Early Reading Empowerment

by

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A Grant Proposal Project Report
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
in
Education

Approved: 2 Semester Credits

Donald Platz, Ed.D.

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout

December, 2008
ABSTRACT

The grant project proposal entitled Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) is developed to improve the reading ability of students who are struggling to read. This ERE grant project will provide short-term, one-on-one assistance to readers in first grade. This program also will allow for ERE tutors to address students with reading difficulties through the use of Reading Recovery. They will do so by creating individualized lesson plans that include using a familiar text, reading a new text, creating a message, and working with letters and words (Pinnell et al., 1990 as cited in Fitzharris et al., 2008).

If funded and if the outcomes determine that the Early Reading Empowerment grant project improves the reading performance of first grade students, the results will be used to generate a possible increase in funding from the district. Assessments compiled from all lessons
will be used to determine outcomes of the program. The outcomes will be disseminated through various types of media and presented to the public as well as individuals linked to education.
Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my husband, Eric for continuously supporting me throughout this whole process. Second, I would like to thank my little boys, Gavin and Asher for being such great sleepers at night so I could complete my assignments. Third, and lastly, I would like to thank my colleague and friend, Leah for getting me interested in this program.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I: Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance Statement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II: Literature Review</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics of Lincoln Elementary</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) Program</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Reading Status</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III: Methodology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) Implementation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Procedures</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination Plan</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV: Budget</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Template</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Narrative</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter I: Introduction

There is a growing need to assist struggling readers in first grade, before age eight, and
before their frustration with reading becomes intensified (Clay, 1997 as cited in Colman, 1997).
As indicated by the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading
assessment, the average reading score has gone up; however, there have been no new positive
gains in reading performance among students that receive free or reduced lunch (Institute of
Educational Sciences: US Department of Education, 2007). At Lincoln Elementary we have
6.4% that are eligible for reduced lunch, 42.6% that are eligible for free lunch (Watertown
Unified School District, 2007). This proposal addresses the need for financial support for Early
Reading Empowerment (ERE) tutors to conduct reading lessons. In addition, it addresses how
this program will benefit struggling readers by getting them close to grade-level using Reading
Recovery methods.

Statement of the Problem

At this time funding has ended to support the innovative ERE program, we are no longer
able to acquire a substitute teacher to teach in our classrooms while we conduct the ERE lessons
outside of the classroom. As a result, we do not have the ability during our regularly scheduled
hours to assist struggling readers, one-on-one, as teachers are not able to give up 45 minutes of
instructional time, every day (30 for the lesson and 15 for planning), to work with one student, as
many paraprofessionals working within the classrooms are not licensed to instruct. At this time
funding is needed to enable us to address reading needs of students in first grade in order to get
them near grade-level. With having 61% of first grade students losing one to three grade-levels
just over the summer it is essential to provide them with the skills they need to, at the very least,
stay at their end of the year reading level (Watertown Unified School District, 2007).
Significance Statement

This Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) project is significant as it will provide the opportunity to help approximately seven struggling readers, in first grade, to acquire reading skills that will allow them to reach their appropriate reading level. By assisting our struggling readers it would not only benefit them now, but would allow them to be productive citizens as they will continue to use their reading skills in almost all things they do. The study will continue to assess how great of an impact ERE has on the individual students that participate in the program. Also, data will be collected and shared in order to provide additional data that could be used to generate future funding for the ERE program from the district or other sources.

Students receiving the ERE lessons will benefit most of anyone, as they will receive one-on-one reading lessons three to four times per week for an entire semester or in most cases when an appropriate reading level is reached. Each lesson focuses on a sight word (word that should be known immediately upon being seen), writing, making new words through using magnetic letters and writing, as well as reading texts that are at an instructional level (a level that is difficult and not too easy in order to promote reading growth). When the child graduates from the program he or she will be at an acceptable reading level. In addition, the students’ progress should be seen in increased reading test scores for our school.

When thinking of literacy and the role it plays in our daily lives, it appears to be an essential component in being able to function and communicate in society. By tutoring these students before they reach age eight there is a greater chance that they will be able to catch up to their peers. Initially, it will mainly impact the students in the ERE program, however it may also positively impact the classroom as a whole. As a result of reading interventions and anticipated improvements to the students’ reading skills and levels, the teacher will be will be able to
instruct the class as a whole on the same level. Upon graduation and becoming adults, these students will be more capable of integrating into society, becoming contributing members that are able to communicate effectively.

