

The TUTOR

CORPORATION
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Hello, Volunteer! Welcome to School Culture

by Heidi Pfunder Laws

Imagine your first day at school: finding your classroom, getting to know your new teacher, and meeting the other kids. You wonder who you will sit next to in class. You hope that you'll be able to keep up with the others in reading or math.

Do you remember the people who influenced you while you were in school? Who were the adults in your school that helped keep the school running? Those people and the students that make up the school body define the unique culture of each school.

There are many layers within a school culture and many players. If you are a new volunteer or project director, how can you develop a better understanding of that culture? Who are

the key players and how will they influence your role? What are the written and unwritten rules of school procedure? Having knowledge of the school and how it works may be the

key to the success of your project. To give an overview of life inside a school we have asked several teachers, principals, and tutors to talk about their experiences with volunteer projects in schools.



Principal's Perspective

Janette Hernandez,
Assistant Principal
San Francisco, CA

Communication and Respect

"I love life in the chaos of middle school learners. The positive

DEAR PROJECT LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS,

It's Back to School time again! Since we are all gearing up to start or return to our education-focused projects, this issue of *The TUTOR* is designed to guide projects through the process of building **partnerships with schools and communities**, to help volunteers establish **strong relationships with their students**,

to suggest other students as a wonderful **new resource for tutors**, and to offer resources and information about **research-based literacy practices**.

I hope you can find useful activities and information in this issue to help make this coming school year a great one!

Your Editors

FALL 1998

The TUTOR is your source for topics of interest to education-focused National Service projects.

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interaction among students, parents/caregivers, families, teachers, and community members is what brings the school together as a community. My advice to tutors and volunteers entering schools is, *first*, to get to know the students, families, and teachers by spending time observing in classrooms and on the playground. Talk to students, get to know them, and respect what they bring to school. The key to a successful program is building relationships with people in the school and the community.

"It's also important to know what the mission and goals of the school are. For example, many schools are focusing on literacy development, so a volunteer could offer support in that area. We are very grateful to have volunteers at our school and value everything they bring to the school and to the students.

"We started a parent volunteer program at our school last spring and it was very successful. We called it **Community on Patrol**. Parents of students at our school volunteered at least 10 hours a week, walking the halls, the yard, and cafeteria before, during, and after school. Our mission was to increase adult visibility at the school, deter outsiders from coming in the building, and lower our class cutting rate. Ten parents attended a one-day orientation at the school reviewing student expectations and building relationships with students.

"The students respected the adults and the students, teachers, and parents all communicated daily the positive benefits of having parents in the

school. I met once a week with the parents and we discussed what was going well and ways to improve the program.

"The parents began mentoring students and developing relationships with other parents and teachers, bringing them into our program. It's been a great success."

**Karrin Calhoun, Retired Principal
Eugene, OR**

Learning the Ropes of a Bustling Environment

"How do I juggle the needs of all of my teachers, students, parents, and volunteers? Well, the best way for people to make an appointment with me is through the secretary who keeps my calendar up to date. Quick issues are dealt with by leaving a note on a clothes pin by my door which I check all day. I am always available if my office door is open, which it nearly always is. I also give a very thorough school handbook with every conceivable kind of information about the school to all volunteers."

Teacher's Perspective

**Margot Patzer, Teacher
Chicago, IL**

Filling the Holes to Offer Children What They Need

"Being on the front lines as a classroom teacher can be a form of isolation. Over a period of time this can become taxing on an individual. Often the

HELP! I'm Entering A New School. How Do I Begin to Learn About It?

Each school has a unique culture all its own. When entering a school, you should take the time to learn as much as possible about it. These questions and suggestions will get you started.

Interview staff and consider these questions about staff, school, and community.

- ◆ What is the environment like? Is there a love of kids?
- ◆ Are there complaints from staff? What kinds?
- ◆ Are there school celebrations?
- ◆ What are the demographics of the school?
- ◆ What is the level of parent involvement?
- ◆ What are the education levels of the parents?
- ◆ Are there language barriers between schools and parents?

Find out about school-based resources:

- ◆ Teacher trainings
- ◆ Sharing of materials
- ◆ Use of copiers
- ◆ Other volunteer programs within the school
- ◆ Computer lab

Note: Find out the protocol for the use of these resources: Is there a time when you shouldn't use the copiers?

Good habits as you enter a school:

- ◆ Write a letter introducing yourself to the principal and teachers.
- ◆ Be proactive and have a positive attitude!
- ◆ Participate in special events at school. Volunteer to help out on field trips, etc.
- ◆ Get copies of district policies.
- ◆ Get a copy of school handbook (lots of insight into school culture here).
- ◆ Share CNS handbook or similar information with school.
- ◆ Ask the teacher's classroom rules.
- ◆ Dress appropriately. A good rule of thumb is to follow the style of the classroom teachers.
- ◆ When you cannot make it to a tutoring session, call and let them know in advance.
- ◆ Pay close attention to the schedule. Arrive a little early. Teachers and students are counting on you.
- ◆ HAVE FUN!

These suggestions were contributed by Kimberly Jordan, Project Director for Kansas City Seniors for Schools, and Earl Williams, Principal at Crispus Attucks Elementary School, Kansas City, MO.

resources needed to educate your children are nonexistent in your school and classrooms are overcrowded. A teacher's schedule doesn't allocate time to address those critical issues. How can learning possibly be taking place in this situation?

"My solution was to search for a volunteer tutor who could help enrich the learning process in my classroom. This will be my third year with a classroom tutor and it's hard for me to imagine how I ever survived without her. Ms. Tovin has filled every role imaginable from storyteller to nurse. Primarily she works with children on an individual basis to accentuate skills that the children are lacking.

"It is in the area of life skills that I see the most gain though. I have seen dramatic changes in the students' personal worth, a drive to use their potential, and pride in their successes. Life may be hard for these children but no one will ever be able to take away from them what Ms. Tovin has given them: a window to the world and the belief that they are capable of obtaining what they want out of life."

Volunteer's Perspective

**Gale Greenlee¹, AmeriCorps Team Leader
Atlanta, GA**

The Ins and Outs of School Culture

"When going into a school, it's crucial that you understand how the school works, and I don't just mean the schedule. Are teachers divided into teams? If so, how often do they meet? Is there a grade leader? Are there existing school programs within which you or your project can work? Is there an advisory council that includes parents and volunteers? Can you have

access to student records such as grades and parent contact information? Who approves special events and field trips? And it may seem simple, but how do you get office space or reserve space for your program activities? Ask questions and get to know the school secretary. He or she will be a lifesaver!"

