

Reading Together rests soundly on scientifically-based practices in literacy instruction. Lessons are designed around structured interactions, with step-by-step, scripted lessons that consistently reinforce strategies for intentional thinking. In each lesson, all of the language arts—reading, writing, speaking and listening—are practiced. Students have multiple opportunities to interact with the text (fourth-grade level) while tutors monitor progress and lend support.

Tutors learn and practice the strategies during pre-lesson training sessions with the coordinator. Tutors then model how to apply each strategy by demonstrating or thinking aloud during the tutorial. Following a script, tutors guide tutees as they learn when and how to apply the strategies on their own. Strategies are used repeatedly and consistently until the tutees can apply them independently, across curriculum and in real-life situations.

Strategies employed include setting a purpose, predicting, activating background knowledge, rereading, retelling, questioning, visualizing, text connections (text-to-text, text-to-self and text-to-world) and evaluating predictions and purpose after reading. The chart below highlights some of the strategies employed in Reading Together Intermediate.

Description	Strategy	Research cited
<p>Warm-up chat: Tutor initiates a short chat with tutee.</p>	<p><i>Motivation and relationship building:</i> Working with a partner promotes more positive attitudes and high achievement.</p> <p>Multi-age interactions provide an environment in which close relationships allow for the development of mutual trust and understanding. These relationships and the scaffolding of growth opportunities provided by a multi-age peer group make a significant contribution to academic growth.</p> <p>All aspects of motivation are enhanced when students feel like they can control their own learning because of their development of a personal toolbox of strategies.</p> <p>Many students may feel more at ease, and thus can concentrate better on the subject matter, with a peer tutor rather than a professional teacher or consultant. Peer tutors help themselves increase their own understanding of subject matter they tutor students in/on, which boosts confidence and can carry over to their desire to learn other subjects.</p> <p>Peers are more sensitive than adult teachers to picking up on non-verbal cues students being tutored may give to reveal that they may not understand what a tutor is trying to communicate...a peer tutor may be able to more readily perceive difficulties a student being tutored may be having, and work to clear things up.</p>	<p>Johnson, Johnson, Holubec and Roy 1984; Johnson and Johnson 1986</p> <p>Kinsey 2000</p> <p>Swartz 2002</p> <p>Ehly and Karsibm 1980</p> <p>Allen and Feldman 1996</p>

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<p>Trade book selection: High-quality picture books and passages include a wide variety of genre.</p>	<p>The first step to increasing reading achievement is providing students with quality books that will encourage them to read...</p> <p>...early exposure to a variety of reading materials improves students' ability to comprehend texts in later grades. Individual differences in exposure to print can predict differences in growth in reading comprehension ability throughout the elementary grades and thereafter.</p> <p>Reading trade books produces reading achievement across a wide spectrum of measurements: knowledge base, language development, comprehension skills, story sequencing, vocabulary, reading fluency, linguistic competence, confidence to move on to more sophisticated and difficult reading, improved spelling and writing quality and improved use of language mechanics.</p>	<p>Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding 1988</p> <p>Cunningham and Stanovich 1997</p> <p>Caldwell and Gaine 2000; Cantrell 1999</p>
<p>Read aloud: Tutor reads from a book as tutee listens.</p>	<p><i>Modeling:</i> By listening to good models of fluent reading, students learn how a reader's voice can help written text make sense....Reading to children also increases their knowledge of the world, their vocabulary, their familiarity with written language ("book language") and their interest in reading.</p> <p><i>Read aloud:</i> Reading with a buddy and discussing the story allows children to progress in the acquisition of reading ability and to put reading in a social context. The ongoing interaction between partners creates a satisfying relationship built on literacy.</p> <p>Through read alouds teachers demonstrate their thinking process when reading. These instructional demonstrations or think alouds are central to comprehension instruction.</p> <p><i>Practice reading:</i> Cross-age reading "provides upper-grade youngsters with a legitimate reason for practicing for an oral reading performance."</p> <p>Reading to a younger child helps an older child develop positive reading behaviors.</p>	<p>Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) 2001</p> <p>Lamme 1987</p> <p>Davey 1983</p> <p>Vacca, Vacca, and Gove 1991</p> <p>Labbo and Teale 1990</p>

