

SEMESTER IN REVIEW

A SEMESTER OF GROWTH AND CONNECTION

Tina Koneazny, JEP Associate Director

Over the past few years, JEP has been fortunate to have Beth Levinson as a valuable addition to our professional staff. Prior to JEP, Beth was an Educational Developer at McMaster University in Canada. Before McMaster, she was a K-12 educator in the US, where she supported her students' learning through inquiry. Beth graduated from the University of California, San Diego with a BA in Political Science and received her master's degree in education from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Given her experience in education and curriculum development, Beth has been helping to guide and support our ReadersPLUS leadership team in rethinking and revamping our tutor training curriculum and development of a new lesson plan form that will more effectively, and readily, allow us to measure student progress and outcomes. Beth worked jointly with Abbie Hitzemann, a Rossier PhD degree recipient May 2023,



IN THIS ISSUE

- Letter from the Associate Director
- Alumni Spotlight
- Fall Recap
- House Cup Results
- Farewells
- The Revamped Lesson Plan

on both efforts that were inspired by the great need to consider some of the new challenges and educators – and tutors! — are currently facing due to the devastating academic impacts and student learning loss that resulted from the COVID pandemic.

I am thrilled to have Beth working alongside me to support our tutors and peer leaders as we all strive to continue learning and growing in our work serving our partner schools, teachers, and K-5 students. You will get to know Beth and her work better later in this newsletter edition, as she shares more about some of the changes she introduced to the program this semester.

Alumni Spotlight



Nisey Dumbutshena-Berry

It feels comforting to reflect upon the fact that all four years of my undergraduate experience were shaped by my time at JEP ReadersPLUS both as a tutor and coordinator at the Norwood site. Go Polar Bears! Being part of the Readers family, regardless of your role, means being welcomed by a tight-knit community on USC's sprawling campus where service work is marked by compassion and humility. The people I worked with over the years, whether within the JEP house or at the school, were truly some of the most empathetic and devoted people I have ever met. It always felt like a safe and nurturing space and those dynamics directly informed the close connections forged between tutors and all of the incredible students we were privileged enough to work with. I will always remember the kids I got to see develop grade after grade.



What makes it such an impactful experience is that, whether you're a student receiving tutoring or a program director, you have a voice within Readers; there's a space for your authentic self to shine. Having been a part of the program will continuously encourage me to seek out work and community spaces that are just as heart-felt.

My time at Readers solidified my love of mentoring and making meaningful connections with youth. After graduating, I moved off-grid onto a 28-acre farm on Kauai. Here, there is a nature-based school program where I am one of the teachers. I take the older home-schooled kids on enrichment days around the island and engage in Montessori-centered learning on the farm with the preschool-aged group. It has been a wonderful place to land, but it's definitely a lot more muddy and mosquito-filled than DTLA!

Sending my love to all ReadersPLUS folks past present and future,

Nisey Berry





Fall Festivities



Mack tutor Ashely Jung doing a holiday themed lesson with her student

Fall-themed artwork at Vermont

Norwood Annual Halloween Parade



House Cup



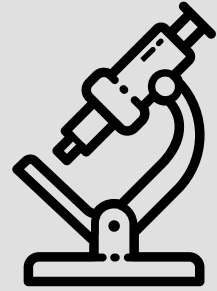
In the spirited realm of ReadersPLUS, our fall semester was not only marked by academic enrichment but also by the exciting House Cup competition. Each site, comprising our different elementary schools, engaged in friendly rivalry, earning points through commendable accomplishments and going above and beyond in their dedication to the program. The competition was fierce, with several intense toss-ups keeping the excitement levels high throughout the semester. After a gripping and hard-fought battle, it is our pleasure to announce that Norwood emerged victorious, claiming the House Cup after a journey filled with teamwork, determination, and a commitment to excellence. Congratulations to all participating teams for making this year's House Cup one to remember!



Farewell and Thank you



*Carla Collier -- tutor, coordinator, math director
ReadersPlus ALL STAR!*



Carla will be graduating this semester with a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology and Master of Science in Stem Cell Biology, after having devoted 8 semesters working with JEP and the ReadersPlus program -- beginning as tutor and working all the way up to Math Director. Carla has always been a tremendously helpful and caring part of the ReadersPlus team, and she will be greatly missed! We wish you all the best!