**Juergen Meyer, Volunteer
Atlanta, GA**
The Children Make It Easy

"Every other Saturday there is an event in my life that I look forward to for one week and which then makes me smile through the next week. It's the **Discovery Program at Dunbar**. Inspired by **Hands-On-Atlanta Day**, I began to volunteer at Dunbar Elementary School's Discovery Program.

"The whole environment, a large cafeteria full of young children preparing to head to their classes, was a completely new experience to me. About a dozen first graders made me feel welcome right away though. The shine in their eyes and the smile they give me when I read a book with them or work on math problems leaves no doubt that they are having a good time. Knowing that they actually give up an opportunity to play outside for a volunteer learning experience is particularly rewarding to me.

"Many of the children also tell us about their dreams for the future. Some want to become doctors, others want to go to college and pursue equally exciting careers. I am glad that I can give some of my time to help them fulfill their hopes and have lots of fun on top of that. Getting out of bed on Saturday was never this easy!"

¹Gale Greenlee is now a member of the LEARNS Team at SRC.



✓ What Do I Need?! Tutor Checklist ✓

by Debbie Howell

In your tutoring experience you'll find that there will be many materials you will collect and other materials you wish you had on hand during a tutoring session.

Here's a start to creating a handy tutor tool kit:

- ✓ A large three ring binder (3" is an excellent size).
- ✓ A plastic zipper pencil pouch to hold: pencils, markers, crayons, glue sticks, and scissors.
- ✓ Dividers with the following tab titles and contents:
- ✓ **School or site information**- addresses, important phone numbers, schedules of students you tutor, classroom rules, management procedures and school calendar, teachers' names and other school contacts.

- ✓ **Lessons / record keeping**- lesson plans, assessments, and daily progress chart (see page 10). Include a separate tab for each student you tutor.
- ✓ **Site words / vocabulary**- word lists, activities and a separate pocket divider to hold cards and games.
- ✓ **Reading activities**- strategies, games, a list of books you've read together, and book making activities.
- ✓ **Writing activities**- letter writing, story starters, journal topics, games, poetry, and paper in various colors and sizes.
- ✓ **Book lists**- age appropriate book titles for your students.

When the Tutor and Child Do Not Look Alike: Diversity Training for Tutors

by Sarah E. Torian

Although there are seven times as many whites as non-whites aged fifty and above in the United States, the demographics are different for children age zero to nine, where whites only hold a two-to-one advantage. The schools where we conduct our National Service programs are multicultural. We must, though, continuously challenge ourselves to be aware of the experiences that shaped us so that we can be better prepared to learn about and earn the trust of others with different experiences. But, what does that mean? How can National Service volunteers turn those words into actions?

Actually, a first step to take is not an *action* at all. Frequently, when teachers or tutors are challenged to be more aware of cultural pluralism in their work with children, they respond with: "Tell me what to do and I will do it." But as Paul Gorski, a cultural diversity facilitator at the University of Virginia explains, "Cultural diversity and multicultural awareness are not approaches to implement or topics for a special unit or themes for a bulletin board. Instead, they are the foundations of an attitude or value system that insists that good education is multicultural, and education consists not simply of curriculum, but also of teaching styles, atmosphere, socialization, and learning how to learn."

This can begin with a development of awareness of the experiences in our own lives—our histories, our families, hometowns, educations, significant events—and an understanding of how they shaped us into the people we have become. With the knowledge of what made us who we are and a recognition of the fact that those influences are not universal, it is much easier for us to reach out and discover people with different backgrounds and of different cultures.

Acquiring the Knowledge

We are all products of our own cultures, our own backgrounds and experiences. Having taken the time to develop an understanding of what those cultures, backgrounds, and experiences that influenced us are, how can we ensure that we are properly equipped to respond to and respect others' cultures? Again, attitude and an open mind are vital, but it is also important to broaden our knowledge and understanding of the other cultures and ethnic groups with whom we will be working in the schools.

- Spend more time with people of that culture.
- Identify a cultural guide, someone from the culture

who will discuss the culture with you, introduce you to new experiences, and help you understand what you are seeing.

- Spend time with the literature. Read articles by and for persons of the culture. But, don't just read nonfiction or professional articles; read fiction too. It is an enjoyable way to enter the culture in a safe, non-threatening way.
- Attend cultural events and meetings of leaders from within the culture.
- Spend time in the school community. Attend community events and school festivals.
- Ask questions. Most people are willing to answer all kinds of questions if the inquirer is sincere and seeking to learn and be more effective.
- Be aware of the great diversity within various groups. Although you are developing an understanding of some of the cultural traits and influences of the children with whom you will be working, do not assume that any cultures are homogenous.

Relationships Are Built on Trust

First and foremost, in the development of any relationship, especially a tutor/tutee relationship, is TRUST. Rita Tenorio, editor of *Rethinking Schools* and an eighteen-year veteran of the kindergarten classroom, remembers a quote she heard during her first year of teaching that echoed throughout her teaching career, "How much must a child trust himself, others, and the world in order to learn?" She answers the quote's query, "Throughout the twenty years I've worked with children and their families, I've always felt that trust was a key component to success."

The road to becoming a successful reader is full of mistake bumps and frustration potholes. In order to convince a child to let herself make mistakes in front of you, you must gain her trust—let her know that you will not judge her or think less of her as long as she tries. Without that trust it is difficult to create an environment that is conducive to learning.

Here are some things to think about and do when you are building a relationship with a tutee whose cultural background is different from yours—they also apply to any new student whose trust you are trying to gain:

- Trust comes from a child's knowledge that someone understands and respects his experiences. Ask your student questions about his life, his interests and hobbies, his friends, and his family. Talk about some of the similarities with your life and experiences.

● Trust comes from being a consistent and reliable figure in a child's life. When you make the commitment to tutor a child, realize that it is serious. Children learn best from adults who make an investment in them and in their learning.

● Trust comes when you present yourself to a child in a way that he will interpret as dependable and caring. Sincerity is at the core of building a strong, trusting relationship with a student. Make sure the child knows you care about him, want him to succeed, and believe that he is capable of succeeding.

