge of mouse → tutor implemented this rule due to child's frustration with clicking & dragging
- scheduling problems
- tutors not all aware of adaptor
- child plays with computer more than anything (i.e. looking for a specific picture), therefore, tutor doesn't like it – using it once every 2-3 weeks – tutor goes through magazines to find pictures instead
- need more than 20 minutes on computer (it is in an out of the way location), had an “exploring day”, tried writing stories, likes specific programs i.e. food groups – write name of fruit, etc.
- “weekend words” – “at the end can we write all our words on Kidspiration?”
- child loves computer – choose the ones he likes, alphabet pictures that start with that letter
- St. John's – child doesn't want to work on the computer when his class is in the same room
- child loved it, really good program, tutor accustomed to NOT using computer for tutoring sessions, so they don't use it much
- need more structure – child asking lots of questions, getting off track

- hassle getting on computer – St. Peter’s
- child has it at home so not new/special to her
- one day is computer day because hassle to get on – likes microphone
- new & exciting at first, lost interest recently – child prefers reading books
- “pilot” year with Kidspiration – computer weekly logs

Maria

- computer can be fun & frustrating!
- looking for pictures is kinesthetic
- easy to lose track of time
- tight plan helps you stay on track → decide what you’re going to do ahead of time
- can’t always explore
- slowly share control of mouse & keyboard
- very tactile
- take away from computer at certain times i.e. to strategize
- become familiar with programs ahead of time

Deborah

- some children have a lot of trouble writing so computers can help them become more independent
- sometimes unclear what our focus should be – learn to use technology, learn sounds, etc.
- controversy over when to introduce keyboarding (i.e. at what age)
- what kind of parameters to suggest for the computer for the future → i.e. how long, how often on computer?
- language use, thinking
- mapping ideas into a graphic sense
- finding balance between one-on-one & usage of computer
- going into session – have different plans in mind – adapt to child’s needs/mood
- child & tutor both need to feel they’ve accomplished something over the course of a week
- LD kids – what leads to failure – they don’t finish anything – everything is half done – gets worse & worse as they get older → child doesn’t know what it feels like to complete something
- break things into chunks – each chunk is a completion
- tutor keeps in mind “big picture” – adapts as necessary – i.e. write alternate chapters or alternate sentences → joint authorship
- scaffolding – providing help, building up

Lesson Plan

- what should be happening each tutoring session
- important to have child read something they feel confident in – every session
- suggestion – while walking to session “what could you read today?”
- write a letter each week
- important for parents to see what’s being done, too – i.e. letter to go home
- start off with unstated statement “you can read”

- word study – easy to get too focused on – just decoding, though
- need to do prediction, retelling stories i.e. cues from pictures, reading comprehension
- thinking about story first is very useful → need to do at least once/week
- “What do you think will happen next?”
- sometimes child may be too tired to write, tutor can be scribe
- print slowly for child
- nonsense things are fun – playing with language, silly word thing
- Dr. Seuss – fun playing with words, rhythm
- reinforces phonemic awareness, clap along
- think of whole week when planning
- reading is about COMPREHENSION
- importance of how you make observations
- purpose of this → hand out “A Guide to the Lesson Plan”
- learning assessment skills
- what kind of things am I looking for?
- pick & choose what you comment on each week
- responsible for monitoring of children
- strategy awareness
- → very important – see development of child’s abilities in using strategies (i.e. review at end of session)
- kids need to be taught strategies if they are poor readers
- take some time to review the tutoring manual

Portfolios

- communicating with home (include letter sent home)
- Family literacy night participation

Challenges & Strategies

C: doesn’t want to finish projects (i.e. computer things)

S: - break down into smaller projects

- child picks something from book bag then tutor links it back to project
- white cards – word memory
- more challenge
- what he (child) wants to do
- drop things that he’s not interested in if it isn’t crucial
- choices can be overwhelming (i.e. just have him choose between ‘this’ or ‘that’)

C: confidence – i.e. when trying to figure out a word (afraid to say it – afraid to take a risk)

S: encourage her

C: distracted – asks a lot of questions, getting off track

C: brings extra baggage to session – i.e. upset about interactions with other kids → strong sensitivity to being different

