Volunteer Tutors' and First Graders' Literacy Learning:
Navigating Assumptions, Social Positions, and Phonics

Dissertation

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By

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Abstract

  This qualitative study offers an examination of volunteer literacy tutors'
developing complex relationships with their first-grade students as they negotiated
literacy teaching and learning over the course of seven months. It assumes that literacy is
created, shaped, and maintained by social groups, yet social groups are then influenced
by the literacies they have created (Street, 1995). The context was an urban elementary
school in which the researcher was asked to develop and implement a volunteer tutoring
program to work with at-risk first graders. The tutoring program was based on the *Book
Buddies* (Johnston, Invernizzi, & Juel, 1998) tutoring model, and the volunteers were
trained, supervised, and supported throughout the program. The three first-grade students
in this study were identified by their classroom teacher and assigned to volunteers with
varying levels of tutoring experience. Tutors met with the first-graders for thirty minutes,
twice a week. Research questions focused on how the volunteer tutors interpreted and
applied their training, what assumptions the volunteers had about teaching and learning
and how those assumptions were evidenced in the tutoring relationships, as well as how
the volunteer tutors and students negotiated understandings within their unique dyads,
particularly in terms of positioning themselves and each other with literacy. The article
proposes that volunteers can have a positive impact on young students' literacy learning.
When provided training and ongoing support, volunteers are quite capable of tutoring.

Prior assumptions were strong factors, but not necessarily deciding factors in how they approached their students and tutoring. Histories and assumptions were subject to scrutiny and revision. Students at this age displayed agency by negotiating with tutors as they co-constructed understandings of how to "do" literacy when they worked together. The researcher proposes that practitioners – whether teachers or tutors – should develop language and interactions that support students in positioning themselves as inquisitive, capable readers and writers.

Dedication

Dedicated to my husband,

Jerry,

my rock.

Vita

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Chapter 1

Framing the Study

Introduction

As state and local budgets ebb and flow, schools are often asked to "do more with less." At the same time, proof of effective teaching is being demanded and measured with standardized tests. Yearly improvement of test scores is required with consequential punishments if correct percentages are not achieved. Given this economic and political environment, all available resources should be explored in order to assist schools in reaching goals. Early readers and writers who fall behind quickly are of particular concern to educators, and early intervention is often considered of prime importance. One reason is that intervention more closely approximates one-to-one instruction that is nearly impossible to provide within a classroom. Intervention by a trained reading specialist would be most beneficial, but the costs involved in hiring extra reading teachers is prohibitive for many districts, and even then, they would most likely work with small groups of three to five students rather than one-to-one. In some cases, paraprofessionals who work in the school buildings are trained to tutor, but that is also not always feasible. Inviting community volunteers to tutor has seemed to be effective in pockets of the United States (Invernizzi, Rosemary, Juel, & Richards, 1997; Morris, 2006), but other research does not indicate the same types of positive effects (Torgerson, King, &

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Sowden, 2002). My interest lies in deepening understanding of the complexities surrounding tutoring relationships and how they impact student self-concept as readers and writers.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to deepen understanding of the complexities of relationships built between volunteer literacy tutors and their first grade students as they negotiated text and the process of becoming tutors. The tutors were trained, supported, and supervised throughout the school year and tutors' interpretation and application of that training will be described. In addition, the tutors' explicitly stated assumptions about literacy learning and their students will be explored in terms of impact on the tutoring dynamic. Close examination of the discourses recorded during tutoring sessions will reveal implicit assumptions about teaching and learning, as well as active negotiations on the part of both tutor and student as they determine positions with each other and with texts.

Problem

The definition of *literacy* continues to be vigorously debated among researchers, educators, policy-makers, and communities. If stakeholders can not agree on what literacy entails, disagreement on how it should be taught and learned seems inevitable. Does it involve a subject area that can be separated into subskills? Or is it an amazingly

complex, dynamic thinking and reasoning process that cannot be decontextualized or completely quantitatively measured?

Literacy definitions and ways of teaching and assessing literacy are highly politicized in our culture. Recent federal mandates include President Bill Clinton's *America Reads* initiative which provided funding for schools to recruit and train droves of volunteers to read with children (Edmondson, 1998). Currently, that initiative has been replaced with *Reading First,* a federal program established by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. This program funds professional development for staff in low-income, low-performing schools who plan to use "research-based instruction" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). In spite of the shift in approaches, volunteers continue to be encouraged to participate in many schools, often being asked to work with students in literacy.

Significance

The school district in which this study was conducted has struggled financially and academically. District personnel previously charged with providing supplemental instruction in literacy were redirected into math and science instruction as district priorities shifted. As a result, volunteers were recruited to "fill the gap" in the particular school in which the study was conducted. These types of problems are not unique; oftentimes, schools must continue to find ways to provide instruction with depleted resources. Volunteers continue to be recruited, but can they work effectively with children who need assistance with literacy? Research has demonstrated pockets of effective volunteer tutoring (Invernizzi et al, 1997; Morris, 2005b, 2006), but other

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research studies have shown statistically insignificant effect, either positive or negative (Torgerson et al, 2002). Effective tutoring has typically been based on improved reading achievement scores.

As volunteers are recruited to tutor or even just to read aloud with students, they bring assumptions about literacy, learning, and children that can influence students' achievement and attitudes toward literacy. Studying specific daily literacy events can reveal volunteers' assumptions which impact student learning. Likewise, close examination of daily tutoring interactions can reveal how students either position themselves or allow themselves to be positioned in relationship with literacy, highlighting student agency. Literacy volunteers were trained to use specific instructional strategies; documenting how they interpreted and applied that training can help deepen understanding of literacy volunteers' usefulness. Literacy volunteers bring unique teaching and learning perspectives that have thus far been relatively unexamined in the literature.

Theoretical Framework

Literacy is socioculturally constructed by various groups for contextual purposes (Street, 2005), and those groups use, maintain, and refine literacy as their needs change. Tutoring dyads can be considered literacy groups or communities as partners make sense of how to "do" literacy when they work together. Language, and hence, literacy development grows through interactions, through *long conversations* built over time and giving their relationships substance (Mercer, 1995). Meaning is not carried by text alone;

rather, it is co-constructed during social interactions between reader, text, and other readers. Therefore, attempting to divide literacy into subskills decontextualizes it, which changes its nature (Luna, Solsken, & Kutz, 2000).

Literacy is a tool which promotes thinking and reasoning (Schultz & Hull, 2002; Street, 2005). As sociocultural groups and institutions create their own ways of using language, they form social languages involving reading, writing, speaking and listening in multiple formats (Gee, 2000). Examining specific literacy events within larger social/cultural/political/economic contexts helps researchers find patterns that point toward broader literacy practices reflecting foundational ontological and epistemological beliefs (Luna et al, 2000; Rowan, Knobel, Bigum, & Lankshear, 2002; Schultz & Hull, 2002; Street, 1995).

A critical perspective of literacy examines power relationships which are evident throughout literacy events and practices, negotiated at the intersections of texts and readers. Reading is considered a tool for distributing ideology and identities within particular discourses. However, students are not passive recipients of knowledge or identities. They are co-constructors of meaning as they negotiate positions within the dyad and with texts. They actively engage in creating reading and writing identities for themselves (Bakhtin, 1981; Díaz, Neal, & Amaya-Williams, 1990; Foucault, 2004; Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Street, 2005).

Research Questions

As stated, my purpose in this study was to build on previous research by examining the complexities of relationships built over time between volunteer literacy tutors and their students. I wanted to document tutors' assumptions about teaching and learning and how those assumptions impacted tutoring experiences. I also planned to document how tutors applied their training in specific instructional approaches, which could impact student achievement and attitudes, and I wanted to investigate how students and adults actively negotiated their positions with each other in relationship with text. Hence, my guiding questions were as follows:

1. What assumptions about literacy did literacy volunteers bring to tutoring sessions? What were the sources for those assumptions? How were those assumptions evidenced during interactions?

2. What specific skills and competencies were emphasized in tutoring sessions? Did student utilize these skills and competencies without prompting as time progressed?

3. How did students and volunteers position themselves and each other in relationship with each other and with texts?

Organization of the Dissertation

The following chapters will describe the process of this study as I examined the research questions. They include an explanation of theoretical frameworks, pertinent literature, methodology, context, findings, and discussion of the findings.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature. Within this chapter, I will discuss my use of sociocultural theory and critical literacy theory to understand literacy learning. Prevailing early literacy instructional methods are described, along with scholarship concerning classroom discourse. Finally, empirical studies that examine the use of volunteer tutors or mentors are discussed.

Chapter 3 includes descriptions of the methodology planned and implemented to gather and analyze data for this study. Explanation of the research design will be provided, along with information about the timeline, access, and context of the study. The tutoring model implemented for the research will be explained, along with how the program was developed and tutors trained. Participants, types of data collected, and the role of the researcher are all described. Methods of data analysis and issues of trustworthiness and transferability will be examined.

Chapter 4 contains the data analysis. Each research question will be addressed in turn. The first two questions' data are organized by categories or themes with specific examples from dyads illustrating each category. The last question's data are organized by dyad. After addressing each question, I synthesize the analyses.

Chapter 5 summarizes the findings from Chapter 4 and describes the significant findings. The next section examines the general themes that emerged from the data analysis. Finally, limitations of the study and directions for future research will be presented.

Chapter 2

A Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter contains a review of literature concerning early literacy pedagogy, sociocultural and critical literacy theories, classroom discourse, and literacy volunteers. I start by summarizing current prevailing scholarship concerning early literacy instruction. I then consider the meaning of literacy, using sociocultural and critical literacy theories to frame my understanding. In this theoretical section, I will first discuss sociocultural theory as it applies to literacy and learning. Next, I will discuss theories which, to me, seem to transition sociocultural and critical theories, and then I will move on to discuss critical literacy theory and how it applies to school environments. After that, I will explore research on classroom discourse and implications for tutoring interactions. Finally, I will describe findings from research with literacy volunteers in schools and how my research offers unique perspective.

Early Literacy Practices

Literacy skills grow from oral language, so early literacy instruction builds on that foundation through a wide variety of activities, such as reading aloud, discussing,

engaging in dramatic play, singing, chanting nursery rhymes, drawing, and writing. All these types of activities foster engagement with spoken and written language, developing foundations on which to build phonological awareness, concepts of print, and beginning alphabetic knowledge (Gunning, 2010). Literacy knowledge begins at birth (or possibly in the womb), as soon as infants are exposed to oral language. Language development continues throughout children's lives as more complex oral language is understood and they are exposed to more print (McKenna & Stahl, 2009) within their environments.

As children engage with print, they develop the understanding that text carries meaning; after that, they begin to differentiate between words and letters. They learn the alphabet not only by the name of each letter but by the sounds associated with each letter, pairs of letters, or groups of letters. Children learn that some words are so frequently used in print and often do not follow any letter-sound "rules" that we just memorize them. Simultaneously, emerging readers and writers learn about print conventions, such as directionality, the meaning of periods, and purposes of capital letters. Clay (2001) argued that these aspects of literacy learning represent "visible items and invisible relationships" (p. 98). Invisible relationships include semantic, phonological, and structural knowledge that we bring to the task of interacting with visible text (Clay, 2001), best learned through exposure to print-rich environments (Gunning, 2010). Therefore, focusing on letter-sound relationships is vital for beginning readers, but it is too restrictive if that focus deprives children from engaging with text in ways that foster development of entire processing systems (Clay, 2001).

Marie Clay (2001) discussed beginning literacy as building on the diverse language experiences and prior knowledge with which most children arrive to school. As they learn to read and write, children assemble processing systems, making many decisions as they encounter text about how they will process a particular text. Each portion of text requires decisions which are influenced by previous decisions and results. These processing systems assembled for reading and writing include visual, auditory, speaking, and understandings of phonology and language use. As children practice assembling and developing these processing systems, successfully using them, their understandings of how to access and use reading and writing become more sophisticated. Teachers foster that growth by offering a diverse range of learning opportunities, influencing the child's decision-making, and affecting the teacher-child interactions (Clay, 2001). The role of the teacher cannot be over-emphasized. Although a wealth of tangible print materials should be made available to early readers and writers, it is up to the teacher to understand how to focus children's attention on the print, enabling them to see how to use print in various situations (Gunning, 2010). Children only learn to read through many opportunities to read successfully (Clay, 2001; Morris, 2005a).

Reading is intensely contextual and relational. As a social construct, reading is only learned through relationships with other readers (Vygotsky, 1986; Street, 1995), and as students read, they bring their entire histories of life and language experiences into specific moments of reading specific texts in particular places. Their current relationships with text are influenced by those histories and relationships occurring concurrently with the building of each new language experience (Morris, 1994).

As will be described in Chapter 3, the tutoring model I chose for use during this study has its foundation in the types of paradigms and practices described here. At this point in the discussion, I believe it is necessary to use sociocultural theory in order to more deeply analyze the teacher's (or tutor's) role.

Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky

Vygotsky's (1986) theory of language, tools, and signs serves as a foundation on which to begin this discussion of literacy. According to Vygotsky, thought is mediated by words which become signs (representations of objects but with psychological meaning) only when they become concepts that actually shape perception and organize thoughts. For example, a young child hears many words that sound like babble at first, but then he learns to differentiate sounds and perhaps even remember some of the words; Vygotsky calls this thinking in unorganized congeries. It's only when the child associates the word *milk* with his bottle that the word *milk* becomes a functional tool that she can use to obtain a drink. At this stage, the child is thinking in complexes. A complex is only a shadow of a concept, though, because the child is using a term given to her, and she does not clearly differentiate the term. In my example, the child is thinking in complexes because she associates *milk* with other children's bottles or even adults' soda bottles. Once the child begins to differentiate between types of bottles, between containers and liquids, and between colors of liquids, the word *milk* becomes a sign or concept because she realizes its importance and can begin to think more abstractly about

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milk, applying what she knows about *milk* in different contexts, such as milk on cereal or milk stored in a jug in the refrigerator. This new depth of understanding organizes her thoughts and ideas, ultimately shaping her perception of milk and what it represents. The child would eventually come to understand the sociocultural meaning of "crying over spilled milk" once she is thinking in signs. A child who thinks in signs in her homeland, however, may or may not grasp the meaning of "crying over spilled milk" in to this country since the expression was created and is used in particular sociocultural environments. Vygotsky believed that human consciousness can be found within a philosophy of signs (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 2001).

This became evident during my research when a tutor read aloud a book about a little girl who was excited about Santa Claus bringing her gifts. On Christmas Eve, the father asked her to help build a fire, but the little girl refused because it would cook Santa. Although the book had mentioned Santa before this point, it had said nothing about the tradition of Santa's arrival through the chimney, but Justin, the child to whom the tutor was reading, understood the tradition and immediately recognized the implication of cooking Santa with a fire. Because Jason's sociocultural environment incorporated the same tradition of Santa as in the text, and because Justin was capable of thinking in signs by understanding what a chimney represented when paired with Santa and Christmas Eve, he understood and enjoyed the character's horrified reaction.

Bakhtin

Bakhtin's theories also focused on relationships and context as prime factors influencing the use of language. He argued that we must consider multiple layers of

contextual meanings and innuendoes attached to particular words, along with

relationships fostered or hindered by those words, each one of which possesses theme,

meaning, and evaluative accent or value judgment (Morris, 1994). As students engage

with language (written or oral), they bring to that interaction all the words to which they

have been exposed, along with the values, meanings, and assumptions attached to those

words. Bakhtin's *heteroglossia* helps me understand that each utterance (written or oral)

is the product of not only the immediate interaction between a particular text and the

reader(s), but also the product of a much broader spectrum of complex social relations at

the time of the utterance (Morris, 1994). In other words, as authors write, they carefully

choose words to not only express ideas within their conscious minds at the moment, but

each of those words carries meanings related to broader experiences and history the

authors have with language and life. As readers encounter the text, they interpret each

word within the broader context of life and language experiences they have had. So the

same text can be understood differently by different persons. The meaning of an

utterance lies not within the speaker or within the listener (or text/reader), but rather,

somewhere in the borders between them. "Any true understanding is dialogic in nature"

(Morris, 1994, p. 35).

New Literacy Studies

Building on Bakhtin's theories, New Literacy Studies argues that literacy is not

individually acquired through cognitive means, but is generated by social groups to serve

various purposes within various contexts. Because it is socioculturally created, language

is considered ideologically saturated and cannot be decontextualized or rendered neutral.

Meaning is not carried solely within the text, but is created during interactions between reader and the text, between speakers and listeners within particular historical and political contexts (Street, 2005). Communities create, modify, and maintain literacies, while being affected and shaped by those literacies (Luna et al, 2000; Rowan et al, 2002; Schultz & Hull, 2002; Street, 1995). These perspectives of literacy assume a great deal of agency on the part of the learner as well as a large responsibility for the teacher. Vygotsky also assumed individual agency when describing *intersubjectivity*, in which understanding is jointly constructed between learners rather than passively transmitted (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990). All these theories focus attention on language and literacy growth through relationships with other language and literacy users.

Summary of Sociocultural Theories

The skills learned by early readers and writers in the tutoring dyads of this research are tools which they practice using to deepen and broaden understandings. Eventually, children use the tools more skillfully, transforming them into signs that represent ways of knowing, thinking, and doing literacy. Sociocultural theory helps me recognize the agency brought to tutoring sessions by both adult and child. Neither is a passive recipient of knowledge, but an actively engaged constructor of meaning. Each member of the dyad brings a unique language history to their daily interactions. Those interactions reflect those histories as the tutor and child negotiate new understandings of text and literacy within their unique contextual spaces.

Transition from Sociocultural Theory to Critical Literacy

A group of theories that transition sociocultural and critical perspectives is an artificial construction. Sociocultural and critical theories intersect on many levels, so a distinct boundary or even an area of transition does not really exist, as far as my reading has revealed. Rather, I use this concept of transition because it is one way that I can make sense of the areas which seem to create bridges for me to move from sociocultural thinking to critical thinking. These areas of transition include the concepts of figured worlds and dialogism.

Figured Worlds

Figured worlds, as described by Holland et al (1998) are likened to the worlds of play created by children. They are relatively separate conceptual spaces within larger sociocultural worlds in which participants attach meaning to artifacts and develop unique ways of speaking, acting and interacting within that world. This is easily seen within a classroom where a group of learners attaches meaning to various artifacts within the room as they relate to their communal lives. There are ways of talking and acting that are considered appropriate and inappropriate. The class's figured world exists within, and yet separate from, larger figured worlds of family, school, community, etc. Although pieces of all of the larger social, cultural, political, and economic figured worlds outside the classroom enter with the children and teacher, their unique interactions construct meaning for themselves in terms of how to live and learn together in this physical and temporal space, which Bakhtin (1981) would call a chronotope. They become participants who simultaneously submit to and influence their figured world. Newcomers

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are acclimated to these traditions and, in turn, begin interweaving their own influences into the dynamic. Each addition and withdrawal of participants, each activity or artifact introduced or removed, and each new day offer opportunities for negotiation.

Dialogism

These negotiations position participants in relationship to each other and texts. Children and adults are addressed and must answer (if even with silence) as they go through their days. These voices entering their consciousness combine with the voices already existing in their minds; they either reject or accept the current voices, but they answer in some way (Bakhtin, 1981). For my purposes, we will consider the voices of adults in children's figured worlds of school. Those voices, since they come from adults asked to teach the children, are authoritative voices which may or may not conflict with the children's internally persuasive voices. In the case of literacy in the United States, some authoritative voices often say that reading is fun and interesting. At the same time, some authoritative voices tell children that they must hit particular pre-established benchmarks in particular skills by particular dates in order to be considered proficient readers. Eventually, if children accept any of these authoritative voices as truthful and if they hear them enough (either from others or echoing in their own minds), they may accept them, consciously or subconsciously, as internally persuasive voices (Bakhtin, 1981). In terms of my research, if tutor address or position children as readers for whom reading is fun and easy, and if children's experiences confirm the positioning, those authoritative voices can become internally persuasive. The children may position themselves as readers within this context, addressing others from that position and not

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allowing anyone to move them toward nonreader positions. On the other hand, if authoritative voices carry doubt that reading is easy or that the children are real readers, those can also seep into the children's cache of internally persuasive voices if their experiences affirm doubt, and they will assume a position of nonreaders or struggling readers. Bakhtin (1981) called this "authoring" their world. Specifically speaking of emergent readers, Clay (1987) called it teaching children to be learning disabled.

Summary of Transitional Theories

In my research, each figured world co-created by the dyads reflected the children's perceptions of literacy and whether or not they saw themselves as literate. Children were not passive recipients of this influence; the data clearly reveal their negotiations with the adults to find ways to be seen as literate. The concept of figured worlds helps me understand the uniqueness of each tutoring dyad's negotiations in terms of literacy. Each active agent (adult and child) negotiated positioning from one moment to the next, sometimes listening to one authoritative voice, sometimes heeding another. Each tutor's voice would have been considered authoritative because of the position accorded them by the school. However, children sometimes answered their tutors' voices in ways that revealed resistance. Other times, tutors and students negotiated positions in which voices were more collaborative, enabling children to explore perspectives in ways that grew internally persuasive voices that would describe themselves as readers and writers.

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Critical Literacy Perspectives

Authoritative and Internally Persuasive Voices

Bakhtin's description of internally persuasive and authoritative voices reflect tension and conflict. According to Bakhtin (Freedman & Ball, 2004), authoritative voices are those with power and influence that insist on absolute allegiance; they have distinct boundaries which must not be crossed. Internally persuasive voices are personalized and discriminating, separating themselves from authoritative voices; they have open boundaries which allow them access to varied contexts, entertaining new ways to think and act. Internally persuasive voices are open to change and will interact with other internally persuasive voices, being shaped and influenced. When this happens, *subjectification*, the border between social (Vygotsky's interpersonal) and the personal (intrapersonal) where identity is produced, is changed (Díaz et al, 1990). Educationally, this effect can be seen in teaching practices when they are shaped by authoritative voices affecting teachers' internally persuasive voices.

Students are affected by many voices; the classroom is a contact zone where internally persuasive voices meet authoritative and other internally persuasive voices, and students' ideologies are shaped and influenced by diverse discourses encountered within that contact zone. For example, if a child moves into a new district and enrolls in a new school, she may start the school year with the authoritative voice of a parent telling her to behave and work hard. Another voice, internally persuasive, reminds her that she knows no one and is slow to make friends. Once in the classroom, her teacher's authoritative voice assures her that she is welcome and assigns a buddy to help her through the day.

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Other children at her table share materials with her and at recess one of them asks her to play. The teacher demonstrates a type of math problem that she already understands, so that by the time she gets home, she has interacted with a multitude of voices in various contexts. She has already begun the process of choosing which voices to accept and which to resist, gradually freeing herself to change her assumptions and attitudes.

Ultimately, what occurs within a classroom depends on teachers' internally persuasive voices, according to Freedman and Ball (2004). An example of this can be found in Larson's (2003) discussion of positioning; teachers sometimes see students as passive recipients of the teachers' literacy rather than as active participants in co-constructing understanding through meaningful engagement. The result of this, Larson argued, is that teachers position students as subjects within or objects of literacy instruction.

Agency in Relationships

According to Foucault (2004), power is an underlying force within all relationships, neither good nor bad in itself, but a productive force resulting in "local and unstable" (p. 466) dominant groups and institutions. By destabilizing the concept of power, Foucault implied agency to change power relationships. Discourses form power relationships, and while discourses create, support and strengthen power, they can also thwart power. Power relationships are dynamic and fluid. Foucault described the force of power as coming from every direction, from every situation, from every person, being formed and re-formed moment by moment, dependent upon the agency of each person to influence power. Power, however, cannot exist without resistances. Natural aspects of

human nature, resistances are fluid and vary in intensity. Power relationships take action and yet, are changed by the actions themselves. Discourses create, support, and strengthen power, but also easily thwart power. Silence has similar effects (Foucault, 2004). Therefore, resistance to authoritative voices may prevent them from becoming internally persuasive voices. Resistance may also allow a child with negative internally persuasive voices to change them when offered something better.

Autonomous and Ideological Literacy Models

Considering literacy models as *autonomous* or *ideological* serves as another framework through which I understand various literacy practices. In keeping with sociocultural perspectives of its foundation, New Literacy Studies considers literacy as involving the social practices of reading and writing; therefore, they argue against an autonomous model which assumes school literacy to be superior over other forms of literacy (Street, 1995). An autonomous literacy model presumes an economic benefit to becoming literate, regardless of social conditions, and it assumes that the acquisition of literacy is the key to cognitive development. This model is created and maintained by attempting to objectify language in various ways. Teaching children to self-monitor linguistic features, for example, often assumes a proper way of speaking. The meanings of language and how language is used in society are often not discussed with students, and oral language used in school seems to be expected to follow the rules of formal written language. According to Street, middle-class families develop their own autonomous model of literacy through resources available to them in society, such as articles, packaging, and discussion groups. Parents may see this type of literacy as

imperative for their children to learn in order to provide viable economic options later in life. In the school setting, teachers often seem to negotiate texts in ways that foster the idea that texts are neutral resources for knowledge, and students are positioned as passive recipients of that knowledge within an autonomous model of literacy (Street, 2005).

An ideological model of literacy, on the other hand, assumes that language is saturated by ideologies of social and cultural relationships between individuals and institutions. According to Street (1995, p. 127), "When we participate in the language of an institution . . . we become positioned by that language; in that moment of assent, myriad relationships of power, authority, status are implied and reaffirmed."   Hence, literacy is understood as a social skill, about knowledge that is embedded within particular assumptions about identity, learning, and being, which are always contested, and which highlight power relationships. It follows that the act of engaging with text is also a social act. When a reader engages with literature, it affects the nature of the literacy being learned and the reader's ideas about literacy. Literacy practices are acquired by readers from the larger society (Street, 1995).

Summary of Critical Theories

My research is situated in the intersection of authoritative and ideological models of literacy. These two models are opposite ends of a continuum, upon which readers, researchers, educators, parents, and lawmakers place themselves at various points in various contexts. Although I primarily assume an ideological model of literacy, in particular contexts I tend to integrate facets of an autonomous model. In my research, tutors reflected some aspects of an autonomous perspective, for example, in assuming

that literacy is necessary to foster to prepare their children for school, along with relational aspects from an ideological model.

My research is likewise situated in the midst of many voices, some of them authoritative and others internally persuasive. Each one of us came to this program with our own sets of internally persuasive voices and encountered outside voices telling us various things about literacy and our relationships with literacy and each other. We all learned to negotiate those voices and subsequent positions.

The tension between authoritative and internally persuasive voices was inevitable within tutoring dyads, and research data revealed that power negotiations were fluid and dynamic. Tutoring dyad interactions revealed social relationships that influenced how literacy was understood and used within their figured worlds. Children and adults both assumed agency to negotiate boundaries and explore ways to position themselves or allowing themselves to be positioned with literacy.

Classroom Discourse

The study of classroom discourse is a study of a traditional communication system within American classrooms (Cazden, 2001). By analyzing a single discussion/event, one can use sociocultural and critical lenses to help determine the influence of that particular event in terms of fostering or hindering critical thinking. In the case of my research, studying tutoring discourses revealed how those events impacted the positioning of students as literacy learners.

The crucial role that language plays in education is apparent in many ways. Authentic classroom discourse, considered "drafting thought" by Barnes (1976), serves

education by helping learners understand what they learn and has the potential for student transformation. Knowledge is not absorbed as tidbits of information arranged for easy access; rather, learners negotiate, argue, revisit, synthesize and critique knowledge and understanding as they interact with others through exploratory talk (Cazden, 2001).

Mercer emphasized the importance of continuity. During the time that a group of students is together within a classroom, themes arise throughout their discussions, most likely to disappear for a time and then reappear later. One desired effect of continuity in classroom discourse is the *long conversation* that lasts for the length of their relationships (Mercer, 1995, p. 70). The effect of a long conversation is that prior shared experiences or understandings are used as reference points for understanding or comparing new ideas or experiences. When the learning community has these common reference points, continued referencing to them can be shortened (Mercer, 1995). They become part of the common discourse in the group's figured world of classroom learning. Likewise, continuity in tutoring relationships may be vital to create long conversations that figure into literacy learning within their uniquely contextual figured worlds. For example, reminders of routine tasks during tutoring session become unnecessary; references to previously read books are meaningful and quickly understood; previous topics of conversation while walking back and forth from the classroom are referenced and extended. Ways of doing literacy, of being literate, are built through the continuity of discourse over time.

If Bakhtin's previously discussed concepts of heteroglossia, addressivity, answerability, and authoring are taken as foundational to our understanding of

communication, it is logical to see that classroom (or tutoring) discourse intermeshes sociocultural knowledge and linguistic knowledge to construct organized understanding (Gutiérrez, 1995). Talk is a social mode of thinking, used to interpret our experiences and shape representations of reality (Mercer, 1995). Language acquisition occurs prior to entering school, within various contexts, so when children enter school they possess different types of language discourses. These discourses include the "chorus of voices" from other people in our past as well as our current social and linguistic experiences (Guitiérrez, 1995, p. 24), which continue to influence new interactions and understandings.

Mercer's (1995) argument for continuity, for the long conversation, is crucial when considering the tutoring dyads in this study. All three sets of partners met regularly and consistently throughout the school year, enabling them to develop particular ways of talking within their figured worlds and establishing personal dyad histories to which they could refer quickly and easily. Adults and students discussed, wondered, argued, revisited, and critiqued knowledge during their tutoring interactions. Their ways of doing literacy within their relationships became at once established and continuously re-negotiated with each new day.

Summary of Theoretical Perspectives

In this research, I used sociocultural and critical literacy theories to understand tutoring dyads. I found evidence of continuous negotiation between adults and students concerning language usage and meaning. I assumed an ideological model of literacy, in

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which language is understood to be ideologically saturated and in which children and adults are known to have language histories influencing current interactions and understandings. This ideological model coexists with the autonomous model brought to tutoring events by our own internally persuasive voices at times, and other times through some authoritative voices. At the same time, some authoritative voices and some of our internally persuasive voices were aligning with the ideological model of literacy. This type of tension seems inevitable.

Language influenced and shaped both students' and adults' understandings of the world; yet, they were active agents in that learning, reshaping and renegotiating language as they used it within figured worlds (with long conversations) they created over time. Relationships became the most powerful influence on language development and learning. Students and tutors co-constructed meaning and negotiated positioning as they learned and practiced literacy skills over time, eventually turning those skills or tools into ideological signs. Even young children evidenced ability to think in signs. In the next section, I will discuss how other researchers have considered tutoring dyads in their empirical studies.

Empirical Research Regarding Tutoring Experiences

Most research surrounding the use of literacy volunteers in elementary and middle schools has focused on whether or not their use raised student reading test scores.

Howard Street-Based Tutoring Models Using Volunteers

Darrell Morris' Howard Street tutoring model (2005a) has been the basis for several studies and for other tutoring models. Paraprofessionals or community volunteers are used as reading tutors, tutoring for two 60-minute sessions each week, remaining with the same student through the school year. The tutors are trained and supervised by a reading teacher whose most important job is coaching the tutors. The model includes developmental word study and emphasizes using leveled books of high interest. In 1990, Morris and his colleagues (Morris, Shaw, & Perney, 1990) conducted research in Chicago where the Howard Street Tutoring Program was used to tutor 30 second and third grade children after school for one hour twice a week. The tutors were community volunteers and a reading teacher provided lesson plans, materials, and supervision. The tutored children were compared with a matched control group of non-tutored children. The children who received tutoring tested higher than their peers on word recognition (ES=.64) and passage reading (ES=1.40). The average gain for the treatment group was 12.2 months in passage reading, compared with the control group's gain of 6.6 months. Word reading was tested with an informal graded word recognition assessment (Morris, 2005) and an informal graded passage reading test (Laidlaw Brothers, 1980).

Book Buddies is another tutoring program based in Charlottesville, Virginia (Invernizzi et al, 1997) in which community volunteers are recruited to work first graders. The model is based on the Howard Street model with some elements of the Reading Recovery model. The supervisor wrote lesson plans and observed the tutoring sessions, providing feedback and guidance throughout the year. In this study, Invernizzi

and her colleagues used a within-program control group research design to judge the effectiveness of the tutoring program, considering a small group (N=38) of children who received fewer than 40 sessions of tutoring as a control group within the larger cohort (N=130) who received 40 or more sessions of tutoring. The large cohort who received more tutoring tested higher on a standardized word recognition test (Jastak & Wilkinson, 1984), with an effect size of 1.12. After the first three years of implementation, the school district embraced the tutoring program, budgeting for part-time salaries for supervisors and hiring a part-time person to recruit volunteers.

In another study, (Morris, Heubach, & Perney, 2002), reading teachers in Richmond, Virginia participated in a three-week summer course designed to teach them how to set up a Howard Street tutoring program themselves in their ten schools. The course involved observing each other tutoring and meetings with the trainer. The teachers implemented programs in each of their schools with minimal guidance from the trainer. Although they reported no problems with the program itself, they had a good bit of trouble recruiting volunteers. Over the ten schools, 56 children received tutoring; they were matched with a control group who received small group reading instruction during the year. The tutored children scored higher on word recognition (ES=.30), passage reading (ES=.57) and comprehension (ES=.35). The children in these schools received only 31 tutoring sessions, compared with at least 50 sessions in both Chicago (described above) and Utah (described below), which could account for the lower effect sizes in this Richmond study (Morris, 2006).

Summary of Howard Street models using volunteers. These results seem to indicate that tutor training, ongoing support and guidance from a reading teacher, and long-term consistency all positively affect reading achievement for the children involved in these studies.

Howard Street-Based Tutoring Models Using Paraprofessionals

Brown, Morris, and Fields (2005) studied a program in Utah which utilized paraprofessionals to tutor 21 second and third graders in 45-minutes sessions twice a week, totaling 53 sessions. The program, called Next Steps, was also based on Howard Street. A reading teacher organized materials, modeled tutoring and supervised the tutors, but the tutors developed specific lesson plans with the guidance of the reading teacher. The tutored children were compared with a control group who received small group, supplemental reading instruction daily, using the district basal reader. The tutored children scored higher on three measures: an informal graded word recognition test (Morris, 2005), an informal graded passage reading test (Morris, 2005), and a standardized reading comprehension subtest (Woodcock, 1987). The tutored children achieved higher levels on all three measurement tools: word recognition (ES=.78), passage reading (ES=.55) and reading comprehension (ES=1.01).

Another program using paraprofessionals was Partners-in-Reading (Miller, 2003). In this program, South Carolina teacher assistants tutored first graders for 30 minutes, four days a week. This tutoring model is similar to Book Buddies, but the tutors wrote their own lesson plans, choosing leveled books and word sorts themselves. Miller, a college professor, trained and supervised the tutors himself. To assess progress, Miller

used an informal graded word-recognition test (Morris, 2005) and a reading

comprehension subtest (Metropolitan Achievement Test, 7th Ed., Psychological Corp.,

1992). A control group of children who did not receive tutoring was used for

comparison. At the end of first grade, the tutored children scored higher in word

recognition (ES=.78). In this study, the children were retested at the end of second grade,

and the tutored children scored higher than the control group on both word recognition

(ES=.63) and comprehension (ES=.76) even though tutoring had not continued in second

grade.

Summary of Howard Street models using paraprofessionals. These studies indicate

that paraprofessionals could be given more direct responsibility for lesson planning with

a reading teacher supervising. Commitment to year-long tutoring seems to be another

implied factor of success. In these models based on Howard Street, tutoring sessions

seemed carefully structured with adequate training given the tutors prior to

implementation.

Randomized, Controlled Trials Using a Variety of Tutoring Models

Rimm-Kaufman, Kagan, and Byers (1999) conducted a study of trained,

supervised community volunteers who worked with 42 first graders who were identified

as "at risk" of reading failure. A matched control group design was used and children

were randomly assigned to the tutored and control groups, 21 children in each group.

The teachers did not know which children were being tutored and which children were in

the control group. It is not clear what non-tutored children did during their time out of

the classroom since I assume they must have all been pulled out on some pretense. The

tutors met with their children three times a week for 45-minute sessions. Of all 42

children (both treatment and control), 95% demonstrated major gains over the year.

However, 91% of the tutored children achieved grade level on letter identification,

compared with 67% of the non-tutored children (ES=.29). Of the tutored children, 33%

scored on grade level with Clay's (1993) word recognition test, compared with 14% of

the control group (ES=.22). Other assessments conducted from Clay's Observation

Survey (1993) demonstrated equivalent growth between the groups. Interestingly,

tutored boys demonstrated more gain than either tutored girls or non-tutored boys and

girls. Children ranged in age from 5½ to 7 years, and the researchers found that the

children who were older demonstrated greater gains within the tutored group, but age was

not a factor with achievement in the control group.

A tutoring program named "Volunteer Reading Help" used community volunteers

to tutor 7-11 year olds for 30 minutes twice a week in London (Loenen, 1989). These

tutors received training for 3½ hours initially and then were placed in schools with little

or no supervision or guidance. Two students were identified by teachers in each class as

needing extra assistance with reading, and each of the two students were randomly

assigned to the tutoring group or a control group. The reading assessments used to

measure progress included the Salford Sentence Reading Test (Bookbinder, 1976) for

accuracy and the Primary Reading Test (France, 1981) for comprehension. No

significant differences were evidenced between the two groups in reading achievement.

In fact, the control group had higher scores on both measures. This study also assessed

the application of the tutoring model and found wide discrepancies between training and

application by the tutors. For example, reading for meaning was a concept emphasized during training, but tutors were not using strategies that would have promoted reading for meaning. Some training was misused. For example, tutors were instructed to help children with particularly difficult words by telling them the word, but when observed, tutors were frequently telling their students every word. Interestingly, there was no evidence of conversation, no evidence of the dyads having "fun" or enjoying literature.

Start Making a Reading Today (SMART) was a program started in Oregon by the governor in which businesses were encouraged to provide funding for books and time off work for volunteers to tutor first graders in reading. Other community volunteers were recruited, resulting in over 7000 students being served at the time of the research (Baker, Gersten, & Keating, 2000). Training was minimal, only 30-40 minutes on tutoring strategies. Tutors were asked to simply read with the child, encouraging the child's interests, making tutoring fun, and asking students questions while reading. A handbook was provided which explained the roles of background knowledge, letter/sound correspondence, predictions, and illustrations. Sample questions were offered for use before, during, and after reading in the handbook. Children were identified by teachers as being the lowest readers. The children were pretested with Rapid Letter Name (Kaminski & Good, 1996), matched by those results, then randomly assigned to either tutoring or control group (no tutoring). Tutoring occurred twice a week for 30 minutes, and two books were sent home each month for children to read independently or with family members. A site coordinator was a half-time Americorps volunteer who handled recruiting, scheduling, and making sure books were available. The first year, 43 students

were in the tutoring group (for this study) and 41 in the control group. The tutored

children received 49-98 tutoring sessions over six months, the average being 73.

Assessments were administered three times – at the beginning of first grade, end of first

grade, and end of second grade. At the end of first and second grades, the treatment

group evidenced statistically significant effect on both phonemic segmentation and word

identification. Comprehension was nearly significant. Student growth was the greatest in

first grade, slowing down in second grade. A group of average achieving students who

had backgrounds of literacy events at home were used as comparison for growth, and the

treatment group surpassed this group in the amount of growth achieved. However, at the

end of 1st grade, the tutored children scored in the 30th percentile across the Woodcock

Reading Master Test-Revised (1998) subtests while the average achievers scored between

the 47th and 69th percentiles. Although the tutored children made great gains, they still

lagged behind their peers in achievement.

Another study in which a randomized control group was used involved Time for

Reading, a program designed and implemented by the researchers (Elliott, Arthurs, &

Williams, 2000) in which community volunteers were asked to work with 4 and 5 year

olds in classrooms. Classes were randomly assigned to treatment or control groups. In

this study, 31 volunteers participated after a six-hour training supplemented by a detailed

reading manual. The focus of tutoring was to be developing phonemic awareness and a

sense of story with the children. A fulltime research assistant supervised the tutors and

talked with both the tutors and teachers. Designed for two tutors to be working with

small groups/individuals within classrooms, distractions caused them to move outside of

classroom. Both groups showed progress from December to June during the year of intervention, but the tutoring group did not achieve statistically higher scores than the control group. This group of researchers, however, re-tested the students three years after the intervention to assess long-term impact on accuracy, comprehension, and spelling. There were no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups across the entire study or within individual schools. Researchers suggest that a longer, more intensive one-to-one intervention might have resulted in stronger effect. Another interesting suggestion from the researchers was that the cultural differences between the children and tutors may have resulted in tutors taking for granted aspects of book sharing, such as taking time for enjoyment and reflection and making connections, resulting in their not including these aspects in their tutoring as much as they could.

Summary of randomized, controlled trials with various models. Because the models were different in these studies, it is hard to generalize. Tutoring involved anything from reading aloud with children to actual tutoring, but with minimal supervision. Results differed considerably. Overall, however, I believe I can say that these studies indicate that ongoing supervision and support are needed to foster adherence to a tutoring model's philosophy and framework, even if tutoring is defined as primarily reading aloud with the child.

Evidence of Factors Affecting Success in Tutoring Models

Ongoing commitment, stability, supervisors, and numbers of volunteers. Several researchers have attempted to identify the qualities of tutoring programs that have successfully raised test scores. Morris (2005b) tracked a class from kindergarten through

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third grade, particularly looking at progress made by those children who qualified for Title I tutoring in first grade. He found that 7 of those 12 students were reading at grade level by the end of third grade. This was opposed to only one of the 12 reading on grade level at the end of first grade, which is when tutoring would have traditionally stopped. The reading teacher in this school began a tutoring program to support those children past first grade, using paraprofessionals and community volunteer tutors. Morris argued that the following factors were necessary for success: low turnover of staff and students, strength and longevity of administrative support of programs that work, well-educated and creative supervisors, commitment to ongoing tutoring throughout the years, and enough people to tutor one-on-one.