● Trust comes when you expect the best from a child. Just because a child is labeled "at risk" does not mean that she is incapable of becoming a successful reader. Having and demonstrating confidence in her abilities will help her develop that self-confidence and will strengthen your relationship.

Choosing the Right Books

In encouraging a child to discover the excitement and wonders of reading, it is important to choose books in which he can see himself *and* see himself in a positive light. Select books that apply to the child's interests and hobbies. Also be sensitive to the cultures being represented by the characters. Make sure the

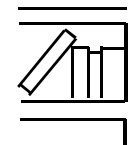
books empower the children and demonstrate the diversity of society. Here are some good guidelines to follow when selecting books:

1. Check the illustrations—look for stereotypes, tokenism, and the roles that minorities and male and female characters play.
2. Look at lifestyles—are people of color depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavorably with the unstated "norm" of white middle-class suburbia?
3. Weigh the relationships between people—Do the whites in the story possess the power and take the leadership? Are African-American mothers always portrayed as dominant in the family?
4. Note the heroes and heroines—When minority heroes appear, are they admired for the same qualities that have made white heroes famous or because what they have done has benefited white people?
5. Consider the effects on a child's self image—Is there one or more persons with whom a child can readily identify to a positive and constructive end?

For Training and Technical Assistance, more information, or a list of helpful resources, contact CHP International, the Human Relations and Diversity T/TA Provider for the CNS at 708-848-9650.

The LEARNS Bookshelf

by Emma Lanier



It's important for tutors to remember that children are much more complicated than merely being little grown-ups. Children are developing by leaps and bounds between the ages of five and eight, and major shifts can sometimes occur over Christmas Break! Luckily, there are many folks who have devoted years of study to deciphering the stages of a child's development. Reading their works can be a huge relief to tutors who are anxious about beginning work as well as a help to those seeking to strengthen their understanding of how different age groups learn best. These books are both interesting to read and insightful. Most importantly, they will remind you that many of the struggles you have with your tutee are perfectly normal and can even be healthy! So, do yourself a favor and check out the following books at your local library or bookstore:

● ***The Learning Child: Guidelines for Parents and Teachers*** by Dorothy Cohen (Schocken Books: 1972) *Ideal for people working with children age 5 to 11.* A child development expert who taught at Bank Street College of Education, Cohen writes with humor and respect for the process of growing up. In the words of reviewer Joan Canedella, "The child, as an acting, sensing, physical being comes alive here and in simple and elegant language the case is made for matching teaching materials and methods with this active being." (p. xi) Cohen integrates the social,

emotional and cognitive components of a child's maturity.

● ***Yardsticks*** by Chip Wood (Northeast Foundation for Children: 1994)

Ideal for people working with children age 5 to 10. *Yardsticks* is a super book that is very user-friendly. Wood focuses on each age by devoting an entire chapter to each year. In addition to citing extremely useful vignettes of children at various stages, Wood places each of these stages in the context of a child's overall development. Organized by age groups, this is a particularly helpful book for readers who have questions about a specific year. Easy to follow charts include titles like "Growth Patterns" and "In the Classroom."

● ***Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades*** by *The Teaching Tolerance Project* at the *Southern Poverty Law Center* (Teaching Tolerance: 1997). Call 334-262-0286

Ideal for people working with children age 4 to 8. This is an excellent book for helping you better understand how to support children at varying stages in their awareness of cultural identity. The authors share successful techniques used in innovative programs all over the country that focus on giving kids healthy community skills. Remember, first and foremost—a tutor is a role model!

Emma Lanier is a member of the LEARNS Partners, working as the Program Coordinator at Bank Street College of Education.

New and Improved!

Implementing Changes from Lessons Learned: Cleveland Seniors for Schools

by Sarah E. Torian

The State of Ohio took control of the Cleveland School System in 1995 due to bankruptcy and mismanagement. As a result, several elementary schools were closed to reduce costs, leaving many children in overcrowded schools. This fall Cleveland's mayor was forced to assume control of the school system. This instability in the schools increases learning difficulties for students, over 85 percent of whom live in poverty and 72 percent of whom live in single parent homes. These difficulties are evidenced by only 15 percent of Cleveland's fourth grade students passing the fourth grade proficiency test in 1997.

How can children master the skills and receive the encouragement and resources needed to learn when they face obstacles such as these? A group of dedicated and determined volunteers are trying to find the answer to that question. These volunteers are a part of **Cleveland's Seniors for Schools** project, sponsored by the **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Greater Cleveland (RSVP)** and funded by the Corporation for National Service. In four schools—chosen because of their high poverty rates and low proficiency scores—thirty-four Seniors for Schools volunteers are providing one-on-one tutoring to more than 150 children. These volunteers also have organized a **"Books for Kids"** program.¹ As a part of this program the volunteers hosted four book fairs, giving more than 1000 gently used books to more than 450 children. Schools' libraries were given over \$2500 worth of new books and all students tutored received a new book as well.

As Cleveland Seniors for Schools Project Director Joy Banish gears up for the project's second year, she feels that she and the volunteers are ready to extend the successes they achieved last year. With a year's worth of wisdom and experiences, the project is utilizing some new local resources and making strategic changes to be even more effective.

The Cleveland project is part of a nine-project national demonstration program called Seniors for Schools, enlisting the services of men and women over the age of 55 to serve in teams to help children learn to read. This project is an integral component of President Clinton's **"America Reads Challenge,"** working to ensure that every child can read well and independently by the end of third grade. The eight other

Seniors for Schools projects are in Leesburg, Florida; Boston, Massachusetts; Kansas City, Missouri; Port Arthur, Texas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; New York, New York; Portland, Oregon; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.²

Laying the Groundwork

As a new project entering four schools simultaneously, the Cleveland volunteers faced many challenges. "I felt like I was trying to be in four places at the same time!" Banish exclaims. "I spent most of my time driving all over town." To make better use of her time, she recruited a VISTA volunteer and acquired an Americorps member from a partner agency to serve as volunteer coordinators at the schools. The two coordinators manage activities in two schools each. They provide support and encouragement for the tutors, manage supplies at the schools, and act as the communication link between teachers, tutors, and project staff.

Communication is Key

Realizing that effective communication with the school is a key to success, the volunteers identified one person (community aide, reading teacher, or head teacher) in each school to be the key contact. They sought a person who was knowledgeable about the school and whom they could usually manage to reach by phone or in person to answer questions. Doing this made managing all of the "little" problems that arise much easier. Originally, the coordinators' main contact was the principal but, says VISTA Jennifer Spittler, "The principals are very busy. Working with a reading specialist instead works well—someone who has more time to give us some direction."