S: watch child in classroom & on playground to see what's going on

C: separating words (i.e. compound words) → breaking up words for her makes her want to do it herself even when it doesn't apply (i.e. trying to break down a word like "the")

S: - maybe she should be left to notice compound words herself

- use play dough to shape out challenge words
- rice on table – trace it out (or use jell, pudding, tiles, play dough, etc.)

progress cards sent home by tutor

"hockey word shoot out list"

- using child's interest to integrate into activity
- Rewards – helpful for most kids

C: Retention is a problem i.e. just covered a word then can't remember it a couple of minutes later

C: Not Improving – frustrating/disheartening – on wait list to be tested

S: Try memory tricks/cues, use the computer program

- try to find one way 'in' to help him
- change expectations
- use the strength of his supportive family
- come up with an action to go with a problem word
- "secret code" for certain letter combinations

C: bored, lack of focus – loses enthusiasm after a few minutes

- child may have ADHD? Impulsive circular thinking
- trouble focusing due to LD?
- many possible reasons for lack of focus

S: - flip back & forth between activities

- find one thing that connects with child (i.e. comic books)
- need more info from Resource Teacher (depressed? anxious?)
- need more challenge?
- does child have higher level in some ways?
- try a series of long term projects you can work on over time in little chunks
- child is interested in origami – read instructions, make mobiles, link to reading, writing
- some kids learn to read by writing first
- puppet show (using origami animals?)
- "scripting" – short sentences, tape record, different voices for different characters

C: social situation; gets teased for having a tutor; trouble motivating; trouble sleeping; fatigue

S: - trying to make things fun

- start with something easy to boost confidence
- choose books on his interests
- blank book for him to write in – how he's feeling, what he likes/doesn't like
- end sessions with him lying on sofa listening to story

- stickers
- being read to is valuable – positive construction of reading
- have him learn to do something “cool”
- awareness of what peers are doing – describe tutor as “friend” coming in as opposed to “tutor for help”
- list of books for his level – go to Peterborough library, school librarian, Trent students for literacy, Deborah has some books
- <http://www.readinga-z.com>
- Janet – teaching long & short vowel words – work sheets – “Rules” i.e. “when two vowels go walking...”
- Book Recommendation: “You are Special” by Max Lucado

C: Lack of sleep – possibility of child abuse?

S: - need more info

- include things said/done in your observations
- meeting with tutor, Janet & Resource teacher
- help him become more self aware, give him a skill that he’ll relate to you

C: Can’t remember words

S: - use computer program to organize words, reinforce things

- possibly child wants the attention he gets when he can’t read a word

- a child with two friends tends to be “okay”

- informational books – boys tend to like them better (i.e. tornadoes, etc.)

- brainstorming – activating prior knowledge; gives a reason for words

C: lack of motivation

S: - giving certificates (but mom throws them out – so put them in a small book that the tutor keeps until the end of the year?)

- at the end of the year she can keep something small & tangible (i.e. book)
- a bead for a bracelet for good deeds/books read, etc (i.e. instead of a sticker)
- different bead colours/types for different things/different levels?

C: Can’t remember words

S: - flash cards – get it right, she gets the card (see who has the most cards at the end of the game; keep track from week to week?)

- repeat it, spell it, then later spell it out loud to her & ask her what it is
- REPETITION
- have her see her progress over time – beads, graphs, can see the accumulation
- internalize feelings of self-worth
- use graphs (i.e. one axis: # of words correct; other axis: week 1,2,3, etc)

Poetry

- add actions to poems
- do the poems a few days in a row
- time how long it takes to read them

Handbook of tutor strategies

C: Confidence with reading – chooses books below his level

S: “tishing” – when he’s struggling with a word, when he finally gets it, he calls it “tishing”

- Child’s “Rate a Book” - # of stickers (to indicate how good it is) → his opinion is important, self advocacy, a way to find out what kind of books he likes

C: Child doesn’t feel she has a problem with reading

Note: Child may feel this at the beginning of the year but not at the end, this can reflect a developmental level

S: - encourage her to read at a good rate since this is very important for comprehension

- make word cards
- don’t start timing her reading until she knows all the words
- need to know what’s expected at grade level → give tutors a sense of expectations
- make sessions challenging without being frustrating – encourage them to reach their potential

Remember: children are easy to occupy but teaching is a different thing

C: Distractions

S: Close your eyes – imagine the other people are invisible

Deborah's Notes – Tutor Session – Jan. 12, 2003

Note: Names of tutors & children have been removed.

