

BUILD

Boston University Initiative for Literacy Development

Tutor Manual

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Introduction to BUILD

What is BUILD?

The Boston University Initiative for Literacy Development (BUILD) supports schools and programs that provide instruction and assistance in the development of literacy skills for elementary school children in Boston and Chelsea. Boston University students tutor children in classrooms, in after-school programs, and in hospitals. Their contributions enhance and support the education of children in these communities.

BUILD Mission Statement

BUILD's mission is to provide elementary school students with more opportunities to be engaged in literacy development through tutoring and literacy-enhancing activities, while providing a meaningful tutoring experience for University students working in public schools and community centers.

The Manual

This manual is a reference for tutors. It highlights BUILD's expectations of tutors and provides information about literacy. Throughout the year training will be offered that will expand on the information included in this manual. For your convenience, there are many other resources available in the BUILD office.

Guidelines for BUILD Tutors

- Tutor activities will complement the academic goals of the school.
- BUILD will work in partnership with school and after-school program personnel to design and deliver appropriate tutoring.
- Tutors will receive an orientation specific to their sites.
- A lead tutor at each site will supervise tutors.
- A lead tutor will organize work schedules and ensure that the work addresses tutoring goals.
- All tutors will adhere to the rules and regulations of their sites as well as to BUILD policies and procedures.
- Tutor services are site-based; tasks and responsibilities will be detailed by the lead tutor and by the site coordinator.
- Tutors will not meet with children outside the designated site.
- Tutors will respect the confidentiality of the children with whom they work.
- Tutors are required to report suspected abuse or neglect according to the site policy.

Tutoring Goals

As a tutor, your goals are to:

- Motivate children to read and write.
- Build self-confidence in reading and writing.
- Encourage independence in reading and writing.
- Help children see themselves as readers and writers.
- Provide strategies for reading and writing.

Classroom Management Strategies

- Work as part of a team. Enforce and maintain classroom or site rules. Children work well when the expectations are clear.
- Be consistent. Follow the lead of the classroom teacher or site coordinator.
- Support the decisions of the site coordinator or teacher. Have any conversations or disagreements outside of the classroom.
- Discuss ways to manage children's behavior with the lead tutor or the site staff.
- Be clear and specific in your directions: "Please put the puzzle on the shelf." Separate directions into steps. "Everyone please sit on the rug. (Pause until everyone is seated on the rug then continue.) We have two choices—arts and crafts or computers. Who would like to go to computers first?"
- Have a routine and/or schedule. Children respond well to structure and learn to transition quickly when they know what to expect.

Effective Discipline

When children misbehave, there are three strategies you can use to get them back on task: focus on the behavior, redirect the negative behavior, and have a specific consequence for the behavior. Remember to always be consistent and follow through. Empower the student to choose positive behavior.

- **Focus on the behavior not the child.**

Say: "When you don't clean up after yourself, I am frustrated because another student does it for you. If you don't clean up after snack today, then you will not be able to play with the computers."

Follow this pattern:

1. When you _____, I feel _____.
2. If expected behavior, then specific consequence.

- **Redirect negative behavior.**

Say: "I'm sorry but throwing a ball indoors is not a good choice. You may go to arts and crafts or read independently. Which do you want to do?"

- **Have specific and concrete consequences for behavior. Avoid idle consequences that cannot be enforced.**

Say: "One of the rules is to talk quietly indoors. If you scream again, you will go to time out. Do you understand?"

Reading Levels

Awareness of student's approximate reading level ensures that reading materials and games are appropriately challenging – without becoming frustrating.

Level: Emergent/Beginning Readers

Phase: Learning to read

Age: up to 8 years

Students at this reading level are just beginning to read. They are learning the letters and their sounds and that letters make up words and are used to sound out words. These students are encouraged to learn common *rimes* (ending parts of words) and *onsets* (beginning parts of words). They are learning *sight words* as well. Their oral reading is choppy. Students reading at this level often read orally when they are told to read silently.

These children are able to write short stories. They may write using *phonetic spelling* (or invented spelling) for unknown words. Sight words are usually spelled correctly. The child will be able to read his/her writing to you.

Goals for Young Readers:

- Accurately read and spell the first 100 sight words.
- Build interest in reading.
- Increase speaking vocabulary.
- Recognize all letters and their sounds.
- Increase reading and listening comprehension.
- Develop reading strategies.
- Represent most of the sounds in phonetic spelling.