Does this mean the Cleveland teachers and principals were left in the dark? Of course not! Keeping them well informed is essential. "The best way to communicate with teachers and principals is to use their staff mail boxes," says Banish, "They can reach us using the mailboxes too."

Preparing Tutors

Recruiting and training tutors is another big challenge for new projects. "It was difficult for us to find five volunteers able to serve fifteen hours a week in

¹See *Summer 1998 issue of The Tutor* for more information on the "Books for Kids" program and tips for planning a similar program at your project.

²For profiles of Port Arthur, Philadelphia, New York City, Portland, and Kansas City Seniors for Schools Projects, see the June, 1997; September, 1997; Winter, 1997; Spring, 1998; and Summer, 1998 issues, respectively, of *The Tutor*.

each school at first," reports Banish.

Churches and libraries are where they found the most success. "We sent a letter to every church and synagogue in the entire county, asking them to make an announcement during service or post information." Convincing the local paper to write a feature story on the project and its volunteers helped attract tutors too.

With 13 volunteers returning from last year and 20 beginning this year, Banish has an extensive orientation and training program planned. New tutors will attend a one-day orientation explaining the Seniors for Schools program and basic literacy information. The following two days the new tutors will be joined by veteran tutors as they hear speakers, ranging from library and school staff to local literacy program personnel. The new tutors will also role play with the returning volunteers.

Effective Tutoring and Student Selection

The Cleveland volunteers also learned that it is imperative to have an effective system for selecting the students to be tutored. Last year, the principals chose the teachers they would work with, some of whom were not cooperative. This year, they have drafted a "Memorandum of Understanding," stating what the tutors will provide and what the schools will provide, and had the principals sign it.

After many discussions with the schools' four principals it was agreed that all future tutoring would occur outside of the main classroom. Seniors will tutor in the hall or the library. "Tutoring inside the classroom is very distracting to both the children in the main groups as well as the children in the small groups being tutored," explains Seniors for Schools tutor John Jackson who began tutoring last November because he wanted to provide a good role model for the children. He adds, "I came from a poor environment and worked my way through college. Learning that barriers can be overcome helps to build up their self-esteem. They can do things and need to know that."

Defining Goals and Showing Results

Literacy project goals should be very realistic and concrete. With the help of a technical assistance coach from **STAR (Support and Training for Assessing Results)**, a Training and Technical Assistance provider for evaluation, Banish is reworking the project's goals. "[The STAR coach] asks me honest questions I need to be asked, 'Why did you decide to do that particular project?' and 'What do you hope to achieve by doing this?' This makes me evaluate the need for doing it, and who will benefit from it." STAR has provided Banish with step-by-step instructions and samples of other project's goals and objectives as a guide.³

The Cleveland volunteers are also overhauling their assessment methods. Last year, the teachers completed reading skills assessments. It was a time-consuming and inefficient process, making it difficult to assess the benefits of the project. The results were there, but were difficult to see, a necessary requirement for any literacy project. This year, the project will use the Brigance Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Reading Skills assessment method,⁴ a standardized test that measures literacy knowledge through reading comprehension, word recognition, word analysis, and reading readiness. The volunteers will conduct the Brigance test in September as a pre-assessment and will repeat it in January and June. If a student's scores have improved significantly by January, they will return to their regular class schedule.

Networks of Support

One area where the tutors found a great deal of success last year is in building a strong network of support from people in the schools and the community. The local public libraries have been involved with the program from the beginning. The children's library staff and the community outreach staff attend every event hosted by Seniors for Schools, providing information on literacy and what the libraries have to offer parents. With

approximately fifty libraries in the area, this is a significant network of support.



Tutor Helen Raglin helping student at Adalai Stevenson School.

- ✓ Tutoring projects don't just work with students and volunteers, but work with entire school staffs, parents, local agencies, and the *whole* community.
- ✓ Organization and flexibility are keys to effectiveness.
- ✓ Having a good staff is critical. One person can NOT do it all.
- ✓ Start small. Make your goals realistic and attainable. It's better to do one thing and do it well than to try to do many things and not complete them.
- ✓ Work only with schools and teachers who are willing to work with you and to help you.
- ✓ Screen volunteers carefully. Don't accept volunteers in order to get the numbers. Make sure they are qualified and dedicated.
- ✓ BE PATIENT! You can't do it all in one year, but you CAN do it!

³To receive information about STAR call 1-800-548-3656 or visit their web site at www.projectstar.org.

⁴See Summer 1998 issue of *The Tutor* for more information on the Brigance Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Reading Skills.

Cross-Age Tutoring

by Gale Greenlee

As the school year begins, many national service programs are preparing to recruit volunteers to serve as tutors. Colleges and universities, retirement centers, local businesses and community associations are all hotspots for recruiting. But you may be overlooking one valuable tutor resource that is literally right under your nose—the *kids*. Yes, the students in your school(s) can play a critical role in helping other students to succeed—and, they simultaneously help themselves!

Cross-age tutoring is a peer tutorial method in which older students teach younger ones. With proper training, continual guidance and support, student tutors can assist younger students in reading, writing, math, and a host of other subjects. Cross-age tutoring allows older students to become mentors or “big buddies.” It challenges them to learn and reinforces material taught in class. Perhaps most importantly, cross-age tutoring engages the older students and allows them to take responsibility and an active role in the learning process. The student tutors stand to gain as much as—or more—than children being tutored.

“I think cross-age tutoring is effective because younger kids benefit from individual attention,” says Sharon Bernstein, School Partnership Director for the **Partners in School Innovation** program in **San Francisco, CA**. “It also gives the older students an opportunity to learn in a way that’s very different from the way they learn in the classroom.”

Bernstein should know. During the 1996-97 school year, she served as an AmeriCorps Member at Ruus Elementary School, where she managed a cross-age tutorial program developed by former AmeriCorps Member Rachel Rosner.¹

Teachers were important collaborators with Bernstein in shaping the program. They helped to match students by grade and language. Some children tutored in English, while others tutored in Spanish.

“The older students—who weren’t always the ‘best’ or most well-behaved students—would go and tutor and sort of transform into *really* responsible, on-task students,” says Bernstein. “Tutoring really brought out something very positive in the kids.”