[Tutors introduced themselves & told a bit about the child they're tutoring]

- L_____ – a challenge
- B_____ – short attention span
- G_____ - B_____ distracted by music
- D_____ – child wants to do everything
- D_____ – a few issues with attention span
- W_____ – he gets bored easily
- S_____ – social situation of child
- P_____ – speech problem affects the way he learns
- M_____ – gets distracted by music room
- J_____ –
- S_____ – she tries her hardest – memorizing words hard
- (S_____ (QE) – put together Kidspiration→)
- A_____ – he has a short attention span
- S_____ – great sense of humour
- K_____ – a delight
- D_____
- K_____ – sweetie
- C_____ – enthusiastic
- S_____ – she's great

50 % spend 1 hr 2x

Computer use

- S_____ – once = Need 30 mins min.
- A_____ – a couple of times
- S_____ QE – lots microphone = Children really like it
- S_____ – letters & sounds
- J_____ – a few times
- J_____ – 2x – microphone – Radio announcement
- M_____ – 4 or 5 times: Now will use less often – used for printing off pictures
- S_____ – Can't print out – Earphones
- P_____ – 20 minutes is enough: Pages of words have trouble with: Reinforcement
- S_____ – 4 or 5 times: Gets distracted in it
- W_____ – Getting sick of some activities
- Better for comprehension – Difficulty finding the right pictures
- D_____ – Couldn't log on properly
- C_____ – once only: she really enjoyed it; first time on computer
- K_____ – Kidspiration really helpful: like pictures of dinosaurs & monsters – every time – lots of explanation – We need to do more with it; lots of clicking
- D_____ – Fine motor problems – frustrating to click and drag: keyboard too

- G _____ – Not a big fan of the program – plays instead of using it – won't do anything until found picture
- D _____ – Need more than 20 minutes just to get there – He enjoys it immensely – Exploring day first – Now using programs – into food groups
- B _____ – D. loves the computer: Have done a lot of the activities: food group; alphabet matching – Gets distracted by classes
- A _____ – Once - _____ (child's name?) loves it – I will try more
- M _____ – Once – just explored – I would need structured things
- K _____ – Once – Hassle to find computer, she has the program at home – not new to her
- T _____ – A few times – Hard to get a room – One day the computer day – likes the microphone
- M _____ – At the beginning – new flashy & enjoyed it; loss of interest now – He prefers reading books over anything else
- DPB – Unclear if focus should be fine motor skills – mouse; keyboard; etc. or language development & thinking skills
- Maria
- = Working can be frustrating and fun
 - = Sound as important
 - = Visual
 - = Time goes by really quickly – a challenge –
 - = Need a tight plan – what do you want to achieve
 - Need to have a plan
 - Control the mouse & keyboard – definitely – slowly relinquish control to child
 - Give the child strategies i.e. what is happening on the screen & how to deal with it e.g. today record your story
 - Take child away from computer; strategize with pen & paper
 - Today we will do this activity – very focused: Next time we will do the colours
- B _____ – I downloaded & became familiar – very helpful

Challenges & Strategies

- M _____:
- C: Dean does not want to finish things that we begin: Loses interest
→ often time computer things
- S: Chunk into smaller pieces. But still does not always work
- Play dough
 - Word memory with white cards
 - Can bring back
 - Be sure the 'why' is apparent
 - Do more challenging tasks [M _____]
 - Choice – between 2 things only

- M _____
- C: loses confidence (low voice)
- S: "I think I heard it!"