**Project Goals**

This project is important to gain additional documentation of the success of Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) for first grade students who are struggling with reading. The overall goal of this project is to gather data that will help secure future funding as well as to get students to an acceptable level of reading before reading becomes even more difficult and the gap between what is appropriate and where the child is becomes even wider.

**Goal 1**

To help struggling first grade students read at their appropriate grade level by the end of the project.

**Goal 2**

Collect data from the tutoring lessons on the Early Reading Empowerment program to determine its effectiveness on first grade reading performances of students.

**Goal 3**

If positive results are determined, use the findings to gain support for future funding from the district or other agencies.

**Assumptions of the Study**

The assumptions of this study are that the students will reread their books at home, put the cut-up sentence back together, and get a parent/family member signature to show there was family participation. The amount of family participation will be unknown. If students have fewer parent/family signatures it may contribute to lower progress. Also, lessons will be carried out as
outlined in the proposal. As a result, there may be similar outcomes if all activities are carried out.

Definition of Terms

Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery is an early intervention program designed for struggling readers and was developed by Marie M. Clay (Clark, 2007).

Early Reading Empowerment. Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) is a title of a program, offered at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, designed using Reading Recovery techniques and guidelines.

ERE tutors. Teachers or paraprofessionals that have been trained in Early Reading Empowerment.

WKCE. Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination that is given in grades 3, 8, and 10.

Grade-level. A level of which a student should be working at according to the grade he or she is in. For example a student in third grade that is working at grade-level has skills and knowledge that are appropriate for a student in third grade.

New text. A text that a student has not read before.

Familiar text. A text that the student has read before and is familiar with.

Working with letters and sounds. Practicing letter recognition as well as the sounds letters make, then using the letters and sounds to make words.

Roaming the known. Observing a student’s reading to learn about the student’s prior knowledge of the world and reading in order to create lessons that are appropriate for the student.

Creating a message. Creating a message is when the student works with the tutor to write one to two sentences about something from his or her life.
Cut up sentence. After the student has created a message the ERE tutor will cut it up, word by word, and the student then needs to put it back in the correct order.

Sight words. These words are words that a person can read instantly (Temple, Ogle, Crawford, & Freppon, 2008).

Instructional reading level. Students reading at a level where there are challenges, but challenges that are not so overwhelmingly difficult that progress cannot be made (Temple, Ogle, Crawford, & Freppon, 2008).
Chapter II: Literature Review

The review of literature for chapter two will include the following information: the demographics of Lincoln Elementary, a review of the Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) program, and current reading status of students at Lincoln Elementary.

Demographics of Lincoln Elementary

Lincoln Elementary is made up of approximately 202 students ranging from kindergarten to third grade. There are three kindergartens, two first grades, two second grades, and two third grades. In regards to student ethnicity Lincoln has 1.5% Asian, 2.0% Indian, 5.4% Black, 5.4% Hispanic, and 85.6% White. As for the economic status of our students we have 6.4% that are eligible for reduced lunch, 42.6% that are eligible for free lunch, and 51.0% that are not eligible for either. In regards to children with disabilities (CWD), 7.9% of our student population is CWD (Watertown Unified School District, 2007).

On the community level, as reported on www.bestplaces.net, the community is made up of 23,330 with a median household income of $47,591. The average household size is 2.5 people with 26.34% of people being married, with children. 8.39% have children and are single. 95.49% of population in Watertown are White, 0.24% are Black, 0.81% are Asian, 0.37% are Native American, and 3.09% claim 'Other', 5.70% claim Hispanic ethnicity.

Review of Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) Program

Some students, by the time they get to third grade, have fallen greatly behind in reading; however, many of them could have received reading assistance through the ERE program in first grade allowing them to get on the right track early on. “It has to be done that early: after the age of six, reading problems become harder to cure with every passing year. And it has to be that intensive. If you skimp, it won’t work” (Beckett, 2000, p. 27). The main objective of the program
is to accelerate learning so that students succeed before they enter a cycle of failure" (King, Jonson, Whitehead, & Reinken, 2003, p. 33). It is the opinion of many teachers that without having a substitute in the regular education classroom, while out doing ERE, it will be very difficult to continue on with the program. This will leave many students to struggle which would be very detrimental, as language arts is essential in order to make further advances in education (Clay, 1993).

