



**E. L. Cord Foundation
Center for Learning and Literacy**

Mission: To improve literacy instruction in Nevada through teacher education and to provide literacy services to children and adults in northern Nevada.

**Regents Service Program Grant
End-of-Year Report to the Board of Regents**

August 2008 – June 2009

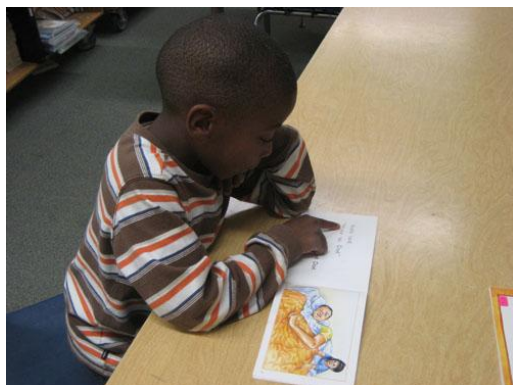
During fall of 2008 year, Regents Service Program (RSP) monies supported 6 Reading Buddies tutors who worked with 44 elementary school students. The average number tutoring sessions attended for the fall of 2008 was 15. A total of 30 students returned for the spring semester. The average number tutoring sessions attended for the spring of 2009 was 21.



The 44 children who were tutored as part of the RSP award were all in the first and second grade. Based on the QSI testing, these students showed significant progress in their literacy development and word knowledge. Information about assessment are discussed further in this report.

At no expense to the district or the children's families, tutors worked with students at least twice a week for forty-five minutes each session and if needed an additional one day-one hour session was provided. Six undergraduate tutors worked at two Washoe County School District school sites: Elmcrest Elementary and Peavine Elementary.

During the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009 semesters, Reading Buddies tutors attended a one-hour training on the instructional and developmental aspects of learning to read and of literacy instruction. After conducting an initial assessment of each student's stage of literacy development, tutors created lesson plans appropriate to the child's developmental stage. Most lesson planning took place at the school sites, so that tutors could consult with teachers and site coordinators. Additionally, tutors accessed resources from the E. L. Cord Foundation Center for Learning and Literacy, and they met weekly with the graduate student coordinator of the Reading Buddies



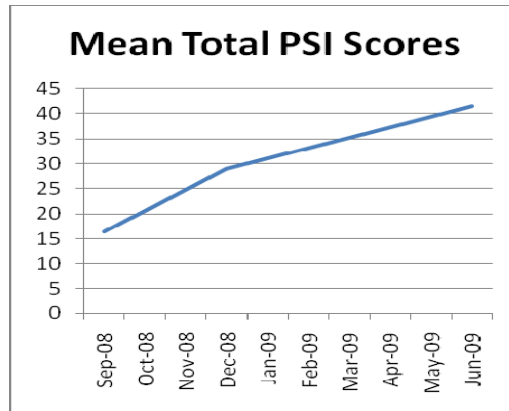
program. In the beginning of the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009 semester, all tutors participated in an individual training and also received on-going training at their school sites. Tutors used a lesson plan template designed around the Read To, Read With, Write With, Word Study and Talk With (RRWWT) format.

Two undergraduate pre-service teachers acted as school site supervisors during the fall semester to support tutors, teach children, and meet with teachers. The supervisors recruited new tutors and assisted with interviewing and hiring.

Before tutoring began in the fall and spring semesters, supervisors established contact with all school site coordinators, and they stayed in contact with coordinators throughout the semester, both in person and by email. Supervisors spent a significant amount of time onsite with tutors at Elmcrest Elementary and Peavine Elementary where the majority of tutoring took place. This time was used to provide tutors with feedback and new ideas for tutoring and the coordinators helped tutors keep in close contact with teachers and staff at the schools. RSP-funded supervisors were available to each tutor at these sites throughout the week. Supervisors stayed in contact with the other tutors by email and reviewed submitted lesson plans. Tutors and supervisors discussed student progress and additional ideas for lesson planning. Finally, to enrich the tutoring program, supervisors read and researched the Reading Buddies program and related tutoring programs.

Assessments

It was noted above that the 38 children made significant gains. We know this from analyzing the results of formal and informal individual assessments that were administered periodically to monitor students' progress, and through our meetings with their teachers. The QSI (Qualitative Spelling Inventory), which measures that students' word knowledge was also administered. In the fall of 2008, results from this assessment showed *significant gains* ($t = 12.43$, $p < .000$) and in the spring of 2009, results from this assessment showed *significant gains* ($t = 12.68$, $p < .000$) for the students who received individualized tutoring from the Reading Buddies program. These gains were shared and discussed with the classroom teachers and administrators. The graph below shows the students' progress was made over the 2008-2009 school year.



At the end of the spring semester, the children in Reading Buddies program were surveyed to see what they thought of their experiences in tutoring. When asked how they improved, children told us about their improvement:

- *“I can now sound out more words and I take my time.”*
- *“I feel like I gotten more time to learn.”*
- *“I read a whole bunch. I read the big book the class reads. I like reading.”*
- *“I like to read and write more. Reading is my favorite thing to do.”*
- *“I’m a better reader because I practice.”*

Children’s classroom teachers were also interviewed about the students’ progress, and these are a few of their comments:

- *[Student’s] confidence level has really gone up! He is willing and able to read aloud in class or reading groups. He knows to read for meaning and he is willing sound out words and perhaps risk a mistake.”*
- *“[Student’s] writing has become more fluid with the addition of more words spelled correctly.”*
- *“[Student] is trying much harder. He is using his pointer finger to look at the words while he is reading.”*
- *“[Student] has the potential to be a top notch student and this program has enabled us to see her true potential.”*
- *“[Student] smiles now during reading activities and much more apt to take a “risk” and sounds out a word aloud.”*
- *“[Student] is more confident and comfortable with reading and writing and is more willing to volunteer to read.”*

Reading Buddies tutors were also interviewed about their children. Comments included below indicate the depth of understanding many of the tutors gained regarding effective teaching and instruction:

- *“[Student’s] fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension have all improved. She can read full sentences without pausing. She also doesn’t always have to look at the pictures for help.”*
- *“[Student] has improved by learning that reading is not a race. Her sounding out skills have also improved.*
- *“[Student] moved from A-level to D-level reader. Her sight word vocabulary has grown. She reads with more fluency and also with more confidence.”*

Each tutoring site has more specific data for each child that includes school-wide testing. University students gained a great deal from their experiences tutoring, while students at school sites acquired invaluable reading skills. We expect Reading Buddies children to continue to make significant progress in the future.

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August 2009