Text selection, volunteers, student characteristics. Reading Partners tutored fourth-graders in Albany, New York, and this study (Gelzheiser, 2005) focused on the impact of text selection, volunteers, and characteristics of students on reading achievement. Although Reading Partners was an ongoing tutoring program, it only worked with 4th graders for one year, working with a new cohort of students each year. Students were identified by teachers as low-achieving and receiving assistance in special education or remedial settings. Half the 34 students in the study worked with the same volunteer twice a week; the other half worked with one volunteer on Mondays and another volunteer on Wednesdays. Recruited volunteers were university students and business partner employees. Tutors and children met twice a week after school for 50 minutes, totaling 56 sessions. The students read texts that supported the classroom social studies curriculum; texts were selected that offered a balance in types/genres (controlled vocabulary,

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informational, chapter books, short fiction) for each curricular unit. Students previewed

all books available at the beginning of each unit and selected one of each type of book to

read with their partner. Packets were given tutors for each unit with concepts and

vocabulary, along with teaching suggestions for each book. Training involved two

initial sessions (length is not described) involving videos and discussions, along with

dispersal of a handbook describing teaching strategies. Ongoing supervision and support

was provided through observations and written feedback. Volunteers were asked to

primarily listen to the child reading aloud, although they could also read with or to the

child at times. Scaffolding involved background information, vocabulary, and using

syntactic and semantic cues along with graphophonic. Emphasis was placed on making

the event enjoyable and modeling enthusiasm for reading and for time spent together. A

common factor analysis was conducted between 4 outcome measurements

(comprehension, word attack, vocabulary and social studies vocabulary) and 10 predictor

variables (programmatic features – volunteer experience, pretests, number of books read,

percentages of different types of books, and program balance). Researchers found that

students with lower reading achievement chose more controlled-vocabulary texts and that

students with higher reading achievement chose a more balanced selection of types of

texts. Students who read more books had higher vocabulary scores. More experienced

(more years spent tutoring prior to this experience) tutors positively affected student

learning of social studies vocabulary. Short literature (as opposed to chapter books) also

had a positive impact. Another multivariate analysis was conducted to see what

influenced reading achievement gain. The researchers found that students were more

likely to make greater reading gains if they entered the program with higher decoding skills. Students who selected more chapter books while also balancing the numbers of the other types of texts read achieved higher gains in reading. Volunteer experience seemed to have impacted gains that were less dependent upon the types of texts read, but it was clear that inexperienced tutors could also impact achievement if the students selected a balanced percentage of different types of texts.

Attendance. One factor used to evaluate instructional effectiveness is attendance, since it is assumed that without good attendance, students will have difficulty learning. Volkmann and Bye (2006) followed attendance records at one elementary school in Duluth, Minnesota for two years. That school had a volunteer reading mentoring program named the Grant School Reading Partner Program, in which community volunteers read aloud with a child in the school for one hour a week for the entire school year. It was not specifically stated that the school includes grades K-5, but there are references to third and fifth grades. The goals of the program were to increase reading achievement, improve attendance, promote self-esteem, and encourage a love of reading. The volunteers were provided with reading materials organized by grades, a monthly newsletter with suggestions, newspapers, and periodicals. A social worker at the school served as the site coordinator. Tutors received 90 minutes of training and signed commitment contracts. An ex post facto exploratory research design used attendance data from the year before the program and the year of the program. The independent variable was student participation in the program and the dependent variable was student attendance. Comparison of attendance between the two years did not reveal statistical

significance, but students were more likely to attend school on the days they met with their reading partners.

Relationships. Only one study attempted to qualitatively describe the influence of relationships on learning. Dawes (2007) documented the results of three reading mentoring pairs (two sixth-graders and one kindergartner) during a lunchtime read-aloud program, finding very different student experiences depending on the assumptions about literacy and students brought by the volunteer readers. These volunteers were not tutors; they were simply asked to read aloud with the children and engage in conversation with the children about the texts. In two of the reading dyads, students seemed to become more confident in their identities as readers and thinkers when volunteers used students' interests in choosing books to read aloud and when reading aloud became a shared activity for adult and child to enjoy together. One volunteer in Dawes' study, however, attempted to use the read aloud experience as opportunity for literal recall with no interpretive or analytical opportunities, to which the student responded unenthusiastically. This observation points to the need for authentic literacy discourse when sharing literature. Rather than viewing texts as neutral resources from which specific knowledge must be obtained and repeated by a passive recipient of knowledge, the adults who subconsciously embraced an ideological literacy model developed relationships centered in, around, and through texts as they co-constructed understanding.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

My research was primarily concerned with the sociocultural dynamics within each tutoring dyad's relationship as it developed over the course of a school year. I wanted to

explore how active agents of learning (children and adults) negotiated their reading histories as they explored texts and practiced literacy tools to co-construct new ways of thinking about and doing literacy. As indicated by previous research, the adults' background experiences and assumptions, both explicitly stated and implicitly revealed, were crucial to begin examining decision-making and types of interactions. Close examination of tutoring interactions were needed to begin understanding how children negotiated positions as readers and writers within their unique figured worlds. As seemed advisable from previous research results, tutors received explicit training with ongoing support and supervision throughout this tutoring program. Describing how tutors translated that training into practice revealed their abilities as they enabled their children to use literacy skills as tools to transform their thinking.

In order to reveal assumptions, positions, and meaning-making through the use of literacy tools, I designed a qualitative case study in which I embedded three smaller case studies, using discourse analysis to uncover nuances in tutoring dyads' long conversations. My own investment in the tutoring program will become clear. I implemented the program, trained the tutors, and provided ongoing supervision and support the rest of the year. I had a vested interest in making the program "successful," although the definition of success varies according to which literacy model is used to judge. This research design will be described in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the research methods that I used to examine my guiding questions. I provide information on the timeline of the study, access, context, and funding for the research. Following that, I describe the tutoring model used and explain the development of the program and tutor training sessions. A section describing the participants is next, followed by information explaining specifics about types of data collected. My role as a researcher is examined, as are the methods of data analysis that I used. Finally, issues of credibility and transferability are examined.

Research Methods

Being grounded in sociocultural and critical literacy theories and wanting to study dynamic tutor-student relationships over time, I designed this research as a case study using some methodologies of an ethnographic approach.

Case Study

I wanted to answer the overarching question, "What can I learn from a close study of interactions between individual tutor/student partners?" Case studies are situated within specificities and within boundaries. They describe complex, integrated systems, just as tutoring dyads' relationships became complex and integrated over time. Their patterns of behavior and particular elements unique to their partnerships became evident when studied closely over time (Stake, 2003). My purpose in investigating these developing relationships between volunteer tutors and their students was to provide insight into the issue of using volunteers as literacy tutors. Although improved reading achievement scores are most commonly used as evidence of tutor effectiveness, I argue that close analysis of tutor/student dialogue or conversation reveal depths of relational and contextual impact that cannot be discerned through test scores.

Stark and Torrance (2006) argue that the strength of a case study approach is in the depth at which inquiry can be focused, and a case study is more helpful if it can compare and contrast cases. In this research, I focused in-depth on a tutoring program in an urban school in which three students from a first-grade class worked with three volunteer literacy tutors, planning to write one case study about them. Within these restrictions, however, I soon found unique interactions with each tutoring dyad. Therefore, three specific case studies developed within the larger case study, serving to differentiate the interactions of individual dyads. By examining such detailed data, I interpreted how participants in each dyad made sense of literacy and of their participant roles in relationship with each other and with text.

The relationship between a student and an adult committed to work with the student throughout an entire school year, on a volunteer basis, develops over time within a specific context. The relationship alone can impact student achievement, whether or not specific tutoring guidelines are followed. Case study design involves interpretation of participants' actions, speech patterns, and decisions in order to describe issues, such as using volunteer literacy tutors, that are "complex, situated, problematic relationships" (Stake, 2003, p. 142).

It is this interpretation, among other factors, that can reveal the researcher's biases. I came to this research with a sociocultural, constructivist perspective, believing that knowledge is constructed within particular contexts and within relationships both present and past. A slant toward critical theory makes me look at data in terms of how persons are positioned, in this case by school literacy practices as well as assumptions brought to the experience by their tutors. These perspectives informed my decisions in research design and in determining what data was important and what was not.

Ethnographic Methods

Specifically, ethnography's purpose is to describe with rich detail the common, everyday actions and interactions of persons within a particular context as it attempts to place those specific events within deeper, more meaningful contexts (Tedlock, 2003). By providing rich description, thick interpretations can be derived which, in turn, can deepen understanding of how persons negotiate meaning within a particular chronotope of time and space (Vidach & Lyman, 2003). Being a participant observer (described in more detail later in this chapter) enabled me to be a part of the tutoring program environment

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while observing and collecting data for analysis. Tedlock (2003) described participant observers as "cross-dressers, outsiders wearing insiders' clothes while gradually acquiring the language and behaviors that go along with them" (p. 166). I was not involved with this school in any way except implementing the tutoring program and conducting my research, so although I have years of experience teaching, I would never become an integral member of this particular community. I was completely immersed in the co-construction of the larger figured world of the tutoring program within this context, which in turn, heavily influenced the construction of individual dyads' figured worlds. My involvement helped me better understand the assumptions, motivations, and behaviors of the tutors and the students (Tedlock, 2003).

In this research, I wanted to discern the perspectives of the participants through their explicit statements and a close analysis of their discussions and decision-making to reveal implicit assumptions about literacy, learning, and their students. The particular themes which give ethnography its focus are:

> …the notions of people as *meaning*-makers, around an emphasis on understanding how people *interpret* their worlds, and the need to understand the particular cultural worlds in which people live and which they both construct and utilize (Goldbart & Hustler, 2005, p. 16, italics in original).

Because I wanted to study how tutors and children negotiated meaning, how tutors interpreted their training to apply in practice, and how tutors' sociocultural backgrounds impacted their assumptions of literacy learning with the resultant impact on students' tutoring experiences, ethnographic methods were a solid fit for this research.

Mercer's (1995) insistence on continuity as a vital factor for developing discourse communities was important to the development of this research study. Patterns of behavior take time to develop within new relationships in new contexts, so I studied these dyads' developing relationships over a period of seven months, from November 2008 through May 2009. These time limits were imposed by the length of time involved to establish the program (explained later in the chapter) and the end of the school year. Using ethnographic methods of data collection, I conducted interviews, audio-taped observations, collected documents, and documented casual conversations in field notes, all of which will be described more fully later in this chapter.

Guiding Questions

I wanted to answer the overarching question, "What can I learn from a close study of interactions between individual tutor/student partners in order to provide insight into the issue of using volunteers as literacy tutors?" Close analysis of dialogue or conversation developed between volunteer tutors and children could reveal depths of relational and contextual impact (Tedlock, 2003) and combining dialogue with decision-making and self-revelation could reveal how persons negotiate meaning within unique chronotopes. In this research, I wanted to discern the perspectives of the participants through their explicit statements and a close analysis of their discussions and decision-making to reveal implicit assumptions about literacy, learning, and their students. Because I wanted to study how tutors and children negotiated meaning, how tutors interpreted their training to apply in practice, and how tutors' backgrounds impacted their

assumptions of literacy learning with the resultant impact on students' tutoring

experiences, I used the following questions to guide my study.

1.   What assumptions about literacy did literacy volunteers bring to

tutoring sessions? What were the sources for those assumptions?

How were those assumptions evidenced during interactions?

2.   What specific skills and competencies were emphasized in tutoring

sessions? Did students utilize these skills and competencies

without prompting as time progressed?

3.   How did students and volunteers position themselves and each

other in relationship with each other and with texts?

Timeline

The research design included four phases. <u>Phase One</u>, planned for two weeks at

the beginning of the school year, involved obtaining permission from the school district

and the principal, approaching the first grade teachers for referrals to the program,

recruiting the volunteer tutors, and obtaining permissions from participants (and parental

permissions), student recruitment, and initial arrangements. Phase One actually took

eight weeks (end of August through the middle of October, 2008).

<u>Phase Two</u> (planned for 3 weeks in September 2008) actually took about three

weeks (middle of October 2008 through early November 2009). This phase involved

initial data collection and analysis of initial interviews of the principal, classroom

teachers, volunteer tutors, and children. I also collected assessment results for each child and provided an orientation and two training sessions. Tutors met once with their students during this time.

Phase Three (originally planned for 25-30 weeks) took place for 23 weeks (second week of November 2008 through mid-May 2009). Phase Three involved member checks of adult interview transcripts and observations of tutoring dyads and classroom. Because of logistical issues I will discuss later, a regular schedule of observation for each dyad was not developed. I also collected student work, lesson plans, and book lists, and I incorporated peer reviews with other doctoral students and candidates in the field. At mid-year (January 2009), I prepared reports on each student's progress for parents with tutor input.

Phase Four (planned for 3 weeks in May 2009) took about three weeks (mid-May 2009 through the first week in June 2009). This phase involved final interviews of students, volunteer tutors, classroom teacher, and principal, along with a member check of adult interview transcripts. I administered end-of-year informal assessments for parent reports and recorded students' scores on end-of-year district assessments. I also incorporated peer reviews with other doctoral students and candidates.

Phase Five involved analytical reflection during the course of data collection and transcription and coding of all audiotapes and documents. This took place from October 2008 through December 2009.

Phase Six took place January through May 2010 and involved writing the case study, revising and editing.

Access

My original desire was to study literacy volunteers working with upper elementary or middle school students since my teaching experience and doctoral studies had primarily involved middle childhood literacy. Therefore, I spent a great deal of time during the summer of 2007 and continuing into the 2007-2008 school year talking with former colleagues in various school districts and approaching other school district administrators. As the 2007-2008 school year moved into early winter, it was evident that it was too late to begin study for that school year, so my focus shifted to seeking access for the 2008-2009 school year.

The issue was not access; several administrators with whom I spoke were receptive to the study and believed their school districts would provide official approval. The problem was that there were few volunteers working with older students. I found one middle school with several teachers who used volunteers, but found that the teachers sent different students each time to work with the volunteer and that the volunteers' primary responsibility was to help the students complete unfinished work, which could be any subject. Although I could have studied the literacy aspect of any content area, my focus was in studying developing relationships over time, so unless the teachers changed their approach to assign volunteers to particular students for the school year, my study would not be feasible. The teachers were not receptive to implementing that type of change in their procedures.

At this point, I realized that I would need to study younger students and started looking at these possibilities. Possibilities emerged and as I was beginning to explore

those options, I received an e-mail from a university professor who knew of my research

plan and had been contacted by a school wanting to start a literacy tutoring program with

volunteers. After speaking with this professor and the school principal in May 2008, I

chose this school for my research during the 2008-2009 school year.

Context

This study took place in an urban, public magnet school (K-8) in a large city in

the Midwest. The school draws from the local community as well as from many zip

codes within this large district. The student population is eclectic in terms of racial,

cultural, and economic makeup. The school's teaching methods include looping,

curriculum integration, family learning events, and problem-solving through cooperative

learning.

The school principal contacted a university liaison for assistance starting a

volunteer literacy tutoring program for first-graders. Due to district reconfigurations, the

school lost its reading specialists for the upcoming school year, and the principal hoped

to fill the gap with volunteers. The idea was to work with students who were identified at

the end of kindergarten as struggling; early intervention was seen as vital by the principal

in order to help these emergent readers progress.

The university liaison knew of my desire to study literacy volunteers and

contacted me. I met with the liaison and other university professors. The group decided

to offer a university remedial reading course onsite at the school in fall of 2008, at the

end of the school day. Teachers in the school could attend, if they wished, for

professional development, and the university students could conduct assessments with the identified first graders and start tutoring. As those university students tutored, the volunteers would observe and gradually take over the responsibilities by the end of the term. Concurrently, I would be training the volunteers after school (with babysitters for the tutors' children) before and during their observations. The logistics of this plan proved to be unworkable as school got underway, and by October, the principal asked me to train the volunteers myself during the school day, enabling the volunteers to start tutoring sooner than they would have otherwise. Volunteers began working with their students the first week in November, after an orientation and two training sessions.

Funding

After obtaining access and understanding the extent of the tutoring program to be developed, I applied for and was granted an Alumni Grant for Graduate Research and Scholarship through Ohio State University's Graduate School in the amount of $1125, which I estimated to be my costs for conducting the research, primarily tutoring supplies, photocopying, background checks, tutoring manuals, and student leveled books. I spent less than estimated since the school had an extensive supply of leveled books from which to choose for tutoring. I ultimately requested reimbursement for $784.84, which I received after the tutoring program ended for the school year. The funding source was not a stakeholder in the results of the research.

Tutoring Model

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I had freedom to choose the tutoring model used to develop the tutoring program, which I presented to the principal, who agreed with my choice. I assumed an ideological model of literacy, as described in Chapter 2. Within this framework, I used the prevailing scholarship describing instructional methods shown to be effective with early readers, as described in Chapter 2. Some of these instructional methods involved reading books at the child's instructional level, rereading, focused word study, writing opportunities while using invented spelling, and reading aloud with the child (Morris, 2005a). I reviewed the literature and found two related tutoring models which fit my perspectives: *Howard Street* (Morris, 2005a) and *Book Buddies* (Johnston, Invernizzi, & Juel, 1998), which is based on the *Howard Street* model.

I selected *Book Buddies* (Johnston et al, 1998), which was based on the premises that reading within meaningful contexts with social interactions between the child and a more knowledgeable "buddy" fosters literacy growth. Also, the program assumed that reading, writing, and spelling should be learned simultaneously, that they are interrelated, and that phonics instruction should be explicit and systematic. Reading instruction should be individualized in pacing as well as content, according to assessment results. These premises were compatible with what I understood about learning to read (Clay, 2001; Gunning, 2010; McKenna & Stahl, 2009; Morris, 2005a; Vygotsky, 1986), and from what I understood the school's perspective on reading instruction to be. It also represents the juncture of the two models of literacy: ideological, in terms of social relationships fostering literacy growth, and autonomous, in terms of explicit skills instruction. Another minor consideration for choosing this model was that the *Book*

Buddies training manual seemed to be more user-friendly, and I wanted a manual that was accessible for the leadership the following year. I varied a bit from the word study portion of *Book Buddies*, incorporating more detailed word study taken from *Words Their Way* (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston, 2008) since the classroom teacher used this text as the basis of their phonics/spelling instruction and this text was the basis of the word study portion of *Book Buddies*.

Based in Charlottesville, Virginia, the *Book Buddies* program uses community volunteers to tutor children in Charlottesville City Schools. Its goal is for all children to be reading independently by third grade. *Book Buddies* begins with recruitment of volunteers through media and communication with businesses, civic groups, and individuals. The volunteers attend two or three 2-hour training sessions throughout the year, using video demonstrations of actual tutoring sessions. A site coordinator (reading specialist) at each school writes lesson plans, gathers materials, and provides ongoing feedback for the tutors, supervising no more than fifteen tutors. The tutoring sessions are 45 minutes, twice a week, and the site coordinator tries to be present through part of each tutoring session. Typically, children are pulled out of the classroom for their tutoring on a schedule arranged with the teacher so the child does not miss classroom instruction. *Book Buddies* has also been used in after-school settings (Johnston et al, 1998).

I took the role of site coordinator, which included assessing the students twice a year (beginning and end of program), training and providing ongoing support for the tutors, coordinating the tutoring with the classroom teachers, writing individualized lesson plans and gathering materials, and documenting information about the program

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and student results for the teachers and principal. I wrote reports for parents with tutor input and gave them to the teachers to distribute.

Program Development

Two parents held positions of parent liaisons, and they assisted a great deal with recruitment and became tutors in the program. I sent home colorful flyers, attended a PTO meeting to explain the program, and provided information for teachers to send home with children they wanted tutored. The year-long commitment seemed a point of hesitation for many would-be volunteers, and when we only had four volunteers (all mothers of children attending the school) at the beginning of the year, I sent home another flyer in January, gaining two more volunteers at that point. One of these was a professor at a local community college with a child attending the school, and the other was a teenage boy fulfilling a community service requirement for high school by helping at the school one morning a week. I took the last child who was waiting for a tutor. Of all seven tutors, one was an African-American female, one a white teenage male, and five were white females. All (except the teenager) had college degrees, including two doctorates and one ABD. Except for the teenager and me, all had at least one child in the school and wanted to volunteer in any way possible to be active members of the school community. All tutors, regardless of when they started, finished the year, although one had a difficult time with steady attendance. Of these participants, six volunteers (including me) and five children's parents agreed to participate in the study; however, the

particular matching only provided four pairs of participants from whom I could collect data. Three dyads are included in this study, which will be explained later.

Tutoring lessons, following the *Book Buddies* model (Johnston et al, 1998) were composed of reading, writing, and phonics instruction. Lessons always incorporated rereading familiar texts as well as reading a new text to build fluency, decoding skills, and comprehension. Each lesson included explicit, systematic instruction in letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns, and each lesson plan included a writing prompt, usually in response to the new text. Leveled texts were used from the well-stocked book room in the school, providing appropriate material at individual instructional levels as determined by running records and other assessments.

I held an orientation for the four initial volunteers (three of whom participated in this study) on October 23, 2008, during which I discussed the context for starting this program, time requirements, basic responsibilities, components of tutoring sessions, and my responsibilities for the program. I also explained my research and distributed the consent forms. The training itself consisted of three sessions, along with ongoing supervision and opportunities for discussion and feedback. The tutoring model guidelines gave some general outlines for tutor training, and I supplemented with some materials I had developed while teaching college undergraduates in a phonics/word study course.

Tutor Training #1

The first training session took place on October 28, 2008, with all four volunteers attending for just over one hour at the end of the school day. As an introduction, I read aloud *Mrs. Spitzer's Garden* (Pattou, 2001), and gave each volunteer a planting pot with soil and a packet of seeds, likening the tutoring experience to planting seeds, watering, fertilizing, and watching the plants grow (watching beginning readers grow in their abilities).

I then moved to general tutoring tips: "getting to know you" strategies, how to read aloud and the purposes of read-alouds, the meaning of independent reading, management of the writing portion of the lesson, the meaning of "phonics," and introductions for parents. I then taught about reading cueing systems (graphophonic, syntactical, and semantic), and the volunteers practiced recognizing which cues they used while reading several unfamiliar passages. I discussed prompts to use (Does that look right? Does that sound right? Does that make sense?), and we talked about the phrase, "Get your mouth ready" (Clay, 2001; Johnston et al, 1998).

Read-aloud books were the main topic for this training since sharing a read-aloud early in the tutoring experience could serve to ease the tutor and the child into their new relationship, along with the literacy benefits. I taught the tutors about using read-alouds to model fluency, which I defined as automaticity, including rate, smoothness, intonation, phrasing, and stress. We discussed ways to use read-alouds, including using poetry and nursery rhymes, rereading familiar texts, echo/choral reading, reader's theater, etc. I emphasized that rate was not a crucial component at this stage of reading, that smoothness, phrasing, and intonation were more important, but that the emphasis might

be different for each child. We also talked about metacognitive strategies, such as what types of topics could be useful to discuss through think-alouds (i.e., plot, characterization, illustrations, prediction, emotions) and how think-alouds model active engagement with text (Gunning, 2010; Morris, 2005a).

I then explained the difference between independent (95% or higher accuracy), instructional (90-94% accuracy), and frustration (below 90% accuracy) levels of reading material (Clay, 2002). We finished by talking about the purposes of discussions before, during, and after reading. Talking before reading sets the purpose for reading and activates schema; I taught them how to do a book walk to introduce the text (read title, look at pictures, predict, preview vocabulary). Discussions during reading promote active engagement with the text and improve comprehension. That can include verifying or making adjustments to predictions, making connections (text to self, text to text, text to world), inferring, visualizing, and determining the author's purpose. After reading, I encouraged the tutors to find ways to talk as naturally as possible about the book, involving discussion or reflection. I said that this could also include art and drama (although time constraints prohibited that), a summary sentence, or helping the child reflect on his/her own reading and thinking processes (Clay, 2001, 2002; Dahl, Scharer, Lawson, & Grogan, 2001; Gunning, 2010; Johnston et al, 1998).

Tutor Training #2

The second training took place on October 30, 2008, for about one hour in the morning. The purpose of this training session was two-fold: to teach tutors how to complete a running record (without a miscue analysis) and to practice using word sorts

for phonics instruction. I had taken running records for years and considered them quite simple to do, as long as the miscue analysis would be completed by the site coordinator (me). However, I quickly discovered that it was overwhelming for the volunteers. They did not seem interested in taking any more time to practice and expressed their hesitation in administering running records. I decided that I would be solely responsible for completing running records for assessment purposes. This was a misjudgment on my part; I think I was influenced by the fact that these volunteers were well-educated and I did not remember how difficult a running record could appear to a novice. This aspect of the second training, which was not a suggestion from the *Book Buddies* model but all my own idea, was a definite failure. However, the second part of this training session was more successful. We conducted open and closed word sorts, discussing the purposes of using word sorts rather than more traditional spelling strategies (Bear et al, 2008). The volunteers enjoyed this and immediately saw benefits in using manipulatives with the children while exploring letter-sound relationships and using inductive reasoning.

Tutor Training #3

For the third training session (December 4, 2008, one hour in the morning), I taught the tutors the basics of developmental spelling stages, paying particular attention to the Letter Name stage since all their students were working within that stage (Bear et al, 2008). We reviewed and discussed teaching strategies to use before and during reading. I assigned them homework at the end of this session – to watch a 44-minute video, *Emergent Reader – Day Two: A Demonstration of Book Buddies in Action* (Invernizzi & Juel, 1995). This video showed a complete volunteer tutoring lesson with

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each phase explained briefly. The child and tutor were part of the Charlottesville *Book Buddies* program and although the session went well, it was not perfect – a fact that each tutor appreciated, saying it helped them realize that they were "real people." The tutors watched the video at home, handing it off to each other until all had viewed it. I talked with each tutor after she finished with the video to answer any questions. They had few questions, but each one mentioned how much more comfortable they felt about tutoring after watching it. Charlene commented that her family expressed amazement that she was watching something so "dry" and did not linger to watch it with her (field notes, 12.11.08). Julie mentioned that she could now visualize how tutoring should go and felt "relieved" to know that even experienced tutors had moments when things did not go well with tutoring, as evidenced on the tape when the tutor had to remind the student not to get an "attitude" about her work (field notes, 1.5.09). These tutoring sessions reflect the relationship between the ideological and autonomous models of literacy within the figured world of tutoring which we were building. Although I was grounded in the ideological model which indicates that social relationships are key to fostering literacy growth over time (forming long conversations), I incorporated the autonomous aspect of separating reading into subskills for the purpose of instruction. At the same time, though, my leaning toward the ideological model was apparent as I reminded tutors that those skills are intermeshed in the reading process.

Participants

Six tutors and five students' parents returned permission slips, making four dyads able to be studied. One dyad included the boy I started tutoring in January. Because of a combination of unusual circumstances, I have chosen to save data on our particular situation for later analysis. The child evidenced symptoms of a psychological issue, and I experienced a stressful life event during that time which made that relationship a separate type of study.

Three dyads, therefore, are included in this study. The tutors were all female Caucasians with children attending the school. Two of the three had older children at the school; one had a kindergartner in the same classroom as her first-grade student. (The class was K-1.) All three volunteered in other capacities besides this tutoring program. The tutors all had college degrees – one in English and two in education – and one of those was a doctorate in education. None had teaching experience, although both mothers of older children had tutored for several years in the school. One of the experienced tutors also gave private piano lessons in her home and since she was the one with the doctorate, she sometimes supervised student teachers in their field placements as an adjunct for a local university. The English major worked in business prior to being laid off and deciding to spend some time as a stay-at-home mom.

The three students in this study were members of the same classroom and had been identified by the teacher as reading below grade level based on their standardized scores and teacher assessment at the end of kindergarten and beginning of first grade. The students included one male Caucasian, one male African-American, and one female African-American. Of the seven students identified for tutoring in this program from two

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classrooms, four were African-American and three were Caucasian; four were male and three were female.

Adults

Principal Ann was, as her pseudonym implies, the school principal. She believed that literacy instruction incorporating explicit phonics and word study instruction while concurrently immersing students in rich literature events was most beneficial for students. The biggest hindrance to implementing the best literacy instruction was the lack of resources, specifically personnel, quality materials, and enough training opportunities for teachers. Principal Ann identified her goals for this tutoring program:

> I'm looking for, obviously, student achievement, um, to increase. ===I think that comes through a complex, um, number of factors, um, including the relationship with the tutor. And I think that's where the motivation and the love of learning and, um, that safety net, that it's ok for me to make a mistake because there's someone right here with me who's going to help move me to the next, to the next level. Um, hopefully, we've caught these little ones early enough that they haven't experienced that failure, um, that so often causes kids to shut down. So, my, my main motivation is early intervention. … And then for the, you know, I get something out of the tutor's relationship with this child as well, which is in many ways, um, a more, um, more thorough understanding of what happens in school every day. And how important it is to have a community around the school, more people who understand how complex that task of teaching a child how to read, um, really is, and the more that those folks go out and talk about that

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experience in their greater community, the more support I believe we'll have for,

for, um, for our schooling. So, there are benefits and goals on a number of levels

(initial interview, 11.25.08).

Principal Ann appreciated the tutoring model's training and ongoing support system, and

she defined literacy as communication, of being able to navigate to find and use literacy

resources to meet needs.

Miss May was the K-1 teacher in whose classroom all three of the students

participated. She echoed Principal Ann's belief about literacy learning occurring within a

rich environment of literature events while still focusing on specific phonics, reading, and

writing skills. Miss May mentioned multiple literacies (visual, oral, speaking, and

written) and the fact that her reading groups were fluid because they were based on

individual needs and children could move through reading groups in different

combinations and at different paces. The biggest hindrance to effective literacy

instruction was the number of mandated assessments which took a great deal of time.

Miss May indicated that results from the standardized tests were so delayed that they

were only useful for the next year's teacher. The overuse of assessments denaturalized

reading and created artificial goals. Miss May responded to the question of why she

wanted to use literacy volunteer tutors:

Why? Because there's one of me (laughter) and unfortunately at this age group,

and I guess it would be with any age group, there's such a wide variety of the

children's developmental levels with literacy, is so wide and varied that it's hard

for me to meet one-on-one with the ones that I might need to (initial interview,

12.8.08).

She also thought it was important for children to see a wider community of readers represented by their tutors.

> Also, that I want the children also to see other people reading; it's not just me teaching them, and it's not just them learning, you know, we're all working together as a community, and it's important to have, you know, different people in the classroom to know that it's a community thing, and it's something that everyone does. So I think that's important (initial interview, 12.8.08)

Miss May said she would mark progress through the mandated assessments, spelling in their writing, and observations during guided reading groups. She also discussed with each child how they felt about reading and learning, if they thought they were achieving their goals.

Charlene was one of the parent liaisons at the school. Her two sons were in fifth and eighth grades, and she had volunteered in the school for several years. She had not taught professionally, but she earned a doctorate in education. Her older son had a learning disability and had difficulty learning to read. Charlene seemed self-confident and appreciated not having to plan the lessons.

Ellie was the other parent liaison at the school. She had a daughter in sixth grade and a son in eighth grade and had been volunteering for several years at the school. Although she had a bachelor's in education, she had never taught professionally. Ellie seemed self-assured but still wanted guidance, especially since the student to whom she

was assigned was described as having negative and sometimes volatile reactions in the classroom, which will be discussed further.

Carol had one son who had entered kindergarten this year in the same K-1 class as the student she was assigned. Carol held a bachelor's in English and had worked in business. After being laid off, she decided to take some time to volunteer in the classroom where she heard about the tutoring program and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to learn how to teach reading so she could help her son. She was the least experienced, having never formally worked with a child on academics before this, and perhaps because of this lack of experience, she was also the least confident in her abilities. Carol was very concerned about the proper ways to do things during tutoring sessions and became concerned when her student did not reach the district's benchmarks.

Students

Keisha, the child assigned to Charlene, was described by her teacher as "substantially below grade level" because she was reading on a Level B at the beginning of first grade, even though she had been tutored by a reading specialist in kindergarten. The district benchmark was a Level E by the October assessment in first grade. Miss May indicated that Keisha had difficulty putting her thoughts onto paper in a way that made sense.

> …she tries hard with her writing and she loves to write, but it, her writing doesn't
>
> make sense; she'll, she'll put words that she knows how to spell in place for
>
> words, um, and it doesn't, there's no sort of, she's just writing what she knows
>
> how to spell and not, it's not the words that she's wanting to put down. And

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she'll reread the words as what she wants to say most of the time; sometimes

she'll stop and look and can say, oh yes, it's not, you know, *I am going to the, to*

the school; she'll say, *I'm with the going school*. And a lot of times she'll reread

the words as her thoughts but she won't read them with what she's written (initial

interview, 12.8.08).

As Charlene worked with Keisha, she learned that Keisha was very quiet. She had

trouble making sense in her writing, but by having Keisha verbalize her thoughts first and

discussing how that could be worded before writing, she improved. Reading continued to

be difficult for Keisha, though.

Miss May described Joe as enjoying learning. His symptoms of ADHD,

however, made it difficult for him to learn in large group instruction, so she hoped one-

to-one tutoring would foster Joe's skills and help his self-confidence.

He has ADHD, um, so when we're having literacy time in a large group it's very

difficult for him to get the information he needs for learning and growing. So

having that one-on-one time is very beneficial for him to help strengthen the skills

he is getting, make him feel confident; again he's about grade level, but there's a

lot he misses during our conversations. Also to help him feel secure about, um,

being independent, he um, it's very difficult for him, I think, to be independent; I

think a lot is done for him and to build his confidence up to be independent in

particularly writing and reading and not to guess, but to know and to feel

comfortable in saying what he knows (initial interview, 12.8.08).

As Ellie worked with Joe, she found that his lack of confidence was, indeed, Joe's biggest

hurdle. He gave up quickly if he did not recognize a word immediately, and he became

frustrated with himself for not knowing the word. By the end of the year, Joe appeared to

have grown a great deal in his self-confidence and was using strategies for deciphering

unknown words. He seemed to be more patient with himself, allowing himself time to

decode and comprehend. He clearly enjoyed reading and writing. Joe made good

progress with his instructional reading level and wrote well.

Jason, who worked with Carol, was introduced by Miss May as being the subject

of an upcoming intervention meeting.

> Um, [Jason] was, actually, I have an IEP meeting for [Jason] coming up. He was
>
> put on the- or an IAT meeting – he was put on the list last year, um, because he
>
> was behind grade level substantially in reading and writing. Right now, he's
>
> reading just at grade level; his writing is behind grade level. Um, he's come a
>
> long way from what Mom says from last year and he's feeling more confident in
>
> this environment. Last year he was in a larger classroom environment that I think
>
> just wasn't the right fit for him, um, but he is feeling more confident; he's writing
>
> more and more, um, common word wall words though are often misspelled, um,
>
> and then also I notice in reading that he'll read a word on one page and then on
>
> the next page he'll read that same word differently (initial interview, 12.8.08).

As Carol worked with Jason, she found that letter-sound relationships seemed to escape

his understanding or could not be retained. With my help, she used other strategies

(semantic and syntactic cues, picture cues, etc.) along with reviewing letter-sound

relationships with close observations of lip, tongue, and teeth placements. These strategies helped somewhat, but Jason did not progress far with his instructional reading level. At the end of the year, Miss May was waiting to hear from the parent the results of an auditory processing assessment performed at a local children's hospital.

Data Collection

The data collected for this study included interviews, tutoring observations, classroom observations, assessments, field notes, and document collection. Each type of data is described in this section and a chart is included at the end of this section which summarizes the information.

Interviews

Because I wanted to understand tutors' literacy backgrounds and to begin to understand some of their assumptions concerning literacy learning, I chose to interview the volunteer tutors at the beginning and end of the program. I also conducted initial and final interviews with the principal, classroom teacher, and children. The principal's perspective on teaching and learning literacy was important to understand the context in which the tutoring was taking place, and the classroom teacher's perspective allowed a glimpse of the paradigm underlying classroom instruction in literacy that the children were experiencing. I wanted to provide a way for the students' voices to be an important part of this research, so I asked them questions about their background and how they felt about reading.

Interviews can be fraught with issues of power and the fear of words being twisted (Barbour & Schostak, 2005). Because I was coming from an informed perspective (from the literature), I had an idea of some topics I wanted to address, but it was imperative that the participants had opportunity to "just talk" about experiences, which can come more freely with a less rigid interview structure. Each interview was, therefore, semi-structured; I had guiding questions, but the conversations sometimes took different turns. Initial adult interviews were designed to gain an understanding of their assumptions about literacy learning and teaching, their goals for tutoring, and their first impressions of the children. Final adult interviews were designed to gain understanding of how they perceived their goals to be met or not met, how they perceived their students, and how their assumptions had been validated or challenged. Each interview was transcribed and the adults were asked to review their transcripts and provide feedback to me if they wanted to clarify or extend the conversation. No one had comments to add after reading the transcripts except how strange conversation seemed when transcribed.

Initial and final student interviews were centered on how they perceived themselves as readers and writers, their backgrounds in literacy, and how much they enjoyed literacy. The final interview included what they thought about the tutoring experience. I inadvertently missed interviewing Keisha at the beginning of the year and did not realize the error until later in the year. I included many of the initial interview foci in her end-of-year interview. The list of interviewees and dates are included in the table (Table 3.1) at the end of this section, and the interview protocols are in Appendices A-H.

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Observations of Tutoring Sessions

Observation of tutoring sessions was considered necessary in the model I was using (Johnston et al, 1998), and because I was attempting to discern participants' tutoring relationships, it was necessary to observe and record dialogue, nonverbal signals, contexts, and decisions made during tutoring sessions. Because I often "floated" through tutoring sessions, staying for ten minutes or so, and because I sometimes stayed throughout the entire sessions, I considered myself a participant observer. I was developing relationships with the tutors through our time together in training sessions and through our frequent discussions. The children were accustomed to me stopping in and did not usually seem distracted by my presence. The relationships I developed with the children were friendly, but not especially close since they did not work directly with me or see me every day. My ongoing presence affected how tutors tutored and even, perhaps, how they interacted with their students. I had a vested interest in seeing that tutoring reflected training, and that would have established me as an authoritative voice that tutors needed to consider, along with their own chorus of voices, assumptions, and the long conversations developing within their dyads.

I observed each tutor a different number of times throughout the school year, depending on several factors. Carol asked me to observe her often since she was not confident that she was meeting Jason's needs, and I observed Ellie more times than some of the others since Joe was sometimes demanding. Charlene was self-confident and developed such a strong working relationship with Keisha that it was not necessary to observe their interactions as often. There were four tutors working at the same time each

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day, so the most I could have observed each one was biweekly, but because of other factors such as those described above, I was not able to observe entire tutoring sessions on as a regular schedule. When I was not able to be present through the entire session, I did not record that observation because I wanted complete data of entire working sessions from beginning to end. The dates listed in Table 3.1 which were not audiotaped are dates that I observed for at least 20 minutes of the 30-minute session.

The tutors were absent only occasionally; children were also absent occasionally. At times special events such as standardized testing or snow days cut into tutoring times, preventing dyads from meeting. The end result was that Carol and Jason met 34 times. I formally observed them eight times and audiotaped seven of those sessions. Charlene and Keisha met 37 times; I formally observed them six times, audiotaping three of those times. Ellie and Joe met 30 times, and I observed them seven times, audiotaping four sessions. All audiotapes were transcribed.

We had 23 weeks available to us once we started the tutoring. In an ideal world, that provided 46 opportunities for tutoring, and research shows that receiving at least 40 tutoring sessions is optimal (Invernizzi et al, 1997). Due to holidays, snow days, special school events, and absences, the three children in this study received 30 to 37 sessions of tutoring. This fact will be revisited later in this document.

With this wealth of data, all of which was transcribed, analyzed, and coded, I decided to focus on three transcripts per dyad taped at approximately the beginning, middle, and end of the program. This would allow me to see how relationships and tutoring strategies changed over time. I referenced my field notes and read through the

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other transcripts to see if patterns continued through other observed sessions, whether audiotaped or not. I talked informally with each tutor many times throughout the year at school, discussing my thoughts with each of them and receiving input regarding their impressions of tutoring sessions. Specific observation dates are included in Table 3.1 at the end of this section.

Classroom Observations

Since I wanted to understand the school context in which the students were immersed, it seemed logical to observe Miss May's classroom literacy instruction. Ethnographic methods are designed to study human relationships, and appropriate data include interviews, observations, and documents (Chatterji, 2002). I observed the classroom approximately half a day for four days. I audiotaped all these observations and found that student voices were undecipherable within that large classroom, particularly when there was a lot of activity. However, the teacher's voice was clear, so I was able to focus on how she used literacy within the classroom and how she provided literacy instruction. My field notes included levels and types of participation, distractions, points of confusion, and other details not able to be captured in an audio-recording. Each classroom observation was transcribed. Specific dates and times of day are recorded in Table 3.1.

Assessments

This school district mandated the use of DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) as a diagnostic assessment tool. The subtests which were administered at the beginning of the first grade year were Text Reading and

Comprehension (TRC), Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), and Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF). At the end of the year, the same subtests were administered with the exception of Letter Naming Fluency (LNF). I collected scores from the beginning and end of the year for the three children involved in this study, doing this only because the children would be judged as successful or unsuccessful readers by the district and school based on these scores. Those results will be listed and discussed in Chapter 4.

I chose to administer informal assessments in addition to recording DIBELS based on Clay's (2001) argument that standardized test scores should always be supplemented by systematic observations in order to better understand how students process print. I did not assess instructional reading levels at the beginning of the year with running records because the classroom teacher verified the reading levels based on her work with the children in guided reading groups. I used particular parts of Clay's (2002) Observation Survey: Letter Identification, Ohio Word Test, and Concepts About Print. In addition, I administered the Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation (Yopp, 1995), and the Primary Spelling Inventory from *Words Their Way* (Bear et al, 2008). At the end of the year, I administered the same assessments. I chose these particular assessments because I thought they would reveal crucial aspects of the children's reading and spelling understandings without over-testing them. Most of the assessments were relatively short, and I administered the spelling inventory to all four children at once. The spelling inventory was used by the classroom teacher, so it served to provide Miss May her beginning-of-year data in spelling for these four children.

