

Quick Reads Newsletter

America Reads/America Counts at NYU

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*Created by project PARA,
University of Nebraska -Lincoln*

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America Reads - Past and Present

America Reads, a national campaign that was initiated in 1997, challenges every American to help our children learn to read well and independently by the end of elementary school. Nationwide, there are approximately 1,200 colleges and universities participating in the America Reads Challenge.

Building on the success of the America Reads Challenge, America Counts was initiated in July 1999 as an effort to improve student achievement in mathematic and assist students in mastering challenging mathematics, including the foundations of algebra and geometry, by the end of the 9th grade. Nationwide, there are approximately 300 colleges and universities participating in America Counts.

NYU's America Reads program began in 1997 with the placement of approximately 700 tutors in 43 schools in New York City School Districts 1 and 2. Today, as schools prepare students for careers of the 21st century, NYU America Reads has grown to include mathematics tutoring, expanding the program to NYU

America Reads & America Counts.

Currently, approximately 1,000 tutors are placed in 100 schools in New York City School Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 13. These dedicated NYU undergraduate and graduate students provide approximately 10,000 hours per week of academic assistance to students in grades Pre-K – 9, at no cost to the participating schools.



Tutoring Tip

Encourage students to write down one new vocabulary word a day. For a sample vocabulary log click here:

<http://www.ed.gov/Family/RWN/Actin97/Log.html>

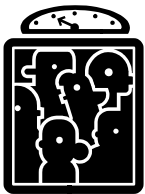
Musings on Being a Tutor

by Jennifer Milne

I didn't know what to expect on my first day as a tutor. I was prepared for the worst, but instead, I got the best group of kids anyone could ask for.

They're all smart, thoughtful and funny. My teacher assignment is slightly different from most others in that I follow the kids around throughout their day as opposed to staying with one teacher. The group I work with is nicknamed "2003 UB313," after a recently discovered planet.

Most of their classes are on the 8th floor of the school; I'm allowed to use the elevator, but they're not. Feeling bad for a few of them one day, I let two or three ride the elevator.



It didn't take long for everyone else to find out – after drama class the same day, one of the girls, let's call her Sarah, approached me.

"Hey, your name's Jen, right?" she said.

"Yup," I answered.

"I heard you take kids on the elevator..." Already I'm a legend. And not in a good way.

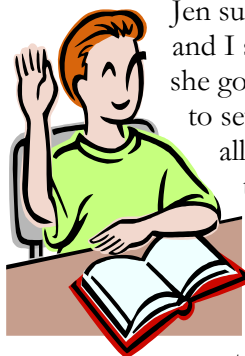
"How many vocabulary words do we have to write?" one of the kids asks me.

"I don't know... ten, 15?" I respond.

"TEN?! That's way too many, we can't do ten!"

At this point the teacher, Ms. Kathleen, chimes in.

"Guys, look. I was going to make you do 15 and then Ms.



Jen suggested five, and I said ten, and she got me down to seven. So you all should be thanking Ms. Jen right now that you don't have to do

ten!" She winks at me, proud that she's set me up to be the good guy.

What I love most about the students is that they really try. They try to be serious when they give reports, even though being onstage brings out giggling fits more than quality theatre. They try to make their presentations on Native American tribes interesting, even if the 'baked goods' aspect of that presentation turns out just a bit too salty. They try to learn.

I know that some of my examples and my experiences are limited to this one school, but I think the lesson I've learned from my tutoring applies universally: *Keep trying.*

Tips for Tutors

✧ Bring magazines and have your student search for pictures that begin with the letter or vowel sounds that your student is studying.

✧ Play "Words In a Bag" with your student. Cut about twenty index cards in half. Then write the beginning sound of the word on one half of each card and the ending sound on another. Go over the sounds with your student and then mix all the cards and place them in a brown paper bag. Take turns picking cards and making words. Also, players may have fun trading cards to help each other make words. Player with the most words at the end wins.




✧ Make two columns on a piece of paper, one with the beginning sound of the word and one with the ending sound. For example, if your student is studying the short "i" sound, write "s, b, p, f," in one column and "ig, ix, it, ig" in the other. Have your student first say the sounds and then draw matching lines to make words ("sit, big, pig, fix").

