

# Florida Center for Reading Research

## Succeeding in Reading

### What is Succeeding in Reading?

*Succeeding in Reading* is a novel approach to cross-age tutoring by which struggling secondary readers learn through teaching. The intent is that struggling readers and ELL students at the secondary level improve their reading and language skills by teaching younger non-readers, emergent readers, or ELL students. The overall goal for both tutors and tutees is to enhance their language and literacy skills and strategy use. Tutors are students in grades 5-12 who must be a minimum of 3 years older than the tutees. Tutors may be students who are native or non-native speakers. Tutees are chosen based upon their elementary or middle school teacher's recommendations; and they are usually non- or emergent readers and ELL students who have just begun to read or who are learning the sounds of the English language. *Succeeding in Reading (SiR)* may be used with tutors and tutees from a variety of proficiency levels. A requisite to *SiR's* effectiveness is the program leader who is responsible for the implementation and coordination of *SiR*. This person must be knowledgeable in all aspects of the teaching of reading because s/he is responsible for the initial and ongoing training, guidance, practice opportunities, and support of the tutors. The developers of *SiR* recommend that young students with more severe reading problems receive instruction from reading specialists rather than from the tutoring offered by *SiR*. *SiR* began in 1998 as a service oriented class called Leadership Through Reading for struggling high school readers. Since then, it has evolved and can be used as a school-based, community-volunteer, and parent tutoring program.

*SiR* consists of two types of cross-age tutoring: Buddy Reading and Buddy Coaching. Buddy Reading is for students who do not yet read or who are just getting started. Buddy Coaching is for emergent readers in grades K-2. Both Buddy Reading and Buddy Coaching lessons provide one-on-one tutoring for 30-45 minutes. Typically, tutoring sessions meet one to three times per week, and more sessions are recommended if the schedule permits. During Buddy Reading, the tutor reads aloud to the tutee while focusing on comprehension, the alphabet and letter sounds. The final part of the lesson, Celebrating Literacy, ends with activities designed to emphasize the importance of literacy in an enjoyable and engaging manner. This might include making an alphabet book or a book of poems that were read during the lessons, writing letters, or making a phonics board game. In the Buddy Coaching lesson, the tutee reads aloud from leveled books while the coach offers guidance in comprehension, fluency, decoding and writing. The lesson begins with the tutee reading books that s/he has already read. Next, the tutor takes a running record to measure progress while the tutee reads the new book introduced on the previous lesson. Then, the tutor assists the tutee in writing a sentence or two about the book that was just read. This is followed by the reading of the new book. Celebrating Literacy concludes the Buddy Coaching lesson with reading aloud to the tutee, writing books and letters, and introducing new genres of books.

The *SiR* program contains a Program Leader's Guide with a resource CD consisting of assessment packets, coaching and reading lesson forms to be filled out after each lesson, flash cards and word lists, games and activities, and training videos. The Buddy Reading Guide and a Buddy Coaching Guide are for the tutor. The first six chapters in the tutoring guides provide an introduction to the reading process, with

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before, during, and after reading skills and strategies, and suggestions for working with the ELL student. The remaining part of each guide is devoted to the specifics of the Buddy Reading or Buddy Coaching lesson, how to choose books for the tutee, the administration of a running record, lists and lesson charts, and materials necessary for each lesson. A plan of the first 3 days of lessons helps orient the tutors to how lessons should proceed. Assessments are given during those first 3 days that inform the tutor of the tutees strengths and weaknesses. The Buddy Coaching Guide also offers information on tutoring the older student (grades 3-5). All three guides are organized and teacher/tutor friendly.

### How is Succeeding in Reading aligned with Current Research?

Buddy Reading and Buddy Coaching lessons contain important components of reading instruction that were identified by the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000), but they differ in their emphasis. Both types of tutoring have a strong focus on comprehension, with varying amounts of instruction in alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, basic phonics, and concepts of print for Buddy Reading, and word work and fluency development for Buddy Coaching. While there is structure to both types of tutoring lessons, there is no scope and sequence of skills instruction. Books are chosen based on the tutee's instructional reading level, and vocabulary and word work instruction are dependent upon the specific words chosen from that day's focus books. Therefore, a lesson may be taught explicitly and systematically, but this is highly dependent on the skill of the tutor and the level of training and support received from the program leader. Buddy Reading and Buddy Coaching Plans, which must be completed by the tutor, may assist in securing an explicit and systematic lesson.

