

Literacy Tutorial Programs in Elementary Schools

A Reference Guide for Program Coordinators and Tutors

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The Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing

is an interdisciplinary student support and research unit in the College of Humanities at The Ohio State University. Its mission is to foster excellence among writers and teachers of writing at The Ohio State University and in the State of Ohio. As part of its outreach and engagement efforts, CSTW responds to requests from business, industry, government agencies, P-12 schools, and other nonprofit organizations for help in improving written communication and writing instruction.

CSTW offers the following resources and programs:

- One-on-one consulting and tutoring services
- Support for writing courses at Ohio State
- Consultations with instructional staff across the disciplines who are incorporating writing into their courses (Writing Across the Curriculum)
- Research projects related to writing
- School, workplace, and community outreach

Preface

This reference guide provides helpful information for those interested in fostering young children's literacy through tutorial-based instruction. Based on interviews with educators, observations of tutorial sessions, and secondary educational research, the following pages guide literacy program coordinators and tutors through issues to consider before and during participation in a tutorial program. Whether the tutorial program is located in a university, public school, nonprofit, and/or other community-based organization, we hope this guide meets the needs of both literacy program coordinators and tutors. The purpose of this guide is twofold:

- 1) to provide a framework for those interested in coordinating a literacy partnership in K-6 schools, and
- 2) to serve as a resource for new and veteran literacy tutors.

This project began in Autumn 2001 as the Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing (CSTW) outreach team at The Ohio State University was evaluating its literacy partnerships with several public schools in Columbus. In 1999, CSTW and the Writing Workshop at Ohio State established literacy partnerships with three Columbus public schools: Hubbard and Trevitt elementary schools and the Africentric School. In the Ohio State-Columbus Public Schools Literacy Partnerships, Ohio State undergraduate and graduate students have been engaging K-6 students in literacy activities to help prepare them for the Ohio Proficiency Tests. These partnerships help enhance student achievement in Ohio's public schools while giving Ohio State an opportunity to demonstrate its "commitment to a meaningful and mutually beneficial collaboration with partners in education, business, public and social service" (www.osu.edu/initiatives/).

We know from experience that starting such programs can take a lot of energy, so we hope this guide will help make it easier and more enjoyable for you to develop, administer, and participate in tutorial programs.

The first two parts of this guide describe administration issues for literacy program coordinators. In this guide, *Literacy Tutorial Programs in Elementary Schools: A Reference Guide for Program Coordinators and Tutors*, "literacy program coordinators" refers to those who make administrative decisions for and coordinate among the various program participants. These coordinators could be administrative staff at a nonprofit organization, university faculty, or public school teachers and staff. Parts 1 and 2 of this guide offer suggestions for how coordinators can go about

- working on a mission statement
- contacting a public school partner
- clarifying each participant's role
- training tutors
- maintaining communication with public school teachers and administrators
- evaluating progress toward desired outcomes

Part 3 offers tutors ideas for one-on-one and small-group literacy instruction by providing guidelines for

- defining the content matter (in this case, literacy)
- establishing goals and creating corresponding lesson plans
- building a repertoire of tutoring strategies

And to help tutors reflect on this reading, an appendix of worksheets is provided.

Coordinators and tutors both should be aware of the issues faced by one another. Tutors should understand the program's larger mission in order to offer insights on the program's progress and direction and to keep their tutoring practices consistent with program philosophy. Likewise, administrators should be aware of tutoring strategies for the sake of evaluation, training, and redesign of the literacy program.

We hope that you'll build from the lessons we've learned while developing our Ohio State-Columbus Public Schools Literacy Partnerships in order to form a literacy program that meets your mission and the contexts in which you will be doing literacy work. Best of luck in this worthy project!

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