The ERE program focuses on working with a child, one-on-one almost every day, for an entire semester and in some cases an entire year. Vaughn, Gersten, and Chard (2000) as cited in Woolley and Hay (2007) believe that the most effective education is delivered through one-on-one instruction. Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, and Seltzer (1994) as cited in Woolley and Hay (2007) echo that belief as they find one-on-one tutoring to be more effective compared to tutoring a group of students. Providing help with reading early on has been know to reduce the number of special education referrals (O'Connor & Simic, 2002 as cited in Fitzharris et al., 2008).

The Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) program operates through providing a one year intensive training for those seeking to become certified in ERE (funded by the District), one-on-one tutoring, individualized lesson plans, building upon cognitive growth the child already possesses, allowing the child to work from his or her level (Clark, 1992) which will assist in catching up to peers, and students graduating from the program once an average literacy level is reached (Clay, 1991, 1993a, 1993b as cited in Rhodes-Kline & Quaglia, 1998; Clay, 1980 as cited in Moore & Wade 1998). “This model is founded on sensitive observation of the complex and reciprocal relationships between reading and writing” (Gylln & McNaughton, 1992, p. 171). The components of the lessons are drawn from a “theory of how young children come to master
the complex tasks of reading and writing...” (Clay, 2002, p. 2). What the tutors plan and teach “depends on their close observations and knowledge of what the children are able to do and what they need to learn to progress to the next level. In other words, the teachers help the children become self-regulated readers” (Horner & O’Connor, 2007, p. 3).

A common strength of a student in this type of reading program is that he or she will have a wider range of strategies to utilize when reading than students whom have not participated in such a program (Anonymous, 2006). Having a variety of strategies will help the student to self-assess, which is the ultimate goal (Manning & Manning, 1996). Also, the activities presented in the sessions such as reading a familiar text, reading a new text, creating a message, and working with letters and words naturally assists in developing fluency in reading aloud, increases comprehension of what is read as well as increases knowledge of vocabulary and the sound structure of words (Pinnell et al., 1990; Stahl, Stahl, & McKenna, 1999 as cited in Fitzharris et al., 2008). The methods used in Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) were introduced in the United States in 1984 and have been used with approximately 1.6 million students.

Current Reading Status

From data that is gathered throughout working with each child we have found the ERE program to be very successful in getting students to the appropriate reading level. For the 2005-2006 school year 10 students out of 14 tutored in ERE scored in the advanced or proficient category on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) test. For the 2006-2007 school year 10 out of 16 scored in the advanced or proficient (D. Vitale, personal communication, May 30, 2008).

Nearly every year we are filled to the limit for servicing children with reading needs. Children that meet the criteria for being able to receive Title I reading assistance are able to work
in small reading groups with the Title I teacher. However, some students that are borderline, or not low enough, may go without getting the Title I reading services simply because of the large number of students needing assistance. There are a greater number of students needing reading support, with not all of them qualifying for reading assistance. Most children in kindergarten are able to make good progress in the area of reading, in a large group setting. “However, the teaching procedures … are developed for children who, for different reasons, do not get off to a good start in literacy instruction of their classrooms during their first year at school” (Clay, 2005, p. 1). The Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) program caters to those students, not leaving them to fall behind.
Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter includes information on the following components: Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) Implementation, timeline, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis and dissemination plan.

Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) Implementation

Approximately seven first grade students struggling with reading will be selected to participate in 60 one-on-one lessons or one semester of lessons that are specifically designed for them after careful observations have been made. The students will be selected after regular grade-level assessments are given and by classroom teacher referral. Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) tutors will prepare daily lessons based on where the student is at, in regard to reading and writing. Each lesson will include reading a familiar book, reading a new book, writing, and word work. The Daily Lesson Plan will be utilized to track improvement and to fill out the End of Semester Evaluation form. After each lesson the students will take home familiar books to reread and will put their cut up sentence back together. A parent or family member will sign off that the homework has been completed. The support activities mentioned in the timeline, for the tutors, are of particular importance as Wasik (1998a) as cited in Woolley (2007) believes that for tutors to be effective they have to be given supervision, feedback, and training by a teacher specializing in the given area.