Drawn from end of semester evaluations from tutors and peer leaders, words of gratitude and appreciation for Carla below:

“Carla always demonstrated active listening when voicing concerns and questions. She always empathized with coordinators and tutors about what they were experiencing. She was very active in communication and always responded quickly.”

“Carla is a great role model and I appreciate how she took the time to get to know me (i.e. what I’m studying, as well as bonding over our struggles with the STEM courses we had to take for our majors). “

“Carla was always very easy to interact with. She always created a safe space when you were talking to her.”



New and Improved Lesson Plan



Beth Levinson, JEP Program Manager, on the new Lesson Plan

We have implemented a new template for lesson planning that is strongly aligned with the California Common Core Standards, designed to better address the learning loss in fundamental reading and math skills of elementary students due to the COVID related school closures and online instruction. Post-pandemic, students all over the world have returned to their classrooms with significant learning deficit. However, students in priority neighborhoods are showing an even deeper learning deficit and these are the students with whom ReadersPlus tutors engage. This new lesson plan template supports tutors developing standards based lessons that are individualized to the needs of their students.

The lesson plan template requires tutors to identify a Common Core Standard that will provide a framework for the lesson. The first portion of the lesson is a **Warm Up** which introduces the lesson topic and allows tutors to take a very informal assessment of prior knowledge of their student. The second portion of the lesson is a **Fun Learning Activity**. We don't want tutoring sessions to be boring! Instead, we encourage tutors to be creative and develop engaging learning experiences for their students that include hands-on learning. During the Fun Learning Activity, students "practice" the standard. For example, if the tutor is working on multiplying up to 10, the fun learning activity focuses on interesting and hands on ways to practice multiplying up to 10. Tutors are encouraged to use manipulatives and strategies that invite their student to actively participate in the activities. Tutors can play a game with the student, or work on the activity with the student. Elementary students learn best when their hands and brains are on! This also helps the tutor to stay focused on what the lesson should be covering.

The last portion of the template is the **Post Assessment**. This is NOT a formal test!! This can be another round of a game. The difference between the Post Assessment and the Learning Activity is that the student does the assessment independently. Tutors will determine if the student can do the standard with at least an 80% accuracy before moving on to another standard.

Tutors are asked to report on the progress that their student is making after each tutoring session. We need this information for a few reasons. One is to make sure that our approach is effective. Another is for the tutor to know whether they need to continue to work on the same standard or move on. We are not in a race! Tutors can take as long as they need on a standard. Our objective is to see growth among the student with whom we engage. It is a marathon, not a sprint!



Fall Semester -- Stellar Lesson Plan Spotlight



Every week, our tutors create a personalized lesson plan based on their students interests and learning goals. Tutors are encouraged to make use of manipulatives, create out-of-the-box learning activities, and have fun during their sessions while still practicing and enhancing reading and math skills.

Best Lesson Plan winners this semester were Sophia Da Costa from Weemes and Maximus Allen from Mack!

Literacy

Math

Lesson Plan Template

Readers^{PLUS} Lesson Plan Template- MATH

Readers^{PLUS} Lesson Plan Template

Name of Tutor Maximus	Grade 3rd	Subject English
--------------------------	--------------	--------------------

Name of Tutor Sophia	Grade 4	Subject Math
-------------------------	------------	-----------------

<p>Common Core Standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrate ability to identify the main idea of a text using key details; summarize the text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop students' ability to <u>identify the main idea</u> of a text - Develop students' ability to <u>explain how key details support the main idea of a text</u> (Students learn to summarize the text effectively, demonstrating comprehension and the ability to extract essential information). - <u>Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral</u> and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text. - Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and <u>explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.</u>
--

<p>Common Core Standard</p> <p>-Find standards in the Tutor's Handbook. Copy and paste the entire standard (including bullet points) You may take a few meetings to get through the lesson</p> <p>Analyze and interpret data using bar graphs, line plots, and frequency tables.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and interpret bar graphs, line plots, and frequency tables. • Identify and compare measures of central tendency such as mean, median, and mode. • Use data to solve real-world problems.
--

<p>Book Title: The Invisible Boy by Patrice Barton</p>	<p>Materials needed for lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction Paper - Strips of paper (pre-labeled) - Glue
---	--