- C: Creates distraction by asking Q's

S: Tutor keep the focus

C: Brings extra baggage

- Friends problems → Can be
- Calming down in sessions

C: Strategy tutor uses card to separate compound words

S: - Stop doing it for her

- Try kinesthetic approaches: play dough, pudding, rice in a container [tutors]

[A _____] Many people – rewards work well

D _____

C: Retention is problematic

- I find it really discouraging
- He is really stuck

S: [M _____] Use an action with each sound – Tap nose with “ch”

W _____

C: Child loses interest easily – Likes at first

S: Flip back & forth between activities

- “bored”
- bigger challenge maybe
- Work from his interest: Origami – animals – make a script

S _____

C: Motivation

- trouble sleeping
- frustrated easily
- teased about having an EYR person

S: - Blank book with his name – writes what he can’t tell her: How he is feeling – If things are too hard

- Reads to him at the end of the session

→ One more thing: Getting the Dennis Lee book of a horse wh/ eats people who tease her

= Treat him like a friend – “Hey bud!”

C: Need materials at the level reading

S: Public Library

C: Long & Short vowels

S: Need activity sheets (Janet will do)

C: Possible depression

S: Talk to Janet & Resource Teacher together

P _____

C: Retention, Not much progress

S: Computer Program sometimes helps

C: Attention seeking?

S: Really emphasize successes

Try informative books –Sharks, Earthquakes, Motorbikes

M _____

C: Lack of motivation (Mom throws out stickers)

S: Keep the stickers with a book (small one)

= Give a bead every time you would a sticker – Every book she reads. Make a bracelet

S _____

C: She does not remember words

S: Flash cards

Accumulating cards – tutor keeps cards with words child needed help with (“helps”); child keeps cards of the words she successfully read → Repetition as key

→ Be sure to keep bar graph daily or weekly of # of words/books read. Date each column

J _____

C: Lack of confidence – chooses books below level he can actually read

S: Have child rate books

→ Give different stickers for harder books; less desirable stickers for less difficult books

- Ask child opinion re: wh/ sticker he should get

C _____’s ‘tishing’

DPB – We need several examples of reading passages at grade 2 level and grade 3 level

→ Give to all tutors w/ a cover note re: challenging the child as much as realistic to try to get the child as close to grade level as possible

Challenges Faced by Tutors

Note: This includes only the information tutors wrote on index cards at the January tutor meeting. All names have been removed.

Challenge: About lack of motivation. One of the larger challenges certainly deals with the child's ability to focus on specific tasks. My child has it in his mind that reading is boring and wants to avoid it at all costs. So whenever we get midway through activities, the largest share is to motivate interest and complete the activity.

Strategy: At this point the best thing to do seems to be basically keeping each activity short and to the point. Also use a wider variety. Do some tasks that require a lot of moving around or interactivity. - Play Doh, black board

Problem:

1. She doesn't think she has trouble with reading (ex. All books are easy)
4. focusing when distractions in room
3. work with reading & writing not just play doh
2. speed

Strategies:

1. have to judge level more on own
4. continual reminder to pay attention (jokingly)
3. use play doh as reward
2. give time, coax

Challenges:

1. D ___ never seems to finish projects. Recently attempts to break it down into smaller steps have failed.
2. D ___'s far more interested in working in other programs on the computer.

Strategies:

1. have back up plans, suggest the book bag of fun things – basically D ___ chooses something that can be linked to word learning
 - flip back and forth
 - play doh
 - cards
 - avoid superfluous activities
 - more challenging
2. After going thru the other programs One session, I was able to count on two hands some of our words of the week (and past weeks) – great!
 - > I let him give me a turn – reading dialogue boxes and explaining to me the games

Challenges:

1. C ___ loves the computer but gets easily distracted. He is restless in doing the Kidspiration activities and pays little attention to them. He'd rather play with the pictures or (other) math, science, spelling software on the computer.
2. I'm having a hard time thinking of any more big challenges! ☺

Strategies I've been using are:

- Having a set activity or using an activity to relate more to words & concepts we are currently working on in place of the instructions of the activity.
 - I try to use topics he enjoys or relates to (i.e. hockey, soccer, dinosaurs, monsters)
-

Challenges:

1. distracted by hallway, other kids
2. doesn't know a lot of words she should and has to constantly repeat words to remember; forgets easily

Solutions:

1. turn desk away from hallway view and other students to the one side of a room
 2. flashcards – when she doesn't know a word or forgets randomly pick a word and ask her to spell it and/or spell it out then ask what the word is
-