Level: Capable Readers
Phase: Reading to learn
Age: 8 – 12 years

Students at this reading level are reading *fluently*. They read at a good pace and use strategies other than “sounding it out” to figure out unknown words. The stories they read are more complicated, and they read a variety of *genres* (nonfiction, fantasy, historical fiction, etc.) These students are learning to read words that are more complex (ex. prefixes, suffixes, compound words, vowel patterns, etc.) They are able to apply reading strategies but may need prompting in order to do so.

The students reading at this level are writing stories, reports, and poetry. They spell sight words correctly and use phonetic spelling to write unknown words. Their story plots increase in complexity.

Goals for More Advanced Readers

- Accurately spell and identify most sight words.
- Increase reading and listening comprehension.
- Apply reading strategies.
- Increase speaking and reading vocabulary.
- Build interest in reading.
- Identify prefixes and suffixes and use them to read and write unknown words.

Supporting Struggling Readers



If...	Do...	Don't...	Why
If a child reads incorrectly,	Ask, "Does that make sense? Let's read it again."	Don't tell the child the missed word.	The goal of reading is to make meaning. The goal of tutoring is to build students' ability to recognize when they don't understand, to stop and correct their mistakes, and then to continue reading the text for meaning.
If a student is stumped on a word,	Wait for the child to attempt to figure out the word. Then ask, "Is there part of the word that you have seen or heard before?"	Don't tell the child what the unknown word is until some effort has been attempted.	Waiting for the child to attempt the word is important for the child to learn to read without you. Teach the student to attack words in parts—prefixes, roots, and suffixes. Most words can be deciphered by their word parts. The goal is to get back to the meaning of the text. "Sound it out" is a strategy that should be avoided. If necessary, phonics can be taught after the story and discussion are over.
If a child is not understanding what is read,	Ask questions.	Don't retell the story or the meaning of the passage for the student.	The questions asked before reading prepare students for a successful reading experience. The questions asked during reading monitor how well students understand what is read. The questions asked after reading test their understanding.
If a child is beginning a new book,	Prepare the student to read the text.	Don't immediately start reading.	A child's ability to read harder text is determined by the discussion before the reading even begins. Ask questions about what the story could be about. Lead a picture walk through the illustrations. Highlight words that may be difficult and discuss their meanings before the reading begins. This scaffolding prepares the child to read successfully.
If the child wants feedback after reading every difficult word,	Tell the child you will talk about his/her reading at the end of the sentence or paragraph.	Don't interrupt!	Interrupting destroys understanding and makes the student dependent on the tutor to know if a word is correct instead of monitoring his/her own reading. Say "Keep going." or "We'll talk about it after you finish the passage/story." Record the words that the student reads incorrectly and discuss the words together at the end. Discussing how to read the word and what the word means is very important but should not detract from the meaning of the text. Remember difficult words can be introduced before reading.

Supporting Struggling Readers



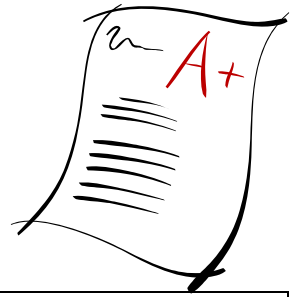
If ...	Do...	Don't...	Why
If a child sounds out a word with great difficulty,	Have the child reread the sentence with the correct word.	Don't just keep reading.	Remember the goal is not just accurate reading but to understand what is read. Word calling (reading correctly without paying attention to the meaning) is not reading for meaning. After working hard to figure out an unknown word, the student needs to go back, reread, and think about what was read.
If you are reading with a small group,	Have the children: * Whisper read the story to themselves * Stagger their reading * Read chorally altogether	Don't have one student read at a time while all the others listen (round robin reading.) Don't ask the children to read silently.	Your time with the students is precious. If they read silently, you are unaware of the reading behaviors they are using. If they read one at a time, the others get bored. Taking turns reading orally also destroys reading confidence for struggling readers because their errors are public as everyone hears their mistakes and their slower pace. Instead, have students whisper read (read softly at their own pace), start reading at different places in the story and then start the story over when they reach the end (staggering where they read), or read together as a whole group (choral reading) with you reading at a fast reading pace.
If you are reading a story out loud,	Think aloud as you read.	Don't read the entire book straight through to the end.	Thinking aloud helps a child to understand what good readers do. Share your connections and your thoughts as you approach difficult words. Modeling good reading behaviors provides an example for the students to follow. As you describe your own strategies, students begin to hear how you think about reading. The goal is for students to become more conscious as they read and to be able to think aloud about their own reading strategies.
If you are giving feedback about a child's reading,	BE SPECIFIC.	Avoid saying, "Good job." "Nice reading."	Being specific gives students helpful feedback that they can replicate when they are reading on their own. For example, "I really like how you reread the sentence when it stopped making sense." "I noticed that when you came to a word you didn't know that you looked at the parts of the word, and then blended the parts together." "I heard you read with expression. That's what good readers do."