<p>Book Title: Dinner at the Panda Palace</p> <p>Warm Up Activity Assessment</p>	<p>Materials needed for lesson:</p> <p>Dinner at the Panda Palace</p> <p>Paper and markers</p> <p>Prepared bar chart with missing x axis labels</p>
--	---

<p>Warm Up</p> <p>-Introduce the lesson topic</p> <p>-Determine if your student has the necessary prior knowledge</p> <p>- Warm Up should be fun and engaging</p>	<p>Describe the Warm Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you know about cause and effect? Can you give an example? - What is a "theme?" (Explain what this is, so that the student will be able to identify it in the book. Give examples with pop culture.)
--	--

<p>Warm Up</p> <p>-Introduce the lesson topic</p> <p>-Determine if your student has the necessary prior knowledge</p> <p>- Warm Up should be fun and engaging</p> <p>This should take about 5-10 minutes</p>	<p>Describe the Warm Up:</p> <p>Start with a ridiculous list of information that you want your student to remember. Ex please go tell your teacher that we need 14 pencils, 3 erasers, 7 whiteboard markers, 44 crayons, etc. The student will likely say "wait I don't remember" or they might panic. Obviously you are joking, but then tell them that there are good to be times in their life when they are going to have to convey a sizable amount of information or data to someone else. How would they do that? Saying it or writing it down word for word can be confusing and time consuming, so using a visual to illustrate it would be helpful.</p> <p>Read "Dinner at the Panda Palace" and write down each animal in a horizontal line. Above each animal name, write the number of that animal that's inside the restaurant. This isn't super visually pleasing so let's draw it a different way. Put numbers on the side and put a line for each animal at the number.</p>
---	---

<p>Fun Learning Activity</p> <p>-Student practices the skill highlighted in the standard during this activity</p>	<p>Describe the Fun Learning Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I will ask comprehension questions that pertain to the main character's feelings (What is Brian feeling here? Why?) - We will identify the theme of the story together. (Being kind to others and including them.) - ACTIVITY: We will be sorting strips of paper with sentences on them into matching "cause" and "effect" pairs. The student will take paper cut-outs of sentences, glue them onto two papers (one labeled "cause," the other labeled "effect") and have to identify and match the pairs that correspond. (EX. "I was hungry" is on a strip of paper, labeled as #1. "I made myself a sandwich" is on another. The student will determine which one is cause/effect, and match them with each other.)
--	--

<p>Fun Learning Activity</p> <p>-Student practices the skill highlighted in the standard during this activity</p>	<p>Describe the Fun Learning Activity:</p> <p>Grab a prepared bar chart. This bar chart will ideally have 4-5 bars all at different numbers but the x-axis labels will be missing. You will have set up buckets with supplies on different tables throughout the room. The number of a certain supply a bucket will correspond to one of the bars on the graph. For example, there may be bars set to y-axis values of 2, 3, 5, and 7. In one bucket, there should be 2 markers, in another 3 pencils, in another 5 erasers, and 7 crayons in the last. The student then has to correspond the supply to the matching bar and write the number of the supply in the appropriate spot on the x-axis.</p>
--	--

<p>Post Assessment</p> <p>Post assessment indicates whether the student can do the skill independently and with accuracy (70%-80%)</p>	<p>Describe Post Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student will be doing the same exercise (cut-outs, glue, and paper) with scenarios that are from the book. This will prompt him to make logical conclusions and assess his ability to identify cause/effect on his own, based on his comprehension of the story.
---	---

<p>Post Assessment</p> <p>Post assessment indicates whether the student can do the skill independently and with at least 70% accuracy</p>	<p>Describe Post Assessment:</p> <p>My student loves Harry Potter so we can read through a chapter of Harry Potter very briefly. Pick a couple of things you want the student to count (ex. How many times Harry's name is mentioned, how many times his family says something mean to him, how many times dobby says "bad dobby", etc). The student will write all of this down and make their own bar chart.</p>
--	---





ReadersPLUS in Action



SOPHIA AND JAKE WORKING ON PROJECTS WITH THEIR STUDENTS AT WEEMES



MAX AND HIS STUDENT DOING AN OUTSIDE SESSION AT MACK



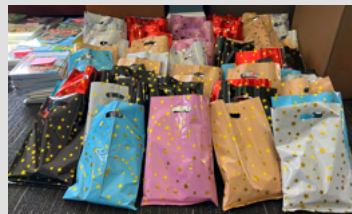
EDUARDA AND HER STUDENT AT VERMONT



MULTIPLICATION HOPSCOTCH AT NORWOOD ASP



Pictured above are some of the activities and lessons our tutors and students created this semester, including projects, outdoor lessons, and games all centered around learning.