At the conclusion of each tutoring experience and after a full semester of data has been collected, ERE tutors will fill out the End of Semester Evaluation form through utilizing information from the Daily Lesson Plan forms. From the information on the forms, students’ names will be coded to protect student identity when reporting the data. Student rights will not be violated as only the ERE tutors and project director will have access to actual student names.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2009</td>
<td>Refresher session to prepare Semester I ERE tutors for beginning ERE lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assess students to determine if they will participate in ERE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>Select students to participate in the ERE program, beginning with Roaming the Known and then moving into regular lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2009</td>
<td>Meet with the other Semester I ERE tutors to discuss and share video tapes of ERE lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2009</td>
<td>Continue meeting with the selected students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>Before releasing the students from the program complete the same assessments that were administered in September to determine progress that has been made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semester I ERE tutors will fill out the Tutor Survey form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semester I ERE tutors will fill out the End of Semester Evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2010</td>
<td>Refresher session to prepare Semester II ERE tutors for beginning ERE lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assess students to determine if they will participate in ERE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2010</td>
<td>Select students to participate in the ERE program, beginning with Roaming the Known and then moving into regular lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2010</td>
<td>Meet with the other Semester II ERE tutors to discuss and share video tapes of ERE lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>Continue meeting with the selected students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2010</td>
<td>Before releasing the students from the program complete the same assessments that were administered in February to determine progress that has been made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semester II ERE tutors will fill out the Tutor Survey form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semester II ERE tutors will fill out the End of Semester Evaluation form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The project director will evaluate assessment scores, assess project goals and outcomes, and write a final grant report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2010-June 2011</td>
<td>The project director will prepare a presentation to disseminate data collected and will present the data to the director of curriculum and instruction, the board of education, as well as to other educationally focused groups.</td>
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Also, additional components to the timeline will include the documentation of every tutoring session utilizing the Daily Lesson Plan form, tutoring a the selected student three to four times per week when applicable, discussing with ERE tutors how the sessions are going for them as well as the students, and setting up meetings to discuss progress with the families of the students participating in ERE. The timeline of tutor and student activities ensures that all tutors and students will be following the same process in order to achieve maximum success.

*Instrumentation*

The Daily Lesson Plan, End of Semester Evaluation, as well as the Tutor Survey will be used. The Daily Lesson Plan was created to assist each tutor to carefully plan out each lesson, to collect daily data on each student, to create a consistency in how lessons are conducted, and to provide ongoing information to be used in filling out the End of Semester Evaluation form. This form was adapted from one created by Marie Clay (2005). The End of Semester Evaluation form will be utilized to gain information on the program that will be shared in order to gain further funding. The form was adapted from Jan Detrie, the District reading specialist. As for the Tutor Survey, it was created for the purpose of this proposal as well as to evaluate and determine if the other instruments are valid. See Appendix C, Appendix D and Appendix E.

*Data Collection Procedures*

A pretest from *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* by Marie Clay (2002) will be given when Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) tutors first begin to work with a student and then right before releasing a student from the ERE program. Information that is collected from the Daily Lesson Plan such as reading level, reading strategies used, knowledge of letters and words, and components used in lessons will be utilized when filling out the End of Semester Evaluation form. From the End of Semester Evaluation form information regarding
number of lessons conducted as well as the beginning reading level, when entering the ERE program, and reading level of the student, when being released from the program, will be gathered in order to collect data on the progress made during the program. Also, the form found in Appendix E, Tutor Survey, will allow teachers to evaluate the Daily Lesson Plan and End of Semester Evaluation tool and ERE program as a whole to determine usefulness. The project director will collect both the End of Semester Evaluation form as well as the Tutor Survey. See Appendix C, Appendix D, and Appendix E.

Data Analysis

Data from the End of Semester Evaluation form (beginning and ending reading level), Tutor Survey (tutors thoughts of program and assessment tools), and Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) (data of how students score in reading once getting to third grade) will be assessed by the project director at the completion of the project.

