A Publication of the Tufts Literacy Corps

The T.L.C. Bulletin

"Reading makes immigrants of us all. It takes us away from home... ...(and) finds homes for us everywhere." Hazel Rochman

"BookMatch" Challenges Area Kids to Read

Tufts Literacy Corps Members Create Friendly Competition that Encourages Medford's Children to Read

In the spring of 2006, Emily Scott, Jessie Waters and their team of T.L.C. BookMatch volunteers piloted an excting new reading program in Mike Allen's 5th Grade classroom. After many long hours of reading children's novels and crafting carefully worded competition questions, these innovative T.L.C. members tested the fruits of their labor. The results? The kids loved the game. Since then BookMatch has invited all fourth and fifth graders at the Brooks and the Columbus Elementary Schools in Medford to try their luck in a rollicking—but friendly—tournament.

"In what book do three children smuggle a dragon up a tower with the assistance of an invisibility cloak?

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This team of girls inspects the BookMatch book list to decide who will read which books.

T.L.C. Grows By Leaps and Bounds

The Tufts Literacy Corps has grown five fold since its inception and it continues to develop.

The Tufts Literacy Corps (T.L.C.), now jointly supported by the Office of Student Financial Services and the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development, was established in 1998 through a seed grant from Tufts. At that time, the program consisted of 16 reading tutors and a director. Today, the T.L.C. has over 90 student members, three core tutoring programs and several student-run initiatives. T.L.C. tutors have worked with children in eleven local schools, and two family developments, and tutoring children on the Tufts campus is becoming increasingly popular as more and more parents call looking for math tutors.

"The T.L.C. taught me that learning is not an even path… ...but a self-renewing experience that allows you to see the world in a different light."

Abbie Allanach
Reading Tutor,

Fostering Fluency: RAVE-O / T.L.C.

Collaborating With Tufts' Center for Reading and Language Research

By Cynthia Krug

Since 1998, the Tufts Literacy Corps has served as an "applied arm" of Tufts' Center for Reading and Language Research. As the program director of the T.L.C., an important part of my job involves translating the research conducted by Professor Maryanne Wolf and her staff at C.R.L.R. into an effective instructional program for student tutors with boundless energy, compassion and talent—and with little or no background in reading.

For the last ten years, Professor Wolf and her colleagues have been funded by the National Institute of Health and Human Development to create a new remedial reading program known as "RAVE-O" (Retrieval, Automaticity, Vocabulary, Engagement with Language and Orthography). As its pithy acronym suggests, RAVE-O represents Professor Wolf's refusal to reduce remedial instruction to a simplistic vision of reading. It embraces as many dimensions of the reading process as possible, and "fosters fluency" by insisting that children automatize every aspect of this process. The T.L.C. training program for reading tutors follow's the Reading Center's lead. Our adapted tutoring agenda encompasses the theoretical orientation and many of the hands-on activities that make RAVE-O so rich.

Several aspects of the C.R.L.R. curriculum are superbly matched to our work with slightly older, less impaired readers. We rarely work with children who cannot read at all. Our children tend to know most letter patterns and they can usually blend letters into words. Nevertheless, many cannot seem to move beyond sounding out words to rapid sight word recognition and true fluency. Sometimes this is because there are gaps in their knowledge of symbol-sound relations. Other times, the reasons are less clear. Using RAVE-O-like activities, however, T.L.C. tutors help every piece of it, from letters and letter-patterns to multiple meanings of words and their use in connected texts. The goal: when they put it all back together—the parts fit and the print comes to life.

- Attention-Getting

Keeping children engaged is key to all teaching, but it is a particular challenge when working with struggling readers. In part, this is because reading and attention difficulties often co-exist. It is also because the "nuts & bolts" of print recognition are tedious. Children with reading problems have to see the same print patterns over and over again—and there is nothing inherently thrilling about "ight" or "silent e's." However, RAVE-O teaching sparkles with "magic tricks" and holds children's attention with games. It breaks the learning process into small, manageable tasks, so that children are always mastering new skills and understanding new ideas. Using this approach, T.L.C. tutors

The Tufts Literacy Corps Math Tutors

The America Counts Challenge was established soon after the America Reads Challenge took off. By 2001, the Tufts Literacy Corps had added math tutors to its repertoire, and was sending mathematically minded Tufts students to local schools, libraries and after school programs to help elementary and middle school students with math.

The first goal for all tutors is to make sure that children master the mathematics program taught through their school district. In addition to helping children gain math *fluency* (i.e., they can add, subtract, multiply and divide quickly, easily and automatically), TLC math tutors approach math from a variety of angles, searching for ways to make the concepts clear. Working one-on-one, they have the luxury of listening carefully to their students, so they can understand how they think about numbers. They identify children's strengths and the areas with which they struggle, and help them grow from whatever point they are at. Our second goal is to broaden children's understanding of mathematics and its place in the world. TLC math tutors have used calculus to help middle school children design hockey pucks, taught fractions through music, and enhanced children's understanding of money by planning fantasy trips to Disney World.

PLay the Game of Fostering Fluency

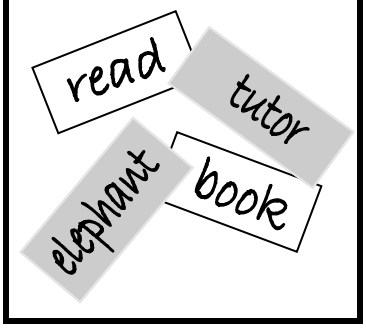
By Sarah Morrison-Cohen

Follow the path and experience a typical T.L.C. tutoring hour.