Throughout the year, I kept anecdotal records and took notes for miscue analyses during observations. The tutors gave written feedback on their lesson plans at the end of each session and I discussed their students' progress frequently with them. Having data from multiple sources served to triangulate results, which serves to clarify meaning and verify interpretation (Stake, 2003).

Field Notes

I carried a notebook when I went to the school to document observations, conversations, reflections, questions, etc. During observations, I recorded such things as nonverbal signals, verbal intonations, reflections, and points I wanted to discuss with the tutor. Classroom observations required good note-taking since the tape recorder only picked up the teacher's voice with a lot of background noise. I was able to describe movement, attitudinal posturing, environment details, distractions, student actions and reactions. These notes helped me remember observations more vividly when reviewing, analyzing, and coding transcripts. The field journal provided space for reflection, analytical memos, theoretical wrestling, to-do reminders, and insights (Charmaz, 2003).

Document Collection

I collected many documents in order to document program implementation. These included orientation and training agendas, lesson plans for each child with written feedback from the tutors, pre- and post-assessments, mid-year and final reports to parents, and student writings. I also kept notes from planning meetings (with university personnel and the principal during early planning stages and with principal and staff during later planning stages) and e-mail correspondences with all involved in the program

DATA COLLECTION			
Interviews	**Participants**	**Initial**	**Final**
	Principal Ann	11.25.08	5.20.09
	Miss May	12.8.08	5.26.09
	Charlene	11.13.08	5.18.09
	Ellie	11.4.08	5.18.09
	Carol	11.20.08	5.20.09
	Joe	12.15.08	6.2.09
	Jason	1.30.09	6.2.09
	Keisha	–	6.2.09
Observations	**Participants**	**Dates (* = audiotaped)**	
	Charlene & Keisha	11.20.08 12.4.08* 1.12.09* 2.9.09 3.23.09* 4.23.09	
	Ellie & Joe	11.10.08 11.24.08* 12.16.08* 1.22.09 2.5.09 3.16.09* 5.4.09*	
	Carol & Jason	12.8.08* 1.5.09* 1.26.09* 2.26.09 3.9.09* 3.30.09* 4.27.09* 5.7.09*	
	Miss May's K-1	11.15.08 (a.m.)* 1.15.09 (a.m.)* 5.4.09 (a.m. & p.m.)* 5.6.09 (p.m.)*	
Assessments	**Participants**	**Initial**	**Final**
	Jason	11.3.08	6.1.09
	Joe	11.3.08	5.26.09
	Keisha	11.3.08	6.1.09
Documents	Lesson Plans	Ellie – 30 from 11.6.08 through 5.4.09	
		Charlene – 37 from 11.6.08 through 5.6.09	
		Carol – 34 from 11.10.08 through 5.20.09	
	Training Agendas		
	Recruitment Flyers	General information and volunteer recruitment	
	E-Mails		
	Parent Reports	Mid-year and year-end	
	Information Letters	Parents of children being asked to participate	
	Consent Forms	Adults and students	
	Student Writings		
	Planning Meeting Notes	5.12.08, 5.14.08, 5.21.08, 5.28.08, 6.4.08, 6.18.08, 9.8.08, 9.16.08, 9.23.08, 10.1.08, 10.21.08	
	Field Notes		

Table 3.1: Data Collection

from conception to completion. Consent forms from all participants, recruitment flyers, and information letters were saved, as well.

Role of the Researcher

Goldbart and Hustler (2005) describe immersion into the culture as a hallmark of ethnography since only when a researcher becomes closely involved can she discern the assumptions of participants and determine how they construct meaning in those circumstances. I assumed the role of a participant observer. I developed the program, trained the tutors, and provided ongoing support through observations and verbal and written feedback, and tutored a child myself. I assessed each student at the beginning of their involvement in the program, and I was present most tutoring days. When I sat in on a tutoring session, I talked with both child and tutor, mostly chatting or inserting encouraging comments. I always had my field journal to take notes during and after the session. Primarily, I tried to stay out of the tutor's way, allowing her to progress as she saw fit unless I noticed something was confusing the child or if the tutor directly asked for guidance or clarification. The tutors sometimes drew me into the session by commenting on the child's abilities or growth in some regard, allowing me the opportunity to praise and encourage the child. Occasionally I spontaneously answered a child's question or inserted a comment, forgetting my intention to refrain from interfering with instruction and switching inadvertently and temporarily to a more participatory role. The children knew I was responsible for organizing the lessons and gathering materials, and they referred to me as "in charge" or "the boss." I resisted that, explaining that we all

worked together to help as many students as possible and that my job was to organize and

to help the tutors with anything they needed. I wanted to position myself as simply

helping the tutors rather than being in charge of them. That would position the tutors in

what seemed to me a more secure place of capable volunteers.

Data Analysis

The data corpus consisted of interviews, observations, conversations, and

document collection. Material data were stored in a locked file cabinet in my home.

Electronic data were stored on my password-protected computer and back-up hard drive.

Having a variety of data sources served to triangulate the results (Stark & Torrance,

2005). I analyzed the data by using a basic grounded theory approach, a microanalysis,

looking through all the data line by line while I analyzed what was happening (Corbin &

Holt, 2005). By studying each line of transcript, I was able to look back and forth

between speakers, analyzing the discourses as I searched for evidence for each research

question. I transcribed and systematically coded the data, looking for properties of

particular interactions. Specifically, I studied things like word choices, tones of voices

(from field notes), repetitive phrases, and flow (if a question or comment was picked up

by the other participant or ignored). This process of coding and recoding is common in

qualitative research; data are coded once but then continuously re-interpreted as more

data is collected and/or deeper analyses occur. Transcripts and other data are analyzed to

seek emerging patterns and initial categories, but the same data is revisited across other

issues or questions (Erikson, 1986; Stake, 2003).

Initially, I simply noted what was happening, such as Cazden's (2001) initiation-response-evaluation pattern or frequent reminders of having seen this word before. Although this initial coding familiarized me with the data, it did not further my understanding of the guiding questions in a way that would lead to analytical descriptions.

Becoming more systematic, I focused first on the only literal aspect of my questions, the first part of the second question, "What specific skills and competencies were emphasized in tutoring sessions?" I pinpointed examples to reanalyze to discover categories suitable for discussion. I then chose another question to guide me through another microanalysis, finding excerpts which exemplified aspects of that question. By continuing in this manner, I began to find categories that could sometimes continue, sometimes being rearranged or absorbed into larger categories (Erikson, 1986). For example, for the second research question, I had at first categorized examples of tutors helping students with aspects of fluency under decoding. Eventually, I separated them into their own category. Also, I originally pulled examples of tutors helping students stay focused during tutoring sessions, but later eliminated these examples from inclusion as skills and competencies. Although staying focused is important for learning, it was more managerial than instructional in the way that the tutors approached it. Eventually, I was able to discern thematic patterns of behaviors and relationships within specific and broader contexts.

Data Analysis for Question #1

My first research question was: What assumptions about literacy did literacy

volunteers bring to tutoring sessions? What were the sources for those assumptions?

How were those assumptions evidenced during interactions?

In order to examine prior assumptions and the sources of those assumptions for

the volunteer tutors, I relied heavily on initial and final interview transcripts (protocols in

Appendices A-H) and my field notes. The volunteers openly expressed thoughts and

ideas about literacy learning, their expectations of the tutoring experience, and their goals

for their students. Most of them remembered little about their own early reading

experiences, but they all were deeply involved in their own children's early reading. As I

began coding, I found myself at a loss as to how to label the many examples I found.

Only by physically moving the examples next to each other, searching for similarities and

differences, could I begin to see patterns emerge of specific qualities which, with more

rearranging and reflection, emerged into themes. While reading and rereading these

transcripts, I coded for overarching themes in terms of perceptions revealed during

discussions of different types of experiences. I was able to understand more completely

how official discourses from school and the district combined with information from

media sources and word-of-mouth from friends, coworkers, and family members to

create particular assumptions about how best to teach and learn literacy and how to set

goals for their students.

I then revisited the transcripts from the tutoring observations for each tutor with

the themes in mind from the interviews, checking and cross-checking for evidence of

these themes, counter-evidence, or evidence of a new theme that had not emerged from the interview data or my field notes from the observations. In this way, I was able to validate my interpretations of the interview data.

Data Analysis for Question #2

My second research question was: What specific skills and competencies were emphasized in tutoring sessions? Did students utilize these skills and competencies without prompting as time progressed?

To analyze this question, I reviewed my training agendas and transcripts from tutoring sessions, coding for the foci of each segment. I was able to group these codes into categories, adjusting as I revisited the data each time, finding categories that were too broad or too narrow and defining subcategories. One category (helping the student stay focused) was deleted from the analysis since it was not a literacy skill, but an overall learning or life skill that was sometimes a need for tutors to emphasize, but even so, they did so more in terms of management during tutoring rather than as a skill. The data I had from this category seemed inconsequential within the broader picture of tutoring, and the data did not seem to add to my understanding of this question.

When analyzing the second part of this question, I revisited the transcripts, reviewing the examples of various skills and competencies I had collected and going through each dyad's transcripts at one sitting so as to get a picture of any change over time. I also reviewed field notes and final interview transcripts for this question. I found it difficult to pinpoint specific moments of change because the tutors all seemed to step in quickly if the children hesitated, partly because of their limited time with their student

and partly because they believed they should provide strong assistance. I answered this question by reviewing all the data sources described and taking a more general perspective.

Data Analysis for Question #3

My third research question was: How did students and volunteers position themselves and each other in relationship with each other and with texts? This question was answered through multiple reviews of observation transcripts and field notes. I coded examples of resistance, labeling, declarations, hesitation, and encouragement. In so doing, I was able to group examples within each dyad's transcripts according to themes, finding some overlap in themes between dyads, but also interesting differences.

I was heavily influenced in my analysis of this data by authors such as Anyon (1980), Aukerman (2007), Luke (1995), and Street (1995) who trouble how we position ourselves and students in educational settings. These influences biased my thinking toward looking for data that would reveal such themes as who seemed to "own" knowledge and whether or not students were encouraged to engage in higher-level reasoning. As I started coding, however, my approach to this question became more open, less theory-sensitive, as I found patterns and themes that I had not anticipated.

Throughout analysis of all three questions, I wanted patterns and themes to emerge from the data, as much as possible, rather than forcing data into preconstructed frameworks.

Summary of Data Analysis

The strength of this type of grounded theory approach was that it allowed patterns to emerge from the data, forming a more grounded perspective of how people made sense within particular events and how they negotiated relationships over time. As further data was gathered, greater depth of understanding and more precise descriptions could occur. There was a constant comparison of data to verify whether or not categories, themes, or theories needed revision based on what the data revealed (Corbin & Holt, 2005). I did not have preconceived codes in mind when I started coding, except for Question 3, as explained.

The weakness of this approach is the acknowledgement from a constructionist perspective that multiple realities or interpretations are present in any data corpus. Thus, another analyst may interpret my data differently. To counteract this weakness, I have described my analyses as richly and transparently as possible so others can follow my logic (Corbin & Holt, 2005; Stark & Torrance, 2005).

Credibility & Transferability

According to Janesick (2003), validity in qualitative research involves rich description and explanation, and credible explanations (if the explanations fit the descriptions). Therefore, my efforts at rigorous qualitative research have involved carefully documenting from a variety of sources, using member checks, peer review, keeping an audit trail, writing thick descriptions, and making sure my explanations are clearly based on the data. These approaches are described below.

Triangulation

I collected data from a variety of sources. Classroom observations and tutoring session observations were made throughout the year, audiotaped and transcribed. Individual interviews of the principal, classroom teacher, volunteer tutors, and students were conducted at the beginning and end of the study, audiotaped and transcribed. Documents were collected, including lesson plans, student writings, assessment results, and district benchmark information, along with training materials and communications. I also kept a field note journal, recording casual conversations, insights, observation notes on nonverbal signals, etc. I coded all data in a way that served as a strong audit trail.

> Triangulation is a:
>
> process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But, acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen. (Stake, 2003, p. 148)

One example of how triangulation impacted description occurred while rereading my field notes from tutoring observations. I came across notes from a conversation I had with Carol after I observed one of her tutoring sessions. She indicated a concern that she was "too boring." She listened to other tutors talk about things they do with their students and somehow had the impression that she was "too low-key." I assured her that Jason seemed relaxed and comfortable with her, that he was actively engaged with their work together, that I saw no signs of boredom at all, and that we all have different

personalities and ways of doing things (field notes 12.8.08). I had described Carol as not

confident in her skills based on other data, and I had forgotten about this exchange until

rereading. This added another source of information to back up my claim that Carol was

not confident.

Member Checks

I shared each interview transcript with participants, asking them to further

describe anything they thought might be unclear or misleading. I also talked frequently

with the tutors, requesting input concerning their perceptions of training material,

teaching methods, student achievement, etc. In those conversations, I shared my own

impressions and they were free to disagree or add clarification, which they did upon

occasion. I did not change the original transcripts, but these casual conversations were

documented in my field note journal as soon as possible after the exchange.

Peer Review

I met with two peer groups during the course of this research. One group was

composed of one doctoral student and two doctoral candidates; the other group consisted

of two doctoral students and one recently graduated doctorate. They reviewed some of

my material, discussed insights, questioned, and made suggestions. The first group met

three times before breaking up. The second group has met regularly for a few years now,

approximately every other month.

Transferability

Naturally, I cannot presume to generalize from the uniqueness of this case study

to a larger population (Janesick, 2003). However, because what I describe with thick

detail is human relationships within this particular context, readers may glean insight into elements that could transfer into other situations. Naturalistic generalizations are possible from thick descriptions of case studies (Stake, 2003). Particular aspects of how these six persons acted with each other within this context may speak to other situations, such as a teacher-student relationship or a student-volunteer read-aloud program in a middle school.

This study provides an in-depth investigation of long-term dynamics within three volunteer tutoring dyads in terms of how volunteers applied knowledge to practice, how their prior assumptions affected tutoring relationships, and how students and adults negotiated positions within each relationship. It speaks to the potential benefits of using volunteer tutors as well as to potential pitfalls. The pitfalls caused by unanticipated assumptions can be better understood and perhaps, in some cases, addressed in future tutor training sessions.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to deepen understanding of the complexities of relationships built between volunteer literacy tutors and their first-grade students as they negotiated text. The complexities examined included how tutors interpreted their training and applied it in tutoring sessions, how the volunteers' assumptions impacted the students' tutoring experiences, and how students and adults positioned themselves and each other in relationship with literacy. In this chapter, I have presented the research methods used to collect and analyze the data for this study, as well as information

concerning my timeline, access, context, funding, the tutoring model, implementation of the program, research participants, my participant observer role, and types of data collected. Embedded within all of this was the purpose to examine complex volunteer tutoring dyad relationships and how those relationships were negotiated over time.

Chapter 4

Findings of the Study: Research Question 1

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to deepen understanding of the complexities of relationships built between volunteer literacy tutors and their first-grade students as they negotiated text. Sociocultural theories involving *dialogism* and *figured worlds* became foundational to my understanding of these relationships. Tutoring sessions were clearly a contact zone where multiple voices entered current chronotopes in which participants co-constructed meaning. Those voices included authoritative voices from various sources and the participants' own internally persuasive voices, influenced by prior assumptions and experiences. Evidence of tension between an ideological perspective of literacy and an autonomous perspective existed in tutors' words and actions from the beginning. Students and volunteers co-constructed meaning, negotiating how they would "do" literacy together, assigning meaning to artifacts and negotiating their respective positions within the relationship. These ways of thinking about and doing literacy formed the basis of unique figured worlds, existing within the larger figured worlds of classroom and school. Each new day brought opportunity for new negotiations about how to make meaning from text. Over time, the memories of these negotiations and resultant

meanings formed long conversations, which enabled participants to build on recurring themes and memories, creating stronger shared histories. Student agency was just as present as adults' and while histories and assumptions played an important role in tutoring dynamics, those assumptions were challenged and the resulting impact altered. (Bakhtin, 1981; Holland et al, 2001; Mercer, 1995; Vygotsky, 1986).

Three research questions formed the basis for this inquiry. In order to answer Question 1, I conducted interviews at the beginning and end of the program, transcribing and coding for themes of thoughts and ideas about literacy learning, tutors' goals for their students, and expectations of the tutoring experience itself. I cross-checked these themes with my field notes from the entire year and then turned to tutoring observation transcripts to search for evidence or disconfirming evidence of these themes or evidence of new themes. As described previously, I chose three transcripts from each tutoring dyad to analyze, one each from roughly the beginning, middle, and end of the tutoring program. This served to reveal changes over time. The limitations of restricting my data to three observations is in the risk of limiting each dyad's story, of failing to include an aspect of their relationship that might have been revealed in one of those other transcripts. To reduce that risk, I reviewed the other transcripts thoroughly when I was choosing the three to examine and I reread them again toward the end of the analysis to see if I were missing counter-arguments or better examples – or examples of a new category. I found other examples of what I already explained, but nothing that illustrated my points more clearly.

To analyze and answer Question 2, I reviewed training materials then revisited tutoring observations to analyze and code for categories, such as decoding, comprehension, fluency, writing, and word study, that emerged through the coding and recoding process. These codes were influenced by the framework of the tutoring model and the training I developed for the program.

In order to answer Question 3, I used observation transcripts and field notes to re-analyze and code for themes within each dyad's tutoring sessions. I discovered themes emerging from each dyad's interactions, such as specific praise, tough love, and enjoyment.

Each research question will be addressed separately. For Question 1, I first present broad categories that emerged from all tutors' data from various sources. I will then explain data pertaining to individual tutors, explaining the types of assumptions revealed for each person and documenting evidence of change over time with those assumptions.

For Question 2, the data will be described by instructional category with sub-categories listed within each. Specific examples will illustrate each category. Evidence of each child's change over time in taking initiative is then discussed.

For Question 3, I will address each dyad individually, describing evidence pointing to negotiations between tutor and student in terms of positioning.

This method of organization of data for each question will provide a detailed picture of the dynamics that occurred across the dyads as well as within each particular relationship. Using both breadth and depth in data description will facilitate coherence

and thorough descriptions of tutoring dyads' stories. By addressing each question in order, I will be able to tie these understandings together in a way that makes sense to the reader.

Assessment Data

Before discussing the research data pertaining to my guiding questions, I want to include a brief discussion of assessment data Miss May and I collected at the beginning and end of the tutoring program. I kept these records as accountability for the tutoring program itself with the principal and teachers. The assessment results describe these three children in a particular manner, and although these assessments were not a focus of my research, the story revealed through these data serve to situate the students and tutors within the larger figured worlds of the state's reliance on an autonomous model of literacy. I will discuss information about each assessment administered to the children, followed by a table of their pre- and post-scores. I will then discuss the significance of those scores, along with their limitations.

  DIBELS. The school district mandated the use of DIBELS, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, (DIBELS Data System, n.d.) and first-graders were assessed with four subtests: TRC (instructional reading levels), NWF (nonsense word fluency), LNF (letter naming fluency), and PSF (phoneme segmentation fluency). Table 4.1 shows the goals for each subtest for October and May of first grade, the months I collected results.

	DIBELS							
	TRC		NWF		PSF		LNF	
	Oct (E)	May (I)	Oct (24)	May (50)	Oct (35)	May (35)	Oct (37)	May (NA)
Keisha	B	E	19	37	40	53	59	—
Joe	D	I	44	85	54	51	62	—
Jason	D	E	23	33	55	61	27	—

Table 4.1: DIBELS Assessment Results

Keisha. This table shows that Keisha moved two reading levels, from B to E.

Level E was considered beginning first grade level, according to district benchmarks. To

be considered reading on grade level, Keisha needed to read at Level I. Keisha's scores

on NWF, reading nonsense words, were 19 in October (with a goal of 24) and 37 in May

(with a goal of 50). Keisha's October score and May score were approximately the same

percentage of the goals; in other words, she did not lose ground, but neither did she

"catch up." Her scores on PSF (segmenting phonemes) and LNF (naming letters) were

above the goals in October and the PSF score was still above the goal in May. First

graders were no longer assessed on LNF (naming letters) at the end of first grade.

Joe. Joe progressed five levels during the course of the year, from Level D to

Level I, according to his TRC scores. This meant that he was considered to be reading on

grade level at the end of first grade. Joe's scores in all three of the other subtests were

above grade level goals in both October and May.

Jason. Jason demonstrated the smallest progression in reading levels, according to the TRC, moving only from Level D to Level E. His score on NWF (reading nonsense words) was 23 (with a goal of 24) in October and 33 (with a goal of 50) in May, indicating that he actually lost ground, according to the benchmarks. Jason's PSF (segmenting phonemes) scores were above grade level in both October and May. Jason's LNF score in October was 27, with a goal of 37, and he was not re-assessed with this subtest in May.

DIBELS comes highly recommended by Reading First, and it is described as an inexpensive, quickly administered assessment of several reading subskills, some of which are considered predictors of future success on standardized tests and as markers of reading progress (DIBELS Data System, n.d.). However, these claims are contested by some researchers. Altwerger, Jordan, and Shelton (2007) conducted a study with thirteen second-graders to determine the relationship of rate and accuracy as measured by DIBELS with rate and accuracy of reading trade books. They also investigated whether or not the instructional recommendations resulting from DIBELS scores correlate with students' reading proficiencies when reading real books. They found that it was not advisable to rely on one measure of rate and accuracy. According to the researchers, DIBELS recommends assessing rate and accuracy three times and using only the middle score for assessment purposes. The researchers argue that a better practice would be to examine the reasons for the variance, which they found to be broad. As part of their study, they analyzed individual student

proficiencies and compared their observations with recommendations from the students' DIBELS scores, finding discrepancies between their observations and what the DIBELS test scores revealed. They concluded that using DIBELS to place students in instructional levels "sets a very dangerous precedence of focusing teachers' instructional emphasis on remediation of simplistic features of rate and accuracy rather than on individualizing instruction needed to advance proficiency in the very complex process of reading" (p. 87). Based on what I have observed and learned through research such as this, I hold little stock in the DIBELS scores. However, they are presented here because the students' stories are incomplete without understanding how governmental authoritative voices serve to position students as either on grade level or not. It results in a normative effect of indicating that if the child does not read on grade level, he/she is not progressing normally. Yet, as we look again at Jason, evidence exists of his ability to learn, of his innate curiosity and comprehension of literature. He simply cannot decode – yet. With the appropriate assistance, he will be quite capable of reading on grade level, but it will not be on a state or district timetable.

Observation Survey assessments. I used Marie Clay's (2002) Observation Survey as a source for assessments that would give us another source of data with which to mark progress, heeding Clay's (2001) admonition to supplement standardized tests with less formal observations. I conducted three of the Observation Survey tasks with each child the first week in November 2008 and the first week in June 2009. The tasks I chose to use are described below. None were timed.

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1. Letter Identification – This task assesses the ability of the child to identify 26 lower case, 26 upper case, and two fonts of a and g. The ultimate goal is to read all 54 correctly by the end of first grade.

2. Ohio Word Test – This task assesses the ability of the child to read 20 words that are commonly found in primary literature. The words are out of context. The ultimate goal is to read most of the words by the end of first grade. (A different word list was used for each assessment.)

3. Concepts About Print – This assessment is designed to "catch" misconceptions about print that could be difficult to determine without specific assessment. The goal is to achieve a close-to-perfect score by the end of second grade.

	Observation Survey Tasks					
	Letter ID (54)		Ohio Word Test (20)		Concepts About Print (24)	
	Nov	June	Nov	June	Nov	June
Keisha	53	54	7	15	15	20
Joe	50	53	8	20	16	19
Jason	52	54	4	12	14	16

Table 4.2: Observation Survey Assessment Results

Table 4.2 shows that all three students scored well on Letter Identification in November. Given those scores and the students' performance during tutoring, it was

unnecessary to use this assessment in June, but I used the assessment simply to have complete comparison data.

The Ohio Word Test showed all three students reading fewer than half the words in November and more than half in June. Keisha's score more than doubled, reaching 75% of the goal. Joe's score more than doubled and he read all 20 words correctly in June. Although Jason's June score is still lower than I would like, 12 out of 20, it is important to note that his score tripled from November on a task which was difficult for him.

Concepts About Print is more about noting details from assessment results rather than just looking at the numerical scores. Keeping track of what the child did not know informs instruction. It is important to keep in mind that children are not expected to achieve a perfect (or nearly perfect) score until the end of second grade on this assessment.

Keisha's end-of-year assessment showed that she still needed to attend to details in order to notice a change in word order and a change in letter order. Keisha also did not know what quotation marks represented, which was not specifically addressed during tutoring.

Jacob's end-of-year assessment showed that he did not notice changes in word order or letter order. Neither could he explain a comma or quotation marks. This data shows that he was not attending enough to the fine details of print to notice when two words were out of order in a sentence or two letters out of order within a word. The

comma and quotation marks were not addressed during tutoring, but will be addressed in time in classroom instruction.

Jason's end-of-year assessment showed that Jason needed more attention to details as well. He did not recognize that two lines of print were out of order. Neither did he notice the change in word order or letter order, the meaning of a comma or quotation marks, and he pointed to words when asked to point to letters.

All three students' results on Concepts About Print reveal issues that can and will be addressed during continued reading instruction. All three are capable of identifying letters and Joe demonstrated ability to read commonly used words out of context. Keisha progressed close to that goal and Jason showed progress in moving toward the goal.

Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Awareness. The Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Awareness (Yopp, 1995) is an oral assessment that asks children to segment common short words into phonemes. There are 22 words on the assessment and they get one point for each word they segment correctly. Common errors include segmenting words into onsets and rimes. However, on this assessment, the administrator may instruct the child when he/she makes an error. The error still counts, but it gives the child better opportunity to achieve success as they move forward through the assessment. The children's scores are displayed in Table 4.3 below, along with the next categories to be discussed.

	Other Informal Assessments					
	Yopp-Singer (22)		Spelling Inventory		Instructional Reading Levels	
	Nov	June	Nov	June	Nov	June
Keisha	10	15	Late Emergent	Early-Mid Letter Name	B	E
Joe	16	16	Early-Mid Letter Name	Mid-Late Letter Name	D	H
Jason	8	19	Early-Mid Letter Name	Mid-Late Letter Name	D	F

Table 4.3: Other Informal Assessment Results

Joe's scores remained constant from November to June on the Yopp-Singer. However, the fact that he read on grade level and spelled well when writing balanced these scores; I did not believe they warranted concern.

Keisha's score improved from 10 to 15 over the course of the program. Of the words she missed, most were considered errors because she segmented onsets and rimes, a common error.

Jason's score more than doubled over the course of the year, and he scored higher than the other two students in June. He likewise segmented onsets and rimes rather than phonemes with the three words that he missed. This assessment indicated that Jason's phonemic awareness improved over the course of the year.

Spelling inventory. This teacher used *Words Their Way* (Bear et al, 2008) as the basis of her spelling program. I conducted the spelling inventory from this manual in November and June. The spelling stages are developmental rather than by grade level. The Emergent stage ranges from pre-Kindergarten to the middle of first grade. The Letter Name stage ranges from Kindergarten to the beginning of third grade, and the

Within Word stage can range from first grade to the middle of fourth grade. Therefore, specific goals for beginning and end of first grade are not used. The goal is for each child to demonstrate progress through the stages.

In November, Keisha was in the late Emergent stage, which can range to the middle of first grade. By year's end, however, she had moved into the early to middle Letter Name stage, which is acceptable. Joe and Jason both started in the early to middle Letter Name stage and both progressed to the middle to late Letter Name stage, which is appropriate since this stage ranges to the beginning of third grade.

Instructional reading levels. I relied at the beginning of the year on the teacher's assessment of each child's instructional reading levels since Miss May had been working with them in guided reading groups. After initial placements, I conducted miscue analyses throughout the year to keep track of how students were progressing and when it seemed appropriate to move them to the next level. Students showed progress, although at different rates. Keisha started the year at Level B and ended the year working in Level E. These levels correspond with her TRC scores and show that she did not demonstrate enough progress to be considered on grade level, according to benchmarks.

Joe began the year working in Level D and was working in Level H at the end of the year. He tested at Level I with his TRC score, which is the district benchmark level.

Jason started the year at Level D and was working in Level F at the end of the year. He tested only at Level E. Both levels are well below grade level, according to benchmarks.

Summary of assessment data. Joe's scores were all strong, with the possible exception of Yopp-Singer, which I considered an outlier. Once Joe gained confidence, his reading achievement growth followed.

Jason's scores all improved, but he moved two instructional reading levels during tutoring sessions and only one level when he was tested. The fact that individual scores on other assessments improved, sometimes dramatically, was encouraging, but they did not reveal specific information about Jason's struggles in learning to read. Jason was considered to be reading nearly a full year below grade level by district benchmarks.

Keisha's individual tests scores revealed progress, but she moved three instructional reading levels during the course of the school year. She was considered reading nearly a year below grade level according to district benchmarks.

Jason and Keisha were the two children of all seven receiving tutoring with the volunteers who had the most need for intensive, specialized reading instruction. The fact that they did not show "adequate" progress as compared with district benchmarks positioned them both as poor readers.

It was evident, even before comparing their scores with benchmarks, that both Jason and Keisha needed extra help beyond the scope of a part-time volunteer tutoring program. Morris (2005a) set guidelines for acceptance into the Howard Street tutoring program he established. He argued that reading specialists and even paraprofessionals are better equipped to provide intensive, daily intervention to first-graders and that early intervention should be provided in that manner, so Morris used volunteers to follow up with second- and third-graders. However, staff availability for such intervention was

quite low, which was the original reason for starting the volunteer program. Had Jason and Keisha received professional, daily intervention, they might have demonstrated a higher level of achievement in terms of their instructional reading levels.

These assessment data inevitably raise the question of the power of the state to impose an autonomous model of literacy on students, particularly young students as they begin to learn to read. The authoritative voice of the state, necessarily echoed through the district, gives power to the autonomous model that is representational of the extreme end of the autonomous-ideological continuum. The state offers no room for negotiation; their boundaries are rigid and closed. Absolute allegiance is required to their goals and severe penalties are threatened if adequate yearly progress (measured by pre-determined percentages) toward those goals is not met by the district. By the state's standards, all children should be able to read Level I at the end of first grade. If they cannot, they are deemed sub-par, less than "normal" readers – at the age of 6 or 7 years. No consideration is given the fact that young children, in particular, develop at amazingly different rates and that with good instruction and patience, nearly all of them will learn to read.

These authoritative voices positioned Joe as normal and Keisha and Jason as substantially below normal in reading. The slow progress of Keisha and Jason are a source of concern because I did not seem to find the appropriate strategies to enable the volunteers to help them progress more rapidly, and Jason, in particular, was beginning to experience the sting of realizing he was falling "behind" some of his peers. The tensions between wanting to help a child read more easily and wanting the child to experience joy

while reading were evident throughout Jason's tutoring events, particularly when he did not respond well to the reading skill instruction provided in this context.

These data tell one story about the three children involved in this study that is very limited, one-dimensional in nature. I will now address the data collected for each guiding question. Together, they serve to illuminate depths of thinking and interacting with literacy that are impossible to understand from assessment data.

Research Question 1: What assumptions about literacy did literacy volunteers bring to tutoring sessions? What were the sources for those assumptions? How were those assumptions evidenced during interactions? [1]

Introduction

For this analysis, I will address the question in two parts. The first section will analyze the first two questions: *What assumptions about literacy do literacy volunteers bring to tutoring sessions? What are the sources for those assumptions?* I will describe assumptions about literacy that volunteers had as they began working with students in this program, connecting those assumptions as much as possible with their sources of knowledge. I will begin by reporting the volunteers' descriptions of their own literacy experiences and those of their children. Moving to a focus on their students, I will report their initial perceptions of the students and the goals they established for their students. Finally, I will discuss their assumptions about teaching literacy.

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[1]

Symbol	Representation
…	undecipherable
[ ]	simultaneous talk
════════	lines omitted from transcript
italics	words or letters from texts
DK	researcher (I spontaneously commented or was drawn into the conversation.)
( )	field notes inserted for clarification
l - e - d	word being spelled rather than pronounced
/l/ /ĕ/ /d/	word being pronounced by phoneme[1]

Table 4.4: Transcription Symbols

The second part of this section will address the last question: *How are those assumptions evidenced during interactions?* At this point, I will describe each tutor's actions and decisions that revealed how they were working from underlying assumptions about literacy, learning, and their particular students. I will also document changes evidenced throughout the school year.

Tutors' Histories and Assumptions

Literacy experiences. One way that I attempted to discern the tutors' assumptions and their sources of knowledge was to ask them to talk about their literacy histories, particularly what they remembered from elementary school, their own children's experiences, and how they used literacy now. I was not surprised to find that reading was considered important in their families since they had volunteered to tutor in literacy.

In their initial interviews, the tutors recalled some details of early reading experiences, although none of them could explain how they learned how to read. Carol and Charlene both remembered enjoying reading. Carol was able to read by the end of kindergarten and because that was apparently unusual, she was asked to read aloud to her kindergarten class, sitting in the teacher's chair with her peers seated at her feet. She thought she probably felt proud doing that but could not remember. Both Carol and Charlene remembered reading materials. Carol talked specifically about the basal series:

> We had Scott Foresman series; it was, um, like a solid color book that
>
> would have readers and workbooks and everything and had different

levels; I remember level five was purple, I think (chuckling), you know,

and, and you would move up and it went up through like twenty-

something, I mean it was pretty much through the elementary grades, I

think. (initial interview, 11.20.08)

Charlene remembered reading "Dick and Jane." She also remembered doing

SRA, task cards that she completed independently when her other work was finished and

thinking that was fun. When I asked Ellie how reading instruction had changed since she

was in school, she responded:

Well, yeah, it's very different from when I was in school because we did a

lot with spelling, and phonics is what we did. It wasn't near the holistic,

uh, language piece, uh, that they do here, which you know, they'll read

something and then they'll apply it to whatever else they're working on,

and I mean, it's just, everything's just interrelated here. And so it's, it's a

lot fuller here, I mean, it, it covers, it's, it's more of everything, and there

everything is very, uh, compartmentalized. (initial interview, 11.4.10)

When asked to clarify, Ellie explained that the instructional approached currently used in

this school where implicit phonics instruction is combined with literature-rich reading

and writing instruction is what she considered "better" than the approach that taught

subskills when she was young.

All three tutors discussed their own children's experiences with literacy in detail,

and phonics was a major topic. When I asked Carol about how reading instruction is

different with her young son in kindergarten than when she was in school, she described

her surprise that things had changed so much:

> I just remember a few years ago talking with coworkers about what the
>
> expectations are in kindergarten. And I was kind of blown away cause she
>
> was like, well, you know, my, my one kid who's ending kindergarten is
>
> gonna be doing some things in the summer so that she can get up, or it was
>
> either that or, I have to really work these last few months cause she's gotta
>
> get up to this x level or she's not gonna to be able to go on to first grade.
>
> === And so yeah, I was really surprised and shocked to learn all this and
>
> um, you know, with, with [my son], um, we got one of those Leapfrog
>
> things that's fridge phonics === but I really don't know, you know, to
>
> what level, I mean he's not reading now, and I know, um, with the
>
> kindergarten teacher visits, the teacher who came to our school said, oh of
>
> course there are some children who come into kindergarten already
>
> reading, so I'm like, am I supposed to be teaching him that, like should I
>
> be working more with him on these things or === I read to him, I read to
>
> him at night, but I don't know to what degree I'm supposed to be working
>
> with him on his actual reading. Um, and like I said, um, I, I just don't
>
> know what the expectations are cause I know they're so much higher now,
>
> um, somehow, than what they were when I was in kindergarten. (initial
>
> interview, 11.20.08)

Carol expressed strong anxiety that she had not prepared her son adequately for kindergarten, seeming to infer that the "rules" of preparing children for academic success were unwritten, and she seemed to fear that because she did not know to teach him to read before kindergarten that he might lag behind some of the other children with his reading skills.

Ellie homeschooled her oldest child in kindergarten, using a phonics workbook in addition to reading books and writing. When Charlene's children were preschoolers, her oldest son learned phonics easier than her younger son, who was too interested in the story to care about what sounds the letters made. All three tutors described phonics as letter-sound relationships.

Along with expressing concern about their children learning phonics, the volunteers described positive aspects of their children's literacy experiences. Ellie's son read *Harry Potter* in first grade, and her daughter "absorbed" books that interested her. Carol described her son as inquisitive, explaining that they were investigating questions he asked by finding nonfiction books at the library on those topics. Carol and her son enjoyed reading those books together, and she thought this practice was sparking further interest in the topics.

When asked how her family uses literacy now, Charlene had a lot to say:

Um, we use it a lot less than we used to because our kids are older and they only want to watch television and play video games. But, um, my husband and I are both readers so we, they definitely see us reading, magazines, books, um, and === my kids definitely see that I'm always

going to the library and getting books. === We have at different times

tried, you know, you actually, reading is one of the ways you earn your

computer time. We're not doing that right now but I'm considering going

back to it because there's less reading going on, particularly for my older

son who was the more avid reader of the two. But now that he's a

teenager he's down to really not reading at all. I think he can't find what

interests him at his age. === He's 13. === On the other hand, um, at

school they're reading very challenging, they're reading high school

material. === but at home, he's not very much choosing to read which

makes me sad. But, you know, at least they, they do see it modeled at

home and I think, you know, eventually he'll come around and be a reader

again. My younger son, um, has comprehension issues and I think reading

is not that enjoyable for him and he's really a "Manga" guy; he likes these

very visual and he's an artist and he likes that kind of reading, but in terms

of reading chapter books or kind of thing, it's a hard sell. We do, we have

been reading together; I do read to him at night before he goes to bed and

he enjoys that. === And I'll be really sad when he doesn't want me to

read with him any more. Although I'm having trouble getting him to read

what I want to read. (laughter) We have read, been reading the *Series of*

Unfortunate Events where he says, oh, I don't want to read that, and I say

but we're on the last book, let's get it done ===. (initial interview,

11.13.08)

Charlene's tone of voice clearly indicated that she was bothered by the fact that her older son did not read for enjoyment any more and was considering making that a requirement to earn privileges, such as computer time. Her younger son no longer enjoyed the series they had started together, but Charlene seemed to think that they should finish what they started. She was still interested, even if he was not. Her words seem to indicate a rigid view of reading, one that says that children should demonstrate their love of reading through voluntary, spare time reading of books or magazines. She recognized that he was reading "challenging" literature in school, but did not seem to connect that with using literacy as part of the family. Charlene apparently did not believe in abandoning a book once the child lost interest, which could have added to her son's disinterest in reading.

Carol and Ellie both described their families as actively involved in literacy. Carol described a rich experience of reading with her son:

But lately he's been getting into, he asks a lot of questions about just the way things work in the world or whatever, and so I've tried to find some nonfiction books that cover those topics, and interestingly he has um, he's really gotten into those a lot. And there's one === it was about different inventions that were made in the United States. And so we read through; we didn't read it all in one sitting all in one night, but we read through it and put in our bookmark, you know, and came back and, and got through the book, and it's really neat that he's to the point where he enjoys doing that. And, and I do like that he's getting into some of the nonfiction things cause I think it's sparking his interest and he's very hungry for just facts

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and knowledge; === I think that the, the story things are good, too; I've tried to introduce, we went through like the Mother Goose nursery rhymes and, um, I have a couple books of poetry I just got. === And my husband === he reads books a lot. I don't have a lot of time to read books, but I do from time to time and I read news magazines, like you know, religiously, constantly, um, so he does see us reading and, um, that that's a valued thing for us and he, um, he likes to help like write the grocery list and you, you know, do little things like that. (initial interview, 11.20.08)

Carol seemed to understand that following a child's lead was important to nurture his curiosity and love of reading. She carefully structured the read alouds, not pushing her son to choose books of particular genres, but offering a wide variety and seeming to focus on enjoyment of literature and reading to learn. Carol also emphasized how much she and her husband read at home, realizing that they were demonstrating the value of reading. Carol also engaged her son in writing activities, such as helping with grocery lists.

Ellie's description of her family's literacy events was also interesting.

Well, I read, uh, not as much as I'd like. The last couple of years I just didn't read that much and I'm back into reading again so that feels really good. My husband reads every day because he takes a bus to work and he's always reading. Um, we, haven't done this very much lately, but we read to them a lot when they were growing up, and now sometimes we still get to read to them, but that's rare. It's not like what it used to be.

=== And my husband loves to tell stories. So he would always, um,

bedtime stories was always a big thing. Now again we don't do that, uh,

so much but there's always, um, there's always a lot of talking in our

family. And a lot of wordsmithing, you know, playing with words and

that kind of thing. (initial interview, 11.4.08)

Ellie was recognizing that literacy included oral conversations, story telling, and "wordsmithing," not just reading books or magazines, although they did that, too. Her definition of literacy seemed broader than Charlene's or Carol's.

The three volunteers had remarkably similar perspectives reflecting internally persuasive voices that had developed through their life and linguistic experiences. One assumption was that reading usually involved books, magazines, and other printed material; no other forms of literacy were mentioned, except Ellie's description of oral literacy. The tutors agreed that phonics instruction should play an important role for beginning readers. Their roles with their own children speak to the assumption that parents have a responsibility to read with their children, and they also seemed to believe that parents needed to work with preschoolers on literacy skills.

These perspectives align somewhat with an autonomous model of literacy, in which school literacy is considered a commodity, vital for children to learn in order to achieve success later in life. There seemed to be pre-established ways for these mothers to do literacy with their children and they all expressed concern that they wanted to do things correctly so their children could reach their reading potentials.