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<p>Before–reading activities: Students set a purpose for reading to decide what is important in the text and what they should remember. Tutors use this strategy, helping tutees determine their purpose and the authors’ objectives before reading.</p>	<p><i>Setting a Purpose:</i> Meaningful reading cannot occur without a purpose. Even though proficient readers may not always consciously state their reasons for reading particular selections, they always have a purpose. Purpose influences the strategies that readers use and what they will remember from their reading. If no specific purpose exists, reading tends to be haphazard and may lack any real value... Ineffective readers wait for purposes to be set for them, and too often only read to find the information requested by that purpose statement. Intrinsic or internalized purposes are preferable to those that are externally provided by the teacher. When students set their own appropriate purposes for reading, greater interaction occurs between them and the text, and better comprehension results.</p>	<p>Pennsylvania Department of Education Division of Evaluation and Reports (PA Dept. of Ed., Div. of Evaluation and Reports) 1998</p>

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<p>(Before–reading activities...) Tutee predicts content using picture and title to draw the reader into the story and activate background knowledge.</p> <p>Tutor asks questions and leads discussion.</p>	<p><i>Predicting:</i> Asking students to make predictions entices them to read the story more carefully and to use context clues more effectively as they work through the process of confirming or rejecting their predictions. Students appear to remember events in the story better when the events discussed contribute to their prediction making.</p> <p><i>Activating prior knowledge:</i> Prior knowledge is an important step in the learning process. It is a major factor in comprehension: that is, making sense of our learning experiences. Brain-based research confirms the fact that the learning environment needs to provide a setting that incorporates stability and familiarity. It should be able to satisfy the mind's enormous curiosity and hunger for discovery, challenge, and novelty. Creating an opportunity to challenge our students to call on their collective experiences (prior knowledge) is essential. Through this process we move students from memorizing information to meaningful learning and begin the journey of connecting learning events rather than remembering bits and pieces. Prior knowledge is an essential element in this quest for making meaning.</p> <p>The background or prior knowledge that students bring to the reading of a selection may be the most important factor affecting how well they comprehend. It is nearly impossible for students to understand material that they have been given to read if they have little or no personal knowledge of the topic. Prior knowledge enables a person to read between and beyond the lines. Since what is actually printed on the page is never fully explicit but only suggested, readers must use personal knowledge to fill in gaps and to integrate different pieces of information in the message. The process of interacting with text to construct meaning is largely the process of combining new information with prior knowledge.</p> <p><i>Questioning:</i> Questioning is the strategy that keeps readers engaged. When readers ask questions, they clarify understanding and forge ahead to make meaning. Asking questions is at the heart of thoughtful reading. Probing questions lead to further discussion and clarity of understanding.</p>	<p>Calderon 1999</p> <p>Christen and Murphy 1991</p> <p>PA Dept. of Ed., Div. of Evaluation and Reports 1998</p> <p>Harvey and Goudvis 2000</p>