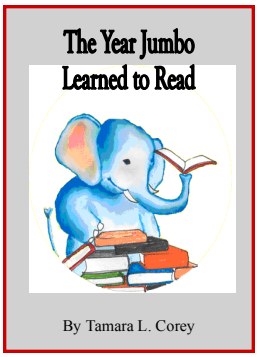
Start Here!

"Hello, Let's catch up! Its been a week. What's happened?"

Word Box Collection



Collaborative Oral Reading



One day in late May, Jumbo and his T.L.C. tutor sat under a huge pine tree.

"Jumbo," said the tutor (his name was Sam). "Let's read this book together."

" But Sam," replied Jumbo. "I am an elephant."

"Yes, you are," agreed Sam. "An elephant who can read, with a little help from your T.L.C. tutor."

Word Race 1

How fast can you read these words?

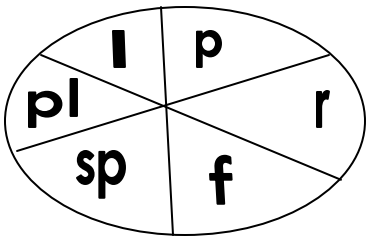
ace lace race face

pace face space grace

Time 1____ Time 3____

Time 2____ Time 4____

Words Live in Families!
Spin the wheel !
How many words can you make?



ace

Core Words:
face, brace
Rimes to Cover:
ace, ice

Re-Read Poem or "Snippet"

There once was a runner named Grace,

Who ran in her high heels and lace.

She ran every race but she fell on her face…

And went limping back home in disgrace!

Finish! See You Next Week!

T.L.C. Grows in Leaps & Bounds

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According to T.L.C. Director, Dr. Cynthia Krug, this growth reflects both the educational needs of local children and incredible energy on the part of Tufts students. "Each year, we get new requests from principals, teachers and parents, and I start coordinating as soon as I see a match between community need and student interest."

Krug continues, "for example, early this semester, I received email from a middle school math teacher. He wanted to know, did we have students to help him run an after-school math club for failing middle-schoolers? Within an hour after I sent out email, three students had responded. These math tutors are now visiting the school every Monday afternoon."

As the Tufts Literacy Corps grows, so does its "infrastructure," which creates opportunities for students to advance within the program. At most schools, for example, second and third year tutors work as "student liaisons." In addition to tutoring, these experienced T.L.C. members are instrumental in coordinating on-site logistics and helping the new tutors get oriented.

"The possibilities for growth are really endless," says Krug. "A couple of years ago, Tisch College asked me to create more opportunities for student leadership—so now we have projects like BookMatch, which was almost entirely created and run by students, Emily Scott, Jessie Waters and Patricia Letayf.

BookMatch Challenges Kids to Read

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"Name the book and author that tells how a pair of silver shoes have the power to transport a heroine home." Every Wednesday after school, BookMatch teams practice answering questions like these. With the assistance of their Tufts guides, the children read a list of 25 books and devise strategies to make sure their team is well prepared for the competition. Want to join this year's audience? Email bookmatch@gmail.com for the time and place.

For more information about the Tufts Literacy Corps, email Cynthia.Krug@tufts.edu or call (617) 627-5325.

Fostering Fluency: RAVE-O/T.L.C.

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experience firsthand how motivated children become when they are successful.

- Automaticity and Word Families

Research suggests that we naturally break syllables into their "onsets" (the c in "cat") and "rimes" (the "at" in cat). Like the C.R.L.R. research team, T.L.C. tutors teach children that words "live in families" ("cat" is part of the "at" family, along with "fat," "mat," and "splat"). This family-based approach allows children to move past letter-blending as they automatize coherent "chunks" of print.

- Word analysis is laced with meaning.

Of course, "word family approaches" are not new. What *is* new, however, is RAVE-O's emphasis on the multiple meanings of words and their use in a variety of contexts. Clinical observations and research indicate that words are stored in memory categorically, and that the sound, sight and *meaning* of printed words are neurologically bound. When children trip over symbols and sounds, deep familiarity with meaning can make all the difference in their ability to read a word. Following the lead of the C.R.L.R. research team, T.L.C. tutors link print patterns to as much meaning as possible. The children learn a set of "core words" that simultaneously represent the most common letter patterns AND are rich in meaning. They web them, draw them, dance them, and act them out—because once they know "fan" (really know it, in all its myriad meanings), they also know "ran," "pan," and "toucan."

The contribution RAVE-O has made to T.L.C. tutor training, and the children in Medford and Somerville, is unmistakable. Every year, most children we tutor make *at least* a year of progress in *at least* one key area of reading. This year, with a grant from the Stratford Foundation and a stronger partnership with public school reading teachers, we are hoping to help a wider range of readers make even more progress.

Tufts Literacy Corps Community Partners Since 1998

Kennedy Elementary School
Dame Elementary School
Columbus Elementary School
Brooks Elementary School
Andrews Middle School
Medford Boys & Girls Club
West Medford Community Center
Willis Avenue Family Development
Powder House Community School
West Somerville Neighborhood School
Healey Elementary School
Cummings Elementary School
Brown School
Winter Hill Community School
Mystic Avenue Public Housing Development