All three volunteers also talked about literacy as it involved relationships, most specifically reading aloud with their young children. They talked about mutually enjoying literature and each other during those times. This relational perspective is foundational to an ideological model of literacy, although aspects of both models of literacy apparent in each volunteer's beliefs.

Volunteers' assumptions about teaching literacy. Some of my discussions with the volunteers revolved around their perception of how literacy should be taught or how it is learned. All three were aware of the phonics vs. whole language debate through school and district information dissemination as well as media sources. Ellie and Pat had seen both approaches used in this elementary school with their own children, and they each mentioned that this school supported the current district's phonics-based approach with an added emphasis on a strong literature-based curriculum, making it more "balanced." All three tutors spoke about this type of approach being best, embracing immersion in good literature, but believing that children also need explicit phonics instruction. Ellie mentioned being able to see the difference between students who were taught with the whole language approach and those taught with the balanced approach, saying that the whole language students were less capable spellers. Charlene mentioned that the scripted, phonics-based approach currently in use by the district was "a poor fit for gifted" children. Carol learned about the two approaches through a *Scientific American* article and expressed her opinion that this school was right in taking a more balanced approach to literacy instruction. Ellie seemed to summarize the volunteers'

comments by saying that both extremes were not good; that a "broader picture" involving "real" books in combination with phonics was the best approach.

Interestingly, even with degrees in education or English, none of the tutors had concrete ideas about how to teach beginning reading. Charlene was surprised by the idea of using word sorts to study letter-sound relationships and spelling features; she thought she would work only on "reading and writing." Ellie described the teaching of reading as a "puzzle," and Carol thought that reading instruction involved teaching particular skills and that she anticipated some aspects of tutoring to be "intuitive," "normal," and "natural." Carol was unable to describe what aspects those would be other than sharing her love of literature.

Information seems to have been accepted by tutors from school and district authority figures in which they described phonics-based, whole language and balanced approaches to instruction. A magazine article impacted Carol's perception of how to teach literacy, and the other volunteers' understandings had been strongly influenced by their own children's experiences with both approaches to teaching and learning literacy. All agreed that phonics instruction was vital, and they all agreed that reading good literature and having writing opportunities were equally as vital. These authoritative voices had been accepted into their intrapersonal planes, becoming part of their histories as they began tutoring (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky,1986)

The tutors all enjoyed reading and wanted their own children and their students to enjoy reading as much as they. I believe this reflected an ideological perspective since the women focused on relationships with their children as they involved literature and

wanted those pleasant relationships with texts and with each other to last. Discussions that would inevitably ensue during shared reading times with their children involved Bahktin's (1981) dialogism, where meaning is created through discourse between readers and between the text and reader, not simply by lifting a universal truth from neutral text.

Carol's comment about expecting tutoring to be "normal" and "natural" may reflect her own love of literature and the way she enjoyed literature with her kindergartner as they explored different topics of interest. It may also reflect the ease with which Carol learned to read at an early age, and it might also reflect an underlying assumption that learning to read would also be "natural" and "intuitive." This is a possibility to which I will return.

Perceptions of students. At the time of the tutors' initial interviews, they had met their students and worked with them for one to three sessions. When I asked about their perceptions of the students, Charlene and Ellie described their students' personalities rather than reading skills. Charlene described Keisha as "very eager to come and work and she's very sweet" (initial interview, 11.13.08). Ellie described Joe as bright and capable with a good sense of humor, needing to move a lot and needing to build his self-esteem. Carol's description of Jason was the most detailed. She described him as kind and family-oriented with an active mind and loving to talk. Jason took directions well, Carol reported, not balking or becoming sullen, and "does well" with reading, but she then seemed to contradict herself by adding that he had trouble with sounds and forming words while reading.

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Carol wondered if not connecting sounds with letters was "cognitive" or "intentional." This question arose when Carol was responding to how she would mark Jason's progress:

> Um, and I don't know if that is just a cognitive thing of just looking at it and kind of not seeing it, or if it's an intentional thing of not, kind of you're just saying what sounds right and not really attending to what letters are there, um, but I think that would be a first step that if I see him really doing that, um, that then I'll feel that he's, you know, moving, moving forward cause you're not always gonna find words that you already know. And he does do that some, I'm sure, I haven't heard him read last year or before, so I don't know, I mean there are words that he comes to that he says and does just fine and I'm sure that they weren't necessarily taught that word, so he does, he does do that and I think that just seeing that and seeing more fluidity, definitely and more, actually more or, um, you know, he enjoys all the, uh, QUIET [using her voice dramatically when pronouncing it, as she did during tutoring] and things like that, but sometimes when he reads he's just reading word-by-word and not really kind of as a phrase or, you know, as something that imparts a certain meaning so, you know, seeing some of that build, um, I think would be a sign for me. (initial interview, 11.20.08)

This might have reflected Carol's experience of having learned to read quite easily as a child as well as believing that tutoring (and perhaps learning to read) would be partially

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intuitive and natural. Although one of my own underlying assumptions during training

was that children do not intentionally fail to learn, that assumption apparently needed to

be spoken. Carol's honesty was vital; I would not have anticipated this mindset and

would not have addressed it without her openness. Carol's comment was revealing,

perhaps reflecting an autonomous model of literacy in which learning to read is seen as

the norm, required of everyone in this society (Street, 1995). Put with her comments

about tutoring being intuitive and natural, it served as evidence of her attempts to make

sense of Jason's difficulties learning to read.

Goals for students. All three volunteers mentioned, during these initial

interviews, wanting their students to read at a higher reading level than they were

currently; Charlene specifically wanted Keisha to become an "independent reader" by the

year's end, meaning that Keisha would choose to read books on her own. This echoed

her discussion about her sons, neither of whom currently chose to read books on their

own, which seemed to disappoint Charlene.

All three tutors also mentioned affective aspects as goals; they wanted their

students to enjoy or have fun with literature. Charlene and Carol both wanted their

students to gain self-confidence. When asked how they would mark progress, Charlene

reiterated her goals; she would know that Keisha had progressed when she read at a

higher level, enjoyed literature, read independently, and displayed self-confidence. She

indicated that enjoyment and reading on her own would be two key indicators that

reading instruction was successful. Carol thought she would see progress with Jason

when he could decode, being able to "sound out" words and associating sounds with

letters. His reading would then become more fluent rather than reading word-by-word.

She added that all the words he was currently reading could not possibly be sight words,

so he must be decoding already (initial interview, 11.20.08).

Ellie, when asked how she would mark progress, responded:

I can tell by their expression or by how, you know, if they're pleased by

what they're doing or being able to compare, what they did maybe a

month ago to what they're doing now, um, the frustration level, it's a lot

of just looking at them, I think, tells an awful lot. (initial interview,

11.4.08)

Ellie's goals for Joe included reading with expression and being pleased with himself

from understanding his own progress. I found these to be interesting comments. Ellie

was not relying on any type of measurement tools other than informal observation of

facial expressions, attitude, intonation, and progress observed while working with him.

This seemed to me to represent an ideological model of literacy in which reading is

considered primarily a social act in which readers are positioned by and position

themselves with literature (Street, 1995) and to a degree, reflected the perspective that

informal observations by those who work most closely with the child are the most valid

(Clay, 2001).

Reflecting upon individual tutors' goals and my own goals, it seemed that we shared

some similar goals. We all wanted the children to enjoy reading, to not be discouraged

by any difficulty they may encounter in reading. We all seemed to share a desire to see

progress by being able to read at higher reading levels, although none of us set a specific goal for any of the children.

Ellie and Charlene both described affective goals for their students, including personal satisfaction and enjoyment. Carol was the only one to focus exclusively on skills, and as she described those skills, she indicated that Jason's seeming inability to decode was confusing to her as she realized that he could read some words. Perhaps in working with Jason, Carol felt necessarily drawn into emphasizing skill development, thinking that was what he needed. If he were already not responding well to her instruction, Carol might not have had the experience to realize that it might take Jason longer to learn and that we would need to find different ways to help him.

Summary of Histories and Assumptions

Several common assumptions emerged from these data: literacy usually involved printed texts; phonics instruction was vital for beginning readers; parents should read aloud to their children; reading should be pleasurable, and children should want to read on their own. These assumptions, on one level, reflected the relationship aspect of an ideological model of literacy (Street, 1995). The volunteers were all mothers who referred to the closeness they experienced when they and their children read aloud together. They associated those times with positive feelings and wanted their children to continue that strong relationship with text, even if the mother-child relationship was no longer required as part of that text interaction.

It was also assumed that there were proper ways to empower children to prepare them for the academic world of kindergarten, and that parents should assume

responsibility to model reading for enjoyment and work with their children on letter-sound relationships. This reflected an autonomous model in which literacy is considered a commodity that children need to possess in order for them to become productive members of society in the future (Street, 1995). Another aspect reflecting the autonomous model was the presumed rigidity of how to do literacy as a mother; they were all convinced of their roles in modeling reading for enjoyment and for information, teaching their children alphabetic knowledge, and basic letter-sound relationships. This pointed to the assumed superiority of academic literacy (Street, 1995) since the idea seemed to be that it would better prepare them for school and ongoing learning. All three mothers read widely and discussed literacy issues with family, friends, and neighbors. There were multiple voices competing for consideration within their experiences, resulting in sets of beliefs that clearly revealed the ongoing co-existence and tension between an autonomous model of literacy and an ideological model.

Semi-structured interviews offered the tutors opportunities to discuss in depth and to swing the conversations toward topics or perspectives that were important to them, but about which I had not specifically inquired. In addition, keeping a field note journal with me each day to record casual conversations during the school year prevented memories of important comments from fading. In the next section, I will examine evidence of these assumptions as revealed during tutoring sessions. In the final summary, I will discuss all the data related to this question in terms of what other researchers have found.

Evidence of Histories and Assumptions During Tutoring

This section will address the last part of this research question: *How are those assumptions evidenced during interactions?* For this section, I will address each tutor's experiences individually, and I will include any evidence of change in assumptions over the course of the year. I will then summarize data from all three tutors.

I examined transcripts of tutoring sessions and referred to field notes and final interview transcripts to answer this portion of Question 1. As I coded, I found myself pulling examples and being at a loss as to how to label them. Only by physically moving examples next to each other, searching for similarities and differences, could I begin to realize that there were specific qualities evidenced throughout. By rearranging groupings, focusing on specific word choices or decisions, themes began to emerge. I found specific qualities of teaching styles, personalities, decision-making, and expectations that pointed toward underlying assumptions. Each tutor's discussion is subdivided by those qualities.

Charlene (Keisha). *Subtle empowerment.* Like all the tutors, Charlene praised Keisha for things she did well. However, Charlene was unique in how smoothly she drew Keisha into performing literacy tasks with what I call "subtle empowerment." For example, Keisha struggled while reading a new book for the first time and Charlene wanted her to reread it to have a positive experience with the book before returning to the classroom and to practice rereading for fluency and comprehension. Rather than just telling or even asking Keisha to reread, Charlene simply and cheerfully said, "Let's read

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this one more time now that you're all warmed up" (1.12.09). Labeling Keisha's struggle

as just a warm-up for reading positioned Keisha as a strong reader.

   Stretching to learn. Although Charlene paid attention to the same details as the

other tutors (i.e., rereading word sorts, using punctuation in writing, reading accurately),

she seemed particularly adept at stretching Keisha's focus toward more abstract thinking.

For example, I noticed that Charlene often asked Keisha to infer characters' feelings and

motivations from both illustrations and plot (12.4.08; 1.12.09; 3.23.09). Charlene talked

once about how an extension of the story would help her appreciate the story so much

better. Keisha finished reading a book in which a very large sandwich is made, but it did

not show anyone eating it. Charlene's comment was, "Look at that. How is she going to

get that in her mouth? I would need one more page with a picture on to see what happens

after she actually tries to eat that" (12.4.08). Charlene discussed how the text on another

page was written in a confusing way and that she and Keisha would have worded that

page differently (12.4.08). She also pointed out text details such as font that reflected

intonation and meaning (1.12.09). Overall, Charlene modeled higher level thinking more

frequently than the other tutors. Charlene did not directly state a belief that all children

can learn, but that could be a logical underlying assumption that would explain her

willingness to help a child reading below grade level see subtleties and nuances that some

volunteers might not think to address until the child was older or more skilled. Charlene

was helping Keisha use literacy tools more broadly and deeply, which would ultimately

enable Keisha to think in signs (Vygotsky, 1986). She explored literacy with Keisha

using multiple tangents, reminding me that Vygotsky's zone of proximal development

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(Tudge, 1990) is not simply linear, but at least three-dimensional, with many porous borders and that we should not limit children to one linear path at a time. This aspect marked their figured world of tutoring as intellectually stimulating and positioned Keisha as intelligent, capable of higher level thinking.

Social relationships within reading. All three tutors shared a quality of enjoying literature together with their students. Charlene and Keisha found many shared experiences that they recounted for each other and for me. For example, when Keisha chose a particular book to reread, Charlene commented, "We like this one, don't we?" (3.23.09). In the same observation, Charlene asked Keisha to tell me what Charlene's favorite part of the book was and when she did, they both laughed over it (3.23.09). It seemed that Charlene wanted Keisha to become an independent reader, motivated to read on her own, and she knew that Keisha would only do that if she learned to love reading. So, they found things about which they could laugh, co-constructing reading as fun within their social environment. These interactions reflected Bakhtin's (1981) dialogism and an ideological model of literacy (Street, 1995) in which meaning is co-created somewhere in the spaces between texts and fellow readers. They also reflected Mercer's (1995) long conversation, in which literacy memories were established over time, co-constructing unique meanings within their figured world of tutoring.

Change over time. I observed no changes in how Charlene approached tutoring decisions over the course of the year. Charlene maintained a positive attitude toward Keisha's ability to learn throughout the year, saying at the end of the year that working with Keisha was always interesting and a "bright spot" in her day. She indicated, though,

during this final interview, that it was hard for her to see that Keisha had progressed, and she was looking forward to seeing assessment results. When I asked specifically how much she thought Keisha had learned, Charlene responded rather uncharacteristically:

Charlene: Uh huh, um, I don't know. I hope some stuff. (laughs)

DK: Can you see some signs of progress or any growth?

Charlene: You know, I thought to myself at one point that I should go back and read through some of the earlier lessons. Because I think it's hard when you're in the moment to kind of put yourself back where you were at the beginning, so I should have done that before we talked, but, um, I guess I see a little more confidence in her, and I see less relying on the pictures. (final interview, 5.18.09)

Neither of us had documentation with us at the time of the interview to review Keisha's progress in reading level or writing skills. Charlene's original goals for Keisha revealed tension between ideological and autonomous models of literacy of wanting Keisha to achieve higher on assessments, as well as wanting Keisha to love reading enough to initiate reading on her own (initial interview, 11.13.08). At the end-of-year interview, Charlene seemed discouraged that Keisha had not moved forward farther with her reading levels.

Miss May and I were also concerned about Keisha's progress. Charlene was doing everything I asked of her, quite skillfully, but Keisha seemed to grow in her reading ability very slowly. Miss May saw the same thing in the classroom and requested

additional testing and assistance for Keisha through the school, which Keisha would probably receive in 2nd grade. It was easy to become discouraged when a child did not progress as hoped, and I believe that Charlene's perspective during the final interview reflected the first tone of discouragement I heard from her all year.

A change in one assumption that Charlene explicitly revealed during conversation in the final interview (5.18.09) was that she now realized learning to read was far more complex than she had imagined. Her prior assumption might have reflected Charlene's experience as a child who learned to read easily as well as her older son's experience who also learned to read without difficulty. Her younger son had a learning disability and reading comprehension was troublesome for him, but Charlene did not seem to consider from his experience the complexity of the reading process in general. This shift to considering learning to read as complex reflected a change in Charlene's internally persuasive voices over the course of the year. She specifically mentioned the information shared during training sessions and ongoing discussions she and I had concerning Keisha's literacy, combined with her experiences with Keisha, as sources of her new knowledge. My voice and the resources I presented were probably perceived as authoritative, and the information I taught was later reinforced at a PTO meeting when school faculty members presented a program on the reading instruction used at this school. Those were other authoritative voices and the combination of all these sources, combined with her experiences with Keisha, seem to have influenced Charlene's acceptance of them as she adapted her assumption about learning to read.

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Ellie (Joe). *Empowerment.* Ellie's initial description of Joe included descriptors of bright, capable, and with a good sense of humor, and her goals for Joe included enjoying reading and being pleased with his own progress (initial interview, 11.3.08). Ellie's assumption that Joe was capable was evidenced throughout their tutoring sessions. She did not waste time on explanations, for example, knowing that Joe comprehended instructions quickly and would far rather complete the activity than listen to directions. She told Joe to go ahead with the next activity, saying, "You know the routine" (5.4.09) Ellie found ways to empower Joe, even if in small ways, such as asking him to turn the cards over as they worked with them rather than controlling them herself (11.24.09). I asked Joe once if the word sort had been hard and he responded that it was easy. Ellie added, "you make it look pretty easy, Joe" (3.16.09), suggesting that Joe was successful not because the sort was easy but because he was so smart. This positioned Joe as a smart, skillful reader, and Joe accepted those labels as evidenced by his grin and lack of protesting (field notes, 3.16.09).

Attention to detail. As I will describe more fully later, Joe and Ellie frequently negotiated power. Ellie willingly shared power, but within limits. For example, Joe wanted to complete word sorts quickly and move on; Ellie insisted that they reread the words in each category and discuss the categories so that she knew Joe understood the concept of that sort (11.24.08; 3.16.09). At the end of one tutoring session, Joe started to jump up to leave, but Ellie stopped him to make sure he heard her commendation for focusing and doing well with his reading (5.4.09). However, even when she insisted on something, there was an easy air about her. Ellie had the rare ability to be firm and

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friendly at the same time, which probably helped Joe accept Ellie's attention to details as part of their co-constructed figured world of how to do literacy together.

Reading is social. Ellie, like the other tutors, greatly enjoyed reading and wanted Joe to enjoy reading as much as she did. Hence, she engaged Joe in conversations about texts they read together and followed Joe's leads when he initiated literacy discussions. When Ellie needed to explicitly define their roles in tutoring, she told Joe that it was okay not to know a word immediately when reading a new book. "That's why we're here, to read it." In other words, they were together for the primary purpose of co-creating meaning from text. It is notable that she did not say that <u>she</u> was there just to help him, which might have implied that he was a weak reader in need of special help. Rather, she said that <u>we</u> were there to read, which positioned Joe as a collaborator in reading. Ellie seemed to believe that literacy learning occurred within collaboration and that reading in particular occurred within social relationships. Their conversations clearly reflected Bakhtin's (1981) dialogism in which meaning is created by readers in the spaces between themselves and others and text.

Change over time. Ellie seemed to always be positive and cheerful when she worked with Joe, even during the last week or two of tutoring, when she described their sessions as "rough" because it was close to the end of the school year with changing routines, particularly since the school was relocating into another building at the end of this school year. Joe had evidenced difficulty with transitions and the end of the school year seemed particularly hard for him. He reacted negatively to the packing boxes and other signs of change and seemed to be more disagreeable with Ellie during their last few

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sessions and she needed to be more firm with him. Overall, however, in her final

interview (5.18.09), Ellie stated that she and Joe had built a good working relationship.

Ellie enjoyed learning more about how to teach beginning reading, but her basic

assumptions did not appear to have changed. When queried about Joe's progress, she

was quick to respond that Joe could now read more difficult books than when they started

working together. He clearly knew more words and was not easily frustrated when he did

not know a word immediately. Ellie's comments that day began and ended with

relational descriptors of Joe's progress:

> But, really, one on one, he does pretty well overall. Um, I learned to give
>
> him opportunities to be active, around, we either, he hides every week or
>
> every time or we, you know, throw that little ball around, at the end of a
>
> lesson or something to just kind of keep him moving. And then he seems
>
> to, uh, engage really well. To, to the reading. (final interview, beginning,
>
> 5.18.09)

> Well, if I look at myself, if I have a good relationship with somebody, I'm
>
> more, um, wanting to help them or please or do, you know, work with
>
> them. So I, I think that for him, too, it would, you know, make it easy to
>
> come on and join in with what we were doing. That kind of thing. (final
>
> interview, end, 5.18.09)

Joe seemed to have trusted Ellie's authoritative voice (it is okay to take risks; it is okay to

make mistakes; be patient with yourself; let me help you), perhaps internalizing it as part

of his history to apply in other situations (Freedman & Ball, 2004). Joe and Ellie co-constructed a figured world in which they negotiated how to think about and do literacy together (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998).

Carol (Jason). *Intense accuracy.* Toward the beginning of the year, I noted that Carol seemed especially concerned with accurate reading. It is necessary for beginning readers to read accurately, but sometimes Carol seemed intensely focused on this aspect. She stopped Jason immediately each time he mispronounced a word rather than occasionally allowing him time to reconsider or allowing him to finish the sentence to see if he caught an error through semantic or syntactic cues. This might have reflected her insecurity and lack of experience, but Jason struggled so much with decoding that it probably made sense to Carol to give extra attention to that skill, trying to help Jason improve. One example of Carol's intensity occurred when Jason successfully reread a book, and Carol praised him for reading so well. Jason responded happily that it had seemed easy to him. Carol then reread the title, emphasizing the one word that Jason had misread, *an* (12.8.08). This could have diminished the pride Jason was feeling, but Jason did not react overtly to Carol's statement, so I do not know the impact, if any, of this particular instance.

Carol's intensity might have come from her assumption about the superiority of academic literacy. In her initial interview (11.20.08), Carol expressed surprise that kindergarten had become so focused on reading achievement and was now worried that she was not doing enough to help her son learn to read as quickly as he could. This anxiety coupled with Jason's difficulty with reading might have led to Carol's intense

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insistence on accuracy. Reading seemed to be viewed here as a commodity vital for

future success, a hallmark of an autonomous view of literacy (Street, 1995).

   Confusion. A unique aspect of Carol's tutoring involved rather frequent

confusions. One such example involved the word *led* encountered during a word sort in

which Jason was working with words containing the rime *–ed*. Jason began by

misreading *led* as *lad*. Along the way, Jason attempted to spell led, but became

completely confused, confusing Carol as well.

1	Jason:	*Lad*.
2	Carol:	What is it?
3	Jason:	*Lad*?
4	Carol:	*Led*, mm hmm.
5	Jason:	This, this, *d-e-l*.
6	Carol:	*D-e-l*? What is it?
7	Jason:	D-*e-s*.
8	Carol:	No, it's *l-e-d*.
9	Jason:	No, I said it's *p-e-l*.
10	Carol:	Well, it starts with the *l* and then the *e* and then the *d*. So
11		this one is? (referring to a key word)
12	Jason:	*Bed*.
13	Carol:	And what would this be starting with an *l* instead of a *d*?
14	Jason:	*Led*.
15	Carol:	*Led*

16   Jason: What's a *led*?   (5.7.09)

I can not follow Jason's logic, but it seemed that because (as will be explained later in this chapter) he had difficulty differentiating between /ă/ and /ĕ/, he became confused between his pronunciation and Carol's uncertain response (lines 1-4). Carol seemed to have difficulty understanding Jason's pronunciations sometimes; it was unclear whether or not that was the case here. When Jason started spelling the word backwards (line 5), Carol showed him the correct spelling twice (lines 8, 10), but he seemed to become more anxious and confused, using incorrect letters. Carol thoughtfully used the rhyming word *bed* which he knew and could use to pronounce the word correctly (lines 10-14). Finally, Jason revealed that the word *led* (line 16) was not in his aural vocabulary, at least when presented out of context.

Part of the confusion might have been allayed by referring to letters by their sounds rather than names. Using her finger to glide under the word while stretching phonemes was a technique I had encouraged Carol to use, but this end-of-year observation revealed her continuing inclination to refer only to letter names. At the beginning of the program, Carol commented on how liberating it was to allow early readers to use pictures as support. She had always considered it "cheating" for even beginning readers to look at pictures for assistance. I speculate that subconsciously Carol might have considered it "cheating" to pronounce sounds for Jason rather than having him retrieve the phonemes from memory, which could make it difficult for her to adapt her strategy.

Information retrieval. Information retrieval seemed to be a skill that Carol tried to foster with Jason by often asking if he remembered information from previous lessons. For example, when Jason was attempting to read the word *down*, Carol asked him to remember something about a *w*.

1   Carol: Remember, we said with the *w*

2   Jason: */due/*

3   Carol: Ow! (emphasized like "ouch!")

4   Jason: *Down*   (3.9.09)

This seems to reflect an ongoing tension between ways of supporting the student. It is possible to provide so much assistance that it does not stretch the child to learn, but Carol seemed to have trouble understanding when more support might be justified. This might have reflected her inexperience working with children along with the competing perspectives reflected in her chorus of voices.

At the same time, I must acknowledge that my own history and assumptions about literacy teaching and learning influenced these interpretations. I have years of experience working with children who, like Jason, struggled with various aspects of reading, and I believe that a tutor's responsibility, in this intense one-to-one context, is to support a child's learning development as closely and strongly as possible until the tutor can see understanding developing. At that point, the tutor can gradually release responsibility to the child for taking initiative in remembering and using the knowledge or skills in various contexts. A volunteer tutor who had not worked with young children in an academic role prior to this situation should not be expected to be able to discern some of these nuances

or to know how to adjust her tutoring. There is some evidence in the literature that students who have great difficulty with decoding do not improve with volunteer tutoring; they need daily instruction with a reading specialist (Gelzheiser, 2005), so it might not be surprising that Carol had difficulty helping Jason decode more easily. However, as I will describe next, many instances demonstrated that Carol and Jason co-constructed reading as enjoyable.

Reading is enjoyable and relational. Carol's assumption that reading should be enjoyable was evidenced many times. Carol frequently found books at the library specifically for Jason to enjoy and used her voice dramatically to bring life to characters, much to Jason's delight. She followed Jason's lead when he made personal connections with texts and laughed along with Jason when he squealed and belly laughed at silly characters and situations. Carol and Jason clearly shared a mutual love for literature and Carol fostered that aspect throughout the year. This speaks to Carol's assumption that reading enjoyment should be modeled by adults (initial interview, 11.20.08) and to her obvious love of literature. This type of engagement is relational, a defining quality of an ideological perspective (Street, 1995), and Carol's underlying belief that adults have a responsibility to model reading indicates a leaning toward an autonomous model of literacy which values school literacy. This dyad's discourses surrounding these books built a type of long conversation (Mercer, 1995) within their figured world of tutoring, meaning that they could refer to these books in terms of specific characters, words, or plot elements because of their shared experiences. For example, Jason quickly recognized Carol's reference to a shared book after he started discussing "froggies":

Jason: Hmm, what do I think about froggies? They jump really high,

           they can jump all the way up to there, if they get a really good

           view …

Carol: And if you had one, you could say, "Frooooggggggyyyy!"

Jason: In that book (big grin).

Carol: Yeah.   (12.8.08)

Jason was not shy about asking questions or stating his opinion. For example, when

starting to read a book about a scrubbing machine that washes everything in its path,

Jason volunteered, "He looks pooped from all that scrubbing." (5.7.09) Their dialogue

reflected Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism, of addressivity and answerability as they

co-constructed meaning in relationship with each other and the text.

        Change over time. In Carol's final interview (5.20.09), she stated that she

enjoyed learning specifics about teaching beginning readers, especially appreciating word

sorts and the idea of rereading. She saw progress with Jason; he could now "do" vowel

sounds more proficiently than at the beginning of the program and he was reading at a

higher level with more fluency. She emphasized that interaction with good books was

crucial to foster Jason's positive attitude toward reading.

        Carol also revealed in this end-of-year interview that she had seen Jason before

being assigned to work with him when she helped in the classroom each week. She did

not tell me this at the beginning of the year when I asked about her perception of Jason,

but she now shared that she knew Jason did not stay on task well and she did not

anticipate that he would be eager to learn or engaging. Jason's bubbly personality

surprised Carol when she started working with him, and data revealed that Carol immediately came to appreciate and interact with Jason's humor and active engagement.

Carol also discussed how she was frustrated at the beginning of the program when it became evident that Jason had difficulty learning to decode. She reported that now she realized "that's just what we're facing with him," so she did not blame herself for not knowing how to help him. Carol also said that Jason's confidence was better now but that he needed to continue progressing and finding ways to enjoy reading to keep his confidence bolstered. Jason "can do it" when he was slowed down, she said. When we discussed this further, Carol said that it was hard work for Jason to decode some words and that sometimes it was just easier for him to have someone else give him the word. She then thought for a second and added that another possibility was that decoding was overwhelming for Jason.

These last statements were surprising to me. While I did not want Carol to blame herself for Jason's difficulties, I did not realize that she still thought that Jason might be deliberately choosing not to read words. Carol's assumption that Jason's actions during tutoring might be behavioral had not completely changed from the beginning of the year, but she now acknowledged there could be an alternative perspective (that decoding was overwhelming for Jason). Carol's comments reveal her continuing struggle to make sense of this experience. My authoritative voice and other voices competed for her to internalize them, but it was evident that she still could not choose which ones to accept. She was, perhaps, seeking another voice that would make more sense within her experiences and histories.

Summary of Research Question 1

Charlene began positioning Keisha as a strong reader early on in their relationship (discussed more fully later) and encouraged her to use literacy as a tool to think beyond literal comprehension toward thinking in signs, reflecting an ideological perspective that emphasized relational learning and recognized the complexity of reading embedded within assumptions of identity. Charlene's internally persuasive voices had changed as she questioned her understandings of beginning reading and allowed other voices to influence her.

Ellie also began positioning Joe early on as a capable and collaborative reader (also discussed later). Her attention to detail could have been resisted, but Joe accepted it as part of the figured world they were co-creating. Their discussions reflected Bahtin's (1981) dialogism in terms of collaboratively constructing meaning in relationship with text. Joe also accepted Ellie's authoritative voice when it came to his insecurity; he eventually seemed to accept that voice into his intrapersonal plane (Diaz et al, 1990) as well. The idea that it was acceptable not to know something became a cornerstone of their figured world of tutoring.

Carol (Jason) seemed to believe that academic literacy was superior and vital as a commodity for all children to possess. She was inexperienced in working with children academically, which might have caused her to not perceive when more explicit scaffolding was needed. Carol also spoke to the relational aspect of learning, reflecting an ideological model of literacy in which learning occurs within a social environment.

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As seen in Carol's final interview, her assumptions about behavioral choices being a cause of Jason's reading difficulties had begun to entertain another possibility. Her attempts to understand the situation were evident; it was clear that various voices were competing for acceptance, reflecting the ongoing tensions between authoritative and internally persuasive voices.

Tutoring dyads began creating unique figured worlds (Holland et al, 2001) as soon as they started working together. Bakhtin's (1981) dialogism became evident as I examined assumptions brought to the development of those figured worlds. Assumptions, both explicit and implicit, came from several sources of knowledge: sociocultural backgrounds, word-of-mouth, authoritative voices, and media, and they reflected the inevitable ongoing tension within their chorus of voices (Guitiérrez, 1995). Adults' assumptions combined with the life and linguistic experiences of the students, affected new negotiations of meaning with students within these temporal spaces in which they were co-constructing meaning of literacy, of how they would talk and act when they interacted together with text.

Vygotsky (1986) and Bakhtin (1981) both argued that learning is contextual and relational. All three tutors acknowledged the relational aspect of literacy when talking about the affective results of shared reading experiences. What became evident was that assumptions shaped how tutors addressed students within their figured worlds. Students' answers (even if silence) served to question assumptions or reify them. In Charlene's (Keisha) case, her assumption that learning to read was relatively simple was challenged, resulting in modification of that assumption. Carol's (Jason) assumption that not learning

to read was either cognitive or behavioral was challenged by my authoritative voice. Her experiences with Jason apparently served to reify her assumption, yet she eventually accepted the possibility of an alternative interpretation.

Other researchers, for the most part, have not pursued inquiry into assumptions brought to tutoring sessions by volunteers. Dawes (2007) studied relationships between adults and students in a read-aloud program in which adult mentors read aloud with children at an elementary school (K-6) for one hour a week. Her analysis of three relationships was taken from a one-time, one-hour observation of each dyad's interaction. Most of her analysis about prior assumptions comes through evidence implicit in the interactions. Two of the dyads seemed to operate on an ideological model of literacy in which relationship was vital and where dialogue and interaction between each of them and with the text was critical for co-constructing meaning. The children in these dyads were actively engaged and seemed to greatly enjoy themselves as they read with their mentors. Another dyad seemed to be operating on the adult's assumption of an autonomous model of literacy, where school literacy is superior, the text is a neutral source of information, and where specific skills are objectified. Reading for this adult seemed to be a commodity necessary for future success, and the student appeared withdrawn and unengaged.

Dawes (2003) also studied one dyad in this program for five months. She found that this read-aloud pair seemed to operate on an assumption that reading was fun and strongly relational. Their interaction was lively and entertaining, reflecting an ideological model of learning where relationship was vital for learning. In this type of

relationship, meaning was co-constructed and these partners seemed to make connections freely with texts and each other's lives, building a long conversation (Mercer, 1995). Discussions were a vehicle for co-constructing understanding and connections, again reflecting Bakhtin's (1981) dialogism within this ideological model (Street, 1995).

My study verifies that adults' assumptions can impact the dynamics of relationships with their students. However, my research extends hers by acknowledging the agency of the children involved. Within the dyads in my study, students actively co-constructed figured worlds with their adult tutors. This will become more evident as I discuss findings from the next questions.

I will now move on to discuss the second question concerning how volunteers took knowledge gained during training sessions, interpreted it, and applied it to tutoring sessions.

Research Question 2: What specific skills and competencies were emphasized in tutoring sessions? Did students utilize these skills and competencies without prompting as time progressed?

Introduction

The following section describes specific examples of instruction observed during tutoring sessions with each dyad. As described previously, I focused analysis on three observations (audiotaped and transcribed, with accompanying field notes) for each dyad. The observations I selected occurred roughly during the beginning, middle and end of the program (see Table 4.4) so that change in relationships, teaching strategies, or student progress could be documented. To analyze this question, I reviewed my training agendas and transcripts from tutoring sessions, coding for the foci of each segment. I was able to group these codes into categories, adjusting as I revisited the data each time, finding categories that were too broad or too narrow and defining subcategories. One category (helping the student stay focused) was deleted from analysis since it was not a literacy skill, but an overall learning or life skill that was sometimes a need for tutors to emphasize, but even so, they did so more in terms of management during tutoring rather than as a skill. The data I had from this category seemed inconsequential within the broader picture of tutoring, and the data did not seem to add to my understanding of this question.

When analyzing the second part of this question, I revisited the transcripts, reviewing the examples of various skills and competencies I had collected and going

through each dyad's transcripts at one sitting so as to get a picture of any change over time. I also reviewed field notes and final interview transcripts for this question. I found it difficult to pinpoint specific moments of change because the tutors all seemed to step in quickly if the children hesitated, partly because of their limited time with their student and partly because they believed they should provide strong assistance. I answered this question by reviewing all the data sources described and taking a more general perspective.

The training agendas are included in Appendices M-P, and the lesson plans with tutor feedback from each dyad in this study are included in Appendices Q-S. Along with the lesson plans are student writings (either coinciding with lesson plans or representative) and the book logs of books read during tutoring sessions.

This question was important to my understanding of the complexities of relationships among participants in the tutoring program because the answers to this question speak to prior assumptions that might have influenced tutors' interpretations and to resistances from students that might have influenced applications. If tutors had chosen to approach tutoring sessions with different strategies than had been presented through training, that might have spoken to how texts and readers were positioned in the relationships, which will be addressed in the third question. Therefore, although this question might seem simplistic, the data has possibilities of greatly affecting tutor-student dynamics.

By separating literacy into subcategories of skills and competencies, I run the risk of being perceived as decontextualizing and neutralizing text, of abandoning my premise

that reading is co-constructed in the boundaries between text and reader and between other readers (Street, 1995). When teaching others how to teach reading and writing, it was helpful to break the process into components which were easier to conceptualize. When doing so, however, I always explicitly assumed that these components, although considered separately and sometimes taught separately, were always vitally and inextricably interrelated within the process of making meaning with text. Therefore, I was acknowledging the tension between the two models of literacy (autonomous and ideological) and choosing aspects from each to best serve student needs.

I will address the first half of the question first: *What specific skills and competencies were emphasized in tutoring sessions?* The volunteer tutors engaged their students in the following broad instructional categories: decoding, comprehension, fluency, word study, and writing. Each instructional category had subcategories of particular skills. For example, writing contained prewriting, spelling in writing, and mechanics.

In the first subcategory under decoding, letter-sound relationships, I will describe examples from Carol's tutoring from the beginning, middle, and end of the year because her change over time in how she addressed this subcategory was important to note. I have not included that type of progression in any other subcategory; rather, I have included examples of how all the tutors applied knowledge from their program training in various subcategories.

In each dyad, some subskills were emphasized more than others, depending on student need. It is difficult to separate the influences that made this so. Tutors may have

adapted their instruction as they themselves understood their students' unique needs, or they may have made adjustments resulting from our ongoing discussions about the children, or there may have been other influences of which I was unaware. I suspect the differences in approaches are due to unique combinations of factors.

After a discussion of how each tutor applied knowledge in their tutoring sessions for each instructional strategy and particular skills, I will discuss changes I observed over time in terms of whether or not each student internalized strategies, implementing them without prompting as the year progressed, addressing the second half of the question: *Did students utilize these skills and competencies without prompting as time progressed?*

Dates of Tutoring Observations Included in Data			
Participants	**Beginning**	**Middle**	**End**
Carol & Jason	12.8.08	3.30.09	5.7.09
Charlene & Keisha	12.4.08	1.12.09	3.23.09
Ellie & Joe	11.24.08	3.16.09	5.4.09

Table 4.5: Tutoring Observations

Decoding

Letter-sound relationships. Early readers necessarily spend time practicing word attack skills. Reliance on letter sound relationships as primary decoding skills was evident in Carol's tutoring with Jason, although she also frequently used picture cues and, to a lesser degree, context cues. In this case, I chose Carol and Jason to illustrate this skill because other dyads did not spend as much time with this strategy as Carol and Jason. Also, in this instance, I included examples from the beginning, middle and end of

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the year because there was definite change evidenced as the year progressed in how Carol facilitated instruction in this area.

In the example below from the beginning of the year, Jason attempted to read *stripes* while rereading a familiar book and Carol encouraged him to use picture cues by pointing to a fish with bright stripes. The text read, "*Fish with stripes*."

1   Jason: *Fish with –*

2   Carol: What does this fish have on him? What do those look like?

3   Jason: Uh, they look like – those things?

4   Carol: Uh huh. The yellow on the fish, what do those look like?

         (intercom interruption)

5   Carol: Well, let's look. … the *i*

6   Jason: Yellow?

7   Carol: How do you say that, the *i* (looking to researcher)

8   DK: It says its own name.

9   Carol: It says its own name in this, so it'd be *–ipes*, with that other

10   sound in the middle and it's these (pointing to picture)

11   [What do these]

12   Jason: [/sss/]

13   Carol: look like, the yellow things on the fish?

14   Jason: *Stripes*?

15   Carol: *Stripes*! [Right.]

16   Jason: [*Fish with*] *stripes*.   (12.8.08)

Carol was surprised during training when I demonstrated how books for beginning readers use pictures as support for reading. She responded that she thought it was "cheating" for beginning readers to use the pictures, and the news that it was not only permissible but desirable seemed to be a liberating revelation (field notes, 10.28.08). She embraced that concept and used it in this excerpt, clearly asking Jason to refer to the picture as contextual support for the word.

Further consideration of this example included noting that Jason started his word study with the Letter Name developmental spelling stage (Bear et al, 2008), meaning that Jason was focusing on practicing short vowel sounds within single syllable words. The VCe spelling pattern had not been explicitly studied in tutoring yet, so it was a bit of a stretch for Jason to decode *stripes* at this point. The *str* blend was a more difficult blend, as well; Jason had worked with two-letter blends, but he had less experience with three letter blends. Carol opted to start with a picture cue (lines 2, 4), hoping that this combined with his prior experience with the book, would help him recognize the word. When it did not, she focused on the long vowel, giving him the "says its own name" clue and then pronouncing the rime (line 9). Once Jason used the rime, the picture, and the initial sound /s/, he was able to read the word.

By the middle of the year, I had asked Carol to use sounds when pointing to letters rather than just naming the letters; it would be better for Jason to immediately connect the visual representation with the sound since he seemed to need more practice making these connections. Carol tried to make the change, but it appeared to be a difficult habit to break. In the following excerpt, Jason tried to translate the letters into

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sounds at Carol's request, with one misstep (lines 3-6). The word Jason attempted to read was *sniff*.

1	Carol:	Look at the letters. What's the *s* sound?
2	Jason:	/s/
3	Carol:	What about the *n*?
4	Jason:	*Soon*
5	Carol:	What's the *n* sound?
6	Jason:	/*n*/
7	Carol:	Uh huh. If you have an *s* and an *n*, /*sn*/
8	Jason:	/*sn*/
9	Carol:	And then you know this word. You know the *i-f*.
10	Jason:	*Off*
11	Carol:	/*sn*/, /*if*/
12	Jason:	*Sniff* (3.30.09)

Carol separated the letters *s* and *n* (lines 1, 3) rather than focusing on them as a blend or onset, which might have been more helpful for Jason. Carol then gave Jason the /*sn*/ onset and asked him for the sound of the rime (lines 7-9). When Jason answered incorrectly (line 10), Carol gave him the sounds for both the onset and the rime, which Jason then combined correctly. This example reflected Carol's progression to using sounds rather than just letter names when assisting Jason with decoding. She still referred to the letters by name, but she was more often including sounds when she realized the need.