In Tennessee, former classroom teacher, Betty Hanes agrees. She, along with Ann Wallace, coordinates the **Partners/Mentoring** program at six of the thirteen middle schools in **Knox County, TN**. The program started eleven years ago and just completed a three-year cycle as a **Learn and Serve** grantee. During the 1997-98 school year, more than 100 “successful” students were assigned to work with 200 students considered “at-risk.”

“We don’t always take the ‘best and brightest’ students, because they aren’t always the best tutors,”

Hanes says.

Students in the Partners/Mentors program are trained using the **Governor’s Study Partner Program**, developed by Tennessee Partners in Education. They are also introduced to principles of service learning. After training, tutors meet with their tutees once a week during study hall. Tutees gain points for attending sessions, for improved grades and for having a positive attitude. All students are rewarded with t-shirts, and are recognized at the annual awards program and in the school yearbook.

A little further South, in **Fort Payne, AL**, Karen McGee, serves as project director for **Homework Hotline**. Four nights each week, high school student volunteers answer calls from other students needing homework assistance. Housed at DeKalb County Vocational School, Homework Hotline, a Learn and Serve supported program, is in its fourth year. Certified teachers are on hand in the call center.

Like others involved in cross-age tutoring, McGee recognizes that the students learn a lot by volunteering. “You can’t teach someone without learning something,” she says.

So, when looking for volunteers to staff your tutorial project, don’t underestimate the value and effectiveness of students teaching students.

Here are some tips for cross-age tutoring.

Plan together. Spend time with your school partners to envision how your program could start.

Publicize. Make announcements over the school intercom. Visit classrooms and distribute flyers to students during lunch.

Make tutoring a privilege. Provide incentives (t-shirts, school supplies, books, etc.).

Don’t turn away students who aren’t academic achievers. In fact, seek them out! They may be more committed than more successful students. And this may be the “push” they need to succeed.

Train well! Like all tutors, student tutors need orientation and on-going training in order to be effective.

Observe tutors and give feedback. Give them time to reflect on the importance of their work.

Provide support for tutors. Work with teachers to help student tutors maintain their own grades.

Reward tutors regularly for a job well done.

Don’t just wait until the end of the school year to show your appreciation for them.

Have fun! Tutors and tutees alike should enjoy the sessions.

¹See *Students Teaching Students: A Handbook for Cross-age Tutoring*, written by Rachel Rosner and published by Partners in Innovation and the Southern Regional Council for distribution to National Service Programs. Programs may request one free copy by calling the LEARNS Partnership at SRC (toll-free 877-253-2767 or 404-522-8764, ext. 24).

Understanding Children's Writing

by Clarissa Wilder

Children's writing reveals a great deal about what they know and what they can do. Tutors can make exciting discoveries about their tutees by including writing as a regular part of the tutoring session. They can emphasize the meaning behind print by asking the child to read his or her writing aloud and to talk about his or her drawings.

Learning to write is a developmental process. It does not happen all at once. Tutors will want to practice patience, and appreciate each new development as it unfolds.

The drawing above shows the way one five-year old child mixes drawing and writing to express her ideas. She has clustered each sentence around the picture to which it refers, demonstrating her awareness of the connection between the words and images, but it is clear that she has more to learn about the directionality of print on a page.

This young writer exhibits her knowledge of initial consonant sounds such as 'h,' 'm,' 'c,' 'w,' 'f,' 't,' and 'd' as well as the sound of the digraph 'th' as in the beginning of the word "the." Her developing word recognition is depicted by the way she writes "mea" for the word "made." She hears the 'r' in the word "are"

and knows that the word "how" is spelled with more than just an 'h' and an 'o.' This child works to write all the sounds she hears in words as shown by her spelling of houses—"hses," telephone—"tl" and dinosaur—"danso."

Children's invented spelling is a valuable indicator that can inform our teaching as it tells us how they are putting things together. Their ways of spelling can help us determine the kinds of word analysis support that would be most helpful to them.

Since children learn concepts and develop skills at their own individual rates of development, their writing helps tutors learn more about each specific child with whom they work. A tutor may devote all of his or her time to working with one age group but the strengths of each child in that age group will vary greatly. The drawing above is just one example of the many ways in which children's writing can inform our teaching. When tutors devote time in their sessions with tutees to writing, they simultaneously learn about all that each child knows and all that they can do to help them in their continued growth.

Clarissa Wilder is a member of the LEARNS Partners, working as a Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator at Bank Street College of Education.

Breaking the Ice: Meeting Your New Student

by Debbie Howell

You are about to embark on a true partnership in learning. Here are some tips to get started developing that partnership.

● **Let the tutee’s individual personality determine the structure of the first meeting.** If the student is outgoing and talkative, then dive into the standard get acquainted questions: name (make sure you have the correct pronunciation), age, family, pets, friends, school subjects—favorites and challenges, etc. If he is quiet or shy, however, he may feel overwhelmed by too many questions. Ask a few questions then read a special, high interest story to the student. Getting to know a student takes patience and time.

● **Do a role reversal.** If you’re new to the school, ask the student to help orient you. Ask many questions during the tour to give the student the opportunity to be the expert.

● **Share information about yourself.** Both of you could bring in something of significance (a picture, toy, or hobby). Talking about these items will give you each insights to help find ways to trust each other.

● **Create a safe tutoring environment.** Let the student know that she should not be afraid to make mistakes. When you make a mistake, call attention to it. Reiterate that “It’s alright to make mistakes.” If you will be tutoring more than one student at a time, emphasize that you are a “team” and that you’ll support each other through the learning process.

The first sessions of tutoring can set the stage for the rest of the school year. Make your tutoring experience a memorable one!

Debbie Howell is a member of the LEARNS Partners, working as a Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator at NWREL.

Dear Diary: Documenting Student Progress

by Gale Greenlee

A necessary but sometimes neglected aspect of any tutorial session is documentation. Rather than being a lengthy drain of valuable tutor time, ongoing general assessment, if incorporated into a tutorial session, can:

- Allow for student writing and expression;
- Let students be active participants in the learning process;
- Record the frequency and *consistency* of tutorial sessions—an important gauge in tutoring;
- Reveal student progress over time—to students, tutors, teachers, and parents.

One method of gathering information is to use a progress log or daily journal. Formats differ, but here’s a list of general information you may wish to include in your tutee’s daily journal.