Written by Laura Brown for Albemarle County Migrant Education Program in Charlottesville, Virginia. Reprinted with permission from Migrant Education Program. <http://scs.student.virginia.edu/~madison/migrantaid/k2.html>

A child is born with the potential ability to learn Chinese or Swahili, play a kazoo, climb a tree, make a strudel or a birdhouse, take pleasure in finding the coordinates of a star. - Emilie Buchwald

Getting to Know the Student

There are many ways to learn more about the student so you can know how to best reach him/her during instruction. It is important to remember that you are in a role where the student will look up to you and may consider you a friend. You should be friendly with the student, but not become so close that you lose the student's respect as an authority figure and are unable to be firm when necessary. The relationship should be one that communicates respect and caring. Specific techniques which encourage positive interaction

-  include:
 - Using student's first name,
 -  Establishing eye contact, and
 -  Discussing the student's interests.

A different method of getting to know one student may be more appropriate than another. The success of a method will vary depending on the personality of the paraprofessional and of each student. The following ideas are some which may be used in establishing relationships with students during instruction.

Student Characteristics and Interests

Observe the student in the classroom situation, by him/her self. What types of activities seem to motivate the student and how can you use the knowledge you gain from observing the student?

1. Open conversation with the student:

- ✦ Ask about their day, family,
- ✦ Ask what they enjoy during free time,
- ✦ Discover their interests and activities, and
- ✦ Tell about yourself.

Be approachable:

- ✦ Give students your undivided attention
- ✦ Listen carefully to questions and concerns, and
- ✦ Understand the student's world, relate to events of interest to the student.

Student's Ability Level

1. Student's skill level

It is important to be aware of the student's skill level in the subject in which you will be tutoring. If you do not know this from prior experience with this student, be sure to ask the teacher.

2. Strengths and weaknesses

Note student strengths as well as the areas where they need more work. Build on successes and report any frustrations of the child to the teacher.

3. Instructional Strategies

Talk with the classroom teacher about which instructional strategies they have found to work well with the student(s). For instance, the student may

read best orally when alternating pages that are read with another student.

The above information is re-printed with permission from [Project PARA Lesson 5](http://para.unl.edu/para/TrainingIntro.html). Please visit [Project PARA: http://para.unl.edu/para/TrainingIntro.html](http://para.unl.edu/para/TrainingIntro.html) for other great resources on tutoring.

Enrichment Corner

The following activities may help a child to understand what they have read, and to practice word, interpretive reading and creative skills:

Understanding What You Read:

1. Write 5 sentences about the story. Make some true and false. Give them to a friend who also read the story. See how they do!
2. List ten words from the story. Write an antonym for each word.
3. Skim the story. List words that tell who, when and where.

Enrichment Activities:

1. Draw three pictures that show the events from the beginning, middle and end of the story. Write a sentence that describes each picture.
2. Write a note to your teacher. Describe what you liked best or least about the story.
3. Write about an experience you have had that is similar to an experience in the story.

Top Ten Time Sheet Bloopers

1. No student signature.
2. No gross pay.
3. Tearing off the top so the copies get split up.
4. Putting hours down on a school holiday.
5. Using any other ink except black or blue.
6. No Student ID No.
7. No name.
8. Incorrect math.
9. Turning in a student or teacher copy.
10. Wrong pay period end date.



If you commit any of these offenses, you run the risk of **delaying your check for two weeks!** Make sure you check your timesheet before you submit it!



Thanksgiving Payroll will be held on Wednesday, November 22nd from 10AM-1PM and Monday, November 27th, 11AM-5PM Timesheets for this pay period are due in the America Reads mailbox by 12pm on Monday, November 27th.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

We want to hear from you!

If you have a special story or tutoring experience that you'd like to share with us, please submit it to areads@nyu.edu, attn: Marina.

We are also interested in learning of any tutoring techniques that are working well for you in the classroom.

We will also be featuring a "Hot Topics" section to provide you with further information and resources. Please submit topics you'd like to see covered in the next newsletter and we will ask the experts for you.

Save Your Pay Stub!

-- And if you have direct deposit, make sure you print out your stub every pay period!

It is a good idea to save your paycheck stub for several reasons. First and most importantly, it is a convenient record of the amount of hours that you have worked in any given pay period. In the event that something happens to your check or if there is a discrepancy in your pay, your check stub is the best evidence for us to quickly correct the situation.

Your paycheck stub may also be important when it comes time to file your taxes. The IRS recommends that you retain copies of any proof of income to ensure an accurate tax return.

In addition, your paycheck stub provides an ongoing balance of your remaining federal work-study funds. The America Reads/America Counts program is a federal program using federal work-study dollars, therefore we can only pay you with money from your remaining work-study funds. As the semester draws to an end and your work-study continues to decrease, it's imperative that you monitor your work-study money.



AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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