By the end of the year, Carol's promptings were more succinct, and she used
sounds more often than relying on letter names. The text below read as follows: "*She
turned it on. The machine went glop! Wishy-washy, wishy-washy. Bubble, bubble, plop!
It scrubbed her table. It scrubbed her chair. It scrubbed her dress. It scrubbed her
hair*" (Cowley, 1998). In line 2 of the following excerpt, Carol simply pronounced the
initial blend, followed by saying the word *glop*.

    1   Jason: *She turned it on. The machine went bubble*, I mean *gop*.

    2   Carol: /gl/, *glop*

    3   Jason: *glop. Wishy-washy, wishy-washy, bubble, bubble, pop.*

    4   Carol: Ok, is that *pop*?

    5   Jason: *Plop*.

    6   Carol: *Plop*, yeah.

    7   Jason: *It scrubbed her chair, table. It scrubbed her chair*.

    8   Carol: Mm hmm.

    9   Jason: *And it scrubbed her hair, head*

    10   Carol: /dr/

    11   Jason: /dr/, *dress*?

    12   Carol: Uh huh.   (5.7.09)

When Jason missed the initial blend in line 3, Carol refocused his attention on the missed
word, which was sufficient. In line 7, Jason self-corrected and Carol quietly affirmed.
When, in lines 9-11, Jason over-relied on the picture, Carol simply focused his attention
on the print by pointing to the word *dress* and pronouncing the initial blend.

Carol had become much more "smooth" in her tutoring style at this point, seeming to know when Jason simply needed to focus on text details. This aligned directly with our ongoing discussions of Jason's needs and my recommendations, and reflected the long conversations they had created within their figured world. By the end of the year, Carol developed a stronger working relationship with Jason, seeming to understand and appreciate his learning strengths and needs, which allowed her to scaffold his learning more efficiently. This progression indicated that ongoing guidance was helpful in supporting Carol's growth within the continuity of their relationship.

One more example from Carol and Jason's experiences warrants mention within this category. Jason seemed to need more precise instruction on differentiating short vowel sounds, so I suggested helping him become aware of the placement of his lips, teeth, and tongue when making those sounds, providing a multisensory approach to help bolster Jason's skills (Morris, 2008; Gunning, 2010). I provided Carol with small mirrors to keep with her tutoring supplies, one for her and one for Jason; Carol was asked to exaggerate her facial expressions when practicing short vowel sounds and to model watching herself in the mirror. Although this strategy was usually used as Jason completed word study activities, being able to differentiate sounds supported reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. In the following excerpt, Jason is practicing /ĕ/ and /ă/.

1	Jason:	/ĕ/
2	Carol:	You remember what that looks like? /ĕ/ (emphasizing
3		with mouth)

4	Jason:	/ĕ/
5	Carol:	/ĕ/ /ĕ/. Right, so that will have the short e sound, /b/ -ed.
6		And then we have the /ă/, -ad sound. Remember,
7		[what your mouth does when you say /ă/]?
8	Jason:	[/s/ -ad] /ă/
9	Carol:	You say, look in the mirror and say /ă/.
10	Jason:	Didn't we already do these?
11	Carol:	/ă/
12	Jason:	/ă/ (5.7.09)

At the end of the word sorting activity, Carol reviewed the vowel sounds, having Jason

focus again on how his mouth formed the sounds while pronouncing entire words. Jason

enjoyed the novelty of this activity and seemed fascinated while watching his mouth form

sounds. Over time, Jason's ability to aurally and orally differentiate short vowel sounds

seemed to improve, based on field notes of Carol's comments and with Jason's improved

scores on a phonemic awareness assessment and a spelling inventory, which will be

discussed with the next research question.

Chunking, spelling patterns, context cues, and previewing. Deliberate, overt

focus on letter-sound relationships in terms of letter-by-letter analysis was observed

rarely with the other dyads. With both Ellie and Charlene, decoding seemed to involve

focusing more on spelling patterns, chunking (pronouncing sections of words), using

context cues, and previewing words. Therefore, I will present one example for each of

those foci from either Ellie/Joe or Charlene/Keisha, depending on whose example demonstrated the focus most clearly.

Chunking. In the following example, Keisha stumbled on d*ressing-up*, so Charlene directed her attention to the second syllable and then asked her to say the word now that she knew separate chunks.

1	Keisha:	*Dress* uh,	
2	Charlene:	What's that part say? (pointing to *–ing*)	
3	Keisha:	*-ing*	
4	Charlene:	Mm hmm, can you put it all together?	
5	Keisha:	*Dressing-Up*	
6	Charlene:	That's it.	(1.12.09)

During training, I described chunking as being the next step after letter-sound relationships, emphasizing that we should move toward chunking larger sections of words as quickly as possible rather than "sounding out" letter-by-letter. Charlene knew that *–ing* was an ending that Keisha had experience with and used that as her cue.

Spelling patterns. Early in the year, Joe stumbled on *staffroom*. Ellie used a combination of focusing Joe's attention on chunking (lines 5, 9), the initial blend sound (line 12), and picture cues (line 11). It is important to realize that Joe was rereading this book and that he and Ellie had previously discussed both the pronunciation and the meaning of *staffroom*.   The text read, "*Where is Miss Pool? She is not in the playground. She is not in the classroom. She is not in the library. She is not in the staffroom*" (Cowley, 1992). Some of Joe's reading is indecipherable (…).

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1	Joe:	*Where is Miss Pool? … She is … She is not in the library.*
2		*She is not in* I don't know that.
3	Ellie:	Let's use our fingers. [*She is not in the*] (pointing to text)
4	Joe:	[*She is not in the*]
5	Ellie:	Remember we split it up before? It's a compound word.
6	Joe:	…
7	Ellie:	What's the beginning sound?
8	Joe:	I forget it.
9	Ellie:	What's the last word?
10	Joe:	*Room*.
11	Ellie:	Uh huh. What kind of room is this? Look at the picture –
12		get your mouth ready for the *s-t*, */st/*
13	Joe:	*Staffroom*?
14	Ellie:	Yeah, that's right. (11.24.08)

Although this is in line with the training I provided, when Joe didn't respond to the initial sound prompt (line 7), Ellie moved to the second syllable (line 9), demonstrating her ability to change approaches quickly. Joe became easily discouraged when frustrated and Ellie switched his focus to the second syllable, which she knew he could read. At that point, she added the picture support (line 11) and helped him with the initial blend (line 12).

     Context cues. Tutor training emphasized using context cues as part of the total reading experience. Anything the student read had to make sense, and as they

encountered unknown words, semantic and syntactic cues were considered important

considerations along with graphophonic cues (Johnston et al, 1998). This was reflected

in all the tutors' work, but Ellie, in particular, focused a good deal on using context cues

as Joe read, as evidenced in the following excerpt, which read, "…*take a peek. My friend*

is back for hide and seek" (Saucier, n.d.)

1	Joe:	*take a peek. My friend is back for sear and seek.*
2	Ellie:	for?
3	Joe:	*hide and seek.*
4	Ellie:	That makes sense, doesn't it? When you're doing seeking,
5		hide and seek.	(11.24.08)

Using context cues is an important skill to teach since comprehension is commonly

considered the purpose of reading. Children need to self-monitor comprehension as they

read, and although a great deal of attention is, at first, focused on graphophonic cues,

syntactic and semantic cues are also vital (Gunning, 2010).

Previewing. Another technique for helping students decode words while reading

is to preview vocabulary (Johnston et al, 1998). I often suggested particular words to

preview when writing lesson plans, although I made it clear that they were only

suggestions. Charlene took it upon herself in the following example to help Keisha

notice repetitive words after they took a picture walk through a new book, *The Little Red*

Hen (Cowley, 1986).

1	Charlene:	I want to look at a word, a couple of words that
2		happen a lot in this story. …go way back to the

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3		beginning. Do you know this word right here?
4	Keisha:	*Help*.
5	Charlene:	*Help*. Look at that; almost every page I see that
6		word. (turning pages, pointing)
7	Keisha:	*Help*.
8	Charlene:	Not every page, but
9	Keisha:	*Help*. (pointing)
10	Charlene:	So that keeps happening in the story. Let's see if
11		we can see another word that happens in this story.
12		Do you know that word?
13	Keisha:	*No*.
14	Charlene:	*No*. I think I noticed that word a lot in this story.

(1.12.09)

Charlene knew that by helping Keisha focus on the word *help* prior to reading, it would

help her recognize it when reading it in context. *Help* was a word that Keisha might have

misread. *No* was a word that Charlene knew Keisha would most likely not miss, but she

pointed it out as a repetitive word in the story.

Summary of decoding. Decoding involves incorporating graphophonic,

syntactic, and semantic cues (Clay, 2002), which I continually emphasized in training and

through ongoing discussions with tutors whose children were focusing on improving their

word attack skills. Using multiple strategies for word attack was recommended in

prevailing research on early reading instruction, and ongoing feedback and support

enabled tutors to expand the scope of decoding instructional strategies, speaking to the importance of the continuity in their relationships which provided them opportunity to co-construct long conversations within tutoring dyads. These intense one-to-one relationships over time enabled tutors and students to remember past experiences and build on them. Tutors were more capable of understanding learning opportunities, capturing each moment immediately at the zone of proximal development in order to build understanding and competence. Each moment was dependent on the specificity of the text and the individual strengths and needs of the child, reflecting the fact that reading is intensely contextual as well as relational.

Comprehension Strategies

The following section describes tutors and children practicing various skills to build and enhance comprehension. Although I recognize that comprehension is co-constructed through relationships between readers and texts, that it is not a subskill to be decontextualized, it is, nevertheless, sometimes useful when teaching persons how to teach reading to discuss comprehension as a separate component. As previously mentioned, though, the assumption that was both implicit and explicitly stated was that comprehension may be a focus of instruction at times, but that it is part of the process of making sense of text. In fact, it is often considered the goal of the reading process (Altwerger et al, 2007; Clay, 2001; Gunning, 2010; Luke, 1995; McKenna & Stahl, 1990; Morris, 2008).

Therefore, I am separating comprehension as a particular instructional category because the data revealed tutors' frequent instruction of various skills to foster comprehension. These subcategories include: using background knowledge, making personal connections, making textual connections, noticing important details, drawing inferences, making predictions, and developing vocabulary. In some instances, examples are summarized, but in most of them, transcript excerpts are included with the analysis.

Background knowledge. Understanding children's backgrounds and anticipating when there may be gaps in their knowledge when introducing a new book is a key component of reading instruction for any age (Gunning, 2010; McKenna & Stahl, 1990; Morris, 2008). Keisha, normally very quiet, spoke up at the end of a read-aloud book in the following excerpt. In the book, the child wanted everything in her room to be blue, but it was not until the light was turned off and moonlight streamed through the window that her room appeared blue. After Keisha questioned how everything could turn blue, Charlene realized that Keisha had not been outside with only moonlight. Her explanation is a bit naïve, assuming an early bedtime for Keisha and not taking into account an urban environment in which moonlight would rarely, if ever, be the primary source of light, but it is still an example of Keisha's active engagement with text and Charlene's attempt to compensate for lack of background experience that hindered comprehension.

1	Keisha:	How can the light make everything blue?
2	Charlene:	Ha, that's a good question. Have you ever been
3		outside at night when it was only the moon?
4	Keisha:	No.

5	Charlene:	Well, of course not cause you're probably in bed
6		asleep by that time. But, if you go out, it's not
7		exactly blue, quite like that, but it does kind of,
8		sometimes the moonlight makes things look a little
9		bit bluish. And, and you can't see the other colors
10		very much because it's dark. You'll have to check
11		that out sometime when you're allowed to stay up
12		late, check it out or at least look out the window to
13		see what it looks like out there. (1.12.09)

Building background knowledge was embedded within instruction, sometimes in one or two lines at a time. Because tutors were working one-to-one, they could respond immediately to a question or any hesitation that might indicate a lack of comprehension. Also, when introducing a new book, tutors usually asked the children a question or two to gauge their experiences with particular topics. In most cases, children asked questions when they did not understand something, no matter what the reason, like Keisha did in the previous example.

Making personal connections. Personally connecting with characters or situations is a way to actively engage in the text and enhance comprehension (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2001). All three tutors facilitated those types of connections and students seemed to instinctively mention when something in the text reminded them of something from their own experiences.

In the following excerpt, Ellie was reminded of a personal story Joe shared on an earlier occasion. The new book they were reading involved a baker making a very large number of pancakes. This particular excerpt reveals Joe's delight in sharing amazing stories about himself, bringing humor into the situation as we marveled over his eating abilities. As Joe returned to the story, he smiled and was eager to read more about this character's exaggerated experiences with pancakes.

1   Jason: *Stack of pancakes*. A stack over your head.

2   Ellie: How many did you say you ate the other day, like 20 or

3   something? (Jason nods yes.)

4   DK: Oh, wow.

5   Ellie: Mm hmm, his dad only ate three, but he ate twenty.

6   DK: Oh, my.

7   Jason: We betted.

8   Ellie: Yeah, they had a bet going.

9   DK: Really? (laughs with E. and J.)   {3.16.09}

Obviously, Jason's personal connection brought his sense of humor to the forefront of his reading experience. Although personally connecting to the story, in this case, was unnecessary for comprehension, it enhanced active engagement with text. Children often spontaneously made personal connections and tutors often either modeled their own connections or asked questions to stimulate connections. On the part of both adults and children, this seemed to be a strategy that was automatically employed. Children had experienced this strategy modeled and used in classroom reading events (as evidenced

during my classroom observations), and it seemed natural for all participants to mention when something in the story "struck a chord" in their own experiences.

Background experience

Carol and Jason read a book about making cookies, and prior to starting to read, Carol asked about Jason's experiences baking cookies.

1	Carol:	Yeah, or cutting them out. Have you ever used cookie
2		cutters?
3	Jason:	I used, when it's Christmas, I have Christmas of them, and
4		when Santa always comes, I always make the cookies.
5	Carol:	Oh, neat.
6	Jason:	And when, and when I put my stockings up, he always
7		gives me something back, like he always gives me a cookie
8		back.
9	Carol:	Oh, neat. One of them you made?
10	Jason:	Yeah. (3.9.09)

Carol followed Jason's lead quite often, showing interest in his stories, comments, and questions, helping him feel comfortable talking his way through text. I encouraged this during tutoring, within reason, knowing that this much talking during reading was not possible in a classroom. Tutoring could be an outlet for children like Jason who seem to think and learn through conversation.

Making textual connections. Another type of connection that the tutors and I discussed during training was connecting texts. This was done occasionally, as the

opportunity arose. In this short excerpt, Carol and Jason read a new book about frogs, which stimulated a personal connection with Jason. He excitedly talked about why he liked frogs and wanted to get one (lines 1-5). In Carol's response, she used a familiar silly tone of voice she had used when reading another book with a frog (line 7).

1	Jason:	Froggies! I want to get a froggy.
2	Carol:	(chuckling) You like frogs?
3	Jason:	Yes. … jump and jump. Hmm, what do I
4		think about froggies? They jump really high, they can
5		jump all the way up to there, if they get a really good view
6		…
7	Carol:	And if you had one, you could say, "Frooooggggggyyyy!"
8	Jason:	In that book. (big grin) {12.8.08}

Even though the word and tone of voice were used in a new context, the reference to a previously read book was clear and Jason reacted positively to the sudden connection of one text to another. Again, this was not necessary for comprehension in this case, but it enhanced Jason's engagement with the new text, and illustrates the building of a long conversation (Mercer, 1995) between Carol and Jason, in which points of reference like this to shared experiences were instantly recognized.

Noticing important details. Helping students notice details important to the story is another strategy that I observed tutors using even though I did not include specific directions in lesson plans. We talked in general terms during training sessions about helping students self-monitor comprehension, a topic that did not seem to need to

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be re-emphasized since all three students freely commented when something did not make sense. Tutors seemed to find ways to focus their students' attention on crucial details; this strategy use seemed innate. There were many occasions when the students themselves noticed details that interested them, whether or not the details were crucial to the story. This occurred from the beginning, as soon as they started feeling comfortable with the tutor and/or engaged with an interesting text.

In the following example, Jason reread a favorite story about many fish and one shark in which the colorful illustrations enhanced the plot. Although he'd read this book several times before, he continually delighted in pointing out the shark as it gradually came out of hiding and scared the fish, as captured below. Because this excerpt was so long, extending through the reading of the entire book, I have deleted some lines of the transcript that were unnecessary for the purpose of this example. Those missing lines are marked as =====. The remaining lines are numbered consecutively. The title of the book was *All Kinds of Fish* (Phillips, n.d.).

1	Jason:	*All Kinds of Fish* (cover). *All Kinds of Fish* (title page). I
2		see the shark.
3	Carol:	Yes, he's in there, isn't he?
4	Jason:	I bet the puff fish doesn't see.
5	Carol:	Uh huh.
6	Jason:	He's looking up. (pointing to the puff fish)
7	Carol:	That's true.
8	Jason:	Uh! (giggles, pointing to shark half-hidden in illustration)

9		He's on him.
10	Carol:	Yeah, I see the fin.

11	Jason:	(turns page) Yee-ow!
12	Carol:	(laughs) There he is. He's come all the way up in the open
13		this time, huh?

14	Jason:	That was funny! (with great enthusiasm)
15	Carol:	That is a funny book; I like it too.
16	Jason:	He's floating that way. (pointing to last picture)
17	Carol:	I guess they're trying to get away any way they can, huh?

(12.8.08)

Again, Jason clearly comprehended the story at this point, but the first time he read the

book, noticing the progression of the shark and the reactions of the fish helped him

comprehend the plot. Engaging in dialogue each time he reread enhanced his

engagement with the text and reinforced the idea that sometimes details are important to a

story.

While reading a book aloud, Charlene talked about the close proximity of the

characters' houses which facilitated constant visiting back and forth during a long night.

> Ch: *When they got-* Look, they must just live right (pointing), that's
>
> why they kept walking there, huh? That must be Max's house and
>
> that's Froggy's right there. Kind of convenient, isn't it?
>
> (12.4.08)

Modeling strategies is an important instructional tool that that helps children understand how good readers process text (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2001; Gunning, 2010). Charlene modeled how noticing details in the illustration could enhance her understanding of the story.

Drawing inferences. Another aspect of comprehension I emphasized during training is drawing inferences. Beginning readers seem to enjoy inferring characters' feelings from both text and illustrations. Students often asked questions or made comments that demonstrated their active involvement in making sense of the text through inferences.

In the example below, Ellie and Joe read a new nonfiction book about growing and harvesting apples. Ellie followed Joe's lead in discussing the issue of how apples were loaded onto a truck; they were looking at a picture of apple crates stacked on the ground, to which Ellie referred in her comments (lines 5, 9).

1	Jason:	*Apples are picked by hand. Apples are shipped to, in*
2		*trucks*. Why would they pour, pour them in? …pour them
3		in, the, the whole apples would probably be enough for you
4		to dive in.
5	Ellie:	I think they would go and load them up like this cause if
6		they poured them all, they would get bruised. They pick
7		them [and …]
8	Jason:	[Or they would] overflow.
9	Ellie:	They could, yeah. So I think they just keep them in those.

We discussed at length during both training and follow up discussions that the purpose of

reading was comprehension. I continually emphasized talking "naturally" about texts

before, during, and after reading. Ellie followed Joe's lead in this discussion, picking up

on his question and participating in a short discussion. I doubt this was a result of

training; Ellie was, by nature, interested in hearing others' perspectives and engaging

them in conversation. It follows that she would do the same while tutoring.

Early in the year, Charlene asked Keisha how the main character was feeling,

based on the illustration. Charlene responded to Keisha's answer of "scary" by providing

her with word choices that might broaden her vocabulary and model a different choice of

part of speech.

1	Charlene:	Look at Froggy's face. What do you think Froggy's
2		feeling?
3	Keisha:	Scary.
4	Charlene:	He looks a little nervous or scared, doesn't he?

(12.4.08)

As she offered these choices of words, Charlene still affirmed Keisha's answer.

Later in the year, Charlene used a read-aloud in which diminishing font was used

to illustrate the diminishing tone of the character's words as she fell asleep. After reading

those words aloud with the implied intonation, Charlene asked Keisha about the font.

| 1 | Charlene: | Why do you think it looks like that? It says, *blue,* |
| 2 | | *only sleep blue*. Why is she talking like that? |

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3	Keisha:	She tired.
4	Charlene:	You think maybe she's starting to fall asleep?

(1.12.09)

Again, Charlene used other words to express Keisha's idea while affirming Keisha's thought.

Making predictions. Prediction is a strategy that readers use to continually make sense during reading. Prediction can occur before and during reading (Gunning, 2010; McKenna & Stahl, 1990; Morris, 2008). All the tutors prompted their children to predict regularly, most notably during picture walks prior to reading new books. An excellent example is provided by Charlene and Keisha from the beginning of the year. This is a lengthy excerpt, but it is worthy of inclusion in this case. They are previewing (picture walking) a book about Froggy who goes on his first sleepover at a friend's house across the street. Froggy and his friend take turns being scared or homesick and spend the night going back and forth between houses.

1	Charlene:	Yeah, so this is *Froggy's* [*Sleepover*].
2	Keisha:	[*Sleepover*]
3	Charlene:	So let's just look through the pictures first and see if
4		we can figure out what we think is going to happen
5		in this story.
6	Keisha:	Froggy (pointing to the character)
7	Charlene:	What's Froggy got, do you think?
8	Keisha:	I don't know.

9	Charlene:	Hmm, it looks like a big bag of something. Let's
10		see,
11	Keisha:	…
12	Charlene:	It's nighttime, I'm noticing. Oh- (turning page)
13	Keisha:	It's not nighttime.
14	Charlene:	It's morning. Yeah, what's that?
15	Keisha:	Bus.
16	Charlene:	Bus.
17	Keisha:	(turning page) He eat cookies.
18	Charlene:	Ooh, yeah. Hmm, what's he … there?
19	Keisha:	He pull out the bag and take them …
20	Charlene:	Oh. Let's see, wonder if that's his mom.
21	Keisha:	That's, yeah.
22	Charlene:	You think?
23	Keisha:	(turning page) He's … his toothbrush.
24	Charlene:	Uh! He's got his toothbrush, can't forget that if
25		you're goin' on sleepover. Oh, a sleeping bag. Do
26		you suppose that's his friend that he's going to
27		sleep at their house?
28	Keisha:	Teddy bear.
29	Charlene:	Oooh. (turning page)
30	Keisha:	And […]

31	Charlene:	[That's a little scary.] Uh huh. Mmm, outside
32		in the dark. I wonder who that is.
33	Keisha:	Mmm, his mom.
34	Charlene:	You think so? (turning page) Oh, my goodness! I
35		don't think that's where that goes.
36	DK:	(chuckling)
37	Charlene:	Something happened there that wasn't supposed to,
38		I think. What do you think? Mm, mmm. (turning
39		page) Ooh, that's […]
40	Keisha:	[popping corn]
41	Charlene:	Yeah. Mmm, that can't be [his] parents, huh?
42	Keisha:	[…]
43	Charlene:	They went over to Froggy's house now. Now
44		where are they going? Back out in the dark again.
45	Keisha:	To his house.
46	Charlene:	You think?
47	Keisha:	Mm hmm.
48	Charlene:	Oh, my goodness. Well, let's find out. That looks
49		like a lot of traveling in that story. I don't know
50		what's happening. (12.4.08)

Charlene went beyond the standard procedure of having Keisha predict. She built a sense

of wonderment as they studied the pictures. They became book detectives, collaborating

to decide what clues the pictures revealed. Charlene expressed surprise (line 12) when she turned the page and saw that it was no longer night; this brought a comment from Keisha about it not being nighttime any longer (line 13), indicating her involvement in the mystery. In line 20 and again in lines 25-27, Charlene wondered aloud who particular characters were and when Keisha answered, she validated Keisha's theories without revealing her own. This clearly positioned Keisha as capable of making reasonable predictions at least as valuable as Charlene's would have been. In lines 23-25, Charlene followed Keisha's lead in commenting on the toothbrush and tying that object to the title. Charlene continued in this manner to the end of the book and then suggested that they needed to explore the text together because she didn't know what was happening in the story (lines 48-50). Charlene's skillful abilities were a result of having built a relationship with Keisha; Charlene knew what tone of voice to use, what types of questions to ask, and how to express seemingly genuine interest on her part. Keisha was completely engaged, both with the pictures and with the dialogue. The two participants sat side by side with their heads close together as they examined each page and discussed their impressions and predictions. Charlene's voice had gotten softer since their heads were so close together. Keisha was drawn in completely, participating fully in the book detective figured world created during these few minutes in which she co-created meaning with Charlene and the text (field notes, 12.4.08). The moment was intensely contextual and relational.

Developing vocabulary. Tutors consistently helped students develop vocabulary, sometimes while reading books and other times during word study activities. In this

short example, I return to Keisha and Charlene. During a word sort using the word *sag*, Charlene wondered aloud if Keisha understood the meaning of *sag*. When Keisha shook her head, Charlene described it. More than ten minutes later, as they were leaving to return to the classroom, Charlene saw another opportunity to use the word *sag* in their conversation when, following up on earlier comments about Keisha feeling tired, I asked her if her brain had woken up yet. She nodded and Charlene said, "All right. So we won't *sag*, we don't want to *sag* through the rest of the day, do we?" (3.23.09)

As mentioned before, Charlene was particularly smooth in drawing Keisha into learning experiences of all kinds and this example provided further evidence of that. All the tutors, however, used opportune moments to reinforce or extend understanding of something they had talked about previously. This is part of what Mercer (1995) referred to as long conversations, in which themes and ideas are revisited in different contexts, enabling learning to deepen and extend over time.

Summary. Obviously, not all these particular skills having to do with comprehension were foci in each tutoring session. As with decoding, tutors decided at the moment what strategy would foster comprehension. Even when basic comprehension was not the issue, practicing comprehension strategies facilitated experience and expertise in using them in various contexts. Certainly, training information and ongoing feedback and support built a foundation of strategies from which tutors could choose to suit particular situations. However, these descriptions again point to the ability of one-to-one relationships developed over time, forming the long conversations that enabled tutors to seize moments to facilitate movement through their students' zones of proximal

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development. All these moments depended on the specific text and the specific needs of the child, reflecting an ideological model of literacy of contextuality and relationships. Concurrently, they focused on aspects of reading as subskills at various times during instruction, reflecting an autonomous model and highlighting the continual dynamic tension of utilizing both models.

Fluency

During training sessions, I defined fluency as involving far more than simply rate and accuracy. We discussed fluency as phrasing, intonation, and smoothness. In this school, teachers used a measurement tool which assessed fluency as simply rate and accuracy. At this young age, and particularly with readers who were anxious, lacked self-confidence, and needed extra time for decoding, assessing their reading rate was not helpful. Gunning (2010) emphasized fluency as phrasing in meaningful groups of words, which I also prefer, along with intonation and a general smoothness.

Tutors understood that rereading familiar books at each session was one way to foster fluency, but I also mentioned the possibility of asking a child to reread a new book immediately after finishing it, particularly if they struggled the first time. This not only supported increased fluency, but it also assisted comprehension and self-confidence (Morris, 2008).

I observed Charlene when she decided during the tutoring session to ask Keisha to reread a new book. After Keisha struggled to read a book that Charlene thought was a familiar text (it turned out not to be), Charlene asked her to reread immediately, phrasing

her request in an affirming manner. "Good. ===   You did a good job. Let's read it one more time now you're, you're all warmed up" (1.12.09). Keisha agreed to do so and reread with improved fluency. She also continued the tutoring session on a more positive note.

Another example involved a strategy that I suggested Carol use with Jason. Echo reading was an instructional strategy which we discussed as a possibility during training. In this case, Jason often seemed to become very anxious when he started misreading words, quickly resorting to illogical guesses (field notes, 12.8.08, 1.5.09). To help him overcome that anxiety, Carol used echo reading frequently to assist Jason to read new books the first time. In echo reading, the tutor reads a line and the student immediately rereads the same line (Gunning, 2010). This models fluency and offers strong support to children like Jason who become easily anxious and confused (Morris, 2008).

I asked Carol to have Jason point to the words as she read and then she would point as Jason read, but Jason usually resisted pointing, so Carol pointed to the words as they both read. Jason was adept at negotiating the use of choral reading within their figured world of tutoring, sometimes reading a line without Carol, but most often preferring to read along with Carol as she read (5.7.09). This technically turned the activity into choral reading which still offered strong support. None of the other tutors used this particular strategy because their students did not seem to need that type of support. Jason was much more relaxed and willing to become involved with a new book when he knew that Carol would read with him the first time. Although I have listed this example under fluency, choral reading had broader benefits besides the psychological

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relaxation and ability to read more fluently. It also assisted comprehension and stimulated more active engagement with the text.

In all cases involving fluency skill, I did not consider fluency to be a goal in and of itself. Fluency can sometimes be a reflection of reading for meaning. It is helpful to recognize or decode quickly and more easily, to not repeat needlessly. Clay (2002) argued that reading improvement grew from time reading successfully. Improved fluency enables the child to feel successful and to engage more actively with the story or information (Gunning, 2010; Morris, 2008).

Word Study

Word study is a phrase that I preferred to *phonics* because of current political and social emphasis on the word *phonics* and because I think that *word study* more accurately describes the concept.   All three students were assessed to be in the Letter Name developmental spelling stage at the beginning of the year (Bear et al, 2008). After administering a spelling inventory, I focused each tutor's instruction on the particular spelling features within the Letter Name stage that their child needed. Word study in the *Book Buddies* tutoring model involved two aspects, practice with sight words and a focus on spelling patterns. I will discuss sight words first, using one excerpt to illustrate how sight word study was utilized successfully and one description of how sight word study out of context failed.

Sight words. Tutors were asked to work with their students during each session to develop quick recognition of sight words. This reinforced and extended their

classroom work with words taken from the Dolch list of sight words that corresponded

with those studied in the classroom and commonly used in their reading and writing.

Most of the time, tutors used the sight words provided them in a traditional flashcard

manner, in addition to finding them in context while reading and writing. Sometimes I

suggested a game or they spontaneously invented one.

Most of the time, the children seemed to enjoy racing through the words. Joe, in

particular, enjoyed counting the number of words he read correctly and quickly, taking

pride in having a higher count.

1 Joe: Let's see how many words I did.

2 Ellie: You wanna count them quick? I'm gonna guess how

3 many, 30?

4 Joe: (several seconds of counting)

5 Ellie: (when J gets to 31) Oh my. I didn't guess high enough.

6 Joe: 42. (11.24.08)

Jason, however, did not thrive with this method. He had difficulty remembering

words from one session to the next. Recognizing sight words in context was not much

more helpful; he often could not remember a word from one page to the next (3.9.09).

We changed the focus from automatic recall to untimed recall with support, but

eventually put the word bank cards away entirely, focusing on studying spelling patterns

and words in context.

Recognizing sight words out of context within a second can be a useful practice

technique, but Jason became anxious when he did not recognize a word. His decoding

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skills were weak and once he began struggling, he quickly seemed to spiral downward into anxious confusion (12.8.08). It was not a good instructional tool for him, so we stopped. Focusing on multisensory techniques to differentiate sounds and spelling features seemed more helpful for Jason.

Spelling features. Word study in terms of studying particular spelling features was conducted in each tutoring session, based on developmental spelling pedagogy (Bear et al, 2008). Typically, tutors helped students sort words based on particular spelling features and pronunciations. After they finish sorting, the tutor had them reread the words in each category to hear and see similarities and differences and to double-check their work.

The following excerpt is an example of the conversation between Ellie and Joe surrounding a completed word sort of word families –*ill*, -*ell*, and –*all*.

1	Ellie:	Good. We're listening for the *ill*.
2		[*Pill, hill, bill, fill, mill, will, chill.*]
3	Joe:	[*Pill, hill, bill, fill, mill, will, chill.*]
4	Ellie:	Did we get them?
5	Joe:	Yes.
6	Ellie:	All sound *ill*? Ok. Now, let's leave it up here. (stopping
7		Joe from removing –ill words from the table) Maybe
8		there's another *ill* someplace in here. Ok? So, we'll just
9		leave it like that. Let's check it. *Bell,*
10		[*ell, fell, tell, sell, shell*] Is that all *ell*?

11	Joe:	[*ell, fell, tell, sell, shell*]	[nods]
12	Ellie:	Ok, let's try these. [*Ball, mall, fall, hall, tall, call*.]	
13	Joe:	[*Ball, mall, fall, hall, tall, call*.]	
14	Ellie:	Got them all. You did. Good job.	(3.16.09)

In this example, Ellie helped Joe pay attention to the details, described earlier as being

one of Ellie's traits. She set the purpose for reading the group of *–ill* words then checked

to see if Joe thought all of them fit (line 4). When he started to remove this group of

words, Ellie told him to leave them alone in case there were more *–ill* words that had

been mis-sorted. They read the other two word families together, emphasizing the short

vowel sounds. Joe was patient through this; by now he had accepted Ellie's insistence on

paying attention to details as part of their co-constructed figured world. This was part of

the routine of their figured world, which gave them a sense of identity.

For the sake of variety, I often assigned games to review and enhance

understanding of spelling patterns. Keisha and Charlene played a game where they

matched onsets *th* and *sh* with various rimes to make words. Some combinations made

nonsense words, which can have value because they reduce the inclination to use word

recognition to read the words (Gunning, 2010; Morris, 2008), focusing the student's

attention on the onset and rime, for example. Children often enjoy pronouncing "silly"

words. However, I had failed to explain the usefulness of reading nonsense words to

Charlene.

1	Charlene:	Ok, now. I want you to see if you can make a word
2		using one of these at the beginning and one of these

3		at the end. Put them together. What do you want to
4		try first? What's that say?
5	Keisha:	*Thi*, /*th*/
6	Charlene:	Hmm, ah, what word does that make?
7	Keisha:	*Thin*.
9	Charlene:	*Thin*, very good. Can you make another word using
10		either one of these?
11	Keisha:	*That*.
12	Charlene	*That*. That was one of our words this morning,
13		wasn't it? Ok, let's try, does this make a word that
14		makes any sense?
15	Keisha:	No.
16	Charlene:	That's just a nonsense word, *thop*. I don't know
17		what a *thop* is, do you? (Keisha shakes head.) Me
18		either. (1.12.09)

Charlene did not see the same usefulness of having occasional nonsense words in the

mix, and she either disregarded the nonsense words or pronounced them for Keisha. I

had not anticipated this since my understanding was so deeply buried in my prior

assumptions, and I forgot that volunteer tutors would not have the same background

knowledge. Charlene might have seen nonsense words as meaningless, and therefore,

useless in this activity. We were listening to different sets of voices in this instance.

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Summary. Ganske (2000) argued that word study during her teaching career was of no value in and of itself. Rather, it was, "…a natural bridge between reading and writing. Reading and writing provided the purpose and the vehicle for learning about words, and word study served as the means for strengthening and advancing students' understanding of words so they could read and write more fluently" (Ganske, 2000, pp.3-4). Just as fluency was not a goal by itself, at least for these young readers, neither was word study. The value of word study, improved understandings of spelling features, and quicker recall of sight words lay in the transfer of those skills into reading and writing (Ganske, 2000). It took tutors some time to become accustomed to focusing on spelling features; they had no prior understanding of this approach, although they became comfortable with the process. A spontaneous discussion began after tutoring one day (1.12.09) when Charlene mentioned that Keisha seemed to enjoy the word sorts. Carol overheard her and said that Justin liked them too, that it was good for him to have something to do with his hands. They both agreed that working with words in this way was nontraditional and more interesting. Charlene commented that the logical progression that Keisha was making through the word sorts was becoming apparent to her (field notes, 1.12.09). This clearly indicated that tutors' assumptions could be challenged and they could choose to alter their assumptions as a result of new experiences. The authoritative voices of the tutoring manual and myself, combined with positive experiences with their students served to influence their thinking about ways to teach spelling.

Writing

Writing complements reading. Clay (2001) argued that reading and writing should be introduced simultaneously because developing and using processes in one mode can strengthen developing and using processes in the other. Our 30-minute time slot was too short to thoroughly cover all components of the tutoring model each day, particularly since the thirty minutes included transfer time back and forth from the classroom. Unfortunately, writing was often the component that was cut, partly because it was quite time-consuming by itself. When tutors worked with writing skills, the following categories emerged as areas in which the tutors focused their attention. Charlene focused on prewriting strategies for reasons that will be discussed below. All three tutors focused on spelling in writing and the use of mechanics. Each category will be discussed in turn.

Prewriting. Many times, particularly with young children, helping them verbalize what they want to say before they start writing helps them hear sentence structure, but this strategy is particularly difficult to use within classrooms on an individual basis. Two of the children, Joe and Jason, usually started to write as soon as they knew the prompt and seemed able to construct sentences that made sense without talking about what they would write first. Keisha, however, benefitted from thinking and discussing her thoughts prior to writing. Part of Miss May's comments at the beginning of the program centered around Keisha's difficulty with writing. She tended to write words out of sequence in ways that did not make sense. When asked to read what she

wrote, Keisha could not remember what it was supposed to say (12.8.08). Given this need, Charlene worked with writing more than she might have otherwise.

I always provided a writing prompt to use, but I never restricted them to that prompt. I told the tutors that if they had a better idea or if the child wanted to write about something special to disregard the prompt. My prompts usually had something to do with the new book read that day, but I will admit that the quality of my prompts was inconsistent. In this excerpt, Charlene altered the prompt when the prompt I suggested proved too difficult. She then engaged Keisha in a discussion before asking her to write.

1	Charlene:	Ok, did you think of any kind of food you could use
2		to make a bug?
3	Keisha:	No.
4	Charlene:	No? Do you wanna write about some foods that
5		you like to eat?
6	Keisha:	Yes.
7	Charlene:	What do you like to eat?
8	Keisha:	Pizza.
9	Charlene:	Me, too. I had pizza this weekend. Twice as a
10		matter of fact.
11	DK:	What kind of pizza do you like?
12	Keisha:	Pepperoni.
13	DK:	Do you? Hmm.
14	Charlene:	That's what my boys like. All right, let's start

15		writing. What do you want your first sentence to
16		say?
17	Keisha:	I like pepperoni pizza.
18	Charlene:	There you go. (3.23.09)

Later in the same session, Charlene suggested an idea about pizza that Keisha might use to develop her story. Again, she had Keisha verbalize the sentence before writing it.

1	Charlene:	Maybe think about a time when you, a really fun
2		time when you had pepperoni pizza.
3	Keisha:	When I went to Magic Mountain.
4	Charlene:	That would be a good thing to write about. How
5		could you write that sentence?
6	Keisha:	When I ate pizza I went to Magic Mountain.
7	Charlene:	Ok. (3.23.09)

Keisha benefitted greatly from this type of discussion and verbalization of her ideas before setting pencil to paper. One of her teacher's concerns was that Keisha's writing in the classroom often made no sense, and Keisha was unable to read it back after completing her writing. Charlene's skill in helping Keisha verbalize her ideas helped her write complete sentences. Keisha's story, prior to revision, was as follows:

I like parone plls. It is good because it have parone's.

Win i eat parone plls i wos at match mouttan.

Keisha was able to reread this story after finishing. Charlene prompted her to think about where capital letters might go as she was rereading. Keisha recognized that *Magic* was a proper noun then asked if *Mountain* would be capitalized as well.

Spelling in writing. Joe spelled well, so Ellie needed to spend little time with this aspect of his writing. Charlene and Carol, however, both worked directly with spelling by helping their students represent each sound they heard with an appropriate letter or letter combination, using available resources to find correct spellings, and recognizing when correct spelling was necessary to prevent confusion.

In this example, Carol asked Jason what he wanted to say about ice cream in his story. Jason thought aloud as he wrote and automatically read the sentence aloud when finished.

1	Jason: Ice cream is good.
2	Carol: Is that what you want to say?
3	Jason: Yeah.
4	Carol: Ok. That's an idea. Go ahead and start.
5	Jason: /ī/, /ī/, /s/, ice, ice, /ī/ /s/, ice, ice, /k/, /rē/, /ēm/ is /g/, /ö/, /d/.

(3.9.09)

Jason followed this procedure with two more sentences, stretching each word to hear individual phonemes and deciding how to best represent them graphically. After Jason finished writing the entire piece, Carol asked him to reread it. His written text was as follows (prior to revision): *Is crem is gud. I et it in a dish. I will be cowd.* His first word,

ice, was spelled *is*. I stepped in when Jason became confused over the pronunciation of

that word and Carol did not pick up on it.

1   Carol: You wanna read what you just wrote?

2   Jason: *I, I, I*

3   Carol: There's an *s* there. /ī/

4   Jason: *Is*   [pronounced /ĭz/]

5   Carol: *Ice*.

6   Jason: *Ice cream is good. I eat it in a dish. I will, I will be cold.*

7   Carol: Is that what you want to say: I will be cold – or – It will be

8   cold.

9   Jason: It.

===

10   DK: I'm gonna show you something up here, J., before you get

11   back to that. When you were going back to read this, you

12   looked at *i-s* and you said *is*. Because you know that *i-s*

13   does spell *is*, doesn't it? Now when you were sounding it

14   out, you realized that was an *s* sound in ice cream. So,

15   let's erase that *s* cause I'm gonna show you the secret way

16   to spell ice. It's kind of a funny way. It's i-c-e. That's *ice*.

17   Jason: Oh.   (3.9.09)

My explanation seemed to make sense to Jason. He did not remember his first word and

was trying to decode what he had written. Carol either did not notice the reason for the

confusion or was unsure how to address it so I stepped in. Jason had not studied long

vowels with the VCe pattern yet in his word study, so I did not expect him to spell it

correctly. But, when misspelling caused confusion in this way, I expected to stretch the

child's zone of proximal development to a slightly different angle in order to solve the

problem.