Dissemination Plan

The Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) program has created an interest within not only the Watertown Unified School District, but in other districts as well. In order to share the results of the program, on a staff/local level during the 2010-2011 school year, the project director will attend staff meetings at all schools in the district with the intent of sharing the results. The purpose of attending the staff meetings will be to share videotapes of lessons and data from the program during the 2009-2010 school year as well as to create an interest and gain support for the program. The project director will also speak with the district’s curriculum and instruction director to pass on relative information. The curriculum and instruction director will then pass on the information to the School Board members. In addition, the information will be printed in the district newsletter and posted on the district web site. This same information, with the addition of
common reading issues, will then be printed in the Watertown Daily Times in order to inform the community of the program and results. All information will be shared in September of 2010, after analyzing that data collected during the 2009-2010 school year, in order to gain continued funding for the program.

As for the sharing of information at the state level the project director will give an overview of the ERE program, share video clips of actual ERE lessons, provide results of the program, and answer questions regarding the program. All of the information will be shared at the 2011 Wisconsin State Reading Association Conference.
Chapter IV: Budget

A request for funding in the amount of $9,279 is being sought to fully implement the Early Reading Empowerment (Reading Recovery Program) at Lincoln Elementary School. The funds will be used to support tutoring individuals that struggle with reading and also to collect more information on the benefits of the program in order to gain financial support from Watertown Unified School District.

Budget Template

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<td>Personnel</td>
<td>Substitute Teacher</td>
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<td>Five Teachers</td>
<td>In-kind Contribution (6,000.00)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two Paraprofessionals</td>
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<td>One Reading Specialist</td>
<td>In-kind Contribution (100.00)</td>
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<td>Direct Costs</td>
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<td>Training Support</td>
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<td>for Teachers and Paraprofessionals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
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<td>Subtotal Agreements</td>
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<tr>
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The District contribution will be to release five teachers, two paraprofessionals, and one reading specialist to participate in the ERE program as described in the proposal goals and objectives. The average full-time teacher salary is $55,857.00 per year (B. Melius, personal communication, July 25, 2008).

* In-kind contributions are salaries/wages that are already paid by the Watertown Unified School District for the teachers, paraprofessionals, and reading specialist working their regularly scheduled hours (Miner & Miner, 2005). The salaries/wages have been broken down to show approximately what it would cost for the teachers and paraprofessionals to conduct approximately 60 (45-minute) lessons.
Budget Narrative

A substitute teacher will allow for seven Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) tutors (five classroom teachers and two paraprofessionals) to conduct ERE lessons, one-on-one, with their selected students. The district reading specialist will conduct the training and support sessions for the tutors participating in ERE. The tutors will focus on tutoring students using the researched reading methods described by Marie Clay. Each of the tutors will spend a minimum of one semester tutoring a student, one-on-one, three to four times per week. The substitute will be supporting the ERE tutors, allowing them to conduct ERE lessons. The Personnel Costs will total $9,000.00.

Supplies used during ERE lessons will include correction tape ($20.00 for 7 rolls—one for each ERE tutor), paper for creating student made booklets and cut up sentences ($5.00 for 2 reams), and 1 pack of envelopes to hold the cut up sentences ($5.00). As for duplicating, the ERE tutors will need paper to photo copy an evaluation/planning sheet for each day he/she meets with the student, beginning and ending assessment papers, and notes to the family communicating what is happening in the ERE program ($7.50 for 3 reams). The costs of using the copy machine for duplicating necessary documents will be .10 per copy (85 copies for each person tutoring at .10 per copy = $59.50). Training and support for ERE tutors conducting the ERE lessons will be provided one time per tutoring period ($25.00 per training and support session, per person = $175.00). The training and support sessions are necessary as the ERE tutors will share parts of their lessons with each other in order to gain feedback that will be used to improve lessons. Also, information from Marie Clay’s texts will be reread and analyzed at this time. The Direct Costs will total $272.00.
In order to give an accurate idea of what each Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) tutor’s lessons look like and to gain feedback on tutor performance, each tutor will use videotape to record part of his/her lesson. This part of the program is essential to gain feedback that will also be used to gain new insights and improve the lessons. (7 videos, one for each person at $1.00 each=$7.00). The Equipment Costs will total $7.00.

