

MY TOP 3 ACTIVITIES TO HELP RELUCTANT READERS AND SPELLERS

(submitted by Jennifer Southard, OG Tutor)

As a learning and literacy specialist, and a writing instructor, I am often tasked with the paradoxical predicament of having to teach two things that I absolutely love-reading and writing-to students who are less than excited to be doing either or (gasp!) both. I am fortunate that both reading and writing have not only been activities that I wholeheartedly enjoy, but also, other than some writer's block now and again, have not caused me much difficulty in school and after graduation. However, for many of my students, this is not the case. So what's a reading and writing fanatic to do when her students do not share her enthusiasm for the written word? After working with students of all ages for many years, I have come to the conclusion that the best way to help students come to enjoy reading and writing is to make it fun and to give them a safe space to enjoy it. For my OG students, this means thinking up creative and multi-sensory ways to facilitate learning in an environment that is both relaxed and supportive. Here are some of my favorite activities to do just that:



Play doh. Even before Covid-era lockdowns, there were many days when I was trapped at home with my own kids who were climbing the walls out of boredom-and I was losing my mind! Our solution: homemade play doh. It is super easy to make and kids enjoy not only playing with it but watching it come to life in your kitchen. For my OG students, making play doh is a great way to practice their fine motor skills, which helps with hand writing, as you need to stir and knead the dough to get it to the consistency that you want in order to manipulate it (just be careful that they don't handle the dough when it is very hot to avoid burns). Once you make the dough, it is a wonderful multi-sensory activity for my OG students to practice making their letters. What I often do is write a letter on a piece of paper and then have my student shape the play doh into the letter that is on the page and place it on top-tracing with play doh! If there is time at the end of our lesson, I will let the student use the play doh to make any shapes he or she wants-again, great fine motor practice!



Scratch Paper. I am not a big player of the lottery or scratch-off tickets but I do enjoy getting them from time to time because I find it very satisfying to scratch off the film over the numbers to see what is underneath. I think most people do, including my students, and I was super excited to find a stack of scratch paper on sale at Lakeshore Learning. For the uninitiated, scratch paper is paper that is coated with a black film or paint that when you scratch it, you will find a rainbow of colors underneath. Kids love scratch paper because they enjoy seeing the colors revealed and it is a cool way to draw/create art. For my OG students, we use scratch paper to practice handwriting, read and even spell! Using scratch paper with my OG students is super easy: you just need some scratch paper (Amazon or Lakeshore Learning), a sharp (but too sharp!) stick and a ruler to make lines. To help get them started, I create lines on the paper, and if we are using the paper to practice handwriting, I will write the

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February 17: Office Hours with Kate; email for ZOOM link
February 21: Office Closed
February 22-25: Daytime Hours Only

Snowman Scavenger Hunt

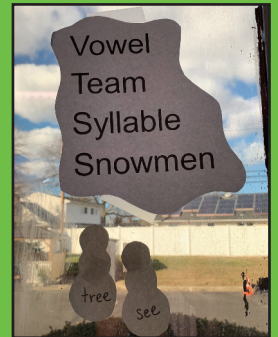
Thank you to our OG student, Isabella for the idea of a snowman scavenger hunt. For the months of January and February, students will combine their scavenger hunting abilities with their knowledge of syllable types in the following fun activity:



1. Search for a hidden snowman.
2. Read the word on your snowman.

3. Tell what syllable type your word is.

4. Tape your snowman on the window under the correct syllable type.



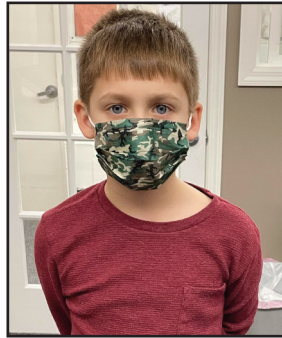
Thank you

FOR SPONSORING THE TRAINING OF NEW ORTON-GILLINGHAM TUTORS AT LITERACY NASSAU

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: AIDAN

(submitted by Renee MacDermott, OG Trainee)

Aidan just recently turned eight years old and is in third grade at Oceanside School #2. Aidan is a funny child with lots of energy! During our tutoring sessions, he loves playing tic-tac-toe and hide-and-seek. Aidan also loves earning different types of prizes when he does great work! Aidan enjoys talking about all the different trips that he takes with his family. He especially loves visiting amusement parks and water parks.