Mechanics. The aspects of mechanics that I observed tutors working on with

their students included punctuation (capital letters and periods), grammar usage, and

putting their name and date at the top of the writing paper. The following excerpts from a

tutoring session with Keisha and Charlene demonstrates Charlene's hesitancy to correct

Keisha's grammar when she thought the grammar Keisha used in her sentence might be

dialectic. The first section is when the grammar question arose for Charlene; the second

section shows how she ultimately dealt with it. This example also reveals other aspects

of writing instruction: finding a resource for spelling *sleepover*, discussing the use of

capital letters and periods, and briefly discussing handwriting. Keisha was writing a

story about when she went on a sleepover with her cousin.

1	Charlene:	Mm hmm, now do you want to say, "I went to my
2		cousin's house for a sleepover" or do the sleepover
3		part in?
4	Keisha:	*Has* (reading word by word as she writes) *a*
5		*sleepover*.
6	Charlene:	Sleepover. Where do you suppose we could find
7		out how to spell *sleepover*? … (as K starts turning

8		pages of book) Look at that.
9	Keisha:	*Froggy's Sleepover.*
10	Charlene:	Sleepover. (several seconds for K to write) You
11		noticed, didn't you, that they used all capital letters
12		(in the book title), but you knew that you didn't
13		need capital letters, didn't you? Let's read what we
14		have so far and see if we need any periods at the
15		end of any sentences.
16	Keisha:	*I went to my cousin's house. We have, ha-*
17	Charlene:	Do we say *have* or *had* a sleepover?
18	Keisha:	Have.
19	Charlene:	We have a sleepover? Ok. (3.23.09)

Charlene always asked Keisha to reread her complete story before working on revisions. Keisha's story was written as follows: *I wat to my cozn has We haved a sleepover. We play the Wii.* As evidenced in the following excerpt, Charlene paid close attention to how Keisha read her story aloud.

20	Keisha:	*to my cousin's house. We had a, have a sleepover.*
21		*We, period. We played the Wii.*
22	Charlene:	I noticed when you read this just now you said, "*We*
23		*had a sleepover.*"
24	Keisha:	*Had.*
25	Charlene:	I think *had* makes a little more sense there, cause

26		didn't you do it a while ago? So, we would say,
27		"We had." How do you think you would spell *had*?
28	Keisha:	H-a-v?
29	Charlene:	Had. If you wanted to say *had*.
30	Keisha:	*d*?
31	Charlene:	*d*
32	Keisha:	Is it this way?
33	Charlene:	Mm hmm, yeah. It goes that way and the stick goes
34		on this side.

===

35	Charlene:	Those are, we can mix those up with b's pretty
36		well, can't we? And then, *We had [a sleepover.]*
37	Keisha:	*[a sleepover.] It,*
38		*we played the Wii.*
39	Charlene:	(whispering) Good job. (3.23.09)

When I spoke with Charlene after the tutoring session, she discussed her uncertainty in

correcting the verb tense. First, she wasn't sure that keeping tenses consistent throughout

the writing was really important for first graders. Second, and more important, she

wondered if it might have been a cultural dialect influencing Keisha's choice of verb

tense. We had discussed dialect during training, talking about acceptance of dialect

during conversations, but also teaching standard English when reading and writing. At

the same time, I had emphasized drawing attention only to those types of spelling,

grammar, and punctuation errors which had been studied to that point (short vowel

sounds, beginning and final consonant sounds, periods, etc.) in the students' writing.

Charlene mentally debated whether or not a possible dialectic change in tense ranked as

something she should address, but when Keisha started to read *had*, Charlene realized

that she knew to use the past tense form and that gave Charlene the opportunity to discuss

it without further concern (field notes, 3.23.09).

Summary. Time constraints greatly restricted tutors' abilities to work with

writing development. Charlene compensated by not using read-alouds as frequently as

she might have because she wanted to give Keisha opportunities to improve her writing

ability. Joe wrote fluently and loved to write. Unfortunately, that meant that time was

more effectively spent with other skills during the short time available for tutoring. Jason

enjoyed writing but usually took so long with other activities that there was often not

enough time for writing practice.

Skills and Competencies Summary

The purpose of this research question was to describe how tutors interpreted and

applied training during tutoring sessions. I approached training from the perspective of

using the autonomous model of literacy as we needed to separate literacy into specific

skills and competencies for the purpose of training, but I emphasized that while they may

be focusing on one critical skill or competency at a time, all of those skills were

fundamental aspects of larger processing systems. The larger systems of processing print

ran in conjunction with students' life and linguistic experiences to that point and in

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conjunction with current contexts. By referencing myriad influences on reading events, I hoped to prevent tutors from over-simplifying the process of learning to read, of forgetting the contextual and relational aspects foundational to an ideological model of literacy.

Although the process of separating categories and subcategories presents these examples as decontextualized, the tutors were usually embedding these bits of instruction within contexts of specific texts and specific needs of their students. Instruction of skills often overlapped with other types of instruction and was certainly ongoing within contexts of texts and relationships, thereby utilizing both models of literacy. Having most of a school year in which to develop relationships enabled participants to co-construct unique figured worlds in which adults and students alike negotiated meaning in terms of how they thought about and engaged in literacy events. The opportunity to collaboratively grow long conversations benefitted students by giving them referents to past events in which specific types of instruction was used, in turn providing them with grounds for extending understanding within new contexts.

One of the benefits of the structure of *Book Buddies* is the training combined with ongoing support and supervision throughout the school year, which created our own long conversations as the tutors learned how to tutor in literacy. This structure provided tutors with a large amount of understanding with the ongoing opportunity to debrief after attempting to apply that knowledge in tutoring sessions. As a result, tutors seemed to store a wealth of instructional strategies as tools in a tool box for retrieval when particular needs arose. Although my influence was strong due to the design of the tutoring model,

their ability to recognize the specificity of needs at precise moments depended on the long conversations they co-constructed with their students over time.

The fact that relationships became integral to the learning process within each dyad's figured world did not surprise me. They all volunteered discussions of reading aloud to their own children as positive experiences that they either already missed or would miss when they ended. The relational aspect of literacy was already a part of their internally persuasive voices. As part of relational and contextual perspectives of literacy, tutors also seemed to "naturally" engage students in discussions around texts. Students and volunteers all actively engaged with literature on many levels, negotiating meaning within their unique figured worlds of how to do literacy together.

In the next section, I will address the second part of this research question in terms of how I saw students change over time in taking initiative for these skills and competencies.

Change over Time

This section addresses the second half of this research question: *Did students utilize these skills and competencies without prompting as time progressed?* Analysis for this section proved unwieldy. I was unable to pinpoint change over time for each student when looking at specific strategies and skills. Reviewing transcripts, I began looking for examples of students taking initiative in any way within the tutoring sessions. By pulling those out, grouping and regrouping them, I realized that each student revealed unique ways of becoming more assertive in initiating some aspect of literacy learning. There

were a few instances in which the student started early in the program, and others developed over time. Not every type of initiative was observed consistently from one point forward.

One reason for this was that tutors met with each child twice a week for only 30 minutes. The time period was so short that tutors felt pressured to include as much instruction as possible, so they may have stepped in more quickly without giving students time to initiate an activity. The problem with time was one deterrent to the development of long conversations (Mercer, 1995).

In this section, I will discuss each student in terms of the changes I observed over the course of the year in how they took initiative in tutoring sessions.

Keisha (Charlene). At the beginning of the year, Keisha was a quiet child who sometimes spoke so softly that Charlene could only hear her by listening very closely. She did not often initiate comments, choosing instead to giggle or nod in response to Charlene's talk. However, Keisha was always actively engaged in text during tutoring sessions, as evidenced by her body language and facial expressions (field notes, 12.4.09).

Even at the beginning of the year, I noticed that when Keisha started to write a word, she said the word aloud, stretching the phonemes and trying to find appropriate representational graphemes:

1	Keisha:	*I* (stretching sound word by word as she writes) *went*
		(heavy sigh as she erases) *went*
2	Charlene:	That's it.
3	Keisha:	*to* (writes as whispering /t/ /ew/) *my* (writes quickly)

4		*cousin*
5	Charlene:	(as K hesitates) What could our choices be for /k/?
6	Keisha:	Q?
7	Charlene:	A "q" could be a choice. What could be another choice
8		for /k/?
9	Keisha:	R?
10	Charlene:	Usually a *c* or a *k*.
11	Keisha:	[…]
12	Charlene:	[In this case] it's a *c*. [C]uzz
13	Keisha:	[C] *O*?
14	Charlene:	An *O* would work. Mm hmm. Then what do you hear?
15	Keisha:	Cuzinnn. *N*. (writes *n*)
16	Charlent:	Mm hmm, did you get your /z/ sound in there?
17	Keisha:	No.
18	Charlene:	Yeah, what do you want to put in there for the /z/ sound?
19	Keisha:	A *z*?
20	Charlene:	Ok. [Cuzin]
21	Keisha:	[Cuzin] (12.4.08)

Clearly, this stretching of words was a practice learned in the classroom which Keisha had internalized prior to tutoring.

By the middle of the year, Keisha was talking more during conversations. She volunteered the number of books she had read, answered questions clearly during a book

walk, commented at the end of a read-aloud about the brevity of the book, and asked for clarification about a major concept in a book. She was also happy to talk about topics that interested her, like playing Wii (1.12.09).

Later in the year (3.23.09), I noticed Keisha was taking initiative to do several things that she knew were part of their routine, such as:

- o   pronouncing initial letter sounds for comparison during word sorts

- o   reading sight words without tutor direction

- o   speaking up when she did not like a writing prompt

- o   asking for clarification about capitalizing a proper noun

- o   reminding Charlene of the large number of sentences written in a story, as evidenced in the following excerpt:

1	Keisha:	…
2	Charlene:	What's that? Yeah, look how many sentences we had.
3	DK:	Wow.
4	Charlene:	I wrote and she told me what to say.
5	Keisha:	…six.
6	Charlene:	Was it six? Yeah. I like to plant flowers in the spring. I
7		ride my bike in the spring, too. I have to wear a helmet
8		when I ride my bike. When I'm done riding my bike I go
9		play with my cousin. He lives by me. We play seven-up
10		outside. You're right, it was six. That was a good one. We
11		were in sort of a hurry that day, weren't we? So that's why

12		I did the writing.	
13	Keisha:	…a lot…	(3.23.09)

My favorite example of the change in Keisha came as she reread a familiar story, *Blackberries* (Randell, 1996), and spontaneously added intonation when reading various characters' parts.

1	Keisha:	*Blackberries, blackberries, I like blackberries, said*
2		*Baby Bear. Where is Baby Bear, said Mother Bear.*
3		*Father Bear, is Baby Bear with you? No, said*
4		*Father Bear. Where is he?*
5	Charlene:	Uh oh, Father Bear looks a little bit worried.
6	Keisha:	*Baby Bear, where are you? shouted Father Bear.*
7		*Baby Bear, where are you? shouted Mother Bear.*
8		*Here I am, said Baby Bear. I'm here. Father Bear*
9		*looked in Baby Bear's basket. Where are your*
10		*blackberries? said, he said. In here, said Baby*
11		*Bear. Inside me.*
12	DK:	You know what I liked? There was one part that
13		says, *Where are you, Baby Bear* and you were
14		going, *Where are you*? Just like the parent would if
15		they were looking like their baby, huh? (Keisha
		nods)
16	Charlene:	I know she said it in a way that sounded worried

17   once. *Is he with you? No*.   (3.23.09)

This was not something that Charlene had explicitly taught, but she modeled it through

read-alouds, as did Keisha's classroom teacher (classroom observations 11.15.08,

1.15.09, 5.4.09). Keisha was familiar enough with the story to know the plot and

understand the type of intonation that would make sense. In this respect, Keisha was

signifying that in her figured world of literacy, characters' voices used intonation just like

real people. Intonation had become a part of their long conversation.

        Joe (Ellie). Joe's change was dramatic, although not sudden. During a tutoring

session at the beginning of the year, Joe said "I don't know" seven times during the

reading of a new book, *Hide and Seek* (Saucier, n.d.) (11.24.08). Each time he came to

an unknown word, he looked at the word for a brief (1-2 seconds) time, suddenly quit

looking at the book and threw himself back in his chair, waiting to be told the word.

Sometimes he actually pushed the book away as he sat back, and if Ellie asked him to try

pronouncing the word, he became frustrated, usually changing his tone to whining (field

notes, 11.24.08). All of this occurred during my first observation, and Ellie reported that

it occurred each day of tutoring at the beginning of the year. My field notes from other

observations confirmed this (11.10.08, 12.16.08).

        By the middle of the year, Joe spontaneously commented on books he read,

joking and asking questions. He seemed quite comfortable with Ellie and had learned

that discussion about books was important and enjoyable in their figured world. Joe was

consumed in this mid-year observation with completing word sorts as quickly as he

could; Ellie persisted in asking him to read the words, slowing him down to make sure he

was understanding the purposes of the word sorts. Joe no longer stopped and said, "I don't know" when encountering a difficult word. Instead, he attempted to decode, but still seemed tense until he succeeded in reading the word correctly (3.16.09).

By the end of the year's observation, Joe was sometimes taking more initiative than either Ellie or I desired. He attempted to reread a familiar book by reciting what he remembered. When Ellie "caught" him, he read a page silently then tried to recite it. This end-of-year observation was an outlier for this particular question; he had not slept well the night before and was out of sorts (field notes, 5.4.09). However, it still revealed elements that have been captured elsewhere in this chapter illustrating negotiations of how to do literacy within their figured world. My field journal captured discussions with Ellie the last part of the year in which she remarked about Joe's improved self-confidence, that he nearly always attacked words (usually successfully) without prompting (4.23.09, 5.18.09). When I observed informally, my notes reflected that Joe could still become frustrated occasionally if he made a mistake, but he now seemed willing to work with Ellie to correct the error and his degree of frustration was far less (5.4.09).

Jason (Carol). From the beginning, it was clear that Jason was one of those students who talked his way through text. He spontaneously commented on both familiar and new books as he read, sometimes predicting without prompting and sometimes discussing plot or illustrations. He automatically used initial consonant sounds when attempting a word and spontaneously asked for definitions of words.

Jason became completely absorbed with a word study game, practicing consonant digraphs *ch*, *sh*, and *th*, during this early observation, starting discussions about words (such as *downtown*, *shoe*, *school*) with Carol as they progressed. When faced with sight words to practice, his response was a rather dejected, "Oh, man," and he initiated a question about why *said* is not spelled s-e-d. When Carol introduced a new book, he commented that the book is "probably hard, very hard." Although he was enthusiastic about word exploration and literature, some of his comments reflected uncertainty about his abilities.

1	Carol:	Ok, we have a new book to read.
2	Jason:	I read that book.
3	Carol:	Have you read this one?
4	Jason:	It's in my book box.
5	Carol:	Oh, cool. Well then, you should probably be able to read it.
6	Jason:	Uuuhhh
7	Carol:	What's the title?
8	Jason:	I forget the words.
9	Carol:	You forget?
10	Jason:	[I know what that says.]
11	Carol:	Well, let's take a look at it. [Cause you might recognize it
12		if we look at it.]
13	Jason:	[*I Live in an Apartment*.]
14		*I Live in an Apartment.*

15   Carol: You're right.   (12.8.08)

By mid-year, Jason responded with a cheer when Carol said it was time for his word bank, and although he struggled with several words, he commented at the end that he knew "a lot." When the new book (*Cookies*, Tatler, 1993) was pulled out, he said it looked "hard." Once Jason worked his way through the book, Carol suggested that he reread it, to which he responded with a quick and emphatic, "Oh, no." He participated, though, when Carol offered to read with him, using echo reading. He initiated a change in the writing prompt that day (Tell how to make something you like to eat) by asking, "Does it have to be about cookies?" and then, "I like to eat ice cream." This seemed like a topic he appreciated more and before Carol could prompt, Jason said, "Ice cream is good." This would be his first sentence. By speaking up and even pre-empting Carol's prompts, Jason determined the content of the writing for himself, displaying a sensee of agency which Carol answered by accepting his power to negotiate these aspects, serving to verify Jason's agency in their figured world.

Jason still spontaneously commented and questioned, always actively engaged with text, even when he struggled with decoding. Jason's enthusiasm for working with his word bank words belied his continuing struggle with word attack skills and remembering sight words or spelling patterns. For example, Jason stopped after reading the sight word *there* to comment:

    Jason: *There*.

    Carol: Uh huh.

    Jason: I thought it was a word.

Carol:	It is a word.
Jason:	It doesn't even have a vowel.
Carol:	It does; it has an *e*. (pointing)
Jason:	Oh. (3.9.09)

This reveals Jason's attention to detail as he worked. He had studied the fact that each word needed a vowel in the classroom (field notes 11.15.08) and the *r*-controlled vowel in *there* was something he had not studied yet, so the distortion of the vowel caused by the *r* confused him. It was an astute observation, in my opinion.

In this excerpt, Jason was attempting to decode *...all took a bath*.

1	Carol: You want the "l?" /ä/ with an "l" at the end. What would
2	that be? / ä/ with an "l" sound
3	Jason: *off*
4	Carol: Aaaaalll
5	Jason: Ooohh.
6	Carol: Like "all."
7	Jason: *All*
8	Carol: Uh huh
9	Jason: (undecipherable)
10	Carol: Too-, yeah, but what's the ending sound?
11	Jason: /t/
12	Carol: with a "k"

13   Jason: /d/

14   Carol: We have a too- as the beginning sound

15   Jason: (undecipherable)

16   Carol: What sound does the "k" make? Can you get your [mouth

17   ready] to make that sound?

18   Jason: [/k/]

19   Carol: Uh huh.

20   Jason: kuh

21   Carol: They all t-

22   Jason: kay

23   Carol: took

24   Jason: *took a bath?*   (12.8.08)

This excerpt reveals Jason's confusion and seeming inability to follow what Carol

was asking and/or remember letter-sound correspondences. His confidence

seemed easily shaken.

     My field notes from that day include a list of comments specifically

about his decoding:

- Note: be sure to help Jason focus on print for words he's decoding

    when not directly supported by pics (ie, took, ball)

- Needs more work on ch/th especially – a lot of trouble

    differentiating, remembering sounds

- "an" – hard for Jason to understand – seemed not to differentiate from "in"

- Make flip books, rime wheels, etc.

- Make sure sound charts are available for use

- Ch/th/sh game needed

The notes reveal a concern about his difficulty in differentiating between sounds, vowels (/ă/ and /ĕ/) as well as consonant digraphs (ch and th). I knew that I needed to provide a variety of activities and contexts in which Jason could practice seeing, hearing, and pronouncing words with those particular sounds (Ganske, 2000; Gunning, 2010).

By the end of the year, Jason was still actively engaging with text. After reading *Milwaukee Cows* (Cowley, 1998), a book about – yes – cows, Jason asked a riddle:

Jason: Where does a card, where does a cow go at a movie, …?

Carol: I don't know.

Jason: The moooovie theater.

Carol: It's true.

Jason: The moooovie theater.

Carol: The moooovie theater. That's a good one.

Later, when working with Carol through a word sort with the rimes *–ad* and *–ed*, Jason had difficulty:

1   Jason: Ok, *g-l.*

2   Carol: Here's the *g-l.*

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3	Jason:	*Jell, jello*
4	Carol:	Here it is. (referring to soundboard)
5	Jason:	*Glasses*.
6	Carol:	Right, so what would this be?
7	Jason:	*Glad*?
8	Carol:	*Glad*, right. So where does that go, then?
9	Jason:	*Guh-lad*.

Note that Jason is thinking as he and Carol say "g-l" and those letter names together sound like "jello" to him (lines 1-3). Later on, in the same word study activity, Jason has difficulty reading *shed*.

1	Carol:	Ok, what's that one?
2	Jason:	S*ag*.
3	Carol:	Ok, remember what we did with the *–ed* sound? /ĕ/
4	Jason:	*Bed*
5	Carol:	So what would this one be?
6	Jason:	*Hed*
7	Carol:	*Shed*, yep. (5.7.09)

It was unclear whether Carol heard Jason mispronounce the word *shed* and chose to pronounce it for him, or if she thought he said the word correctly.

When a new book (*Rosie's Walk*, Hutchins, 1968) was introduced, Jason became engaged with the story during the picture walk and Carol echo-read with him. At this point, Jason seemed to think that reading was hard, but he still enjoyed learning new

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words and engaging with literature. Jason needed more intense assistance than a volunteer could provide. Showing evidence of difficulty with word recognition and word retrieval (Morris, 2008), Jason needed the help of a reading specialist who could work with him daily, all year. Some research has shown that children who struggled a great deal with decoding did not progress well with volunteer tutors (Gelzheiser, 2005) and Jason's experience appears to confirm this.

Summary of change over time. Although some data revealed that students took initiative with specific aspects of reading skills or tutoring routines, the bigger changes occurred within students' intrapersonal planes (Díaz et al, 1990). Keisha demonstrated increased self-confidence and actively engaged in conversations in and around texts. The figured world she and Charlene co-constructed incorporated internally persuasive voices that established Keisha as a good reader and writer. Her self-confidence did not seem to suffer within this figured world. In fact, she seemed to thrive in her relationship with Charlene and texts.

Relationship also played a key role in Joe's literacy growth. He had the ability to read and write well; he was impatient with himself when he did not know a word immediately and easily became frustrated. He and Ellie built a figured world in which trust and patience were foundational. Joe had to learn that Ellie would be "right there" to read with him, that she would teach him the skills he needed to attack words, and that she would celebrate his progress with him. Ongoing dialogue in which Ellie's authoritative voice was presented in contextual relationship enabled Joe to accept many aspects of Ellie's voice into his own intrapersonal plane.

Jason changed the least. Over time, his self-confidence was shaken, but from the beginning he was actively engaged with literature and had a natural curiosity about words. That never wavered and Carol fostered his interests through read-alouds and following his leads when discussing books. They built a figured world together in which internally persuasive voices said that reading and imagination are great fun, that words carry interesting meanings and can be used in fascinating ways, and that learning to read is hard. It was this last voice that discouraged Jason and Carol both, and they did not manage to find a way to alter its message.

Summary of Question

The purpose of this study was to deepen understanding of the complexities of relationships built between volunteer literacy tutors and their first-grade students as they negotiated text. The tutors were trained, supported, and supervised throughout the school year and their interpretations and application of that training is the subject of this second research question.

The data revealed how much was asked of volunteers during this program and how each attempted to meet uniquely contextual needs of students. Learning to read was discovered to be a complex process and each student's reasons for referral to the tutoring program were different. The volunteers were introduced to a large amount of conceptual material and asked to apply their new knowledge within a short period of time. This tutoring model required commitment and continuity on the part of the tutors in order to provide opportunity for long conversations with their children, opportunity to build

figured worlds in which they negotiated with each other how they understood literacy together.

The "technical" knowledge they gained during training was forgotten by the end of the year (they all admitted), but it laid a schematic foundation on which they could understand why they were being asked to do these types of activities. They relied more heavily on my feedback and lesson plans than the reference materials I supplied for them. Data revealed that tutors applied the instructional skills I shared with them strategically. They seemed to have stored knowledge of particular strategies and retrieved them when needed. This reflected the development of our own relationships in which we co-constructed meanings of literacy within our figured world of volunteer tutors and site coordinator in this school setting. We developed long conversations with each other, understanding backgrounds of issues that enabled us to discuss topics in more depth as time progressed. My degree of involvement in this program heavily influenced their instructional techniques, but also had to have influenced their negotiations while building their dyads' figured worlds.

Besides the requirements of the tutoring model, the tutors themselves brought histories and assumptions which they referenced when deciding how to interact with texts and their children, such as in how much to emphasize letter-by-letter decoding, how much correction should be given during writing, etc. At times, my authoritative voice impacted those internally persuasive voices, adding another thread of influence, but occasionally my voice was rejected, or at least set aside in preference with other histories or assumptions.

Changes in psychological and emotional aspects as they pertained to literacy became apparent over the course of the year. These changes reinforced an ideological model of literacy in which literacy is learned within relationships and is intensely contextual. Changes such as these can only occur when participants co-construct meaning through dialogue between each other and with texts within a figured world in which both participants negotiate how they will think about and act with literacy, building long conversations.

The next question ties into this by examining how participants positioned themselves and each other within those figured worlds.

Research Question 3: How did students and volunteers

position themselves and each other in relationship with each other and with texts?

Introduction

Authoritative voices and internally persuasive voices create tension and conflict within the contact zone of a particular chronotope, in this case the figured worlds of tutoring created by each adult-child dyad. Students' ideologies are shaped and influenced by diverse discourses, and it holds that in a relatively close one-to-one relationship, those voices would exert strong influence. Students, however, are not passive recipients of this influence. Data collected for this question clearly reveal students' agency in negotiating positionality with their tutors. These negotiations came from co-constructing their unique figured worlds in which tutors and students collaboratively decided upon appropriate ways to act and think and communicate in relationship with texts and each other in this context. Participants simultaneously influence and are influenced by these negotiations, which I will address with this question.

To analyze this data, I reviewed transcripts of tutoring observations in conjunction with field notes and interview data. As I found examples of situations in which positioning was being negotiated, I pulled those out and sorted to see patterns. The negotiation of position within a tutoring dyad reflected continual shifts in power relationships. Students proved quite capable of negotiating their own positions in relationship to the tutors and the texts. Unique patterns of behavior and positioning emerged for each dyad, so the organization for this question is by dyad. I will introduce each participant in the dyad individually and then together within the dyad

dynamics. I will then describe specific qualities that emerged in the data to explain specifically how positioning was facilitated.

At the end of this section, I will include assessment data collected on each child at the beginning and end of the tutoring program. Although this data was not the focus of my study, it serves to illustrate how children are positioned by school and government authoritative voices.

Charlene & Keisha

Keisha was described by her teacher as reading "considerably" below grade level. Keisha received additional tutoring during kindergarten from a district reading specialist and was reading at Level C at the end of the year, but started first grade reading at Level B after losing ground over the summer. (The district's benchmark is Level D for the end of kindergarten.) Miss May also reported that Keisha's writing was limited because she mixed up her words when writing: "[Rather than saying] I am going to the, to the school, she'll say, I'm with the going school" (12.8.08).

Charlene was an experienced tutor, and she and Keisha worked well together, almost seeming to have formed a literary friendship. Charlene was always professional and maintained appropriateness in an adult-child relationship, but she was able to find ways to position Keisha as a collaborative partner in their unique figured world of literacy. Much of this was simply due to a happy pairing of personalities. Charlene had a gift for chatting; Keisha was quiet. They seemed to appreciate each other and enjoy their time together. Charlene initiated much of what made this relationship work. She found specific ways to praise Keisha and used scaffolding which directly facilitated an environment of collaboration between fellow readers.

Specific praise. From the beginning, Charlene found ways to praise Keisha that were specifically concrete, giving them authenticity. For example:

- o "You have a good memory." (to remember the date so easily) (12.4.08)

- o "My goodness, you're so fast [reading sight words] I can't even keep up with you." (1.12.09)

- o "…[you] said it in a way that sounded worried once." (3.23.09)

- o "I noticed something. That you remembered that was *Mother* and not *Mama* this time." (3.23.09)

- o "I have to find some hard ones. Most of these [word sorts] are just too easy for Keisha … because she's getting to be a really good reader." (3.23.09)

Because Charlene gave specifics about what Keisha did well, her praise seemed to me to be sincerely thoughtful even when her manner was succinct and her tone of voice matter-of-fact.

Scaffolding facilitating collaboration. Charlene used scaffolding in a way that appeared to be completely "natural." Rarely did Charlene stumble or hesitate. This excerpt was used in the previous question to illustrate the instructional strategy of predicting, but it serves here to reveal several instances of joint hypothesizing, which was indicative of the scaffolding that Charlene provided, which influenced Keisha's position in the dyad.

1	Charlene:	Yeah, so this is *Froggy's* [*Sleepover*].
2	Keisha:	[*Sleepover*]
3	Charlene:	So let's just look through the pictures first and see if
4		we can figure out what we think is going to happen

5		in this story.
6	Keisha:	Froggy
7	Charlene:	What's Froggy got, do you think?
8	Keisha:	I don't know.
9	Charlene:	Hmm, it looks like a big bag of something. Let's
10		see. (12.4.08)

Here, Charlene followed Keisha's lead of focusing on the main character, asking her what she thinks Froggy has. When Keisha did not speculate, neither did Charlene, except to acknowledge that the character had a big bag of "something." This validated Keisha's position by inferring that it was all right not to know what was in the bag at this point.

11	Keisha:	…
12	Charlene:	It's nighttime, I'm noticing. Oh-
13	Keisha:	It's not nighttime.
14	Charlene:	It's morning. Yeah, what's that?
15	Keisha:	Bus.
16	Charlene:	Bus. (12.4.08)

At this point, Charlene commented that it's nighttime, then seemed surprised (line 12) when she turned the page to find daytime, which elicited a response from Keisha (line 13) Charlene validated (line 14) and asked a literal question which Keisha answered quickly (line 16).

17	Keisha:	He eat cookies.
18	Charlene:	Ooh, yeah. Hmm, what's he … there?
19	Keisha:	He pull out the bag and take them …

20	Charlene:	Oh. Let's see, wonder if that's his mom.
21	Keisha:	That's, yeah.
22	Charlene:	You think?
23	Keisha:	He's … his toothbrush.
24	Charlene:	Uh! He's got his toothbrush, can't forget that if
25		you're goin' on a sleepover. Oh, a sleeping bag.
26		Do you suppose that's his friend that he's going to
27		sleep at their house?
28	Keisha:	Teddy bear.
29	Charlene:	Oooh. (12.4.08)

Keisha and Charlene switched roles frequently in the above excerpt; Keisha initiated observations three times. Each time Charlene followed Keisha's lead and validated her observations. In line 17, Keisha commented on the character eating cookies, which Charlene acknowledged before asking her another question, which Keisha answered (lines 18-19). Charlene asked Keisha to speculate about the identity of a female character which Keisha thought was Froggy's mom (lines 20-21). Charlene simply said, "You think?" (line 22), neither validating nor negating. Keisha then noticed the toothbrush (line 23) which elicited a comment from Charlene who noticed the sleeping bag and wondered about the friend (lines 24-26). At this point, Keisha did not answer Charlene, but noted the teddy bear (27) which Charlene acknowledged simply with "ooh" (line 28). This excerpt illustrated the give-and-take conversation pattern of two people immersed in collaborative meaning making. The exchange was low-key. There seemed to be no demands for performance.

30	Keisha:	And […]
31	Charlene:	[That's a little scary.] Uh huh. Mmm, outside
32		in the dark. I wonder who that is.
33	Keisha:	Mmm, his mom.
34	Charlene:	You think so? Oh, my goodness! I don't think
35		that's where that goes.
36	DK:	(chuckling)
37	Charlene:	Something happened there that wasn't supposed to,
38		I think. What do you think? (Keisha nods) Mm,
39		mmm. Ooh, that's […]
40	Keisha:	[popping corn]
41	Charlene:	Yeah. Mmm, that can't be [– his] parents, huh?
42	Keisha:	[…]
43	Charlene:	They went over to Froggy's house now. Now
44		where are they going? Back out in the dark again.
45	Keisha:	To his house.
46	Charlene:	You think?
47	Keisha:	Mm hmm.
48	Charlene:	Oh, my goodness. Well, let's find out. That looks
49		like a lot of traveling in that story. I don't know
50		what's happening. Ok, [*Froggy's Sleepover*]
51	Keisha:	[*Froggy's Sleepover*]

In this last segment, Charlene seemed to retain the position of initiator, but Keisha still appeared to be actively engaged as per her responses and my field notes. During this event, their heads were close together and their voices low, seemingly immersed in the task of investigating the new book. Keisha followed Charlene's lead and responded to each of Charlene's queries, except one when she noticed a detail in the illustration and wanted to talk about that. They seemed oblivious to my presence. They had successfully created a figured world of literacy investigation during this picture walk, and Keisha was unusually verbal, talking rather than nodding.

This type of relationship, positioning themselves as collaborators within their figured world, was created over time through continuity and mutual respect. Charlene used the pronoun "we" often, reinforcing Keisha's agency. For example, early in the year Charlene wanted to draw my attention to what "they" had figured out during a rereading of a familiar text about the fact that the text used the singular form of some nouns that would make more sense plural.

1	Charlene:	I want to tell Ms. Dotty something that we figured
2		out. We noticed that when we were reading this
3		book, when we got to this page with the lettuce, not
4		the lettuce, with the tomato, the onion, and the
5		pickle, that we wanted to say, *Put some tomatoes on*
6		*it*
7	DK:	Aaah.
8	Charlene:	*put some onions on it* and *put some pickles on it*
9		cause that's what I would say.

10	DK:	That is true, yeah. I hadn't [thought of that.]
11	Charlene:	[And we had to look]
12		carefully because it did not say tomatoes, did it? Or
13		onions or pickles
14	DK:	Hmm, cause they did put more than one thing on it,
15		didn't they? [pointing to picture] [Keisha nods.]
16	Charlene:	Yes.
17	DK:	That's a good observation there, Keisha.
18	Charlene:	Yeah, so we noticed that. (12.4.08)

Although I did not observe the original exchange, I can speculate that Keisha used the plural

form of at least some of these nouns and Charlene initiated a discussion about how the plural

forms sounded "right" to both Keisha and her. But, in recounting the observation, she said *we*

figured it out, giving Keisha equal credit for noticing the discrepancy. This positioned Keisha as

a collaborator.

Another way that Charlene positioned Keisha as a collaborator was by depicting her as an

insider, the owner of shared knowledge that I did not have as an outside observer. For example,

when Keisha chose a particular book for rereading, Charlene commented, "We like this one,

don't we?" (3.23.09) Later that day, Charlene asked Keisha to share some of their insider

knowledge with me:

1	Charlene:	Tell Miss Dotty what's my favorite part of that
2		book?
3	Keisha:	When he say he … his fish to the teacher.

4   DK: [Yeah, uh huh.]

5   Charlene: [I just think that's] hilarious.   (3.23.09)

I also observed Charlene addressing Keisha as "Miss Keisha," the way adults in that school were

addressed (12.4.08). Charlene whispered occasionally, which reflected Keisha's quiet demeanor,

but also served to further establish the uniqueness of their figured world (12.4.08, 1.12.09) and

the long conversations they were building.

Although much of what I observed involved Charlene's initiatives, there were times

when Keisha picked up on Charlene's words to position herself in a positive way. Charlene

started to say something about how many books they'd read, but Keisha remembered that they

had read specifically "11 then it was 12," and her demeanor and tone of voice clearly inferred

that she was positioning herself as a proud reader of many books (1.12.09). During a writing

event, Charlene commented that Keisha knew how to spell *pepperoni*.

Charlene: Very good. I can tell you know how to spell. That's a long

word, isn't it?

Keisha: Yeah, no, last year it was.   (3.23.09)

Keisha's response positioned herself as a better speller of "pepperoni" this year than last year,

demonstrating her pride in recognizing her progress.

Occasionally, Keisha raised a comment or question that demonstrated her assertiveness in

positioning herself. For example, Charlene was talking about something else with me when

Keisha interrupted to tell us that one of her writings had a lot of sentences. Although much of

Keisha's words are unintelligible on the tape, the adults' responses reflect what she said.

1   Keisha: …

2	Charlene:	What's that? Yeah, look how many sentences we
3		had.
4	DK:	Wow.
5	Charlene:	I wrote and she told me what to say.
6	Keisha:	…six.
7	Charlene:	Was it six? Yeah. *I like to plant flowers in the*
8		*spring. I ride m ybike in the spring, too. I have to*
9		*wear a helmet when I ride my bike. When I'm done*
10		*riding my bike I go play with my cousin. He lives*
11		*by me. We play seven-up outside.* You're right, it
12		was six. That was a good one. We were in sort of a
13		hurry that day, weren't we? So that's why I did the
14		writing.
15	Keisha:	…a lot…
16	DK:	You have a lot, haven't you? (3.23.09)

The fact that Keisha assertively brought this to our attention may have revealed her pride and positioned herself as someone who has a lot to say in her stories. The fact that this particular story was dictated reflects how much Keisha (and other children) might write about a given topic if the writing itself were not so laborious.

Keisha also asked Charlene when I would get around to updating the book I was making for her with her completed writings from tutoring. She liked the book, not so much for the

writings, but for the clip art I included, particularly the princesses. The fact that she asked

Charlene about this suggested that she considered herself worthy of my time and effort.

Anytime Keisha and the other children started writing a story, they were asked to write

their names and the date on the top of the page. The following excerpt shows Keisha's comfort

level with Charlene which enabled her to comment on her personal association with the date, and

Charlene's response reflected her ability to follow the child's lead with unexpected comments.

1	Charlene:	Do you know what today is?
2	Keisha:	Yes.
3	Charlene:	What is today?
4	Keisha:	23.
5	Charlene:	Mm hmm.
6	Keisha:	That's how old my, my daddy was.
7	Charlene:	Really?
8	Keisha:	But he's 34 now.
9	Charlene:	Oh, yeah. I was 23 once, also. Someday you will
10		be, too. Before you know it. (3.23.09)

I started chuckling at the implication of Charlene's "I was 23 once" comment, but Charlene

ignored me and immediately turned her comment around to make it child-oriented. This event

became further evidence of their figured world of which I was but an observer.

Charlene modeled metacognitive skills often, and she did so in a personal way. For

example, she made personal connections that positioned herself as revealing a bit of her personal

life to Keisha. For example, Charlene had blueberry tea at home, but it was not blue…as a mom,

she could personally relate to the little red hen…she loved to shop and chat. Other times, Charlene commented on her personal reaction to something in the text, much as participants in a book club might. "Look at that. How is she going to get that in her mouth? I would need one more page with a picture on to see what happens after she actually tries to eat that." Keisha always listened carefully when Charlene talked like this, although she didn't always react. " *'That's great,' said Froggy's mother. ' And she gave him a plate of chocolate fly cookies.'* Oh, I thought they were going to be chocolate chip. Chocolate fly, yuck." (12.4.08) This time, Keisha grinned at Charlene's comment. These types of comments became part of their long conversation and positioned Charlene and Keisha as collaborators in this literacy venture.

Disconfirming evidence. I found two instances of inconsistency in this relationship building. Both of the following examples were uncharacteristic. "Miss Dotty has some new words for us; I haven't even looked at them yet. I hope I can read them. We'll be in trouble if I can't read them either." (1.12.09) This comment positioned Keisha as a nonreader of new words and Charlene as a dubious owner of knowledge. The second outlier came during the introduction of a new word sort. Charlene seemed to think that Keisha would have trouble with this sort.

1	Charlene:	Can you read any of those for me?
2	Keisha:	Yeah.
3	Charlene:	Which one?
4	Keisha:	*Bag, bed, head.*
5	Charlene:	Now, these two are kind of tricky when you put
6		them together cause look what they both have in
7		the middle? They both have /ă/ in the middle, don't

8	they? This one has /d/ at the end and this one has
9	/g/ at the end. *Bag* and *sad*. So, hmm, it's going to
10	be a little challenging, maybe.

In this example, Charlene asked Keisha if she *can* read *any* of the words (line 1). When Keisha responded affirmatively, Charlene asked which *one* she could read (line 3), and Keisha read three words (line 4). Charlene continued describing the sort as *tricky* (line 5) and *challenging* (line 10). Charlene's words attempted to position Keisha as a weak word sorter, but Keisha's answers negated the positioning. After this excerpt, Keisha went on to complete the sort accurately and without assistance.

Summary. Because these last comments were rare and the overall tutoring environment was positive and empowering for Keisha, she continued to be actively engaged and positive throughout her tutoring sessions. At the end of the school year, I asked Keisha about her likes and dislikes about school in general and tutoring specifically. She was very positive about school, saying that she liked learning in school, particularly math. She felt she was good at math. There was nothing else in particular that she liked learning in school, but she thought reading was the best thing about working with Miss Charlene. She was emphatic that there was nothing she disliked about school. Keisha mentioned the two books that Charlene gave her the last day of tutoring. One of the books she read every night, showing that she enjoyed and valued the book and, perhaps, the relationship it represented (6.2.09). Keisha's teacher reported that she maintained her positive attitude within the classroom, always giving her best effort (5.26.09).

While it is impossible to know the extent of Charlene's overall influence on Keisha's attitude, their relationship as they co-constructed their figured world of literacy investigation

served to consistently position Keisha as an intelligent, capable collaborator in making meaning in literacy events. This was, perhaps, a more concrete, intensely positive experience for Keisha than could have been achieved within the classroom alone.

Ellie and Joe

During Miss May's initial interview, she described Joe as having difficulty focusing and lacking self-confidence (12.8.08). When I first talked with Miss May, she asked me to be careful with whom I paired Joe because he was prone to angry outbursts and that the tutor should never hesitate to come get her if this should happen (field notes 10.2.08). Given this information, I wanted to assign Joe to one of the more experienced tutors, so I spoke with Ellie about him. She did not seem dismayed by the description of Joe, although she admitted to being a little nervous about whether or not she was up to the task. I assured her that I would be close by and would step in anytime she needed and provide her with every support I could. She committed to working with Joe, not saying that she would "try it," but full-heartedly agreeing to do her best (field notes, 11.4.08). As it turned out, Ellie was very well suited for working with Joe. She understood that she needed to allow Joe some control while still maintaining her authority.

During his initial interview, Joe described a time when he got his picture in the paper for building a snow fort. When I asked if he could bring in the picture, he admitted that he had not really been in the paper, but he wished he could have been (12.15.08). Although I quickly realized his propensity for exaggeration, he revealed an assumption that having his accomplishments published in a newspaper would be an honor. He talked easily with me, evidently comfortable conversing with adults, and displayed an impressive oral vocabulary. It was clear from both his teacher's description and my initial observations that Joe was intelligent.

However, he lacked self-confidence. Once he stumbled on a word, he gave up or became flustered which could easily turn into frustration. He wanted to recognize words immediately; if he had to decode, he appeared to perceive that as negative (11.24.08).