The ERE grant proposal is developed to make an impact on students who are struggling to read at their grade level. In making a financial investment you will be supporting a program that provides short-term, one-on-one assistance to readers whom would most likely need long term-assistance, costing even more money and valuable time, if they were not able to participate in the ERE program. This program will allow ERE tutors to better serve students with reading difficulties as well as to gain documentation and information to secure future financial support.
References


Appendix A: Cover Letter

November 20, 2008

W.K. Kellogg Foundation
One Michigan Avenue East
Battle Creek, Michigan 49017-4012

Dear Supervisor of Proposal Processing:

Lincoln Elementary of Watertown, Wisconsin, on behalf of the Watertown Unified School District, is very pleased to submit a proposal to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation in regards to youth and education in effort to continually improve literacy skills of children at the elementary level. As your guidelines request, we have developed a proposal that addresses all of the areas that were noted in your mission and interest area statements.

As you read our proposal, you will notice that we too are “driven to propel vulnerable children to achieve success”, as Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) is a program that has levers for change, a strategic context, and a program purpose. ERE provides one-on-one tutoring for struggling readers in first grade. Within our school and District teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, and administrators have worked collaboratively to make ERE a successful program. It is a unique program, as each ERE tutor sets aside 45 minutes during the school day three to four times per week, to work one-on-one with a student.

The ERE program was implemented within the District during the 2004-2005 school year, training many new teachers and paraprofessionals since the start up. Lincoln Elementary, in particular, had a large number of students with low reading scores when they reached third grade. Since the implementation of the program our reading scores, for struggling readers, have improved dramatically. Accordingly, this project aims to gather further documentation of the benefits of ERE in order to recover and increase past district funding for the project and to secure other future funding all the while providing opportunities for tutoring time and to develop literacy skills in children, participating in the program, that are below grade-level.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. Please contact me at 920-285-6055 or at weissr@watertown.k12.wi.us to answer any questions or to provide further information. We look forward to working with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for this important youth and education program, specifically designed for vulnerable children.

Sincerely,

Rachel Weiss
First Grade Teacher
Lincoln Elementary School
Step 1 - Prepare to submit your request (Edit Submission)

- Target Geographic Area: United States
- Organization Type: Public/Government
  How did you hear about WKKF?: Internet search

Step 2 - Tell us about your organization (Edit Submission)

- Organization Name: Watertown Unified School District
- Other Organization Name: Lincoln Elementary School
- Address: 210 North Montgomery Street

- City: Watertown
- State/Province: Wisconsin
- Zip/Postal Code: 53094
- Country: United States
- Phone Number: 920-262-1465
- Fax Number:
- Website:
- Tax Status: Yes
- Tax Identification Number: 39-6005031
- Year Established: 1980
- Staff Size: 510
- Operating Budget: 46,000,000
- Number of Locations: 7

Organization’s Scope of Work: The Watertown School District is located approximately 45 miles west of Milwaukee and 40 miles east of Madison and has a population of approximately 22,000.
"Students receive a strong educational foundation through a variety of academic, vocational, and humanities course offerings designed to serve the needs of students in a comprehensive educational program" (Watertown Unified School District, n.d.).

Previous Support: No

Step 2 - Tell us about your organization (Edit Submission)

* Salutation: Mrs.
* First Name: Rachel
    * Middle Initial: 
* Last Name: Weiss
* Position within Organization: First Grade Teacher
    * Address: 210 North Montgomery Street

* City: Watertown
* State/Province: Wisconsin
* Zip/Postal Code: 53094
    * Country: United States
* Phone Number: 920-262-1465
    * Fax Number: 
* Email Address: weissr@watertown.k12.wi.us

Step 3 - Tell us about your idea (Edit Submission)

* Language: English
* Project Name: Early Reading Empowerment
* Purpose Statement: This Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) project is significant as it will help approximately seven struggling readers, in first grade, to acquire reading skills that will allow them to reach the appropriate reading level. By assisting our struggling readers it would not only benefit them, but would make an impact at the local, state, and national levels as the students will utilize their skills all throughout their lives in almost all they do. It is intended to better the lives of the children participating, creating a path to a better life and a way out of poverty (if in poverty) through being a fluent reader and writer. Being a reader and writer will open many more doors in life than if a person was not able to read or write at an
appropriate level. At this point in time it is necessary to gather more data pertaining to the positive impact of ERE on struggling readers. This study will continue to assess how great of an impact ERE has on the individual students that participate in the program in order to gain future funding from within the District.