Date: Have the tutee record the month, day, and year of the session. This may seem basic, but it gives the student, especially younger ones, practice writing

and will document the frequency of tutorial sessions. Significant gaps between sessions may indicate frequent student absences (such as illness) or inconsistency on the part of the tutor.

How I Felt When I Came In: Key words, phrases or sentences, or drawings can describe the students mood at the beginning of the session. This can be helpful in determining a student’s attitude about reading and tutoring. It can also show when techniques are working and when they need to be altered.

What I Accomplished Today: Tutees share what *they* think they achieved during a session. This may be as simple as a new sound or word learned, finishing a book, or reading a difficult passage with ease. This allows the child to recognize and reflect on his/her own successes.

Sign Off: Tutees sign off each day, and tutors should do likewise.

Student’s Name:

My Progress Chart

Today’s Date	How I Felt When I Came In	What I Accomplished Today	My Signature	Tutor’s Signature

Service-Learning and Literacy: A Brief Introduction for America Reads Programs

by Amy Cohen

As a regular feature of The TUTOR, we will be exploring service-learning principles and practices as they apply to America Reads programs. The following is a brief introduction to service-learning.

The Corporation for National Service has published a small, powerful, purple pamphlet, ***Principles and Key Components of High Quality America Reads National Service Program Initiatives***. This 8-page “purple pamphlet” packs an extraordinary amount of valuable program guidance into a small space. Two of the pamphlet’s seven *Principles* describe service-learning and its centrality to effective literacy programs:

Service Learning Principals of Quality America Reads Programs:

- Participants learn and develop through active participation in well organized service that is conducted in and addresses challenges facing a community.
- Program recognizes the assets, strengths, and valuable experiences that service recipients and providers bring to a service relationship.
- Program helps foster civic responsibility.
- Program is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, and/or community service program, *and* with the community.
- Program enhances the academic curriculum of student participants, or the educational components of a community service program.
- Program provides structured time for the students and other participants to reflect on the service activity, both to enrich the experience for them and to improve the quality of service in the future.

Quality America Reads programs recognize that:

- tutors generally have much to learn, particularly from their tutees;
- there are a wide variety of effective learning styles;
- non-academic knowledge and experience can contribute to learning reading;
- tutoring is a collaboration between the tutor and tutee, not a “pouring” of knowledge or skill from one

person to another;

- tutees’ experience with (and view of) school authorities may be very different from that of the tutors;
- an effective learning relationship should take account of cultural differences, including concepts of self, community, and authority.”¹

These service-learning principles and concepts can and should be used in all America Reads programs with all tutors regardless of age, experience, and background. Service-learning ensures that literacy tutoring is a reciprocal, mutually-beneficial experience for both tutor and tutee. Tutors grow when they are well trained; when they learn by doing; when they use their existing skills, knowledge, and abilities; and when they reflect on their tutoring experiences in order to improve them. Tutees grow when they are well tutored; when they learn by doing; and when they have the opportunity to teach and help others, including their tutors, their peers, and their community.

Future Editions of The TUTOR

Look forward to future editions of *The TUTOR* for further discussions of service-learning and literacy—ideas for implementing service-learning; examples of programs that work; tools for service-learning; and much more.

Resources:

- 1) *Principles and Key Components of High Quality America Reads National Service Program Initiatives* (the purple pamphlet). Call 1-800-860-2684 for a copy.
- 2) Article from *The Reading Teacher* on service-learning and literacy.

Contacts:

- 1) National Service Resource Center, 1-800-860-2684.
- 2) The Corporation for National Service, Learn and Serve America website: www.cns.gov/learn/index.html.
- 3) Learn and Serve America National Clearinghouse on Service-Learning, 1-800-808-7378.

¹America Reads: Principles and Key Components for High Quality America Reads National Service Program Initiatives, p. 3.

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Putting Research to Use

Activities that Help Children Read

The Tutor, Fall 1998 Special Supplement

LEARNS—Linking Education and America Reads through National Service

by Amy Blake, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

How do you make sense of all the research on how children learn to read? Do you struggle to connect research with the work you do each week helping children learn to read and write? Here, you'll find summaries of research on 13 core understandings about learning to read, from *Building a Knowledge Base in Reading* by Jane Braunger and Jan Patricia Lewis. Each core understanding is followed by activity ideas and strategies you can share with your tutors. Modify them to fit your program needs, combine them with your tutors' experiences, or take them as is. No matter how you adapt this information, you'll be putting research to use!

1 *Reading is a construction of meaning from written text. It is an active, cognitive, and affective process.*

- **The research says:** Reading print involves recognizing individual letters and words as well as comprehending how words work together to tell a story. To read and comprehend a story, children must be actively involved—thinking about people in the story, talking about what may happen next, looking at pictures, acting out events. By engaging in this process of reading, children develop general reading and decoding strategies (see *decode* in Terms to Know, pg. 4), build on existing vocabulary, form critical thinking skills, and improve social skills.
- **Put it to use!** When you read to or with a child, engage her¹: Ask her about pictures and how they relate to the story. Have her speculate about what will happen next and why. Ask open-ended questions that encourage her to use her imagination. Keep a list of words she knows by sight (*sight words*, pg. 4), in a reading journal. As she learns more words, add them to the list. Refer back to it periodically, and congratulate her on knowing so many words!

2 *Background knowledge and prior experience are critical to the reading process.*

- **The research says:** The foundations of literacy are laid early, some studies suggest before birth! But not all children get one-on-one attention or experience literacy-rich environments needed to build school success and self-confidence. Marilyn Adams, in *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*, estimates that some children begin first grade with 1,000–1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading time, while others average only about 25 hours. The interaction, conversations, reading, and other activities of one-on-one tutoring give children experiences that help develop background knowledge and self-confidence necessary to become successful readers.

- **Put it to use!** In the first tutoring session, talk to the child about his past literacy experiences. Talk to him about other experiences, interests, and things he'd like to know more about. Even if the teacher has given you background information, having a direct conversation with the child helps build a trusting relationship. These conversations will also help you choose books and activities to use later. As one activity, have the child draw a picture of his house, showing the location of all the tools of literacy: pens, pencils, paints, grocery lists, photos, books, artwork, his own drawings on the refrigerator. Share a picture of your own.