Ellie and I talked frequently about Joe's needs. Since he had been diagnosed with ADHD, I suggested switching activities often and providing opportunities for movement during the 30-minute session, anything from just allowing Joe to stand at the table while reading to taking 30 seconds to do jumping jacks at some point. Ellie decided to do reading and writing at a table and then move to the rug to do word study activities (11.10.08). This adaptation proved beneficial and Ellie found that as the year progressed, they needed to move to the floor less often. By the end of the year, they usually stayed at the table the whole time (5.4.09).

Joe focused completely once he engaged with text or activity. Between activities or during any type of mental break, he fidgeted with whatever he could reach (11.10.08). Also, because there was not an assigned space for tutors to use, there were times when Ellie had to switch rooms, and that was always a major distraction for Joe because he wanted to investigate whatever was in that room (3.16.09). Although we couldn't control the room situation, I provided a cushy ball with the idea that Joe could use that as his fidget ball. He and Ellie negotiated the use into a quick break to throw the ball back and forth for a few seconds, which was also beneficial (11.10.08).

Ellie provided strong, consistent support, negotiated power when appropriate, utilized a little tough love, and carried through the year a good sense of humor that allowed Joe to share his own humor. They formed a solid working relationship.

Strong support. Joe's biggest problem was his quick, strong frustration when he did not instantly recognize a word. During my first observation, Jacob said, "I don't know it" seven times. Three more times, he just looked at the word silently for a few seconds until Ellie helped him. When asked for the sound of s-t, he answered, "I forget it." At no point during this observation did he appear to phonetically pronounce the sounds he saw represented in the words. When he said, "I don't know…," he sat back in his chair and quit looking at the book, clearly giving up. At times, he seemed impatient with himself. Ellie reminded him, "And you know what, Joe? … If you don't know a word, that's ok. That's why we're here, to read it." When Joe appeared to become frustrated, Ellie responded, "All-righty, we'll do it together." Her words and demeanor conveyed strong support; she was right there beside him and they would work through things together (11.24.08). In Joe's case, relationship was vital for him to move forward with his literacy achievement.

During this first observation, Ellie also was quick to praise Joe, even if he did not overtly respond to her comments. He recognized that he had skipped a page; Ellie said he was good at noticing that. She complimented him for working through a compound word while reading and for self-editing his writing. Joe was enthusiastic about counting the number of sight words he recognized quickly and easily, obviously proud of the large number; Ellie responded, "That, Joe, is a lot of words to know just like that." She commented that Joe was "really good" at word sorts, and when Ellie suggested a writing topic and Joe cheered about the opportunity to write, Ellie commented, "I know you like writing. I got to see some of the writing you've done in class. I was like, wow, really." Ellie's tone of voice clearly inferred that Joe had written well in

class. Joe did not openly respond to any of these comments, but he was generally enthusiastic and engaged in the entire session, unless he did not recognize a word (11.24.08).

Power negotiation. Joe's demeanor was always intense, even when he was enjoying an activity. One of the negotiations that Ellie and Joe made was to allow Joe to "hide" from Ellie at the end of the session, if he stayed focused and completed his work. Joe was determined to hide at the end of every session, wanting to check the time to make sure they were moving along at a good pace so that they would have a minute at the end to hide before returning to the classroom. I first observed this in the middle of the year.

1	Joe:	What time is it?
2	Ellie:	Oh, you look. Check it out.
3	Joe:	9:43.
4	Ellie:	Ok, so I'm gonna put 9:43. We're moving right along.
5	Joe:	Come on, we gotta get going.

6	Joe:	It's 9:45 […] hurry up, 9:45, […] 5, 5, 5, 5, 5.
7	Ellie:	[Yeah.] [Here we go.]

8	Joe:	9:58, all right, hurry, hurry, hurry.
9	Ellie:	Ok, Joe.
10	Joe:	Step on it.
11	Ellie:	Joe. You're doing really well. We have time. Ok? You're
12		probably thinking, I want to hide yet. Is that what you're
13		thinking?
14	Joe:	Yeah.

| 15 | Ellie: | Yeah. Well, let's get through all our work, ok? |

16	Joe:	Check what time it is. Probably 9:59.
17	Ellie:	9:55.
18	Joe:	Yes.

19	Joe:	It's probably 10 already.
20	Ellie:	It is 10 already. So, you know, if we were going to do
21		some writing, we would have written on, we would have
22		done a rhyme.
23	Joe:	Do we get to hide?
24	Ellie:	I think we're gonna head on down.
25	Joe:	Oh, come on.
26	Ellie:	I think we are. …, oh, Joe, oh, Joe. Ok, let's put the book
27		down Joe, you don't usually do this. What's going on? Put
28		the book in here.
29	Joe:	…
30	Ellie:	Yeah, we're not hiding today. Here we go.
31	Joe:	…
32	Ellie:	[Oooohhh.] You didn't make it, though.
33	DK:	[Oooohhh.]
34	Joe:	You gotta keep it up.
35	Ellie:	Let's just place it in here cause we like our books. There
36		you go, that was a good way to do it. Ok. (3.16.09)

In this example, Joe was very concerned with the time because Ellie promised him he could hide if they finished in time. Between these comments about the time, however, are periods in which Joe was enthusiastically engaged with text. In lines 11-13, Ellie attempted to calm Joe by saying that he was doing fine with time and she put words to Joe's motivation, acknowledging his desire to have an opportunity to hide at the end. When Joe agreed that this was what he was hoping for, she insisted that they needed to "get through" everything (line 15), which seemed to define literacy as a series of tasks to accomplish. When they finished reading the new book, they realized their time was up (lines 19-20) and Joe was disappointed that he couldn't hide, displaying his disappointment by saying something undecipherable but inappropriate based on Ellie's and my reactions (lines 32-33) and throwing books. Ellie stood firm in not allowing Joe to hide since he acted out in this way. While this is an example of how power was negotiated in Ellie and Joe's figured world of literacy, it also points to the next category of tough love.

Tough love. When Ellie's continuous support and encouragement did not seem to completely enable Joe to become more patient with himself, I suggested that she talk directly with him about the issue, explaining what she observed and telling him that she wants to help him by not allowing him to say, "I don't know" or giving up. They negotiated the issue and agreed that he could say, "I need help" when he felt frustrated, but that he was to make verbal attempts at decoding first. Ellie assured him that she would still be there to help him. By the middle of the year, Joe had made remarkable progress. In this session, I observed Joe attempting to decode and not giving up at all, although Ellie was also quicker to step in than at the beginning of the year. In this first example, she asked Joe if he knew the sound of *sm*; he immediately said "no," so she gave him the sound.

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1	Ellie:	You know what *sm* sounds like?
2	Joe:	No.
3	Ellie:	*/sm/*	(3.16.09)

In the next example, Joe didn't recognize the CVCe pattern in *white*, so Ellie explained it.

1	Joe:	*Wit*?
2	Ellie:	Close.
3	Joe:	*/w/*
4	Ellie:	*White*.
5	Joe:	Ah.
6	Ellie:	That *e*
7	Joe:	*White*
8	Ellie:	makes it a long *i*, /ī/. *White*.	(3.16.09)

Later in the session, when Joe was sorting words, Ellie wanted him to pronounce the words as he sorted. He preferred to sort silently, but although he refused Ellie's prompting twice (lines 2, 15), he eventually conceded, pronouncing the words (lines 5, 8, 10, 17). At first, Ellie persevered, reprompting Joe (line 4), but later she acquiesced (line 16). This word sort focused on the rimes *–all, -ell, -ill.*

1	Ellie:	Wanna see, does it help you to say them when you put
2		them out?
3	Joe:	Mmm, no.
4	Ellie:	Why don't we say this one. What is this one?
5	Joe:	*How*.

6	Ellie:	Do we have any *how's*? We have a *pill* and a *bell* and a
7		*ball. –all, -ell, -ill*.
8	Joe:	*How*.
9	Ellie:	And this is a [*hall*].
10	Joe:	[*hall*] Like a [hallway].
11	Ellie:	[*hall*, exactly] Uh huh.
12	Joe:	/h/, [/h/, /h/, /h/, /h/]
13	Ellie:	[*Ball, hall*] I think you got that sound. What's this
14		one?
15	Joe:	… I'm not gonna say any more.
16	Ellie:	Ok.
17	Joe:	*Mill, shell* (3.16.09)

Four times during this mid-year observation, Joe attempted to decode words, sometimes using context or picture cues, but never becoming frustrated. For *stacks*, Joe said, "pat, /*st*/, at" before Ellie told him the word. Later, he read "*pancakes for a snake?*" to which Ellie responded, "Does that make sense? Look at it again. *Pancakes for a…*" Joe was able to read the word correctly at that point.

Joe started phonetically decoding *snack* in the following excerpt.

1	Joe:	/*s*/, /*n*/, /*ā*/
2	DK:	[/*ă*/]
3	Ellie:	[/*snă*/]
4	Joe:	*snack*.

5   Ellie: Yeah, that makes [more sense].

6   Joe: [*Snack*.]   (3.16.09)

Toward the end of the session, Joe read *bunch* for *batch*. Ellie succinctly encouraged and supported: "That's almost. /*b*/, /*ă*/." Joe quickly pronounced the word. *Ceiling* was recognized as a difficult word for Joe to decode at this stage, so Ellie gave him the beginning sounds, which Joe used successfully in the next excerpt.

1   Ellie: Yeah, it begins /*s*/, /*ee*/

2   Joe: *Cei*[*ling*]

3   Ellie: [*ling*]. *Ceiling*   (3.16.09)

Good humor. Although all three tutors displayed cheerfulness and good humor, Ellie was particularly notable with an infectious laugh and ability to see humor in ordinary, minor events. Joe responded well and seemed to feel comfortable sharing his own sense of humor, particularly as they read books. While rereading a nonfiction book about growing and harvesting apples, Joe commented about how good one of the apples looked to him. Ellie's easy manner became evident as she picked up on Joe's comment and continued the banter about eating apples.

1   Joe: *Apples are ripe in late summer and*

2   Ellie: And?

3   Joe: I like that one. I wish it was real so I could eat it right now.

4   Ellie: I would, I would take this one. Any of them look good.

5   Joe: I'll take all of them.

6   Ellie: Oh, I thought maybe you'd share them.

7   Joe: No.

8	DK:	You can make an apple pie.
9	Ellie:	Oooh.
10	Joe:	You can see I'm hungry, by the way.
11	Ellie:	(laughs) (3.16.09)

Ellie often chuckled when particular combinations of words came successively as Joe practiced his sight words. For example, Joe read, "look" followed by "pretty." Ellie commented, "You look pretty." Joe read the next word, then acknowledged her teasing comment with, "Not pretty," as he smiled (3.16.09).

Joe sometimes read with inflection. Rather than comment directly about the inflection, Ellie chose to comment on his enjoyment of the book.

1	Joe:	*Who wants a monster? Not me!* (with inflection)
2	Ellie:	(chuckling) Anytime we read this book, it's just a fun book
3		to read, isn't it?
4	Joe:	(smiling, nods) (11.24.08)

Joe, along with the other children, enjoyed reading books with silly characters or events. While reading about a baker who got carried away making pancakes, Joe belly laughed his way through the book. In the following excerpt, he commented in line 2 when he turned the page and saw a mess in the illustration. Ellie picked up on Joe's comment in line 3, which encouraged Joe to imagine in line 4 both what the baker might be thinking and the sound effects that might be heard in the scene. Ellie confirmed his imaginings in line 5.

1	Joe:	*Mix the batter. Pour it in the pan. Make some pancakes as*
2		*fast as you can.* [Ellie chuckles] Whoa, flips them all over

3   Ellie: Oh, he's there to catch them.

4   Joe: Uh huh. …my beautiful pancakes. Glug, glug, glug.

5   Ellie: That's right. I think that's about how it goes. (3.16.09)

Joe seemed to enter the world of the beleaguered baker with his active engagement and

interaction with the text and his tutor. He obviously had fun with this book and Ellie supported

and encouraged that enjoyment.

Even at the end of the book, when Joe had difficulty with the word "ceiling," he was so

involved in the story that he did not appear to become anxious about not knowing the word. This

excerpt opens with comments from Ellie and Joe about the image presented by the exorbitant

number of pancakes in the room (lines 1-3).

1   Ellie: Oh, my gosh. (all laugh)

2   Joe: He's swimming […]

3   Ellie: [swimming]

4   Joe: *Pancakes on the /k/, /l/, /ee/*

5   DK: That's a hard word.

6   Ellie: Yeah, it begins /s/, /ee/

7   Joe: *Cei*[*ling*]

8   Ellie: [*ling*]. *Ceiling*, ah, man.

9   Joe: *ceiling, pancakes on the floor, I love pancakes. Let's make*

10   *some more*. (all laugh)

11   DK: I don't think the baker man wants to make any more, does

12   he?

13	Joe:	Huh uh.
14	Ellie:	I think he's kinda worn out. Look at his eyes. (all still
15		chuckling) And he's like, let's make more. [J. laughs]
16		What do you think about this book? Pretty nice, isn't it?
17	Joe:	Yeah. (smiling) (3.16.09)

It seemed that decoding the word *ceiling* (lines 4-7) became secondary to Joe at this point because of the enjoyment he was experiencing at that point. Ellie continued commenting after Joe finished reading, stretching the enjoyment a bit longer (lines 14-16). When she asked Joe what he thought about the book, she commented that she thought it was "pretty nice" (line 16). Joe agreed immediately, still smiling.

A final example of the enjoyment Joe and Ellie shared while reading occurred toward the end of the year. Joe reread a book about hats and Ellie began commenting on the expression of the goldfish, starting an ongoing exchange.

1	Ellie:	I love the expression of that goldfish. That cracks me up
2		every time I see it.
3	Joe:	The goldfish hat, big fat goldfish
4	Ellie:	This goldfish reminds me of the ones at Franklin Park
5		Conservatory. Have you seen those before?
6	Joe:	That things' probably going to … get him.
7	Ellie:	I can see why maybe he might not buy that one, huh?
8	Joe:	There's a night hat. Why wouldn't he buy a night hat?
9	Ellie:	Oh, would you buy that one?

10	Joe:	Yeah.

11	Ellie:	Mm hmm. I kinda like the rocker hat, too.

12	Joe:	Look, he's almost eaten down the whole thing.

13	Ellie:	If I bought one, that's exactly what I'd be doing, too.

14	Joe:	Yeah, me, too.	(5.4.09)

At times Ellie initiated comments about enjoying an aspect of a book, as in lines 1-2. More often, Ellie followed Joe's lead (lines 7, 9, 11, 13), which helped to establish a figured world for themselves in which Joe was positioned and positioned himself as a co-constructor of enjoyment of literature.

Summary. Ellie worked hard to build this figured world of literacy, but no harder than Joe worked to negotiate activities and boundaries. Their figured world contained more than a focus on literacy; power negotiations were also an integral part of their long conversation. These power negotiations involved not only who controlled the routine, but how they would "do literacy" together. Ellie's enforcement of a boundary (not giving up) combined with strong, ongoing support and honest discussions helped reduce Joe's frustration when word recognition was not immediate. Joe gained proficiency at word attack skills once he gave himself permission not to know everything instantaneously. In this unique figured world, Joe and Ellie did literacy together, Joe being patient with himself and Ellie supporting him. Although Ellie positioned herself as the final authority, she simultaneously positioned Joe as bright, capable, and funny. Joe accepted Ellie's positioning, and his behavior changed. He became the funny, strong reader and writer. Throughout the entire experience was the underlying assumption that literacy involved shared joy and laughter.

Carol and Jason

During her initial interview, Miss May described Jason as being "substantially" below grade level at the end of kindergarten in reading and writing. Kindergarten seemed to have been a difficult year for Jason; it was a larger classroom that did not seem to be a good match for him. After two months in first grade with Miss May, Jason was "borderline" grade level in reading, but his writing was below par, particularly in spelling of word wall words. Jason was going through an IEP process this year due to his troubles in kindergarten (12.8.08).

Carol was an inexperienced tutor, but with a degree in English and a kindergartner of her own, she thought tutoring would be a good fit (11.20.08). She developed a good rapport with Jason over the course of the year. He was clearly comfortable with her and when she read books to him, he became completely engaged with both the story line and the illustrations, frequently commenting, asking questions, laughing, and contributing sound effects. Jason struggled more with decoding than the other students in this study, and his progress was more difficult to document. In this section, I will discuss their mutual enjoyment of literature, Carol's manner of praising Jason, their power negotiations, and their mutually constructed belief that reading is hard.

Enjoyment. Jason's enthusiastic engagement with text became evident at the beginning of the year when I observed him rereading a book about fish. When he finished, Jason initiated comments about how funny the book was and about details in the illustrations, indicating his engagement with this book.

1   Jason: That was funny! (with great enthusiasm)

2   Carol: That is a funny book; I like it too.

3   Jason: He's floating that way. (pointing to last picture)

4   Carol: I guess they're trying to get away any way they can, huh?

                                              (12.8.08)

Carol had quickly determined that Jason enjoyed when she used different character voices when she read aloud to him. During my first audiotaped observation, Carol read a book which offered opportunity for several humorous animal voices and sounds. Jason quickly appeared to become completely engaged. The following excerpt involves about two minutes of reading aloud during the climax of the story.

1   Carol: *"Now," said the cockerel. "Let's all sing together!" The*

2   *donkey b-r-a-a-y-ed, the dog barked* (deep voice)

3   Jason: (laughs)

4   Carol: *The cat meowed* (high voice), *and the cockerel scr-e-e-ea-*

5   *med* (high, crackly voice). …

6   Jason: (giggles) This is a good story.

==

7   Jason: (squealing noise)

==

8   Jason: (squeal)

9   Carol: *And then the cockerel flew on top of him c-r-o-o-w-ing*

10   *away* (high, crackly voice).

11   Jason: (laughs)

==

| 12 | Jason: (laughs) |

==

| 13 | Jason: (laughs) |

==

14	Jason: Braaaaw.
15	Carol: (laughs)
16	Jason: That was funny! … That was hilarious!
17	Carol: Well, we'd better get you back to class.
18	Jason: No, read it again. That was hilarious. (12.8.08)

Jason giggled, laughed, and even squealed at Carol's sound effects, the plot, and the illustrations. The fact that he immediately wanted the book reread is testimony to how amused he was during this interaction. Carol expressed afterward that she enjoyed reading this text with him; she chose the text specifically for its silly plot and animal noises, knowing that it would appeal to Jason's sense of humor.

Jason's enjoyment of text continued throughout the year, evidenced in overt laughter like the example above, but also in less boisterous ways. For example, after rereading a book about cows, Jason came up with a topic-related riddle.

Jason: Where does a card, where does a cow go at a movie, …?

Carol: I don't know.

Jason: The moooovie theater. (5.7.09)

Other times, Jason commented on characters' appearances or other details in the stories:

"He looks pooped from all that scrubbing."

"Look at the cow. He's…looking at the scrubbing machine." (5.7.09)

These types of observations reveal Jason's immersion in the story, heavily relying, like most children his age, on illustrations to complete his understanding (Johnston et al, 1998).

Carol modeled enjoyment as a prime consideration when reading by following Jason's leads. She refused once to "picture walk" to the last page of *Rosie's Walk* (Hutchins, 1968) because she did not want to ruin the ending for Jason. As he read this book, Jason inserted sound effects like *bong* and *splash*, which indicated his involvement with the characters' actions. After finishing the book, Carol expressed surprise as she noticed a detail in one of the illustrations that she had not seen before and which helped explain a bit of the story, and she shared her discovery with Jason. Jason listened and looked at the illustration where Carol pointed, but did not overtly pick up on the comment (5.7.09). This positioned Carol as a learner who enjoyed discovering subtleties in text while Jason positioned himself as understanding the action and imagining the types of sounds that might be heard.

Mutual enjoyment of literature, as evidenced in Carol's and Jason's relationship, served to position Jason as a fellow reader, quite capable of understanding plot with its nuances. She emphasized this aspect of Jason's learning because one of her primary concerns was that he would love reading as she did (initial interview, 11.20.08). This resolve deepened as the year progressed and she saw Jason continuing to need extra help with reading.

Reading is hard. Jason had difficulty all year with decoding and retention. This excerpt from the beginning of the year is an example of prompting that went smoothly as Jason reread a familiar book. The text read *Fish with lumps. Fish with bumps. Fish with zigs*.

1   Jason: *Fish with* what?

2   Carol: Well, it's an –umps sound

3   Jason: *lumps.*

4   Carol: Exactly.

5   Jason: *Fish with lumps. Fish with*

6   Carol: with a "b"

7   Jason: *bumps*

8   Carol: Yeah, that's right.

9   Jason: *Fish with zags?*

10   Carol: This is the "zags," (pointing to word in next line) so what

11   would the "i" sound be? Like in "pig."

12   Jason: *zigs*   (12.8.08)

In this excerpt, Carol gave Jason the rime for *lumps*, which enabled him to use his initial

consonant knowledge to read the word (lines 2-3). When he came to *bumps*, all Carol had to do

was point out the initial consonant (lines 6-7); Jason knew to anticipate a rhyming word. In lines

9-12, Jason seemed to remember the word *zags*, reading it for *zigs*. Carol pointed out that *zags*

was coming up in the next line, but that *zigs* had an "*i*" in the middle and sounded like the "*i*" in

pig, which enabled Jason to read the word successfully. Carol helped Jason keep reading

without the confusion that sometimes set in when he struggled too much with decoding. She

positioned him as someone who could read the word once he had the information needed.

By the middle of the year, Carol's hesitancy had become apparent through her choice of

words with Jason. In the following example, Jason had just finished reading a few new sight

words, and Carol was inserting those cards into the larger sight word bank to practice them all.

She seemed unsure that Jason would do well, spontaneously resorting to bribery.

1   Carol: Yep. Ok, let's add these in and see what we can do. You

2   got a lot on the first time last time so I think you'll be able

3   to do pretty well with these. We just have to remember the

4   ones that we just reviewed. Cause those are a little more

5   tricky; those are newer words, that's why. Cause we

6   haven't had them as much. All right, are you ready to go?

7   Let's see what you had last time. You got 43 words last

8   time.

9   DK: [Wow]

10   Jason: […all]

11   Carol: Yeah, if you get them all right, I will bring you something

12   fun.   (3.9.09)

Carol realized at the end of the session that she should not have offered Jason anything for

reading all his sight words quickly, saying that it "kind of slipped out" without thinking about it,

and as soon as she said it, she regretted it (field notes, 3.9.09). The fact that she did (lines 11-12)

after Jason said something about maybe he would read them all this time, revealed a sense of

desperation, of thinking that if something as important and unexpected as that happened, it would

deserve to be celebrated with a gift.

Some of Carol's other word choices seemed to indicate her doubt that Jason would

succeed. "Let's…see what we can do" in the first line indicated uncertainty. Since Jason did

well last time, Carol used that as evidence that he should "be able to do pretty well" (lines 2-3) this time. But her uncertainty came to the forefront when mentioning new words; Carol seemed particularly unsure about Jason's ability to remember those new words, calling them *tricky* (line 5). When Carol looked to see how many Jason read quickly last time, I attempted to tell Jason that he was doing well to be able to read so many words, but I was cut off by the dialogue ending with the bribe. These types of comments positioned Carol as hesitant and uncertain, perhaps of her own abilities, but more importantly of Jason's ability to read. Sight words were positioned as *tricky*, too difficult to be read without a lot of work, and Jason was positioned as a weak reader.

The following excerpt shows Carol working with Jason as he read a new book. It is interesting to note that Jason had protested when he started looking at the book that it was "hard." After previewing the book with a picture walk, Carol commented, almost to herself, "Let's, let's see how we do with this…some new words in here. But I think you'll be able to figure them out and sound them out. You wanna try?" Carol's uncertainty is clear: we'll *see* how we do…I *think* you'll be able…wanna *try*? All these words indicated that Jason would probably struggle when he read this book. Surprisingly, Jason answered, "Sure" to Carol's, "You wanna try?" It could be that although Jason was positioned by Carol's phrasing as incapable, a struggling reader, he wanted to challenge that positioning. However, he started having trouble with the text immediately.

The text read, "*Mix, mix, mixing. Shape, shape, shaping. Bake, bake, baking. Sniff, sniff, sniffing. Taste, taste, tasting. Yum, yum, yummy.*" Jason seemed to have some difficulty distinguishing the repetitive pattern in addition to decoding. Because this excerpt is lengthy, I

will interrupt the flow to insert comments, and I will discuss the entire excerpt at the end. It

began with Carol reminding Jason to use picture cues.

1   Carol: You have to look at what they're doing, think about what

2   they're doing when you get –

3   Jason: *Make*

4   Carol: Mm hmm.

5   Jason: *Make*

6   Carol: And then with the *i-n-g*? (4 seconds) I think you said it.

7   Jason: *Milk*

8   Carol: No

9   Jason: *Make*

10   Carol: Mmm, *mix*.

11   Jason: *Mix. Mix, mix, mix*

12   Carol: With the *i-n*-g

13   Jason: *Mixing*

14   Carol: Uh huh, right.   (3.9.09)

Carol sat beside Jason at a table, and she seemed to occasionally misinterpret Jason's words. He

talked quietly at times, which seemed to be when Carol had the most trouble understanding him.

This exchange might have served to confuse Jason, making him wonder, perhaps, why Carol

indicated that *make* was correct (line 4) when he seemed to realize that it was not correct

(guessing *milk* in line 7). When Carol clearly stated that *milk* was incorrect (line 8), he returned

to *make* (line 9) since she said that was okay, only to find that now it was not correct (line 10).

The next section is when Jason was reading, *Shapes, shapes, shaping.* Carol waited five

seconds for Jason to attempt the word, and when he did not respond, she initiated a prompt.

15   Carol: (5 seconds) …s-h sound?

16   Jason: /sh/

17   Carol: And what are these that they're cutting out? (2 seconds)

18   Do you know what they're cutting out?

19   Jason: *Shapes*

20   Carol: Yep.

21   Jason: *Shapes. Shapes. Shaping.*

22   Carol: *Shaping*, mm hmm. Doesn't have the *s* at the end. *Shape,*

23   *shape, shaping.*   (3.9.09)

Again, after the initial blend, Carol told Jason to use picture cues (lines 17-18) rather than

pointing out the rime. After he read shapes for shape (line 21), she pointed out the error and read

the line correctly (lines 22-23), then allowed Jason to move on. Jason read the next line, "Bake,

bake, baking" correctly, then moved on to "Sniff, sniff, sniffing," with which he had difficulty,

as evidenced below.

24   Jason: *Bake, bake, baking.*

25   Carol: Uh huh. (3 seconds) Look at the letters. What's the *s*

26   sound?

27   Jason: /s/

28   Carol: What about the *n*?

29   Jason: *Soon.*

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30   Carol: What's the *n* sound?

31   Jason: /*n*/

32   Carol: Uh huh. If you have an *s* and an *n*, /sn/

33   Jason: /sn/

34   Carol: And then you know this word. You know the *i-f*.

35   Jason: Off.

36   Carol: /*sn*/, /*if*/

37   Jason: *Sniff.*

38   Carol: Uh huh.

39   Jason: *Sniff, sniff, sniffing.*

40   Carol: Yeah, they're smelling how good the baking cookies are.

(3.9.09)

As discussed previously, Carol tended to ask Jason to translate letter names to sounds, even after

I asked her to simply point to the letter(s) and pronounce the sound(s) simultaneously. Because

Jason seemed to have difficulty retaining information, inserting an extra step in the decoding

process seemed counterproductive to me. Although Carol seemed to be attempting to position

Jason as capable of remembering letter-sound relationships, her approach combined with his

unique learning challenges actually placed Jason in a position of weakness, which was not

Carol's intention. The next section revealed how Jason reverted to guessing once he struggled

too long or too profoundly with a text. The text read, *Taste, taste, tasting.* When Jason read

teeth for *taste*, Carol referred him to the picture once again, which did not help.

41   Jason: *Teeth. Teeth, teeth, teething.*

42	Carol:	What are they doing?

43	Jason:	Eating.

44	Carol:	Uh huh, but what's this one? It's a long *a* sound. /t//ā/ /st/

45	Jason:	*ā-ple*

46	Carol:	*Taste*.

47	Jason:	*Taste, tasting.* (3.9.09)

This exchange further positioned Jason as falling deeper into failure. He made a reasonable deduction as to what the characters were doing in the illustration (*eating*, line 43), and Carol briefly acknowledged that reasonableness ("Uh huh"), but then negated that acknowledgement with the word *but* (line 44). She gave Jason the phonemes for *taste* in succession, but at this point, Jason was so apprehensive, he guessed *ā-ple*, forcing Carol to pronounce the word *taste* for him. Although Carol could be interpreted as giving up on a lost cause, she probably recognized Jason's anxiety and thought it best to allow him to just move forward. The next line, however, reflected her uncertainty at this point. Rather than just pointing to the next line or asking, "Will you…?" Carol used the word "can."

48	Carol:	Can you read that word for me?

49	Jason:	*Yellow, yum, yum, yummy*.

50	Carol:	Uh huh. What about the one up here again?

51	Jason:	This word?

52	Carol:	Yeah, the one up here.

53	Jason:	Uh, *tase*.

54	Carol:	/t/ /ā/

55	Jason:	*Taste, taste, tasting.*	
56	Carol:	Right. Ok, let's try and read it again	
57	Jason:	Oh no.	(3.9.09)

Jason's initial guess of *yellow* for *yum* was quickly self-corrected (line 49). Carol generically acknowledged his correct reading again with *uh huh*, and then she referred Jason to the word he struggled with the most, *taste* (lines 50-51). Jason pronounced the word without the ending /t/, and Carol focused his attention on the word more closely by starting to pronounce individual phonemes. Jason was then able to read the line correctly. Carol acknowledged the correct reading (line 56) and then wanted Jason to "try" to reread the text. Her purpose, as discussed after the session, was to empower Jason to read more fluently and experience success after struggling so much, but Jason's immediate reaction was one of dismay (line 57). Carol supported Jason by choral-reading, and Jason succeeded in reading more fluently with that support. The fact that Carol supported Jason this way while rereading afterward served to help Jason leave the session on a more positive note, achieving success with the rereading rather than ending a difficult reading with a feeling of having failed.

It was difficult to observe the struggles of both the adult and the child without stepping in, but they needed to negotiate the issues themselves. During training and in ongoing conversations with the tutors, I had discussed making sure the child ended a session with a positive experience, and I had specifically suggested having the child reread a text or a portion of a text if he/she struggled a great deal in order to improve fluency and to have a more positive interaction with the text. Carol remembered this advice and refused to let Jason end this session

with such a negative experience. By doing so, Carol positioned Jason as more capable than his first reading indicated.

Jason's positioning throughout this interaction with text and tutor developed quickly. It started with Jason probably becoming confused when Carol misinterpreted his words and inadvertently gave him incorrect feedback (lines 1-14). After that, although Jason successfully read one line without prompting, he encountered difficulty with every other line, particularly with *sniff* and *taste*. It was clear from his body language and his unreasonable guesses that he was experiencing anxiety and uncertainty (field notes, 3.9.09). This text contained unusually unnatural language, which might have hindered Jason's reading. Carol could have made different choices with prompts, but she had no prior experience from which to draw, only training and ongoing discussions with me. She wanted Jason to succeed, but became anxious herself when he did not seem to respond to her prompts; her insecurity was reflected onto Jason.

Besides the awkwardness of interactions like this, Carol seemed prone to use phrases throughout the tutoring sessions that indicated uncertainty of Jason's reading abilities. This uncertainty was also sometimes reflected in Jason's comments. When Carol brought out a manipulative made to practice onsets and rimes, Jason was dismayed. "Ah, not those" and "Those things are too hard," he protested, indicating that whatever he had to read would be too difficult for him (3.9.09). In other sessions, Carol said things like, "See if you can sound it out," (12.8.08) "Let's see if we can read it," (12.8.08) and "All right now, let's see if you can read through it and if you need help, I'll give you some help, ok?" (5.7.09) When looking at a new book in another session, Jason commented, "This one is probably hard. Very hard." (12.8.08) Carol did not pick up on Jason's comment, but moved to another topic, which could be taken as

either considering his comment unimportant or validating his concern. Either way, Jason was again positioned as incompetent.

Jason's apprehension was apparent when he was introduced to a "new" book that he was reading concurrently in the classroom. Carol's reaction to this news was, "Oh cool. Well then, you should probably be able to read it." Jason answered with uncertainty, "Uuuuhhhh." When Carol asked him to read the title, Jason responded, "I forget the words." Carol at first said, "You forget?" and then continued, "Well, let's take a look at it cause you might recognize it if we look at it." (12.8.08) This exchange positioned reading as something that you remember; you should not forget words to a book, and perhaps your memory for what these words say will be stirred if you take a picture walk. Although Carol wanted to build Jason's self-confidence, her choice of words and reactions actually undermined Jason's sense of efficacy. He was often positioned as an incompetent reader, one who could try to read, but probably would not succeed. Both Carol and Jason experienced tensions between competing voices. Jason wanted to be a reader, but Carol's voice and the voices of his experiences were questioning that designation. Carol's prior assumption that at least some aspects of tutoring would be "natural" or intuitive" was being deeply shaken as she realized that her instincts were not sufficient to help Jason.

Praise. Each tutor had unique ways to praise her student. Carol attempted to praise Jason consistently. She supported him with continual affirmations ("mm hmm," "uh huh," "yes," "right," "very good," "great," "excellent,") and praised him when he succeeded at a task. After Jason read a sight word that was difficult for him, Carol gave him specific praise: "I'm so proud of you for sounding that one out and taking your time." (3.9.09) When Jason finished reading some sight words one day, he wanted to count how many he read quickly. Carol

responded, "You know what, Jason? Even though you didn't get as many right this time, I'm really impressed with what you're doing, cause do you know what you're doing? You're taking the time and really looking at it and figuring it out and when you do that, you figure it out. Even if it takes a little longer, that's good." (3.9.09) The first piece of praise was straightforward, indicating that Jason did a good thing by stopping to focus on the details of a word. The second example of praise also indicated that slowing down to focus was good. However, Carol also reminded Jason that he would be reading slower that way.

Although this last example of praise was somewhat confusing, Carol's enthusiasm for everything that Jason accomplished was clear. Her small comments mentioned above were constant and exuberant. Carol could have used "uh huh" for correctly reading something on an independent reading level for Jason, reserving "very good" or "excellent" for correctly reading more difficult material, but she tended to intersperse the terms without any particular pattern. Jason did not seem bothered by this; when he was reading successfully, he was exuberant. It was only when he hit those times when reading seemed to become a mire of confusion that he seemed unenthusiastic.

Power negotiations. Jason nearly always interacted positively with Carol. At times, he resisted leaving the classroom to go with Carol, but once he arrived in the tutoring room, he quickly became actively engaged with the tutor and activities. There were occasions when power seemed to be negotiated. At the beginning of the year, Jason reread a book about fish. When he read about the "fish with a grin," he asked what a *grin* was. When Carol answered that it was a smile, Jason pointed to the grinning fish in the illustration. Jason asked why the fish would be grinning, but when Carol offered an explanation, Jason refused it.

1	Carol:	Yeah, he's kinda grinning, isn't he?
2	Jason:	Why?
3	Carol:	This fish has a fin, some of them do, and this fish has a
4		grin. I think he's having fun watching that fish get scared
5		by the shark.
6	Jason:	I don't think so.
7	Carol:	(laughs) Well, he's grinning about something, I don't
8		know.
9	Jason:	No, I don't think he is. (laughter) (12.8.08)

Jason disagreed with Carol's reasoning (line 6), but did not offer his own opinion. Carol acquiesced by admitting that her suggestion might not be the only possibility (lines 7-8), but did not ask Jason for his opinion. Jason then seemed to argue that either the fish has no reason for grinning or it was not grinning at all (line 9), at which point Carol moved on to a different topic.

This exchange is interesting from a positioning perspective because Jason frequently asked Carol for clarification on vocabulary or inferences in the plot, looking to her as the holder of knowledge. This time, however, Jason asserted his authority as a holder of equally viable opinions as Carol, even though the assertion did not appear to lead to an alternative reading.

With beginning readers, picture walks are commonly used to preview new books before reading to orient the child to the setting, provide opportunity to predict, and to introduce new vocabulary (Dahl et al, 2001; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Gunning, 2010). Most beginning readers are fascinated by illustrations and participate in the picture walks enthusiastically, but like anything, at some point they tire of the repetitive strategy; perhaps they are just more anxious to

read the story at some point because they understand that the story will explain and enhance their enjoyment of the pictures. Jason occasionally resisted picture walking. Jason rejected Carol's suggestion to preview a read aloud in the following excerpt.

1	Carol:	You wanna look through real quick at the pictures?
2	Jason:	Read story!
3	Carol:	Read the story? Looks like there's a lot of animals, doesn't
4		it?
5	Jason:	A lot.
6	Carol:	Ooh, and they're in the woods.
7	Jason:	Boom, boom, boom. I bet they can't sing.
8	Carol:	Well, let's find out. (12.8.08)

Jason's answer was loud and clear; he wanted Carol to start reading the story. She persevered in looking at just a couple of pictures, to which Jason responded, but she quickly started reading the story in deference to Jason's request. This exchange certainly positioned Jason as invited to decide the flow of this part of the session, and when Jason made the decision it was (mostly) honored. Jason was given power to control, but only at Carol's invitation, so his power was conditional.

During this read aloud, Carol stopped to ask Jason to predict.

1	Carol:	Do you think they'll be able to sing?
2	Jason:	Oh, I don't know.
3	Carol:	But they might be able to make the sounds that they make.
4	Jason:	(making noises) (12.8.08)

Jason clearly was not interested in predicting; his tone of voice was unenthusiastic. Carol attempted to prod his thinking, but Jason did not follow her lead; rather, he made indistinguishable noises, a way, perhaps, to resist and force Carol to return to reading the text.

Later in the year, Jason was clearly hesitant about previewing a new book, but Carol ignored his hesitancy and implemented the picture walk anyway.

1   Carol: "Do you want to take a look through it real quick?"

2   Jason: "Well" (in less-than-enthusiastic tone)   (5.7.09)

Jason quickly was drawn into the illustrations and became engaged in the preview, but the decision that seemed to have been invited by Carol was not fully formulated before the opportunity was denied. The invitation to power sharing was not authentic, positioning Carol as in control of the session and even in control of offering and taking away opportunities.

At the end of the year, Jason asserted his own position in a rather surprising way. First, Jason asked the name of the author.

1   Jason: Who's it from?

2   Carol: Who, who's

3   Jason: it by?

4   Carol: You know that word?

5   Jason: Pat.

6   Carol: Mm hmm.

7   Jason: Pat

8   Carol: Pat Hutchins.

9   Jason: Hutchins.

10	Carol:	Mm hmm, that's the author.
11	Jason:	Where is he from, actually?
12	Carol:	Oh, that I don't know.
13	Jason:	Probably like from England or something.
14	Carol:	That could be. The barns look kind of English, don't they?
15		Like they're from England.
16	Jason:	…right there.
17	Carol:	Mm hmm. Yeah, I think you're, that's a good observation
18		you made. (5.7.09)

Asking for the author's name was not surprising, although Jason had not previously seemed interested in authors' names. Jason's teacher frequently discussed authors and their roles (11.15.08, 5.4.09). When he asked where the author lived (line 11), he surprised both of us, particularly when he added *actually* to the end of his question; that was not typical of Jason's speaking patterns. To my knowledge, Jason had little prior experience with barns (particularly the structural details differentiating English barns from French or German), so when Carol suggested that the barns looked like English barns, I smiled. To my surprise, Jason looked at the barns and pointed to a detail in the illustration. Whether or not that detail was something that made the barn look English was irrelevant; he was establishing himself as knowledgeable about the fact that authors are commonly from places like England and that the English built barns that looked like those in the illustration.

Adults sometimes smile and consider children "cute" when they assert their knowledge (accurate or not) in this way, and Jason was undeniably charming during this exchange. In terms

of positioning, however, Jason was initiating a line of conversation that proved effective in controlling the discussion and revealing his understanding that authors are people from various parts of the world. For a brief time, he and Carol were on an equal footing; Carol did not know where the author lived and acknowledged that Jason's opinion had merit according to evidence in the illustration. Jason immediately followed that lead, analyzing the detail in the picture that might be offered as that evidence. Carol complimented Jason at the end of the exchange, reinforcing the fact that he had made a good observation, that he was capable of good ideas. This exchange serves as an excellent example of Bakhtin's dialogism involving addressivity and answerability. When Jason addressed Carol, she answered each time in a way that followed Jason's lead and confirmed his line of thinking. Each time Jason was addressed in the way, he answered Carol in a way that further established his position of more of an equal holder-of-knowledge.

Another interesting aspect of this dyad's experiences involved choral or echo reading. Because Jason became so anxious and confused when he read new material, Carol frequently used echo reading to support him. With echo reading, Carol was supposed to read a line of text while Jason pointed to the words (to help him focus on the words), and then Jason was to read the same line of text while Carol pointed to the words. It rarely worked exactly that way. Jason tended to turn the echo into a choral reading, reading simultaneously with Carol while she focused his attention by pointing to the words. Here, Carol told Jason that they should switch to echo reading after he became mired reading a new text. The text read: *Rosie the hen went for a walk across the yard, around the pond, over the haystack, past the mill, through the fence….*

1   Carol: I can read the sentence first and then you can read it.

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2   Jason: *Rose, red, Rosie's the, the hen*

3   Carol: Mm hmm

4   Jason: *went for a walk.*

5   Carol: Very good. *Ac, across the yard*

6   Jason: *Across the yard*

==

7   Carol: *A[round the pond.]*

8   Jason: *[round the pond.]* Splash!

9   Carol: Rosie just keeps walking. I don't think she even knows

10   he's back there. *Over*

11   Jason: *Over the*

12   Carol: *the [haystack].*

13   Jason: *[haystack].*

==

14   Carol: *[Past the mill.]*

15   Jason: *[Past the milk.]*

16   Carol: There she goes […]

17   Jason: [Oh…]

18   Carol: You're right. That's what happened. It dumped all over

19   him, didn't it? *[Through the fence.]*

20   Jason: *[ough the fence.] Through the fence.*

                                                    (5.7.09)

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Jason initially resisted echo reading, continuing to read on his own (lines 2-4), but when Carol initiated the echo, Jason followed (lines 5-6). After that, Jason primarily read simultaneously with Carol. In lines 14-15, Carol did not pick up on Jason's mispronunciation of *milk* for *mill*. In lines 19-20, Jason seemed unsure of *through*, chiming in on the rime then rereading the line to reinforce his understanding. Jason asserted his ability to read without the more obvious scaffolding of echo reading; he appeared to be more comfortable with choral reading, which allowed him to hesitate and listen to unfamiliar words, such as *through* while keeping his focus on the words as Carol moved her finger along parts of words, such as *haystack*. This strategy, as negotiated between Jason and Carol, positioned Jason as a more capable reader than he might have appeared to be either with echo reading or reading on his own.