* Project Overview: The ERE program will make an impact on students who are struggling to read. This program provides short-term, one-on-one assistance to readers in first grade. This program also will allow for ERE tutors to address students with reading difficulties through the use of individualized lesson plans using a familiar text, reading a new text, creating a message, and working with letters and words (Pinnell et al., 1990 as cited in Fitzharris et al., 2008). Assessments compiled from all lessons will be used to determine outcomes of the program. The outcomes will be disseminated through school and District newsletters, the local newspaper, the District web site, and presentations at board meetings, staff meetings, and at the Wisconsin State Reading Association Convention.

* Project Goals: • To help struggling first grade students read at their appropriate grade level by the end of the project.
  • To collect data from the tutoring lessons on the Early Reading Empowerment (ERE) program to determine its effectiveness on first grade reading performances of students.
  • If positive results are determined, use the findings to gain support for future funding from the district or other agencies.

* Project Objectives: • Students participating in the ERE program will demonstrate effective reading strategies in order to make progress in regard to reading levels.
  • ERE tutors will compile data pertaining to students that have participated or are participating in ERE program.
  • ERE tutors will identify the benefits of ERE tutoring through looking at assessments from the beginning and ending of the ERE tutoring sessions as well as from filling out the Tutor Survey.
  • ERE tutors will identify a student that is below grade-level, in regard to reading, and will develop 60 individualized lessons for the student.
Rationale: The Watertown Unified School District supports teachers by offering staff development opportunities. In return these opportunities give teachers new skills that will directly benefit the students. More specifically at the elementary level teachers have been and are being trained in ERE. Once trained in ERE, staff begins serving struggling readers, specifically a struggling reader in first grade as it is essential to catch the struggling reader before age eight (Clay, 1997 as cited in Colman, 1997). “While there may be some differences of opinion about what strategies promote growth in these areas, there is overwhelming agreement on the need for early intervention” (Carnine, Silbert, Kame’ enui, Tarver, & Jungjohann, 2006 as cited in Fitzharris, Jones, & Crawford, 2008, p. 1). Providing help with reading early on has been known to reduce the number of special education referrals (O’Connor & Simic, 2002 as cited in Fitzharris et al., 2008).

Project Activities:

- September 2009- Refresher session to prepare Semester I teachers for beginning ERE lessons
  Assess students to determine if they will participate in ERE
- October 2009- Select students to participate in the ERE program, beginning with Roaming the Known and then moving into regular lessons
- November 2009- Meet with the other Semester I teachers to discuss and share video tapes of ERE lessons
- December 2009- Continue meeting with the selected students
- January 2010- Before releasing the students from the program complete the same assessments that were administered in September to determine progress that has been made
  Fill out and turn in the End of Semester Evaluation as well as Tutor Survey
- February 2010- Refresher session to prepare Semester II teachers for beginning ERE lessons
  Assess students to determine if they will participate in ERE
- March 2010- Select students to participate in the ERE program, beginning with Roaming the Known and then moving into regular lessons
- April 2010- Meet with the other Semester II teachers to discuss and share video tapes of ERE
lessons

- May 2010- Continue meeting with the selected students
- June 2010- Before releasing the students from the program complete the same assessments that were administered in February to determine progress that has been made
  Fill out and turn in the End of Semester Evaluation form as well as the Tutor Survey
  The project director will evaluate the data, assess project goals and outcomes, and write a final grant report
- Semester long activities will include:
  Documentation of every tutoring session
  Tutoring a the selected student three to four times per week when applicable
  Discussing with teachers how the sessions are going for them as well as the students
  Setting up meetings to discuss progress with the families of the students participating in ERE

* Anticipated Outcomes: Many students, by the time they get to third grade, have fallen greatly behind in reading; however, several of them could have received reading assistance, ERE, in first grade allowing them to get on the right track early on. "It has to be done that early: after the age of six, reading problems become harder to cure with every passing year. And it has to be that intensive. If you skimp, it won't work" (Beckett, 2000, p. 27). The main objective of the program is to accelerate learning so that students succeed before they enter a cycle of failure" (King, Jonson, Whitehead, & Reinken, 2003, p. 33). Students that participate in the program will be close to grade-level as a result of the program.