Challenges:

1. Parents who aren't supportive – throwing away reading certificates, etc.
2. boredom with traditional paper & pen activities and magnetic letters
3. noise from the music room
4. fidgeting
5. Reading books that are too easy

Strategies:

1. NO SOLUTION!! HELP
 2. using chocolate pudding & finger-painting words, using play dough, sparkles, etc.
 3. listening to books on tape & reading along, using the computer.
 4. treasure hunts, moving to poems, and jumping while spelling words
 5. getting the teacher to only offer harder book
-

Challenges & Solutions:

Maintaining interest – varying strategies as much as possible -> kinesthetic/ computer/ drawing/ writing/ games/ taking turns reading

- important to vary even once a formula seems to be working.

Isolating weaknesses – one child had very poor attention span while another a good one.

- although child w/ poor attention was much more developed in reading level, the other child had problems connecting & memorizing letters/ sounds/ rhymes/ combinations

-> again varying strategies is the way I try to make victories

Challenges

1. Sight word recognition (keeping attention of child)
2. building confidence in reading

Strategies

2. Hockey Word Shootout – Whatever we are reading on a given day I have the child pick 5-10 words that he/she found difficult. I then have the child write the words out with a different coloured special pencil. I then time the child to see how long it takes him to read the list. I also make a chart (graphs) and record his progress (3-4 times). He then is able to take this home to share with parents. After we complete this activity I ask the child to pick one word out of the initial ten words and we record it on his/her hockey word shoot out list. I then tape a piece of construction paper with the word onto a sponge puck that he actually shoots into a net. The child is then able to learn in an active fun way.

Challenges

1. confidence – second guessing herself
2. getting distracted, creating distractions
3. social problems – with friends, or family on a few occasions she has come -upset- ☹
4. compound words – when reading a big word I break it into parts – N_____ likes this method but she gets confused
5. the English language – words like could – N_____ thinks it should be ‘cood’

Strategies:

1. When I hear my child trying to sound out words I encourage her to be louder and more sure of herself because most often the first or second guess is the right word.
 2. I use a structured session with usually four tasks – to allow for completion, but not boredom
 3. The best thing that I know of is to talk about these things and sometimes I think that’s what she really needs is just someone to talk with
 4. I use a card (index/recipe) at all times when reading to focus attention & break words into two. N_____ would like to use this with words that shouldn’t be
- Jello, pudding, rice make the first letter
-

Challenges:

1. The student gets bored with a task very easily. After a few minutes of working on something he loses enthusiasm.
2. The student tries to rush through the story which affects his reading comprehension

Strategies:

1. It helps to flip back and forth between activities. If he gets bored, we go back to it later.
 2. Often I’ll make him stop reading after a few pages and we’ll talk about (draw, respond to) the part we’ve read and predict what will happen.
-

Challenge: Sometimes it is hard to get M _____ motivated to want to work and read. He is always tired and gets frustrated easily.

Strategies:

1. Making learning fun. I try to incorporate games into our learning.
 2. I sometimes start our sessions off with an activity I know M _____ will find easy. This builds confidence in him and often gets him interested.
 3. I try to choose books that relate to M _____'s interest.
 4. I give constant feedback and support.
 5. I have a book (that is just for M _____). In this book he writes to me how he is feeling – what he likes and dislikes.
 6. At the end of each session, I read to M _____ while he lies on the library sofa. This gives M _____ down time and also acknowledges his personal needs.
 7. Stickers.
-

Challenge:

Problems with the letters B and D. When he writes these in lower case he tends to mix them up.

Strategies:

As suggested by [Resource Teacher] we use a bed to tell the difference. B acts as the headboard and D as the footboard. When he has problems I prompt him and he is able to picture the bed in his head and figure out which letter to use.

My Biggest Challenges:

1. Helping M _____ to recognize common words (i.e. the words on Fry's instant word list) from week to week.
2. Keeping M _____ interested and focused.

Strategies:

1. Working with the flash cards near the beginning of every tutoring session. Playing the word bingo game I created that contains only the Fry's instant word list words.
 2. Making learning fun using games. When it's my turn to read, I make silly mistakes (i.e. adding 'purple elephant' to a sentence. She'll correct me and often continue to read forgetting that it was my turn.
-

Challenge

One of the challenges I have had with my student this year is the maintenance of focus and interest during a session.