Summary. Jason and Carol negotiated their figured world of literacy in ways that revealed ongoing tensions between authoritative voices and internally persuasive voices. Some authoritative voices said that Jason would need to be reading at grade level by the end of the school year. Other voices said that Jason was bright and inquisitive and that he continually read for meaning. Carol and Jason both struggled while attempting to negotiate the intersection of these voices, illustrating how tutoring events were contact zones where multiple voices clamored for attentions and acceptance. Carol's uncertainty of her tutoring abilities carried into uncertainty about Jason's reading abilities. Carol's intentions were good, and she sometimes positioned Jason as funny and successful. More often, however, Carol positioned Jason as a weak reader. Jason resisted that positioning much of the time, and occasionally, he resisted Carol's position as the holder of knowledge. Consistently, he positioned himself as

comprehending literature, as inquisitive about word meanings, and actively engaged with text, always reading for meaning.

As Jason and Carol "did literacy," they collaborated as fellow readers through mutual enjoyment of literature. Laughter and joy were a vital part of this dyad's long conversation, but so was their growing perception that learning to read was hard. These tensions became more evident as the year progressed. Both perspectives appeared to become part of their psychological planes.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the complexities of relationships between volunteer tutors and their students as they negotiated texts. Even though I designed the study around three separate questions, I believe the three sections of data analysis are inter-related and can be considered together in light of my purpose.

By studying prior assumptions and, as far as possible, the sources for those assumptions, I was able to pinpoint several assumptions that revealed ongoing tension between ideological and autonomous models of literacy with each tutor. Although they all seemed to believe that reading aloud and enjoying that time together with literature was vital, they also believed that "working" with their own children on phonics was part of their responsibilities as parents in order to facilitate their children's growth as readers and writers. This suggested a belief that reading was necessary for future success. This tension was reflected in tutoring sessions, particularly with Carol and Jason, who struggled together to help Jason decode and retain knowledge of particular sight words, and also insisted on making time to enjoy literature together. These assumptions

that tutors brought with them into tutoring sessions influenced tutoring dynamics as they began co-constructing figured worlds with their students. Yet, assumptions were not necessarily fossilized; they were able to be challenged and adjusted as new voices and experiences showed the tutors that their prior assumptions were not applicable in their new contexts.

Through examination and categorization of skills and competencies that tutors emphasized during their tutoring, it became evident that tutors had a wide variety of instructional strategies or tools available to them as a result of their own experiences, their long conversations developed with their students, and our long conversation developed between tutors and myself, as site coordinator. Continuity became a key factor in developing relationships in which tutors were able to recognize and instantly seize upon the moments in which the children's zones of proximal development became evident in uniquely contextual relationships with text. Although the site coordinator could provide lesson plans, materials, and ongoing support, the tutors and students developed those close relationships within which literacy could be explored freely through ongoing discourse within their figured worlds.

Over time, students revealed evidence of changes in behavior and attitudes toward literacy within these figured worlds. It became clear that the children had the agency to decide how to answer tutors' authoritative voices which attempted to position them in particular ways. They could accept those voices willingly, or they could negotiate to alter the voices in ways that better suited them. Children were also capable of resisting tutors' authoritative voices in creative ways at times, positioning themselves as capable readers in whatever ways they could.

Children are far from passive recipients of knowledge or positioning. They are active co-constructors of meaning within the figured worlds which they co-construct. They negotiate ways

to think about literacy and how they will do literacy within the contexts of relationships with other readers and texts.

Histories and assumptions are formed and reformed as new meanings are co-created within new contexts. Change in assumptions does not move forward in a linear manner. Sometimes it hesitates, discouraged by current circumstances, reverting to older, more comfortable assumptions. Other times, change is not based on sufficient reflection about meaning being constructed within a particular context, so the new assumption may be flawed, unable to be applied in another new context. Sometimes, a newly altered assumption may seem to work in one type of context but not another. Confusion results and more experiences and deeper reflection with other voices are required.

In close, one-to-one relationships with tutors, children were able to investigate literacy more openly and noisily while the attentive adult followed their leads. This is in contrast to classrooms in which students work with a teacher in small groups two or three times a week. While the teacher works with guided reading groups, the rest of the children are engaged in independent reading activities, involving silent (or quiet), individual interaction with text. If language development and beginning reading are dependent upon relational learning situations, one-to-one tutoring can offer the best opportunity for that to occur.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to deepen understanding of the complexities of

relationships built between volunteer literacy tutors and their first grade students as they

negotiated literacy teaching and learning. Ethnographic methods allowed development of thick

descriptions of how prior assumptions impacted tutoring experiences, how tutors interpreted and

applied new understandings to prior assumptions of teaching and learning literacy, and how

participants negotiated positions with literacy and each other. Observations, interviews, and

documents were collected as data and analyzed using a qualitative, grounded theory approach

throughout the study. Specifically, data were coded for emerging themes and patterns that

represented actions and reactions of participants as they co-constructed meaning within their

literacy dyads. This analysis was designed to gain understanding of my research questions:

1. What assumptions about literacy did literacy volunteers bring to tutoring

    sessions? What were the sources for those assumptions? How were those

    assumptions evidenced during interactions?

2. What specific skills and competencies were emphasized in tutoring

    sessions? Did students utilize these skills and competencies without

prompting as time progressed?

3. How did students and volunteers position themselves and each other in relationship with each other and with texts?

My initial question centered around the assumptions about literacy, how it is learned and used and how it is best taught, along with possible sources for those assumptions and how they played out in tutoring sessions. I conducted initial and final interviews with tutors, recorded tutoring sessions, and kept field notes. Using a microanalysis, I analyzed each transcript line by line, looking for themes and patterns arising from overtly spoken assumptions and evidence of implicit assumptions within discourse during tutoring sessions. Analysis revealed that assumptions played an important role in tutors' interactions with their students, but that those assumptions could be challenged and altered.

The second research question focused on the specific skills and competencies that tutors emphasized during tutoring sessions, seeking evidence of how volunteers interpreted and applied training provided at the beginning of the program. An attempt was made to determine how and when students began taking initiative in using skills and competencies, but the nature of the tutoring situation made that difficult to pinpoint. Data collected included documents, tutoring observation transcripts, student work, and field notes. I analyzed each line of discourse, looking for themes and patterns, then coded for examples of literacy components with specific skills subcategorized. Analysis revealed that tutors followed major components of the tutoring model consistently throughout the school year and that they seemed able to address a wide variety of skills and competencies during tutoring. Although it was impossible to trace change in student

initiative pertaining to those specific skills and competencies, students were found to take initiative and change their ways of doing literacy in meaningful ways as time progressed.

The third research question considered power relationships in terms of how students and tutors positioned each other, positioned themselves, and allowed themselves to be positioned, both in relationship with each other and with literacy. Data included transcripts of tutoring observations, informal conversations, and field notes, which were studied with a microanalysis, examining each line of discourse while looking for recurring patterns and themes. I then coded the data in terms of qualities of interaction that impacted positioning within the tutoring experience. In most cases, students were positioned and ultimately positioned themselves as capable readers and writers. One student and tutor positioned reading as hard although the student also found ways to position himself as capable. In all cases, student agency to influence positioning was evidenced.

Discussion of the Findings

This research took place during the implementation of a tutoring program I was asked to design and execute for a school using volunteers to tutor first-graders in reading and writing. I recruited volunteers, purchased materials with a research grant, and trained volunteer tutors within the framework of sociocultural and critical theory lenses, using a tutoring model that reflected current scholarship on early literacy instruction (Johnston et al, 1998). Several theoretical concepts provided frameworks in which to understand developing tutor-student literacy relationships.

Long Conversations

Mercer (1995) describes classroom talk in terms of building long conversations, in which current discussions build on previous ones as shared histories are constructed over time. The continuity of working with one tutor for the entirety of the tutoring program enabled long conversations to grow. New literacy events built on previous ones, and in fact, the conversation at the end of a lesson might build upon a discussion from the middle of the same lesson. As more experiences are shared, participants use those shared histories as foundations for new experiences. Mercer argued that teachers can use these shared histories to shorten instructions or references because they can assume that students have shared understandings of the instructions or referents.

The long conversations built in tutoring dyads proved crucial to students' growth. Long conversations necessarily involved Bakhtin's (1981) notion of dialogism, in which participants address and answer each other. In a classroom, individual dialogues are necessarily brief, but the teacher uses them to keep everyone in the community of learning, the figured world of the classroom. Each brief individual discussion, each small group instructional dialogue, and all whole class conversations are part of the long conversation unique to their figured world.

In a tutoring dyad, the relatively extended time children have with tutors created opportunities for construction of meaningful long conversations in which shared histories are remembered and referenced in order to build connections with new conversations and literacy events. In Bakhtin's (1981) theory, we must answer in some way. Joe answered Ellie with silence several times during my observations, but his facial expressions and his decisions of what to do next reflected his inward responses to how Ellie was addressing him. Ellie and Joe co-

constructed a long conversation that eventually assisted Joe in learning word attack skills and improve his confidence. Without the continuity of Ellie's messages within this intensive one-to-one situation, Joe may not have experienced success in this regard as quickly as his did.

There is no substitute for time; continuity was vital to develop understandings of how to be literate in their unique figured worlds. References to their shared experiences became a type of shorthand, a way of talking uniquely developed and understood by the participants in each figured world (Holland et al, 2000).

Histories

In this study, Bakhtin's concepts of language use were evident throughout all three tutoring dyads' relationships and students' literacy growth. Each student's relationship with text was influenced by his/her history of life and language experiences (Morris, 1994). For example, Joe indicated on the day I met him that having his picture in the newspaper would be exciting; he had a background that valued newspapers as sources of information about local events. These histories enter with the child into each new literacy event in which the child encounters a variety of texts (Morris, 1994) and voices. Jason had particular difficulty attempting to read a text that used language in a remarkably unnatural way, at least partly because his language experiences did not support reading that particular text at that time. New relationships with texts are concurrently affected by past histories and dynamic relationships with others affiliated with the text (Morris, 1994). Keisha's relationship with a tutor who continually positioned her as a strong, capable reader influenced her ability to see herself as a reader at the end of the year, evidenced by her report that she reread two books each night given to her by her tutor. The relationship they built over the course of the program instilled value to those books for Keisha.

Tutors also brought their entire histories of life and language experiences to these new literacy events and were duly influenced by them. All three tutors, for instance, revealed explicitly held assumptions that reading should be enjoyed, and that assumption impacted the way they approached literacy events with their students. Other assumptions were implicitly revealed through actions and reactions during tutoring sessions. However, not all assumptions remained stubbornly fast. Carol's assumption that young children should not use pictures as support while they learn to read was challenged during the literary event of tutor training, and she willingly altered that assumption and applied her new understanding while tutoring Jason. Other assumptions, however, seemed more deeply rooted. For instance, whether it was an underlying assumption that children should not be given too many clues, or whether it was just a long habit, Carol's use of letter names rather than letter sounds proved more difficult for her to change.

Bakhtin described the impact of these histories of life and language experiences in terms of *heteroglossia*. Bakhtin brought into focus relationships and context as prime factors influencing language use, arguing that particular words come attached with multiple layers of values, meanings, and assumptions (Morris, 1994). Sometimes, this became evident most readily when a student discovered a disconnect between histories and new words. Keisha, for example, questioned how a room could look blue in the moonlight, and Jason continually asked for definitions of words or explanations of phrases that did not make sense to him. On the other hand, Joe laughed his way through a story about a baker overwhelmed by too many pancakes, his enjoyment was enhanced as he brought his own history with pancakes to the event.

Relationships

As a social construct, reading is only learned through relationships with other readers (Vygotsky, 1986; Street, 1995). Each dyad's relationship was unique. Ellie and Joe negotiated power as Ellie employed a bit of tough love to the relationship. Joe responded well, eventually seeming to accept and trust that Ellie was there to help, that it was okay to make mistakes or not know something immediately, and that there were strategies available to solve problems with words.

Carol and Jason built a relationship that was founded on mutual enjoyment of literature. At the same time, they seemed to struggle together while trying to find ways for Jason to learn how to decode. Because of a combination of factors, Jason and Carol seemed to co-construct an understanding that reading was hard, within particular contexts. Meaning was created in the interactions between tutor and child, somewhere in the space between the text and the reader (Street, 2005). In Jason's case, he and Carol assumed a perspective of reading enjoyment, which influenced their engagement with reading, and their engagement with reading also influenced their perspective, seeming to pressure them to accept a second assumption that reading is hard. New Literacy Studies argues that literacy is created, shaped, and maintained by social groups, yet social groups are then shaped and influenced by the literacies they've created (Luna et al, 2000; Rowan et al, 2002; Schultz & Hull, 2002; Street, 1995).

Reading as Intensely Contextual and Relational

The concept of figured worlds proved a useful framework for understanding negotiations among student-tutor relationships (Holland et al, 2001). Each dyad received materials, such as notecards, leveled books, homemade word sorts, and primary writing paper to use during

tutoring sessions. Although they received training about how to use those materials, they were able to negotiate the use as they collaboratively developed understanding of how to do literacy when they were together. Within figured worlds, participants attach meaning to the artifacts, developing particular ways of interacting with the artifacts, unique ways of talking, acting, and interacting when they are together in that conceptual space (Holland et al, 2001). Material artifacts are used to give figured worlds structure and meaning as participants use the artifacts to facilitate talking and acting in particular ways (Holland et al, 2001). In this case, dyads continued to use most of the materials in ways that reflected their training, probably due to the continued influence of supervision and guidance from the site coordinator. However, tutors and students occasionally deviated from the prescribed use, making new games to play with the notecards or marking the primary writing paper in a particular way to make it easier to use. Joe, for instance, quickly started sorting words by the end of the program because he understood that to be the pattern of behavior surrounding that particular material, and that shaped his position as a competent participant in these literacy practices. Keisha knew to put her name and the date at the top of her writing paper because she and Charlene had agreed that it was appropriate to do so within their figured world of literacy. Each new day and each new text offered new opportunities to negotiate meaning and ways of being literate.

Dialogism

Each student (and tutor) exhibited a sense of agency in actively negotiating their position within the dyad's figured world. Keisha used her ability to spell "pepperoni" to position herself as so much more literate than when she was in kindergarten. Ellie positioned herself as a strong mentor, capable of squelching particular ways of talking or behaving that challenged acceptable

parameters of their figured world. Jason positioned himself as a knower of the fact that authors live in different countries. Joe positioned himself as a questioner of how apples are transferred from fields to stores. All students positioned themselves as capable readers and writers, although that positioning could falter at times. Joe resisted positioning himself as capable at the beginning of the program, possibly because of an implicit assumption that good readers know words immediately upon seeing them. Ellie consistently used language in such a way as to challenge that assumption and offer Joe an alternative to that assumption by teaching him word attack strategies.

Each person is addressed and must answer (Bakhtin, 1981), if even with silence. A person chooses how to answer, displaying his agency in negotiating power, co-constructing meaning, and positioning himself and others with his answer. Yet, he, in turn, is influenced and shaped by his answer and the anticipated response to his answer. He is addressed again and the cycle continues of creating and modifying meaning and ways of being literate. Sometimes, students displayed resistance during their answers, finding ways to modify requests, such as resisting writing prompts. Other times, they resisted positioning resulting from being addressed in particular ways. When Carol announced brightly that they had a new book to read, Jason resisted being positioned with that text in such a cheerful relationship. Instead, he commented that it looked "hard, very hard," positioning himself in a troubled relationship with the text.

Since power flows dynamically throughout all relationships, the agency to change power relationships is strong (Foucault, 2004). Discourses within relationships shift power, sometimes strengthening or creating power, sometimes thwarting it. Charlene used power to re-create power within their figured world by consistently positioning Keisha as a capable reader and

writer. By allowing herself to be positioned in such a light, Keisha was accepting that power, and when she validated her position, such as a writer of a many-sentenced story, she strengthened her power to be that capable reader and writer.

Empirical Research

This study grew from previously published studies with various volunteer tutoring models and utilized the *Book Buddies* model (Johnson et al, 1998). The results from this study seem to support a finding by Gelzheiser (2005), who conducted a common factor analysis and determined that interesting texts and tutor experience were prime factors for successful tutoring experiences for students. However, Gelzheiser's study also found that students were more likely to improve in reading if they started with higher decoding skills. The two students who did not move forward very much in their instructional reading levels in my study were students with difficulty in decoding. This study, limited as it is, seems to confirm that observation.

Another finding from other studies seems to be verified through this research. Other researchers have found that training, supervision, and ongoing support from a reading teacher maintains consistency in the application of the tutoring model (Morris, 2005b; Brown et al, 2005; Invernizzi et al, 1997; Morris et al, 1990). I found consistent application of tutoring strategies taught during training, but I believe that was only due to the continued supervision and support offered throughout the entire program.

The qualitative study most closely related to mine is Dawes' (2007) research involving volunteer read-aloud partners. The only student who appeared to have a negative experience was working with an adult partner who was trying to tutor him even though the program was set up to simply read aloud together. Dawes found that using texts that followed students' interests, was

an important component influencing the impact of the literacy event. Also, a positive experience

depended on reading aloud becoming a shared activity in which both adult and child actively

participated. My study supports her findings in that training of volunteer tutors is crucial, along

with ongoing support and supervision in order to support consistent application of the tutoring

model's components. For all three of the dyads in my study, reading aloud was very much a

shared activity in which both student and tutor actively participated, creating meaning and

enjoyment together.

Dawes' unpublished dissertation (2003) describes the positioning of both tutors and

students by the program's organizational structure. Children were positioned as poor and at-risk

of academic failure, and adult volunteers were positioned as successful citizens who have the

ability to influence children's lives. However, the participants' reactions within these presumed

positions varied according to their own histories and assumptions. My study extends Dawes' by

studying three dyads' developing relationships over a period of seven months, the life of the

program, offering a close analysis of tutors' assumptions and how they affected their tutoring.

Although assumptions were important and influential, they were not necessarily fossilized and

could be challenged and adapted as new compelling information came to light. Students

demonstrated agency in negotiating power and positions within their particular figured worlds.

The children shared responsibility for determining how they would think, act, and be in

relationship with literacy while they shared that conceptual space. They developed *long

conversations* (Mercer, 1995) in which shared literacy experiences served to build their figured

worlds uniquely, giving them more structure and meaning that was shared only by themselves

and others they allowed into their figured worlds. Likewise, the tutors and I created a figured

world in which we negotiated positions and co-constructed ways of thinking, speaking, and acting with literacy in this context.

Limitations of the Study

The use of ethnographic methods in this study required analyzing transcripts. I thought I was prepared for the amount of time required for transcription and initial analyzing and coding, but I was unable to complete the work quickly enough to take developing theories to participants for in-depth participant reviews during the seven months of the program. I attempted to counter that by continuing to talk with each tutor often about their thoughts and ideas, but I will need to plan more realistically for transcribing in future research.

I did not obtain substantial information from the children during their interviews. I am not experienced questioning such young interviewees, and I needed to find more concrete or imaginative ways to tap into their minds, allowing them alternative modes of communicating besides just answering questions. I have since found the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990), which uses Garfield characters to represent feelings. This could be useful in the future, and I am sure that there are others available or that I can design something more effective.

The program was not continued the following year, which prevented any follow-up research. The focus of administration changed, and although I had arranged for a new site coordinator and was prepared to assist during the transition at the beginning of the new school year, the administration decided to use all their volunteers for third-grade math and reading tutoring that would involve coaching students for the state-mandated standardized test. This was

disappointing, particularly when considered in light of Morris' (2005b) study revealing that strength and longevity of administrative support of programs that work is one necessary factor of tutoring programs shown to raise test scores.

Another limitation inherent in this case study is my immersion in the context of the research. I planned and provided the tutor training, wrote the lesson plans for each tutor and provided materials, supervised and supported each tutor all year, assessed each student at the beginning and end of the program and informally assessed their reading during the program, and tutored a child myself. I had a vested interest in making this program succeed, but my involvement in planning and supervising undoubtedly influenced tutoring interactions and, perhaps, their feedback in terms of restraining from critical remarks. Each tutor appeared to be comfortable and often suggested adaptations or changes for the future, but researching a program that the researcher created and maintained holds inevitable risks of missing or misinterpreting parts of the data, for various reasons. To counteract this limitation, I have attempted to clearly describe my involvement and provide rich descriptions of contexts, data, and my interpretations.

Recommendations for Future Research

A strong recommendation is to conduct this type of research across multiple contexts. The fact that all three volunteers in this study had college degrees may be representative of typical literacy volunteers, but it would not necessarily be representative of the families in the schools. I would like to explore recruiting volunteers who do not necessarily have college degrees. Certainly, learning from volunteers from diverse socioeconomic, racial, and cultural backgrounds would bring new dimension to children's tutoring experiences as well as to this

type of study. I believe they could be just as successful with training and support, but I fear that they may hesitate to volunteer for such a task because of their lack of higher education. In addition, future studies should explore other contexts, such as after-school centers, and other age ranges, such as adult literacy tutoring.

If students were screened to make sure that students needing assistance from reading specialists do not rely on volunteer tutoring, then tracking assessment data for all children in the program compared with assessment data for children who qualify for volunteer tutoring but who are not participating in the tutoring could be beneficial. My sample was too small to do this effectively. A broader group of participants would be necessary for such an analysis, which should be combined with the same type of qualitative analysis of several dyads' relationships. Longitudinal studies of volunteer tutors' impact on student attitude and reading achievement would be valuable.

Summary

The results of this study showed that volunteers were quite capable of tutoring when provided training and ongoing support. Their prior assumptions were strong factors, but not necessarily deciding factors in how they approached their students and the teaching and learning of literacy. Histories and assumptions were subject to scrutiny and revision, as warranted by interaction in new experiences with new voices.

Students at this age displayed agency by negotiating with tutors as they co-constructed understanding of how to do literacy when they worked together. The goal of this study, to deepen understanding of the complexities of relationships built between volunteer literacy tutors and their first grade students as they negotiated literacy teaching and learning, was achieved

using ethnographic methods. This enabled a close analysis which allowed development of thick descriptions of how prior assumptions impacted tutoring experiences, how tutors interpreted and applied understandings of teaching and learning literacy, how students changed behaviors and attitudes concerning literacy over time, and how participants negotiated positions with literacy and each other, resulting in three case studies.

It is important for practitioners to note that positive relationships were vital for literacy learning and that student agency should be maintained to position themselves as capable readers and writers. At the same time, skills and competencies were developed through careful, contextually insightful instruction. The bottom line in the dyad's relationships was always the uniqueness of each child's personality, strengths, and needs. Tutors proved capable, through the continuity of long conversations, co-construction of meaning in intensely contextual relationships with texts and each other, of seizing opportune moments to use particular strategies to further literacy understanding. Students proved to be active agents in literacy learning.

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APPENDIX A: Anticipated Principal Initial Interview Prompts

(*Note:* This will be a semi-structured interview. Possible prompts include, but are not limited to, the following questions.)

What changes have you seen during your career/lifetime in how literacy is perceived and taught?

Which changes do you see as beneficial and which ineffective or harmful?

How do you see the role of literacy volunteer?
> … of a volunteer coordinator?
> What experiences have you had with volunteers? …
> What types of training have been available for the volunteers?

What are your goals for the volunteer tutoring program?

How do you use literacy now?
> What makes you a literate person?

How do you think literacy is best taught?

What are the most serious challenges of teaching literacy?

How do you define literacy?

How do you judge the effectiveness of literacy instruction?

What do you think is the ultimate purpose of literacy instruction?

APPENDIX B: Anticipated Teacher Initial Interview Prompts

(*Note:* This will be a semi-structured interview. Possible prompts include, but are not limited to, the following questions.)

What changes have you seen during your career/lifetime in how literacy is perceived and taught?

Which changes do you see as beneficial and which harmful or ineffective?

Why do you want to use literacy volunteers?

How do you judge their effectiveness?

How do you choose the students who work with the volunteers?
    What can you tell me about the children within the following topics:
    - their progress in literacy
    - their attitudes toward learning in general and literacy in particular
    - their attitudes toward being tutored

How do you use literacy now?
    What makes you a literate person?

How do you think literacy is best taught?

How do you judge the effectiveness of literacy instruction?

What do you think is the ultimate purpose of literacy instruction?

How do you define literacy?

APPENDIX C: Anticipated Volunteer Initial Interview Prompts

(*Note:* This will be a semi-structured interview. Possible prompts include, but are not limited to, the following questions.)

Why are you volunteering?

What do you think will be the best/worst things about volunteering?

What types of things do you anticipate doing with the students?

What has prepared you to volunteer with students?

How much direction do you think you should receive?

What can you tell me about the child you will work with?

Do you remember how you (or your children) were taught reading, writing, and spelling?

How do you use literacy in your family now?

What type of changes have you seen in how these subjects are taught?
    Which changes do you think have been beneficial and which ones are ineffective?

How will you know when the student you're working with is successful?
    What do you do if he/she struggles with reading, etc.?
    What do you do if he/she excels in reading, etc.?

APPENDIX D: Anticipated Student Initial Interview Prompts

(*Note:* This will be a semi-structured interview. Possible prompts include, but are not limited to, the following questions.)

Do you like school? What do you like best? Least?

Do you like to read? Write? What do you think about spelling?

Do others in your family like to read or write?

What kinds of reading/writing do you do:
     … in the classroom?
     … in volunteer sessions?

What kinds of reading/writing do you do outside of school?

Do your friends like to read/write?

What kinds of things do you do in your spare time?

What do you think of reading/writing activities in school (in classroom, in volunteer sessions)?

How do you recognize a "good" reader/writer? Are you one?

APPENDIX E: Anticipated Principal Final Interview Prompts

These questions will be formulated based on the first interview and data collected during year-long observations while helping to establish the volunteer tutoring program. They will include questions concerning various aspects of interactions with students and will further explore the principal's ideas surrounding literacy – what it is, how it's learned, their role in helping students learn, how literacy is used, taught, and assessed – and the students who qualified for and/or participated in the tutoring program, along with the use of volunteers as tutors.

APPENDIX F: Anticipated Teacher Final Interview Prompts

These questions will be formulated based on observations and the first interview. They will include questions concerning various aspects of interactions with students and will further explore the teachers' ideas surrounding literacy – what it is, how it's learned, their role in helping students learn, how literacy is used, taught, and assessed – and the students who qualified for and/or participated in the tutoring program, along with the use of volunteers as tutors. Any discussion concerning particular children will touch only on the topics of their progress in literacy, their attitudes toward learning in general and literacy in particular, and their attitudes toward tutoring.

APPENDIX G: Anticipated Volunteer Final Interview Prompts

These questions will be formulated based on observations and the first interview. They will include questions concerning specific aspects of interactions with students and will further explore their ideas surrounding literacy – what it is, how it's learned, their role in helping students learn, how literacy is used, taught, and assessed – and the student with whom they have worked this year, along with their own role within the tutoring program.

APPENDIX H: Anticipated Student Final Interview Prompts

These questions will be formulated based on observations and the first interview. They will include questions concerning various aspects of interactions with their volunteers and will further explore their ideas surrounding literacy – what they like/dislike about reading and writing, how they think they learn to read, write, and spell better, how literacy is used in their own lives, how they think literacy is used in adult lives, what they like/dislike about tutoring.

Attention: Parents, Grandparents, Other Relatives, Neighbors, and Friends of Indianola

Volunteer Tutoring Opportunity

Do you enjoy working with young children? Can you make a time commitment to work with a child in reading, writing, and spelling? That's all we need in terms of qualifications.

The Ohio State University College of Education & Human Ecology is helping us build a volunteer tutoring program this year at Indianola. We'll be working with 1st graders on literacy skills.

The time commitment involves two hours a week at first – after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays – for training and tutoring. This will last until December when you'll then start tutoring twice a week during the school day, 30 minute tutoring sessions.

All tutors will receive instruction in the reading process and tutoring strategies. You'll have ongoing support and supervision throughout the year. All tutoring materials will be provided for you.

Columbus City Schools requires that all persons working with children be finger-printed for background checks. This may need to be at your own expense.

If you'd like more information, you may contact Dotty Kupsky, a Ph.D. candidate from OSU who will be assisting with this program. She can be reached at kupsky.1@osu.edu or 614-284-4596.

Appendix J: Volunteer Recruitment Flyer 2

Volunteer Tutoring Opportunity
Do you like to read? Do you enjoy working with children?

If you answered "yes" to these questions, we have an opportunity for you! Due to the decrease in staff dedicated to literacy in Columbus Schools, there is a real need for volunteer tutors. We're starting a program at Indianola Informal K-8 this year in which volunteers will tutor 1st-grade children in reading, writing, and spelling.

The time commitment for tutoring is two sessions a week – about 30 minutes each – November through May. Tutors are asked to arrive about 15 minutes early to preview the lesson plan for the day and stay a few minutes afterwards to write notes about how things went. So, the total time commitment may be close to an hour twice a week.

We have an immediate need for one tutor on Mondays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:00. Two other tutors are needed in the afternoons, around 2:30 or 3:00. Specific schedules for these two have not been finalized.

Training will be provided for the tutors – two sessions, approximately one hour each – at the beginning. Further training will occur during the school year, and all training sessions will be held at Westminster-Thurber. Training will include instruction in the reading process and tutoring strategies. You'll have ongoing support and supervision throughout the year, and all tutoring materials will be provided for you, including lesson plans.

Columbus City Schools requires that all persons working with children be finger-printed for background checks, and that fee will be paid for you.

For more information, please contact Dotty Kupsky, a Ph.D. candidate from OSU who will be directing this program. She can be reached at kupsky.1@osu.edu or 614-875-8074.

Appendix K: Volunteer Recruitment Flyer 3
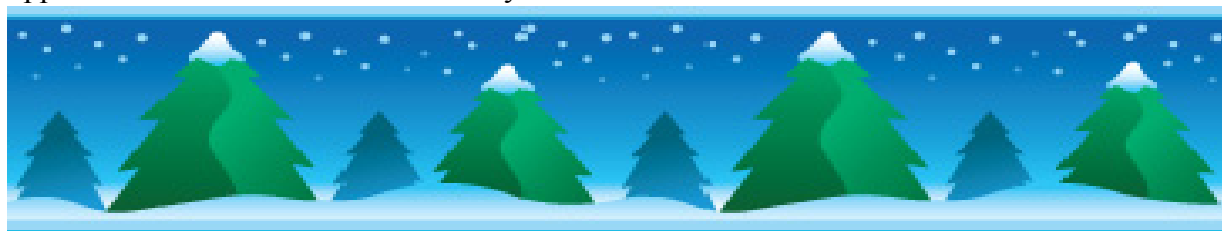
January is a time of renewal, of fresh starts, of hope for the future.

Perhaps this is also a time to consider a new volunteer opportunity; we still have children who need adults to read with them twice a week. Could you find an hour a week to give a young child?

Currently, a gap exists due to reading teachers being reassigned into math and science positions. Supplemental literacy instruction previously provided is no longer available, so we're looking for volunteers to fill this gap by working with a child for a total of one hour a week.

Tutoring is not as hard as it might sound. You receive training, all materials are provided for you, lesson plans are written for you, and you receive ongoing support and feedback from an OSU doctoral candidate.

The children are in 1st-grade and we have openings in either mornings or afternoons. You will meet with the child one-on-one for 30 minutes twice a week. Each tutoring session involves reading, writing, and word study.

We have four tutors who have been working with their children since October. One of them agreed to describe her experiences:

I am tutoring this year and can honestly say the time with my little student is generally one of the highlights of my day. If you enjoy working with kids, I highly recommend getting involved in this program. All tutoring is one-on-one, which allows for great relationship building. Dotty is extremely well-organized and provides detailed daily lesson plans and all necessary materials. All you need to bring is a smile!

--Charlene

Please consider making time to work with a child this winter. It can be a very rewarding experience for you as much as for the child. If you have any questions, please contact me, Dotty Kupsky, kupsky.1@osu.edu, 614-284-4596.

Appendix L: Student Recruitment Letter

February 2009

Dear Parents,

We have started a new tutoring program this year at Indianola with the help of Ohio State University. Working with 1st-graders, the tutors study reading, writing, and spelling skills with the children. The tutors work with the children twice a week, about 30 minutes each session, during the hours that your child is at school.

I believe your child could benefit from participating in this tutoring program, so I wanted to send you this information to help you decide whether or not to allow your child to participate.

The volunteer tutors are parents, grandparents, or other friends of Indianola. These volunteers are carefully trained, supervised, and supported throughout the year by OSU faculty. They also have background checks, as required by the school district.

If you have questions about tutoring, you can contact the person from OSU who is assisting us with the program, Dotty Kupsky, at kupsky.1@osu.edu or 614-875-8074.

Please let me know if you'd like to have your child work with a volunteer tutor this year by sending the information below back to school with your child.

Thank you,

_____ Yes, I'd like my child to participate in the volunteer tutoring program.

_____ No, I don't want my child to participate in the volunteer tutoring program.

Child's Name _____

Parent Signature _____   Date _____

Phone _____

Appendix M: Tutor Orientation Agenda

1.	***Indianola Volunteer Tutoring Orientation***
2.	***10/23/08, 9:45am, Parent Room***
3.	
4.	Introductions
5.	
6.	Overview of tutoring program
7.	• Background – loss of reading specialists to math and science
8.	• Caroline Clark – approached by Kathryn
9.	• Original design – after school, collaboration with 670 students
10.	• Current plan – during school, ongoing training throughout year
11.	
12.	General content of tutoring sessions
13.	• Rereading
14.	• Phonics/word study
15.	• Reading
16.	• Writing
17.	• Read-aloud
18.	• Texts
19.	
20.	Expectations of tutors
21.	• Twice a week, 30-minutes sessions, same child all year
22.	• Come early to preview, stay after for notes
23.	• Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday with Friday as make-up
24.	• Be willing to have me hang around occasionally, especially at first
25.	• Background checks
26.	• Confidentiality
27.	
28.	Expectations for me
29.	• Lesson plan and supply prep
30.	• Ongoing feedback
31.	• Availability
32.	• Observations, friendly criticism
33.	• Supervision at first until all background checks come back
34.	• Venting post
35.	
36.	Research
37.	• Purpose, activities, forms
38.	
39.	Schedule
40.	• two training sessions next week, 1 hour each
41.	• background checks

Appendix N: Tutor Training #1

1.	**Volunteer Tutor Training**
2.	**Tuesday, 10/28/08 – 2:30-3:30 – Parent Room**
3.	
4.	**Note: Plan times for any initial interviews!**
5.	
6.	Read aloud: *Mrs. Spritzer's Garden* by Edith Pattou & bulbs in pots
7.	
8.	Introduce materials
9.	
10.	General tips for tutoring
11.	• Get to know student – interests, family, pets, etc.
12.	• Share self – pics of self and family, books, hobbies, etc.
13.	• Read alouds – modeling book language, model fluency, play with language, thinking aloud – above student's reading level
14.	• Independent reading – repeated readings increases fluency; student enjoyment
15.	• Writing – Share the Pen, read over after writing and reread at other sessions; independent writing
16.	• Phonics – word study (onsets/rimes, etc.)
17.	• Send note home to parents to introduce self
18.	
19.	Reading
20.	• Three cueing systems: visual (graphophonetic), syntax, meaning (semantic) – look at p. 7 Figure 2-1 for cueing questions to use with children
21.	• Practice: "What Cues Do You Use?"
22.	• It's ok when child gets stuck – prompts you can use (p. 8) – add "Get your mouth ready."
23.	
24.	Read alouds
25.	• Fluency = "automaticity"
a.	o Rate
b.	o Smoothness
c.	o Intonation
d.	o Phrasing
e.	o Stress
26.	• Increase fluency by modeling
a.	o Use poems, nursery rhymes, etc.
b.	o Rereading familiar text
c.	o Echo reading – I read, you read (one line or one phrase at a time)
d.	o Choral reading – together
e.	o Reader's Theater – sometimes scripts have too many characters; still searching, may need to write our own
f.	o Don't worry about rate now – just smoothness, phrasing, and intonation (depending on child)
27.	• Think alouds (metacognition)
a.	o Stop during reading aloud for pondering, comments on plot/characters/illustrations, predicting, emotions, etc., etc.
b.	o Models active engagement with text
28.	Independent Reading

29.	o Book levels	
a.		o Independent (easy) – 95% and up
b.		o Instructional (just right) – 90-94% accuracy
c.		o Frustration (too hard) – below 90%
30.	o Before/During/After	
a.		o Before
i.		▪ Purposes of introducing the book
1.		• Sets purpose for reading
2.		• Activates schema
i.		▪ Book Walk
1.		• Read title
2.		• Page by page, look at pictures
3.		• Predict
4.		• Preview vocabulary, if needed
b.		o During
i.		▪ Purposes
1.		• Promotes active engagement with text
2.		• Improves comprehension
i.		▪ Involves
1.		• Predictions and verifications/adjustments to predictions
2.		• Making connections
a.		o Text to self
b.		o Text to text
c.		o Text to world
3.		• Inferences
4.		• Visualizing
5.		• Determining author's purpose
c.		o After
i.		▪ Natural to find some way to react to reading after completing text
i.		▪ Usually involves
1.		• Discussion
2.		• Reflection
i.		▪ Can involve
1.		• Art, drama
2.		• Summary sentence (see p. 51) but change to: "Somebody wanted but so" (story grammar)
3.		• Helping child reflect on his/her own reading and thinking processes
31.		
32.	Notes for next training:	
33.	o Running records	
34.	o Phonics & word study	
35.	o Socks for erasers?	

Appendix O: Tutor Training #2

1.	**Indianola Volunteer Training Session #2**
2.	**Thursday, 10/30/08 – 10:00-11:00 – Parent Room**
3.	
4.	I. Running Records
5.	A. Purposes
6.	1. Informing instruction
7.	2. Assessing text level – appropriateness (independent, instructional, frustration)
8.	3. Document student progress
9.	B. Purpose – to understand what reading processes children are using
10.	C. Immediately after taking running record, it's helpful to record brief notes on how
11.	reading "sounded" – choppy, smooth, soft, etc.
12.	D. Consistent codes – list and examples attached
13.	C. Practice, practice, practice!
14.	
15.	II. Phonics & Word Study
16.	A. Word Sorts
17.	1. Open
18.	2. Closed
19.	B. Concept Sorts
20.	C. Example of game
21.	

Appendix P: Tutor Training #3

Indianola Volunteer Training #3	
Thursday, Dec. 4, 2008	
10:15-11:15	
10:00 – 10:15	Snacks & coffee – chocolate!
Deeply appreciative of commitment of time and energy	
• The Utility of Forty-Five Phonic Generalizations	
• GHOUGHPHTHEIGHTTEEAU	
10:15 – 10:20	Open questions – issues you're facing, etc. What about running records?
10:20 – 10:50	Developmental Spelling Stages – characteristics, features on handout
• Emergent	
• Letter Name	
o Feature A: Initial and Final Consonants	
▪ Suggested sequence (in handout) eliminates similar-looking letters (m/n, b/d, p/q, f/t), similar sounds (g/j, c/s/z, d/t, b/p, f/v, w/y) from being studied together at the beginning.	
▪ As children progress, those letters/sounds can be studied together.	
▪ X is not studied; Q is introduced, but not emphasized.	
o Feature B: Initial Consonant Blends and Digraphs	
▪ Digraphs: sh, ch, th (unvoiced), th (voiced), wh(?)	
▪ Blends	
• s- blends (st, sp, st, sk, sn, sc, sm, sl, sw)	
• l- blends (sl, fl, pl, bl, cl, gl)	
• r- blends (cr, fr, br, gr, pr, dr, tr)	
o Feature C: Word Families and Short Vowels	
▪ Onsets and rimes (start with rimes, then narrow focus to short vowels)	
• Common word families/rimes (at, ad, an, ot, et, un, ob, ug, etc.)	
o Feature D: Affricates	
▪ Common affricates: dr, tr, ch, j, g	
▪ Included in other features, but make sure child is differentiating them. If not, we'll do a separate review.	
o Feature E: Final Consonant Blends and Digraphs, including more word families	
▪ Use rimes first, then focus in on final blends and digraphs	
▪ Common rimes/word families: -ing, -ack, -ong, -ank, -ill, etc.	
• Within Word	
• Syllable Juncture	
• Derivational Constancy	
10:50 – 11:15	Other teaching strategies during reading
• Before	
o Remember to share personal reading with students (paragraph from story you're reading with funny/descriptive content; flyer from someplace you've visited; card/note received from friend; poem, comic	

strip, etc.)
• During
o Making connections
▪ Text to self
▪ Text to text
▪ Text to world
o Making inferences
o Visualizing
o The Three Questions of Decoding
▪ Does it look right?
▪ Does it sound right?
▪ Does it make sense?
Homework: Distribute video – 44 minutes – watch on own time, but transfer to each other until everyone has watched it.