3 *Social interaction is essential to learning to read.*

- **The research says:** Oral storytelling is an important part of many cultures and traditions, from passing down family history to telling ghost stories. Children's storytelling gives insight into what they think about and how they interpret events. In the context of tutoring, having conversations and participating in stories of all kinds give children chances to practice important literacy behaviors and form a significant relationship with an adult.
- **Put it to use!** Play "pass the story" either as an oral or written activity. You begin the story with a fantastic premise; for example: "When I awoke this morning, my bed was in the middle of a desert that stretched to the end of the earth." Pass the story to the child, who "writes" the next few sentences of the plot. Trade the story back and forth, asking questions and encouraging imaginative developments. As a group, children can act out the story using props and costumes.

If your project involves service learning, conversations and storytelling provide ways of reflecting on service. Children can tell the story of their service project individually or in groups; orally; by writing a play or skit; or in various drawing and art projects—all of which can be told, performed, or displayed for classmates, parents, and the community.

4 *Reading and writing develop together.*

- **The research says:** Language skills—reading, writing, speaking—develop together as children begin to understand and interpret the world. Developing readers and writers need encouragement and space to explore the possibilities of language. Many studies, including one by the National Research Council's Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, show that by supporting invented spelling, teachers, parents, and tutors can see a child's sense of phonics and how it develops.

These activities were created with one-on-one tutoring in mind but can be adapted to other projects. To address the gender pronoun issue (he/she), we have chosen to alternate pronouns in each scenario.

- **Put it to use!** Have the child write and illustrate a story about an important older person in his life, perhaps a grandparent or caregiver. A developing writer may use pictures to stand in for parts of his story and use *invented spelling* (pg. 4). Use this as an opportunity to talk about the story: What was the grandparent's life like when she was the child's age? How do they spend time together? Alternatively, have the child dictate the story to you. Afterward, he can illustrate it. Either of these stories can be "published" as a book. Display the book in the tutoring room or classroom, or include it in a portfolio of the child's work.

5 **Reading involves complex thinking.**

- **The research says:** Long before children can match print with sound, they use language to observe, understand, and interpret their world. Both in and out of the classroom, a child builds foundation skills that help her grow into a more sophisticated reader, writer, and thinker: writing pretend messages to a friend, discussing a book that she has read or has been read to her, singing jump-rope songs or the "A-B-C" song. In doing so, children show they already know a great deal about language and print, which they build on as they grow older.
- **Put it to use!** Have the child write, tell, and/or draw a sequel to her favorite book. Discuss what has already happened. Imagine together the events of a story that begins where one book ends. Explore the possibilities by asking questions that help her consider the book's past and future. "But didn't Mrs. Wishy Washy live on a farm?" or "If Old MacDonald lived in the city, what kinds of animals would he have?" This activity also allows the child to insert her own experiences into the story. Publish and prominently display the book.

6 **Environments rich in literacy experiences, resources, and models facilitate reading development.**

- **The research says:** A print-rich environment is filled with lots of books and provides many opportunities to engage in reading and other literacy activities. It's a place where a child can see and participate in reading, writing, telling stories, drawing. And remember, no matter where you go, there are always "texts" to read (a restaurant menu) and stories to tell (how that lone tree got left at the top of the hill).
- **Put it to use!** Create a literacy wall in your tutoring area. Post the children's written work—everything from illustrated stories to poems and pictures cut or copied from magazines or books. Hang blank paper and provide crayons, colored pencils, or markers so everyone can draw pictures, jot down thoughts, and leave each other notes. (Be sure your markers don't bleed through.) Fill shelves with appealing and fun books, magazines, and props children can use to act out stories (*dramatic play*, pg. 4). Include books, pictures, and art that reflect the diversity of the children's homes, school, and community.

To encourage a literacy-rich environment at home, create a book bin with many kinds and levels of books. Children can

check one out overnight or for several days. If your program or school is short on resources, talk to your local library, book and art stores, thrift stores, and other organizations that can donate supplies. Consider forming a partnership with a local business that can donate books or money and have the contribution recognized with a book plate.

7 **Engagement in the reading task is key in successfully learning to read.**

- **The research says:** Skills-based instruction stresses letter recognition and phonics. Literature-based instruction emphasizes reading and understanding stories, and teaches specific skills alongside story comprehension. In a study by Penny Freppon, a group of second-graders who entered a class that taught foundation skills separate from comprehension lost literate behaviors they had previously formed. They developed patterns of passivity and were less likely to pursue reading and writing on their own. A second group who entered a literature-based class continued to read and write on their own and showed enjoyment and confidence in their abilities as readers and writers.
- **Put it to use!** Do you tutor a child for whom English is a second language? Talk to her about her family's customs. Encourage her to share pictures, books, art, or clothing that play a part in her culture and its traditions. What meaning do these items have? When are they used? Check out from the school or local library relevant books you can read together. Ask her to teach you a few words in her first language, such as general greetings or words that you use together often (names of animals or places in a favorite book). For any child, books and activities that fit her interests build motivation to read and reinforce the enjoyment she finds in reading.

8 **Children's understandings of print are not the same as adults' understandings.**

- **The research says:** As adults, we have internalized the mechanics of how print works and what books do—from punctuation and letters to textual meaning and purpose. For children, the rules and conventions of print are new and often confusing. The challenge for a teacher, tutor, or parent is to teach the rules while keeping open the magical worlds of books.
- **Put it to use!** In the forthcoming *Learning to Read and Write: A Place to Start*, Rebecca Novick suggests strategies to help a child think about letters, sounds, and words in print. The strategies listed below help teach letter-based knowledge; using them in conjunction with larger discussions about a book helps a child learn the rules by understanding a story.
 - Point to a letter and say the individual sound.
 - Look for a known part or small word to get at a bigger word (like *at* in *bat*)?
 - Substitute a word that makes sense. Can *run* replace *walk*?
 - Predict what may come next in a story.

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- 11**
- Write words the child doesn't know on Post-it® notes or scraps of paper. Post them on the literacy wall, and practice them during later sessions.
 - Model your own thinking process out loud as you pronounce words or use pictures to understand a story.