Strategy:

In order to keep focus I try to ensure that diversity and originality are a large part of the planning process. I find that if the student feels the lesson or session is developing into a routine he will become bored and distracted. The more I capture the interests and respect of the child, the better.

Teaching Challenges

- * not having student present at sessions
- being unsure about how to assess child's ability

Student Challenges:

- short attention span

Strategies:

- assessment → talk to classroom teacher – I had a good response & met with the teacher on several occasions where she shared some different programs that she works with.
- weekly diagnostic tools – i.e. a weekly letter from child to me can be easily assessed for growth and new issues
- short attention span → reading
- share the reading
- use a ruler to highlight which word we are on & to follow along when I read to her

Challenges

1. Keeping him interested & on task, as he is easily distracted.
2. Helping him to be confident in his reading, as he easily gives up – even when he is reading quite well!

Strategies:

1. I am still having difficulty trying to fix this problem. He has good days & bad. I think I will only go on the computer the day that his class isn't there. I am going to focus the activities more on the things I know he is interested in (i.e. jokes & sharks, etc). I try to incorporate many of the daily tasks into games, like memory, go fish & bingo as I have noticed that he absolutely loves games (& he gets very competitive!). I just have to get more creative.
2. I point out the difficult words that he read more than I point out his little mistakes (although I make note of them in order to focus on them later). I help him break the words down, by covering part with my hand – this seems to work as I have noticed him doing this on his own. Sometimes he knows but he won't say.

Challenges:

1. Keeping student on track and working because she wants to do 101 things all at the same time & there are other days when all she wants to do is colour.
2. Getting her to slow down & think seriously about what she is doing.
3. Knowing whether what I do with her is helping her.

Strategies:

1. Keep the session moving, reward her (words, stickers, colouring) if she does the work I have set for her to do.
2. Have her sit properly on chair, have no or little distracters around her (i.e. nothing else she can play with).
3. I may try some different strategies this term and try testing her in a way.

Challenges:

1. confusing similar words (i.e. there, these)
2. Keeping his attention long enough to finish our story or book.
3. mixing up b's, d's, p's, q's, a's
4. crying, tantrums

Strategies:

1. flash cards
 2. stopping to go over what has happened (ensure comprehension)
 3. practice writing them, shaping them
 4. tell him that I am his tutor & there to practice reading; want to be there. Resource teacher/ principal can intervene
-

Challenges

1. Some mornings D _____ has already been working with the resource teacher for 30 min (9-9:30). He has a harder time sitting and staying focused during these times.
2. D _____ does not enjoy drawing, I would like to create a story but he has refused to draw when I bring it up.

Strategies:

1. – do some activities on the board so he is up and moving
 - will try using play dough to give him something else to do while we work together
 - he receives a star every time we meet for the full time – after 10 stars he gets a small reward
 2. use kidspiration program to create pictures
 - will try to create something with play dough
-

Challenges:

1. comprehension – needs to be directed before complete comprehension is able to be accomplished
2. easily distracted

Strategies:

1. – ask questions regarding the story – before, during, after
 - we make/do mini-book reports in fun ways i.e. make mobile, re-write story, put on a play, create puppets
 2. keep things simple & not too flashy **BUT** FUN!
 - our room to work in is distracting on its own (next to music room), so try a new room i.e. library
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Potential Focus Group Questions (2nd Draft)

1. Tell me about the child you are tutoring. How would you describe your child's abilities and interests in reading & writing?
2. Have you been informed the child you are tutoring has a learning disability? (If not, do you suspect your child has a learning disability that hasn't been confirmed yet?) Explain.
 - Potential follow up questions:
 - a) Who told you?
 - b) What is the nature of the disability?
 - c) Have you adapted your tutoring sessions as a result?
 - d) What kind of challenges has it presented?
 - e) Do you feel adequately prepared to cope with these challenges?
3. Did your past experiences help you in any way with tutoring a child with learning disabilities?
4. Was the training session in September helpful in preparing you for the challenges faced by children with learning disabilities?
5. So far this year what have you learned about Learning Disabilities?
6. Do you feel that you are getting enough support from the resource teacher; classroom teacher; EYR/LDAP?
7. In your opinion, what are the reasons students have trouble with reading?
8. How do you think tutoring a child with LDs differs from tutoring a child without LDs?
9. What do you think are the benefits and challenges of including children with learning disabilities in a regular classroom?
10. Do you think teachers should have special supports for inclusive classrooms? Explain.
11. Overall, do you believe the EYR program is provides a good introduction to teaching students with learning disabilities?
 - Potential follow up: How could the program be improved to better prepare tutors for helping students with learning disabilities?