Supporting Struggling Writers



If ...	Do...	Don't...	Why
If a child says, "I don't know how to spell _____."	<p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can you think of the sounds in the word? * Can you think of part of the word that you have heard before? * Can you think of a word that sounds like this word or means something similar? 	Don't immediately spell the word. Try a strategy first.	Spelling is hard because English is not phonetic—English doesn't "sound out" right. Instead, English spelling is more closely related to morphology, or words can be separated into meaningful parts (un-believ-able or pre-view-ed.) Emphasizing the meaningful parts of a word can help students see the similarities between replay, player, and playoff. Many spelling patterns also account for common word "families" like glowing, growth, flown. Teaching children to use and recognize these patterns (i.e., prefixes, roots, suffixes, common spelling patterns) is helpful as they spell new words.
If a child doesn't know what to write about,	Brainstorm ideas with the child.	Don't say, "Just start writing."	A good starting point is to ask about the child's interests, favorite books, or something that may have happened to him/her. Students can also copy the format or the idea of a book or author. They can write on a similar topic as another classmate. Introducing and brainstorming writing possibilities will help children as they start writing. Once students have articulated some possible writing topics, ask them to choose the idea they want to write about right now.
If the student says, "I'm done."	Find 1-2 teaching points for the student to address and change in their writing.	Avoid long lessons about every mistake or problem with their writing.	The goal of giving feedback is to celebrate what the student is doing well and then to give the student some helpful feedback that will help them become a better writer. Choose carefully what you focus on and wait until the writer has finished reading the entire piece before commenting. Also think beyond conventions (adding periods, correct spelling, or capitalization) and give feedback about the young reader's use of details or the engagement of the writer.

Supporting Struggling Writers



If the students gets stuck early in the writing piece,	Have the student tell you orally what they could write.	Don't suggest switching to a new topic.	Writing is very difficult for a struggling student. Ideas often get forgotten as the child labors to spell. Talking about their writing before they begin is a great way to brainstorm what they write. Ask the student questions about their writing—who, what, where, when, and why. This discussion will provide words to write, ideas to pursue, and someone to listen and give encouragement.
If the writer writes the same thing everyday,	Encourage the student to write for other purposes and in other styles.	Avoid having the student write the same way everyday.	With your help, students can explore other forms and purposes for writing. Write to record their feelings in a personal letter, poem, or greeting card. Have students describe or label a picture. Write an invitation, a script, or a joke. Create an advertisement persuading someone to buy a product. Responding in a journal to a story is another way to encourage writing.
If the child is getting frustrated writing,	Write the hard words for the student.	Don't allow the child to remain frustrated.	Your support can really help a child build confidence. If a young student is really struggling, “share the pen.” You write the words that are hard, and the child can write all of the words that he/she knows. Another way to support is to alternate writing every other sentence with the child.