Before, during and after reading strategies set the focus and structure of the tutoring lesson and assist the tutee in understanding the lesson's content. Three acronyms are used to represent these strategies: **PAS**, **VIP**, and **POW**. **PAS** consists of pre-reading strategies that include **P**reviewing the text, **A**ccessing prior knowledge, and **S**etting a purpose for reading. Previewing might include figuring out the book's genre, examining headings, subheadings, pictures, charts, illustrations, and graphs. **VIP** describes the reading strategy to be applied while reading the book: **V**isualize what you are reading about, **I**nteract with the text, and **P**redict what will come next. Interacting with the text involves questioning that helps the tutee think about the text's meaning, and marking or highlighting important parts of the text. After the initial text reading, the tutor assists the tutee in the following **POW** strategies: **P**practice, **O**rganize your ideas about the passage, and **W**rite about what you read. Practice refers to rereading to build fluency, and organizing ideas might be accomplished by using graphic organizers, lists, and outlines. Story maps, Venn Diagrams, and character maps may be used to develop understanding.

In addition to the lesson structure described above, tutors learn to use a variety of questioning techniques that go beyond simple yes/no answers to help the tutees' understanding. These questions might include inferential questions that require short or extended responses. To develop vocabulary understanding, tutors are encouraged to use pictures and dramatization, classification, and writing down difficult words and phrases and using them in conversation. Vocabulary work examines prefixes, and suffixes, with the added use of cognates for ELL students. To figure out a difficult word while reading, the tutee is encouraged to decode a word or to think about meaning from context.

Fluency development is a goal of the warm-up books at the beginning of the Buddy Coaching lesson, and the rereading of the previous day's sentence. For the Buddy Reading lessons, tutees hear expressively read stories.

In the Buddy Reading lesson, the tutee learns sounds through poetry, rhyming, chants, and songs. Upper and lower case letters, and sound symbol relationships are learned by using magnetic letters and through writing. It is important for the tutor to be familiar with consonants, vowels, and digraphs since word work includes onset-rime and syllable identification, and blending and segmenting words. During the sentence writing portion of the Buddy Coaching lesson, the tutor highlights specific words to teach explicitly. From this, tutees practice saying irregular words, spelling difficult words, and saying the sounds of specific words through the use of Elkonin boxes.

There are important considerations for school districts wishing to implement *SiR*. The reading expertise of the program leader and her/his ability to train and supervise the tutors, and build a rapport with teachers and administrators is crucial to the success of *SiR*. Also, the depth of tutor understanding of the reading process will be highly dependent upon the program leader. Finally, the tutor must have access to a variety of resources that do not come with the program but are necessary for teaching the lessons; most importantly, a library of leveled books and high quality books for reading aloud.

Professional development for *SiR* exists on two levels. Because the program leader needs a strong understanding of the reading process, the developers of the program suggest an on-site *SiR* training through the Maupin House website ([www.maupinhouse.com](http://www.maupinhouse.com)) or any good workshop in emergent reading. The program leader is responsible for providing initial and ongoing training to the tutors.

### Research Support for Succeeding in Reading

Presently, there are no experimental studies that have documented the effectiveness of the *Sir* program. Results of a quasi-experimental study will soon be available.

### Conclusion

In summary, the two types of tutoring that comprise the *SiR* program contain a strong emphasis on comprehension with varying amounts of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and vocabulary instruction. Future, well-designed experimental studies using random assignment, matched units for assignment and analysis, and equivalent scores on pretests between the experimental and control groups should be useful in determining the efficacy of this program.

### Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths of *Succeeding in Reading*:

- Teaching younger readers the necessary reading skills and strategies to be successful readers has the potential to provide tutors with a motivating activity that has reciprocal gains: their own increased knowledge of reading.
- Each chapter of the Buddy Reading Guide and Buddy Coaching Guide is set up to mimic the before, during, and after reading strategies that tutors will teach, enabling them to implement those strategies in their own learning. Questions at the end of each chapter reflect the chapter's main points.

- Running records enable the tutor to monitor the tutee's progress, assist in targeting daily instructional objectives, and guide the tutee's placement into instructional level texts.
- This program has been used with skilled readers, average readers, and ELL students as tutors.

Weaknesses of *Succeeding in Reading*:

- None were noted.

## Which Florida districts have schools that implement *Succeeding in Reading*?

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### For More Information

<https://www.maupinhouse.com/catalog/index.php?cPath=35>

### References

National Reading Panel (2000). *Teaching children to read: an evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. NIH Publication No. 00-4754. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

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Important Note: FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide effective instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does **not** constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

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