9 *Children develop phonemic awareness and knowledge of phonics through a variety of literacy opportunities, models, and demonstrations.*

- **The research says:** Children's *phonemic awareness* (awareness of separate sounds in words—pg. 4) is encouraged through reading and rereading nursery rhymes, singing songs with rhyme and alliteration, enjoying tongue twisters, and paying attention to the movement of the mouth as sounds are made. Phonemic awareness develops naturally when reading books with rhymes, alliteration, and rhythm. The repetition and pleasure of saying and listening to rhymes, poems, and songs expand vocabulary and foster creativity and playfulness with language.
- **Put it to use!** Keep several books of poetry in your book bin. When you read a book of poetry together, talk about a poem's meaning, what it makes the child think of, and how it sounds and looks. Magnetic Poetry® kits for kids are sold at most book stores and novelty stores—single words are printed in black on big, white magnets so that children can easily arrange words, play with ideas, and create poems. Create your own poetry kit by writing single words on pieces of paper big enough for a child to read and handle. Collect 20, 50, 100 words in a hat, box, or bowl. Have her choose 10 words, more or less, and make a poem with them. Transcribe and post it. *Beyond Words: Writing Poems with Children* by Elizabeth McKim and Judith W. Stenbergh contains lists of words that you can photocopy and cut for a (nearly) ready-made word bowl.

10 *Children learn successful reading strategies in the context of real reading.*

- **The research says:** Children learn strategies to decode words, anticipate what will happen next, understand an entire story, and begin to apply these strategies to other reading situations through the context of "real reading." Learning the alphabet and beginning to print words are skills that provide the foundation of reading success. These skills are most effective when learned and practiced in the context of reading a book and understanding a story.
- **Put it to use!** Inventory the opportunities to read and write in the classroom or in a room at home. Have the child write down or recall all the "texts" in his kitchen: grocery list, calendar, newspaper, take-out menus, crossword puzzles. Inventory your own home or what you see on the way to the school: street signs, billboards, someone reading a book. Encourage the child to perform "real reading" wherever he goes, looking for texts and understanding their meaning.

Children learn best when teachers [and tutors] employ a variety of strategies to model and demonstrate reading knowledge, strategy, and skills.

- **The research says:** Both children and adults learn in different ways. Some of us learn best when we hear or write down information, and others need hands-on experience to grasp concepts and remember facts. In *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* and subsequent writings, psychologist Howard Gardner identifies at least seven ways that people are smart (see *multiple intelligences* pg. 4). In the context of learning to read and write, children benefit from approaching tasks from various points. Teachers and tutors alike can use different strategies to read with children, model literate behaviors, and encourage them to read.
- **Put it to use!** Jot down a list of the ways that you read or otherwise work with the child you tutor. How can you adapt or create new activities to offer her a different approach? Listed below are the seven intelligences. Brainstorm ideas with other tutors or teachers to incorporate activities that give a child ways of responding to or extending a story that are not only verbal:
 - *Linguistic:* Word plays, crossword puzzles, and other games in addition to reading, writing, and telling stories—be careful not sacrifice reading and literacy activities to games that simply keep a child busy!
 - *Logical-Mathematical:* Patterns, riddles, mysteries, and strategy games and stories
 - *Bodily-Kinesthetic:* Dancing, crafts, plays, drawing, and other hands-on activities
 - *Spatial:* Mazes, puzzles, drawing, painting, building
 - *Musical:* Singing, poetry, playing instruments, listening and thinking about sounds and rhythm
 - *Interpersonal:* Reading aloud, working with other children, communicating how others feel
 - *Intrapersonal:* Independent reading, working one-on-one, drawing, and other self-exploring activities

Children need the opportunity to read, read, read.

- **The research says:** It's really quite simple: the more children read, the better they get at it. The more opportunities they have to engage in reading, the more children will pursue reading on their own. The more interest shown by older children and adults in reading, the more a younger child will develop the skills and interests of an independent reader.
- **Put it to use!** Involve parents in your tutoring by linking a parent's work with the child's reading and writing. Have the child "interview" a parent to find out what kinds of reading and writing he or she does every day. The child and parent can do the inventory activity in number 10, identifying the tools of literacy found either at home or at the parent's workplace. Have a *Parents' Day* and let the children give tours explaining the literacy wall and their other posted work.

13 *Monitoring the development of reading processes is vital to student success.*

- **The research says:** Standardized tests and other forms of assessment help chart a child's progress in learning to read and write. Alternative forms of assessment are useful in showing knowledge and progress sometimes not measured by tests. Portfolios are collections of student work that show knowledge and skill development over time. In tutoring, portfolios give the tutor and child a way of sharing their work and show the child's reading development over time.
- **Put it to use!** Create a portfolio of the child's work. Meet with his teacher beforehand to discuss the kinds of materials to include and to determine the uses of the portfolio. Include drawings, lists of books the child has read, lists of sight words, photos, tape-recordings of the child reading aloud, and many other items. Also consider keeping a journal to record the literacy activities you pursue with the child. Keep anecdotal records of the books he reads, his abilities, progress, and needs.

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Permission is granted to duplicate this document to use for training and other activities by any individual or group engaged in helping children learn to read. LEARNS is a partnership of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Southern Regional Council, and Bank Street College of Education. LEARNS provides training and technical assistance to America Reads and other education-focused national service programs.

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Terms to Know

Like other fields, literacy has its own language of specialized terms and concepts that can be confusing to the lay person. Here's an initial list of words you might encounter if you're helping a child learn to read and write.

Big Book: Enlarged version of a popular picture book that children can easily see and then talk about the text and pictures.

Decode: To use letter-sound correspondence to figure out new or unfamiliar words in a text.

Directionality: A concept of print. For example, that English books are read from front to back. That print goes from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom.

Dramatic Play: A means children can use to understand or interpret a story or book by acting out the action, either with each other or with toys and props.

High-Frequency Words: Words that appear often in books, including *the, and, be, are*.

Invented Spelling: A system used by young children to write words by using some of the sounds heard in spoken words. Correct spelling is not emphasized. Rather, children are encouraged to write an approximation of the word as it is heard or spoken.

Multiple Intelligences: A concept most associated with Howard Gardner, a Harvard psychologist and researcher, who coined the term to describe various ways that people know and respond to the world. This notion broadens the way we think about knowing, being, and what it means to be intelligent.

Phonemic Awareness: Recognizing the smallest units of sound that make up spoken language.

Sight Words: High-frequency words that cannot be "decoded" through use of phonics, but must be memorized, i.e., *right, through, said*.

Some of these definitions are adapted from *On the Road to Reading: A Guide for Community Partners* (1997), Derry Koralek and Ray Collins and prepared for the Corporation for National Service and the America Reads Challenge.