



Team Read is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure reading success for struggling 2nd and 3rd grade readers through the use of teen tutors. Teen tutors, called Reading Coaches, are trained in reading strategies aligned with classroom instruction and best practices. They work one-on-one with Student Readers twice a week after school or during the summer. Teachers from partner schools are trained by Team Read to supervise the afterschool tutoring sessions. Since 1998, Team Read has served over 16,000 elementary and 8th through 12th grade students, primarily through matching teen Reading Coaches with 2nd and 3rd grade Student Readers

The Need: Since its inception, Team Read leaders have recognized the value of program evaluation for organizational learning and program improvement. In 2009, Team Read began pilots of two new variations on their program model: using 8th graders as Reading Coaches and training 5th graders to serve as Reading Coaches for 1st grade Readers. After working with the same evaluator for many years, Team Read sought a new perspective for the evaluation of these efforts. Team Read contracted with MEMconsultants to evaluate the program impact and explore lessons learned and opportunities for program improvement for each of these pilot efforts.

MEMconsultants designed an evaluation plan that would answer questions about changes to the program structure. Guiding evaluation questions included:

- What impact does the program model have on reading scores, reading confidence and reading motivation of Student Readers?
- Does Reading Coach experience level impact reading outcomes?
- What is the program impact on positive relationships between younger and older students?

The following data collection activities were included in the plan:

- Structured program observations
- Classroom Teacher and Site Coordinator surveys
- Analysis of reading assessment data, provided by the school district, with use of a matched comparison group

At the end of the pilot year, **MEMconsultants** provided a comprehensive report identifying pilot success, challenges and recommended next steps.

As a result of the successes demonstrated during the pilot, Team Read now uses 8th grade Reading Coaches in its core program with great success. Additionally, recommendations that emerged through the evaluation process contributed to the creation of a Site Assistant position for experienced Reading Coaches seeking further leadership and job training opportunities. However, findings from the evaluation, as well as staff experience, led Team Read to choose not to fully implement the program with 5th graders, and instead continue to focus on their core programming with older Reading Coaches.

In recent years, Team Read has also renewed their contracted with **MEMconsultants** annually to complete an evaluation of core programs and a summer program pilot. Team Read has maintained its culture of evaluation and learning within the organization, regularly using findings to make modifications to Reading Coach support and program delivery.

Each year, MEMconsultants provides a valuable external perspective on our program through their expertise in youth development and out of school programs and their skills in analyzing and synthesizing survey and school performance data. Team Read benefits from MEMconsultants' recommendations for efficient and useful data collection and their willingness to adapt the annual evaluation plan in consideration of organizational priorities. We love working with MEMconsultants because they consistently provide great customer service – helping us think through challenges and shape our evaluation to capture the impact of our work for students, parents, and partners.

*~Maureen Massey,
Executive Director*