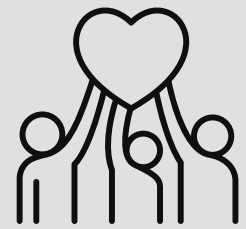
THANK YOU to the Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation for their donation to ReadersPLUS!

The generous donation of books, pencils, pencil sharpeners, crayons, toothbrushes and toothpaste from the Foundation created lovely holiday gifts for tutors to present to their students to wrap up the semester, in celebration of both their successes and the season. We are grateful for our beautiful partnership.





More About Us



This semester, our Weemes team worked hard to implement Little Yoginis at Weemes after school program. Little Yoginis aims to teach kids yoga poses and practice mindfulness as they unwind from a day at school. Each session, the Yogis pick a mindfulness-related book to introduce the theme, and then transition into practicing yoga, which the kids are always enthusiastic to try. Pictured above are is a Little Yoginis session at Weemes ASP.

Stellar Paperwork

Each week, tutors and ACs complete paperwork, largely focused on their experiences tutoring and reflecting on the community. One of the creative projects assigned this semester was the Site Newspaper, which House Cup points were awarded to the winner. Below we showcase select pages from 32nd Street's winning submission.

USC Programs at 32nd St.

KAUFMAN CONNECTIONS
-Students from the school of dance at USC, go to 32nd st once a week and teach dance classes!

USC SCIENCE OUTREACH
A science based program aimed in inspiring scientific curiosity at USC neighboring schools. They work with and show students that science can be interesting, fun, and rewarding!

JEP STEM
JEP's STEM Education Programs include the Young Scientists Program, WonderKids and the Medical STEM program. All of the programs bring hands-on and inquiry-based STEM experiences to students at 32nd St.

YOGA LESSONS
JEP members lead yoga lessons teaching students the components of this exercise and the importance of mindfulness.

CHESS CLUB
Members of the USC Chess club come in after school and teach 32nd St students the fundamentals of chess.

HISTORY

32ND STREET USC PERFORMING ARTS MAGNET

FOUNDING

- 32nd Street/USC opened on July 1st, 1904 at 32nd Street and Hoover.
- Original school was a two-story brick building surrounded by residential homes.
- Damaged by an earthquake in the early 1970s, leading to its demolition.
- A wooden school building and bungalows were constructed between 1971 and 1974

FOUNDING OF MAST HIGH SCHOOL:

- LAUSD/USC MAST High School started in 1994 through collaboration between LAUSD, USC, and the California National Guard.
- Program is designed to help students focused on STEM to get into college

EVOLUTION

- The wooden structure faced a major fire, resulting in the destruction of the primary building.
- It then became a series of bungalows alongside the main administration building.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Largest drawing magnet school in LAUSD with 3,700 applications for 160 spaces.
- 98.8% four-year graduation rate & 71.6% of grades meeting UC-CSU entrance requirements

32ND STREET PROGRESS!

KENNEDY & JAYDEN

"My favorite moment with my 1st grade student Jayden is when he used the math signs that we made. I could see every clear. Recently, I think we're enjoying that I have been incorporating both math and reading into our lessons, and including a fun learning activity that allows him to get up, & be active!" - Kennedy

JENNINE & ERIKA

"My favorite memory of progress with the student was when she was able to identify all of her sight words in the book we were reading. I recall that at the beginning of the semester she faced challenges in identifying and using these words. However, at the semester's end, she was able to identify all of these words, and she was able to use them in her writing. It was a wonderful moment for me and her reading teacher."

EVA & CAMILA

"My favorite moment was when my student said that she really enjoyed reading the books we've been reading together. Her favorite book was 'The City of Ember' which was about an author reading his creation when read about not being read properly. It really sparked her creativity and inspired her to share her unique story using the prompt of the story." - Eva