Supporting English Language Learners' (ELL) Reading



English level	Students May...	Strategies to Try	Reasons for strategies						
Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin to pull meaning from text.• Recognize some sight words (I, is, the).• Be able to read simple, predictable books.• Have difficulty comprehending longer passages.• Still be learning the alphabet and spelling patterns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immerse students in reading with a clear purpose.• Teach vocabulary and sight words.• Read patterned books. (The bear is brown. The bear is big. The bear is sleeping.)• Create story maps with pictures and words.<table border="1"><tr><td>Beginning</td><td>Middle</td><td>End</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>• Practice and review letter-sound relationships, particularly the vowels (a, e, i, o, u).• Encourage students to look for picture clues to figure out unknown words.	Beginning	Middle	End				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give students a specific purpose to read. “Today we are reading to find out about _____ or to see how the story ends.”• Teach students sight words and key vocabulary words that are specific to the text.• The repetition in patterned books assists students in moving from simple texts to more complicated texts.• If necessary, the structure of a story can help students comprehend.• The more strategies (using picture clues or phonics patterns) students have to figure out an unknown word, the more successful they will be as they read independently.
Beginning	Middle	End							
Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know many words by sight.• Read with some fluency (quickly, accurately, and with expression.)• Struggle with new vocabulary especially in the content areas (Math, Science, and Social Studies.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage students to monitor their own comprehension. Teach them to stop and reread a sentence, paragraph, or passage when they don’t understand.• Pre-teach difficult vocabulary before reading.• Practice rereading out loud.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A real danger with ELL students is reading without meaning. Too often they can say the words but are unaware of their meaning. Encourage students to monitor their comprehension by checking to see if what they read makes sense.• Expose students to new words builds their vocabulary and allows them to be more successful as they read.• Rereading is a great way to have students become more fluent in their reading. Familiarity with the passage allows them to focus on the meaning instead of the unknown words.						

Supporting English Language Learners' (ELL) Writing



English level	Students May...	Strategies to Try	Reasons for strategies
Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce very little writing. • Find writing difficult. • Use invented spelling with elements of their first language. • Have difficulty with word order, sentence structure, or spelling in English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before beginning to write, orally discuss the topic, draw and label pictures, brainstorm a list of key words that could be used in the student's writing. • Specifically point out what the student is doing well. • Encourage students to write daily on a variety of topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions, drawings, and word lists help students brainstorm ideas before they write. These lists can be used as references during writing. • Specific feedback highlights what the student is doing well and should continue to do independently. "I like how you used strong words to create a picture in my mind." "I noticed you used a variety of punctuation marks in your writing." • Writing often builds habit and reinforces new writing abilities through frequent repetition.
Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need assistance finding spelling and grammatical errors in written text. • Need help developing ideas and expressing themselves in English. • Need to develop varied sentence and organizational structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to read their writing out loud. • Target editing instruction. Choose 1-2 teaching points to reinforce (a spelling pattern, grammar error, or punctuation issue.) • Teach various writing organizational structures (sequence, topic sentence/supporting sentences, cause and effect.) • Encourage students to elaborate on writing topics. • Have students write daily, such as their reactions to stories or what they learned in a journal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading out loud helps students hear grammar errors they would not normally be able to identify in silent reading. • Focused teaching of 1-2 points will ensure that students do not feel overwhelmed and will help them target what to remember as they write independently. You can fix the rest of the errors as the students watch. Talking aloud can help students understand how you choose to make editing changes. • Students need specific instruction of different structures and styles before they will take more writing risks. • As their language develops, their writing should develop and be longer, more elaborate and detailed, and with more sophisticated ideas. • Daily writing builds habits and reinforces learned skills.

Supporting English Language Learners' (ELL) Speaking and Listening



English level	Students May...	Strategies to Try	Reasons for strategies
Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say and understand a few English words. • Learn simple phrases and expressions (okay, no, wanna). • Form statements following simple grammar rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use picture clues, written words, and gestures to give directions. • Use clear, direct statements. • Encourage students to talk by asking questions. • Provide tasks that require a non-verbal response (songs, games, non-speaking roles in plays). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With little exposure or confidence in their new language, pictures and written directions allow the student to participate in activities. • Avoid flowery language and metaphors so students can focus on just a few words to decipher the meaning of oral speech. • The more the students talk, the faster they develop skills in English.
Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak with some grammatical errors. • May not understand the nuances of spoken English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid correcting grammar in the middle of a conversation. Model correct usage. • Ask questions to encourage more conversation. • Explain the nuances of English grammar and highlight correct subject/verb agreement. • Target grammar and vocabulary activities with clear examples and visuals. • Provide visuals (charts and graphic organizers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling correct grammar is an effective way for students to hear language used correctly in context. • Subject/verb agreement is difficult for ELL students. Specifically teaching and modeling this concept will help students begin to hear the correct usage. • Using visual aids and pictures permits students to use more than just their listening skills to figure out the meaning. • As students engage in rich conversations, they will learn many new words in context.

Adapted from Pereogy, S. F., & Boyle, O. F. (2005). *Reading, writing and learning in ESL: A resource book for K-12 teachers*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.