Computer Questions (If there is time)

1. Do you believe the Kidspiration computer program is a useful tool for tutoring?
 - If yes – In what way(s) has it helped your student to learn?
 - If no – Why not? Do you believe any computer program could be beneficial?

Other Potential Questions (are they relevant?):

What have you learned from your contact/resource teacher?

What occasions do you have to talk to your child's teacher? Do you feel comfortable approaching the teacher?

What have you learned from your student?

What types of learning strategies do you use when tutoring?

What types of behaviours have you encountered so far?

Potential Focus Group Questions (Kelli – Dec/02)

Questions taken from or inspired by interview questions from Reading Research Quarterly (April-June 2001):

Tell me about the child you are tutoring. How would you describe him/her?

How would you describe your child's reading abilities, interests in reading, writing abilities, interests in writing?

What occasions do you have to talk to your child's teacher? Do you feel comfortable approaching the teacher?

Tell me about your lesson plans. Are you able to follow them closely during your tutoring sessions?

How do you think your child likes the tutoring sessions? What evidence/signs do you have?

What types of books do you select for your tutoring sessions? How do you make your choices?

Questions taken from or inspired by Hedrick, McGee & Mittag (2000):

Describe your personal relationship with the student.

Describe a typical tutoring session.

What lessons have you learned about teaching as a result of the tutoring?

What do you think about your expectations for tutoring now that you have completed half of the tutoring program?

How much do you think your student's reading and writing has improved thus far?

My ideas for questions:

Note: Some of these questions are intended to elicit discussion about what tutors know about learning disabilities, their attitudes towards children with learning disabilities and the inclusion of special needs children in the regular classroom.

Have you been informed the child you are tutoring has a learning disability? Explain. (i.e. Who told you? What is the nature of the disability? Have you adapted your tutoring sessions as a result? What kind of challenges has it presented? Do you feel adequately prepared to cope with these challenges?)

→ If not, do you suspect the child you are tutoring has a learning disability that hasn't been confirmed yet? Please explain.

How do you think tutoring a child with LDs differs from tutoring a child without LDs?

What do you think are the benefits and challenges of including children with learning disabilities in a regular classroom? Do you think teachers should have special supports for inclusive classrooms?

Describe the value of the tutoring experience for you personally.

Describe the challenges you have faced in your tutoring sessions.

Potential Questions for Tutor Research (Mary – Dec/02)

1. So far, has this program met your initial expectations?
2. Did your past tutoring experiences help you in any way with this tutoring?
3. In your opinion, what are the reasons students have trouble with reading?
4. What type of activities are you using in your tutoring process?
5. The following is a list of potential challenges you may face as a tutor. Rank from one to ten... Do you believe that these challenges have stayed the same?
6. So far this year what have you learned about Learning Disabilities; Program Modification; Classroom Accommodation; Inconsistent Performance; Dyslexia; Dysgraphia; ADHD; Assistive Technology; Phonemic Awareness; Information Processing?
7. What important factors/ points of interest did you learn at the training sessions in September? Have they been helpful?
8. What types of computer programs have you used with your student so far this year? Have these programs helped your student to learn?
9. What have you learned from your (contact) teacher?
10. What have you learned from your student?
11. What types of learning strategies do you use when tutoring?
12. What types of behaviours have you encountered so far?
13. What types of learning disabilities have you encountered and what type of support has been given to you to assist you in successful tutoring?
14. What questions/ troubles have you encountered so far?
15. Do you feel that you are getting enough support from resource teacher; classroom teacher; EYR/LDAP?