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<p>First reading of the passage by tutee: Tutor encourages, corrects mistakes, records on Progress Form and shares results of Progress Form with tutee.</p>	<p><i>Read aloud:</i> Interactive read alouds encourage children to verbally interact with the text, peers and teacher. This approach to reading aloud provides a means of engaging students as they construct meaning and explore the reading process.</p> <p><i>Praise:</i> The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback.</p> <p><i>Assessing progress:</i> Research has found that the most successful tutors often have well-rehearsed scripts for responding to student errors. The results are general enough to apply to reading also.</p> <p>Timely feedback throughout the learning experience (“formative” as opposed to “summative” assessment) could drastically improve student achievement. The gains in achievement appear to be quite considerable... amongst the largest ever reported for educational interventions.</p>	<p>Barrentine 1996</p> <p>Hattie 1992</p> <p>McArthur, Stasz and Zmuidzinas 1997</p> <p>Black and William 1998</p>
<p>Responding to questions: Tutee answers question(s) asked by the tutor. Tutees assess their original predictions and add to their understanding of text.</p>	<p><i>Questioning:</i> Questioning strongly supports and advances students’ learning from reading. Questions appear to be effective for improving learning from reading because they: give students a purpose for reading; focus student attention on what they are to learn; help students think actively as they read; encourage students to monitor their comprehension; and help students to review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know.</p> <p><i>Activating Prior Knowledge:</i> Comprehension occurs when the information that is being read is connected with that which is already known. If readers do not make the connection, then there is limited comprehension.</p> <p><i>Text Connections:</i> Having students access and use their prior knowledge and experiences to better understand text is a launching point for strategy instruction because every student has experiences, knowledge, opinions or emotions to draw on.</p>	<p>CIERA 2001</p> <p>PA Dept. of Ed., Div. of Evaluation and Reports 1998</p> <p>Harvey and Goudvis 2000</p>
<p>Visualizing: Readers connect past experiences with the text, are more engaged and think artistically.</p>	<p><i>Visualizing:</i> “Text comes alive through the creations of sensory images. Those images take on a three-dimensional character in our minds and connect us personally...with the text.”</p> <p>“Good readers (especially younger readers) who visualize during reading understand and remember what they read better than readers who do not visualize.”</p>	<p>Keene and Zimmerman 1997</p> <p>CIERA 2001</p>

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<p>Making connections: Readers naturally connect books to their own experiences, to other books and to world experiences.</p>	<p><i>Making Connections:</i> Text gains meaning through linking the text to our life, finding common themes and big ideas across texts, and building and sharing connections that enhance understanding of topics and concepts within non-fiction and fiction.</p>	<p>Keene and Zimmerman 1997</p>
<p>Rereading and feedback: Tutee re-reads the passage. When tutees read fluently, rereading gives the opportunity to reread with more expression. For tutees still stumbling over words, rereading offers another chance to achieve fluency. The second reading gives both a better understanding of the text.</p> <p>Tutor encourages, corrects mistakes and records on Progress Form.</p>	<p><i>Rereading:</i> Students who read and reread passages orally as they receive guidance and/or feedback become better readers. Repeated oral reading substantially improves word recognition, speed and accuracy as well as fluency. To a lesser but still considerable extent, repeated oral reading also improves reading comprehension. Repeated oral reading improves the reading ability of all students throughout the elementary school years. It also helps struggling readers at higher levels.</p> <p>Fluency “may be almost a necessary condition for good comprehension and enjoyable reading experiences.”</p> <p>If the goal of reading instruction is to help children interact meaningfully with a variety of text, they must be competent in word recognition, read at an acceptable rate and understand how to project the phrasing and expression of the spoken word upon the written word.</p> <p><i>Feedback:</i> The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback.</p> <p>Timely feedback throughout the learning experience (“formative” as opposed to “summative” assessment) could drastically improve student achievement. The gains in achievement appear to be quite considerable... amongst the largest ever reported for educational interventions.</p> <p>Tutors are trained to offer genuine praise for real effort. Research shows a smile, praise, hand on the shoulder, encouragement, acknowledgment, and silence can have a significant effect on children’s behavior.</p>	<p>CIERA 2001</p> <p>Nathan and Stanovich 1991</p> <p>Zutell and Rasinski 1991</p> <p>Hattie 1992</p> <p>Black and William 1998</p> <p>O’Leary and O’Leary 1997</p>