* Sustainability Plan: The ERE program has created an interest within not only the Watertown Unified School District, but in other districts as well. In order to share the results of the program, on a staff/local level during the 2010-2011 school year, the project director will attend staff meetings at all schools in the district. The purpose of attending the staff meetings will be to share videotapes of lessons and data from the program during the 2009-2010 school year as well as to create an interest and gain support for the program. The project director will also speak with the district’s curriculum and instruction director to pass on relative information. In addition, the information will be printed in the district newsletter and
posted on the district web site. This same information, with the addition of common reading issues, will then be printed in the Watertown Daily Times in order to inform the community of the program and results. All information will be shared in September of 2010 after analyzing that data collected during the 2009-2010 school year. After information has been shared it will be proposed, to the board of education, that this program be funded by the Watertown Unified School District.

* Target Geographic Area: Lincoln Elementary is made up of approximately 202 students ranging from kindergarten to third grade. There are three kindergartens, two first grades, two second grades, and two third grades. In regards to student ethnicity Lincoln has 1.5% Asian, 2.0% Indian, 5.4% Black, 5.4% Hispanic, and 85.6% White. As for the economic status of our students we have 6.4% that are eligible for reduced lunch, 42.6% that are eligible for free lunch, and 51.0% that are not eligible for either. In regards to children with disabilities (CWD), 7.9% of our student population is CWD (Watertown Unified School District, 2007). On the community level, as reported on www.bestplaces.net the community is made up of 23,330 with a median household income of $47,591. The average household size is 2.5 people with 26.34% of people being married, with children. 8.39% have children and are single. 95.49% of population in Watertown is White, 0.24% is Black, 0.81% is Asian, 0.37% is Native American, and 3.09% claim Other. 5.70% claim Hispanic ethnicity.

* Target Beneficiary: Children in first grade that are struggling with reading. These children may or may not be from poverty.

Collaborating Organizations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Project Start Date: September 2009

* Project End Date: June 2010

* Amount Requested (USD): 9,279

* Total Project Budget (USD): 9,279

Other Funding Sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Type of Support</th>
<th>Dollar Amount (USD)</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Grantee Project ID:

Additional Information:

Attachments:

* Previous Contact with WKKF staff: No
Appendix C: Daily Lesson Plan

Daily Lesson Plan

Date: ____________

Name of Instructor: ____________________________________________

Name of Student: ________________________________________________

Lesson Number: ____

Familiar Read:

New Text:

Strategies Observed:

Strategies Prompted:

Making & Breaking:

Writing

Message:

Constructing Words:

Sequencing Words:

Comments on Lesson:

Appendix D: End of Semester Evaluation

End of Semester Evaluation

Name of Instructor: ____________________________

Name of Student: ______________________________

Age of Student: _____

Number of Lessons: _______

Tutoring Time Frame: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___

Month/Day/Year

Beginning Reading Level: _____

Ending Reading Level: _____

Comprehension: ___ / ___

Number correct/Total number of questions

Please list the reading skills you have observed your student utilizing.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Please list any other information you believe is important.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Adapted from:

Appendix E: Tutor Survey

Tutor Survey

Please circle the appropriate number to show how you feel about the program.

I=strongly agree  2=agree  3=neutral  4=disagree  5=strongly disagree

1. The process of selecting students to participate in the ERE program is appropriate.
   1  2  3  4  5

2. One semester of tutoring is sufficient for students that are in the ERE program.
   1  2  3  4  5

3. The Daily Lesson Plan is a tool that is helpful in creating appropriate lessons.
   1  2  3  4  5

4. The Daily Lesson Plan is a tool that helps you to ensure all components of the lesson are
gone over in each lesson.
   1  2  3  4  5

5. The End of Semester Evaluation form accurately represented where your student was at.
   1  2  3  4  5

6. This program has beneficial in getting your student to the appropriate grade-level in
regards to reading skills.
   1  2  3  4  5

7. As a tutor, you have had sufficient support (teaching and materials) enabling you to
conduct the ERE lessons.
   1  2  3  4  5

Please state any other comments about the program and tools/techniques used:

