

Recipe for whole-class success

Melissa Kinkeade, coordinator at Townsell Elementary School in Irving, Texas, has found a way to get the very most out of her Reading Together tutorials. Her recipe for success starts with a full class of bilingual ESL fourth graders who are proficient in English, but have not yet reached “fluent” status. They are trained and prepped carefully during class time on Monday and Wednesday, and then paired on Tuesday and Thursday with a smaller number of native English-speaking second graders from several classrooms.

The result? Kinkeade finds it easy to stick to the schedule and get great results. Tutor prep and tutorials are held consistently because she doesn’t have to adjust to the schedules of many different fourth-grade teachers. Reading Together time also can be counted as English instruction time, so the fourth-grade teacher is eager to have her students involved. And having more tutors than tutees assures that each second grader always has his or her own tutor...and sometimes even an extra helper.

Although Reading Together Grade Two was designed to help second graders, Kinkeade finds that the fourth-grade ESL students gain as much if not MORE than the tutees. She attributes this to the practicing of spoken language that is scripted but natural, as well as the reinforcement of comprehension strategies that these students may still struggle with. Some of these fourth-grade tutors worked in tandem with another more fluent tutor; one was assigned the job of monitoring the lessons with a clipboard and pad, making notes for debriefing.

One of the greatest benefits is that the tutors’ teacher, Denise McAdams, has become Kinkeade’s partner in Reading Together. McAdams stays in the classroom during tutor prep and tutorials and helps facilitate the lessons. This makes it easy to integrate R2 strategies with what the students are practicing in class.

Although Melissa Kinkeade is not the only coordinator to use this implementation model, she has created a magnificent example of how whole-class implementation can be easy, effective and beneficial for everyone involved. We applaud her and everyone at Townsell Elementary for a job WELL done!



Frontloading vocabulary supports struggling tutors

Like many schools, Timberline Elementary School in Cherry Creek, Colorado, picked many tutors who needed remediation themselves. Coordinator Lynn Bliss Replinger realized some of them would need additional support to model fluent reading for their tutees, so she uses a pre-teaching strategy that gives tutors a chance to practice unfamiliar words without embarrassment.

“During tutor training, I found that some of tutors were struggling with reading the books fluently, so I started a Thursday lunch group,” she said.

“The tutors are invited to come and help me plan for the next lesson.”

Over lunch, the tutors read the new picture book silently and use self-stick notes to mark words that they think might cause trouble for other tutors. Replinger looks through their notes and adds the words to a list on the board. Together, the tutors define the words using context and student dictionaries, and Replinger makes a glossary to present to the other tutors during lesson prep time.

“They think it’s a reward, not that they’re being punished or singled out. The students think being in the lunch group is a privilege,” she said.

The process sounds time-consuming, but it’s not, she added. She does her own preparation for the upcoming lesson while the tutors read, so it only adds a few extra minutes each week.

Replinger has added other motivational twists to the program, from freshly baked gingerbread to perfect attendance awards at assembly. “We’re excited about the program and the commitment of the tutors!”

2006 TESOL conference highlights Reading Together

Congratulations to Ju-Hee Song, ESOL teacher in Prince George’s County, MD, who presented the results of her Reading Together program at the 40th Annual TESOL Convention in Tampa. Read more about success for ESOL students at Bladensburg Elementary at www.learningtogether.com. Supreet Anand, ESOL Specialist for the MD State Department of Education, and Alison Hanks, ESOL Office Supervisor for Prince George’s County, helped prepare the presentation, *Structured Peer Tutoring Leaves No Child Behind*.

Word of Mouth

One of these days, these tutors are going to be parents. These kids are learning how to relate to their children in a different way than their own parents are relating to them. They're learning how to get their own children ready for school.

Reading Together Coordinator

Time to celebrate!

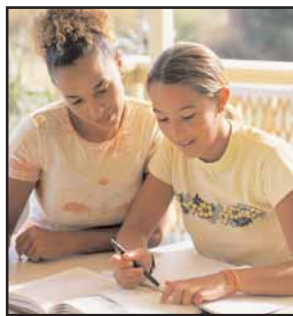
Whether using the cross-age or adult model, it is rewarding to bring together tutors and tutees to celebrate their hard work and achievement. It also makes your job easier next year—recognition of your accomplishments during a school-wide assembly or in the school newsletter creates a buzz that helps with student recruitment next year. Parents want their children to participate in successful programs!

Depending on resources, scheduling and tutoring model, you can incorporate one or more of the following ideas into your end of year celebration. Be sure to include parents, classroom teachers and administrators in your plans.

- Give tutors and tutees their program T-shirts, certificates (print from the Coordinator Resources CD or L2 website) and perhaps a favor. Contact us at info@learningtogether.com to order purple Reading Together wristbands for \$2.00 each, or to ask about other promotional items.
- Allow each student to select and keep his or her favorite trade book from the program. Be sure to keep inventory to order replacements. Some schools have found a corporate sponsor to underwrite this gift—in some

districts, each student gets to bring home the whole library!

- Use a digital camera to take a picture of each tutor/tutee pair and give them each a copy to keep. Pictures can be taken during an earlier lesson as well.
- Solicit local businesses for gift certificates for pizza, kids' meals, smoothies, etc.
- Host a pizza or ice cream sundae party.
- Picnic at lunchtime with tutors and tutees.
- Plan a sleepover at school for Grade Two participants, who finish with "Ira Sleeps Over." This is not for the faint of heart, but has made a great celebration for several energetic coordinators.
- Hold a "graduation" from program for tutees with tutors as presenters.
- Exchange "thank you" notes from tutees to tutors, and "great job" notes from tutors to tutees.
- End your program with the coordinator reading aloud a book that emphasizes the importance of reading.



- Remember Huck Finn and make a game out of cleaning and counting your student kits or storage bins. Tutors and tutees love to do this together, and it saves the coordinator a lot of time to check their work rather than starting from scratch.
- Make up a game with prizes for students who can remember facts about books, lessons or reading strategies.
- Send your pictures and ideas to L2. We'd love to feature your students (if you have appropriate permission)!

It's a wrap

The best way to get off to a good start next year is to put a little extra effort into this year's wrap-up. The record keeping templates, surveys, inventory forms, etc. mentioned below can be found on www.learningtogether.com under the Resource Download section of The Coordinator Community. (You will need a password if you haven't accessed this private web area this year. Please contact us at info@learningtogether.com for assistance).

- Complete end-of-program surveys and provide the information to the appropriate administrators.
- Gather benchmark testing data on tutors and tutees to compare with scores/levels at beginning of program, and distribute this information to the administration or your district contact person. It is important that attendance forms accompany this information. Learning Together is available to help collate data and survey results.
- Plan or attend a debriefing with other program coordinators. It's a great way to share your success as measured in the two items above, and to brainstorm ways to improve the program. We're happy to help facilitate such meetings, which really help build the infrastructure for sustaining an effective program.
- Provide classroom teachers and parents with growth information.
- Take inventory of materials and begin re-order process.
- Identify start date, implementation schedule and training needs for next year. The L2 Educational Consultant who provided your training is happy to help with logistics.
- Find a secure space to store materials. Our great trade books seem to "have legs," as one coordinator put it, so be sure these are labeled for Reading Together use. For some reason, calculators aren't quite as popular, but be sure the reusable Math Tool Kits are secure as well.

Network and download on your private website

NEW!

Coordinators, teachers and administrators have a new website where they can share information and access the latest updates and training materials. See the shaded box at the right to learn how to enter this password-protected website.

Once you've logged onto the Coordinator Community, you have two choices. Click the box on the left to enter the *Sharing Board*, where you can network with other users. There are separate areas for Reading Together and Math Together.

Click the box on the right and enter *Resource Downloads*, where you will find the materials on your Resource

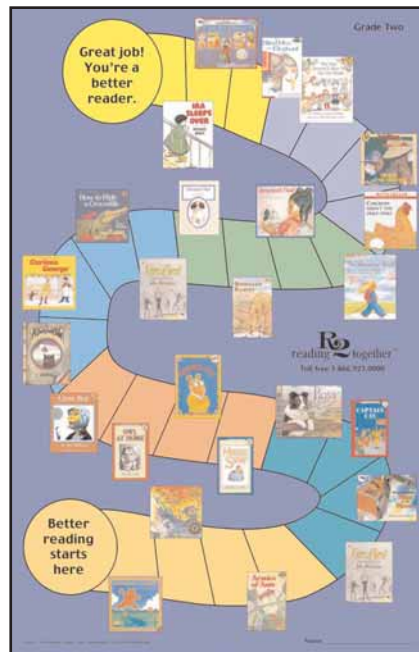
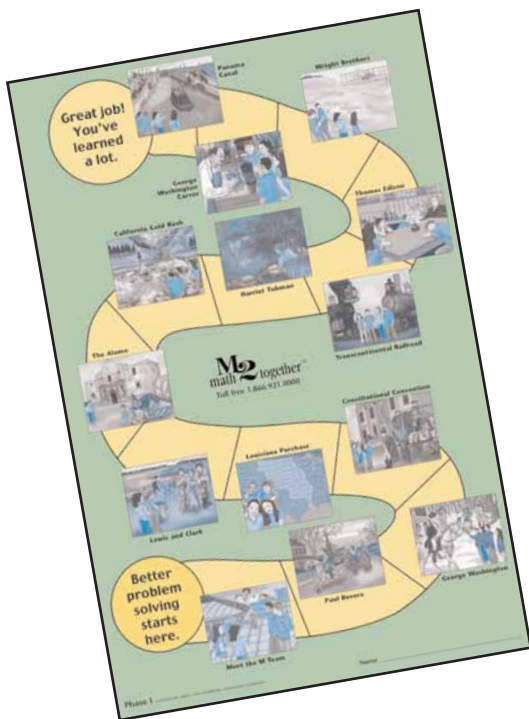
CD, plus new training and management tools. Files are divided into the following categories:

- Planning Templates
- Progress Reports
- Record Keeping
- Research Articles and Links
- Surveys
- Training Materials
- Tutee Recruitment/Selection
- Tutor Recruitment/Selection
- Year-end Materials

The gold "New This Month" box will highlight updates, but we encourage you to spend a few minutes surfing to see what's available. We've tried to make it logical and user friendly, but please let us know if you're looking for something you can't find. If we don't have it, we'll make it for you!

How to log onto the new Coordinator Community

If you are using Reading Together or Math Together, you're already entered into the database. Go to our homepage, www.learningtogether.com, and click on *Enter Our Coordinator Community*. You will need your password to access the *Sharing Board*, a national bulletin board for educators, or *Resource Downloads*, where you can find management tools to implement Learning Together programs. If you do not have a password, contact us at info@learningtogether.com.



M₂ math together Progress Posters

Tutees put a checkmark or sticker beside the historical events as they complete the lessons. The posters also make an easy, graphic way to show parents and teachers what their students are learning.

R₂ reading together Progress Posters

Tutees put a checkmark or sticker beside the books as they complete the lessons. The posters make an easy, graphic way to show parents and teachers the high quality of the learning library.

R₂ reading together Tutee Recruitment Flier

Show parents the benefits of allowing their children to participate in Reading Together. We can customize this handout for your school!

The Learning Together E-Mailbox

We have used 15 adult community volunteers (including community leaders) for three years now. It has many extra benefits that go beyond comprehension skills:

- 1. brings taxpayers into our school and gives them ownership in the educational process*
- 2. adults serve as excellent role models for our at-risk students*
- 3. sharing of genuine conversation and standard English*
- 4. the kids want to do well because their tutor holds high expectations (teacher-like figure)*

If you are even considering the possibility of using the R2 program with adults, I highly recommend giving it a trial run for a year. We end the year with a breakfast so the adult tutors can meet the family of their student. That's when they are each given their R2 T-shirt and the tutors choose a new library book with a nameplate dedicating it to them as a thank you.

— Iowa

It has been such a rewarding experience seeing our tutees from two years ago become tutors this year. They were so comfortable with the stages and so thrilled to be able to take their turn leading the lessons (and repeating the comprehension strategies was great reinforcement for them). They have a special understanding of what it's like to be a tutee, and they've done a great job keeping that before them as they work. It sounds too grand to say this experience has been a life-changing one, but for a few kids I know this to be the case!

— Pam

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