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<p>Retelling: Tutee retells content of passage. In early lessons, tutors model retelling. Later, prompts encourage a complete retelling from tutees.</p>	<p><i>Retelling:</i> Story retelling can play an important role in performance-based assessment of reading comprehension. Gambrell, Koskinen and Kapinus (1991) argue that their research documents retelling as a more effective post-reading activity than teacher questioning. It prepares students for real-life tasks such as selecting, organizing, and conveying essential information. Retelling is more authentic than teacher prompted recall in its application and transfer to the ways in which readers store, recall, and utilize information.</p> <p>Retelling is recommended as an all-purpose extremely powerful learning activity for practicing a range of literacy skills (reading, writing, listening, talking, thinking, interacting, comparing, matching, selecting and organizing information, remembering, comprehending).</p>	<p>Kaiser 1997</p> <p>Brown and Cambourne 1988</p>
<p>Comprehension questions: Tutee answers comprehension questions about the passage, rereading when necessary.</p>	<p><i>Questioning:</i> Improves comprehension in four ways: helps readers interact with text and stay focused; helps readers stay motivated as they read to find answers; helps readers clarify information when they are confused; helps readers make inferences, because questions often are not answered directly in the text.</p> <p><i>Inferring:</i> “Inferring allows readers to make their own discoveries without the direct comment of the author.”</p> <p>“Proficient readers infer implicit notions from the text and create meaning based on those notions. If readers don’t infer, they will not grasp the deeper essence of texts they read.”</p>	<p>Tovani 2000</p> <p>Hall 1990</p> <p>Harvey and Goudvis 2000</p>
<p>Post-reading activity: Tutor and tutee carry out activity related to text.</p> <p>Lessons are grouped by themes; students are challenged to synthesize three readings as they write end-of-theme summaries.</p>	<p><i>Reading-writing connections:</i> Activities that complement reading, usually done after reading, have been effective in reinforcing and extending the affective and cognitive benefits that are attendant in extensive reading.</p> <p><i>Synthesizing:</i> “Writing is the ultimate act of synthesis.”</p> <p>By writing while reading students could learn to organize their thoughts...after habitually writing in response to reading, they could learn to clarify and refine their thoughts.</p> <p><i>Discussion:</i> Book talk about materials children are reading significantly promotes interest in reading.</p>	<p>Manning and Manning 1984</p> <p>Graves 1991</p> <p>Wells 1993</p> <p>Lin 2001</p>

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<p>Tutor debriefing: Writing and communication skills develop as tutors commit thoughts to a journal. Group sharing allows tutors to discuss successes and challenges. Debriefing allows coordinator to offer support and make suggestions based on observations.</p>	<p><i>Debriefing:</i> Tutors need ongoing supervision and support. Younger tutors will require more structure and closer supervision. In periodic group meetings, older tutors gain psychological support by talking out frustrations and sharing success stories. Tutors can learn from each other's experiences as well as from staff suggestions for handling problems.</p> <p><i>Writing:</i> Journals can promote fluency in reading and writing, encourage risk taking, provide opportunities for reflection and promote the development of written language conventions.</p>	<p>Gaustad 1993</p> <p>Routman 2000</p>
<p>Independent Reading: The tutor and tutee stop reading together, and the tutee is asked to finish reading the book at home</p>	<p><i>Independent Reading:</i> The amount of time spend in independent reading was the best predictor of reading achievement and also the best predictor of the amount of gain in reading achievement made by students between second and fifth grade.</p> <p>There is also evidence that independent reading is probably the major source of vocabulary acquisition beyond the beginning stages of learning to read.</p> <p>One of the most notable relationships in the field of reading is the very significant relationship between vocabulary development and achievement in reading.</p>	<p>Anderson, Wilson and Fielding 1988</p> <p>Nagy, Anderson and Herman 1987</p> <p>Baumann and Kameenui 1991</p>
<p>Self-Selection of Books: Choice is an integral part of literate behavior.</p>	<p><i>Choice:</i> Research indicates that when students have ownership over the materials they choose to read, it contributes to the development of independent reading and language learning.</p> <p>Readers must be reading books they can and want to read in order to successfully practice a strategy independently and if they want to improve their reading.</p>	<p>Hsui 2002</p> <p>Harvey and Goudvis 2000</p>

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