During our time together, I asked Aidan a few questions to get to know him a little better.

Q: What are your favorite subjects? I like gym class, makerspace, and Spanish class best.

Q: What do you like most about school? I like seeing my teachers each day.

Q: What is your favorite movie? Godzilla vs. King Kong

Q: What is your favorite video game to play? I like Call of Duty best.

Q: What is your favorite board game or game that is not considered a video game?

Tic-tac-toe

Q: What is your favorite part about our tutoring sessions? I like getting to earn prizes, like miniature minecraft characters.

Q: What is your favorite book? I like Goodnight Moon because I always like the part where the cow jumps over the moon.

Q: What is your favorite sport? I like football best. I play tackle football. My favorite teams are Kansas City Chiefs, Philadelphia Eagles, Buffalo Bills, Tennessee Titans.

No Cook Playdough Recipe

INGREDIENTS

1 CUP OF FLOUR

1 TABLESPOON OF CREAM OF TARTAR

¼ CUP OF SALT

½ CUP OF WARM WATER

5 DROPS OF FOOD COLORING

HOW TO MAKE IT

IN A BOWL, COMBINE SALT, FLOUR, AND CREAM OF TARTAR.

IN ANOTHER BOWL, PREPARE HALF A CUP OF WARM WATER. DROP IN THE FOOD COLORING OF YOUR CHOICE. THE MORE FOOD COLORING YOU USE THE DARKER IT WILL BE.

AS YOU STIR YOUR MIXTURE IN THE FIRST BOWL, SLOWLY ADD IN THE COLORED WATER.

NOW, IT'S TIME TO DIG IN AND USE YOUR HANDS. KNEAD THE DOUGH UNTIL IT'S SOFT AND SMOOTH, AND THE MIX HAS ABSORBED ALL OF THE FLOUR. **ENJOY!**

MY TOP 3 ACTIVITIES TO HELP RELUCTANT READERS AND SPELLERS (CONTINUED)

letters we are learning at the top before having the student trace or copy them (scratch paper works great for a Trace, Copy, Cover and Close activity). I guarantee that even your most reluctant handwriting students will enjoy practicing their letters if their efforts reveal a rainbow underneath their writing! And you can use scratch paper for reading and spelling too! For reading, I simply write the words on pre-made lines and then have the student "scratch" out the word as he or she reads. Spelling is also great on scratch paper: again, make your lines and then dictate your spelling words as usual but this time, your student gets a little more fun with his or her spelling as he or she creates a rainbow of letters with each new word that is spelled.

Games. It may seem super obvious, but kids love games and the best games not only entertain but also teach. This is why incorporating them into my lessons is a must! What games do I use? If I want to create a fun, safe and supportive environment for my students, choice is another important thing to consider (not just with games but with many facets of the lesson). Kids love choice because it makes them feel like they have some control and that they are important (this is crucial for many of my OG students who often have feelings of self-doubt and insecurity because of their academic struggles). While you can't give your students free rein over your entire lesson, you can let them choose some activities such as the type of game that they want to play, as long as the games help the students practice the literacy and learning skills that you are focusing on in that lesson and beyond.



Games are a personal thing (consider the board games that you absolutely adore that perhaps your friend or partner can't stand!) and kids can be very particular. To help my students pick a game that they like that also supports our lessons, I bring a few games with me when I first meet them (LN has a great supply of games onsite). Then, the students and I spend a few lessons playing different games to give them the opportunity to decide which ones they like the best. Sometimes a student fixates on one game and if that is the case, then that is the game of choice for all of the lessons- until they get bored and want to move on! Some of my students' favorites are Word-A-Melon, Bananagrams and Uno (Kate created an amazing Uno game that uses words and Syllable Types instead of numbers). Other great games to try with your students are memory games. I have a great memory game called "Schmear!" that requires the players to remember and then find cards with stuff to make a bagel sandwich. While this is not exactly a "literacy" game, it is a great way to strengthen memory and other cognitive skills that OG students sometimes need help with. And my students love it! You can incorporate games anywhere in your lesson. I often begin my lessons with a game to put the student at ease and to remind them that working with me is a safe and comforting place to be.

No matter which activity you choose, just remember that reading, writing and spelling are more fun when it is multi-sensory, engaging, your students feel that they have a choice and of course, that they are loved.

