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**A Study of Preservice Teachers as Tutors in a
One-to-One Tutoring Program
for Struggling Readers**

Thesis

Submitted to:

The School of Education of the
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree

Master of Science in Education

By

Katherine Marie Lekan

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

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WE HEREBY APPROVE THE MASTER'S THESIS SUBMITTED

BY

Katherine Marie Lekan

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Tutoring Program for Struggling Readers

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Master of Science in Education



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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS AS TUTORS IN A ONE-TO-ONE TUTORING PROGRAM FOR STRUGGLING READERS

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University of Dayton, 2008

Advisor: Mary Kate Sableski, Ph.D.

This thesis is a descriptive qualitative multiple case study of the impact that participation in a one-to-one tutoring program can have on the knowledge and confidence of 6 third-year second semester preservice teachers who are pursuing licensure in Intervention Specialist education at a Catholic, Midwestern university. The purposes of this study were: (a) understand how the preservice teachers were impacted by serving as tutors in a one-to-one tutoring program for struggling readers, (b) to see how this experience impacted their learning, confidence and knowledge of reading and struggling readers, and (c) to understand what part of the tutoring program impacted them the most. The participants took part in interviews and classroom observations, as well as completed weekly reflections in a tutor journal and on a web discussion board, Quickplace. The results of this study indicate that participation in the tutoring program had a positive impact on the preservice teachers.

The preservice teachers' confidence in their abilities as teachers grew over the semester. The experience of the tutoring program was in part due to the importance of communication throughout the program. The tutoring program had a positive influence on the preservice teachers' development of knowledge in teaching, specifically teaching reading and working with struggling readers.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Significance of the Study.....	4
Background of the Problem.....	5
Research Questions.....	8
Summary.....	8
II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE.....	10
Struggling Readers.....	10
One-To-One Tutoring.....	13
Preservice Teachers as Tutors.....	15
Summary.....	25
III. METHODOLOGY.....	26
Participants	26
Context for the Study.....	27
Research Design.....	30
Summary.....	35
IV. RESULTS.....	36
Kristi.....	36
Susan.....	40
Anne.....	45

Rachael.....	50
Lynn.....	56
Mary.....	62
Summary.....	69
V. DISCUSSION.....	70
Cross-Case Analysis.....	70
Linking Practice and Findings to Current Research in Preservice Teacher Tutoring Programs.....	83
Recommendations.....	87
APPENDICES.....	91
Appendix A: Consent Form for Preservice Teachers.....	91
Appendix B: Interview Guide.....	93
Appendix C: Observation Guide.....	95
Appendix D: Tutor Reflection Journal.....	96
REFERENCES.....	97

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Data Collection Timeline.....	31
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As teachers we are all faced with different types of students in our classrooms. At times, I have been overwhelmed at the complexity of reaching all of my students. As a teacher, I have always felt an innate desire to help people. Teachers are presented with a wide range of abilities each year as a stream of students enters our room. I am always pleased when a student of mine finds success, but I find it especially gratifying when that student is someone who struggled and persevered to find success.

As an undergraduate student I was placed in a field experience where I would learn from my cooperating teacher and learn to teach whole class lessons like all the other education majors, but I was also a part of a study that was being conducted on one-to-one tutoring programs for struggling readers. It was through this study and the experience of working one-to-one with a struggling reader that I gained an interest in working with a student that might need extra help. After this experience, which occurred throughout my junior and senior years, I went into my first teaching job in a sixth grade Language Arts classroom with a

different perspective than I might otherwise have. I was acutely aware of the wide range of abilities of the students in my classroom, and I felt confident in designing instruction to meet their needs. I know that the experience of working one-to-one really tuned me into the complexities of teaching reading to a classroom full of children.

After 3 years of teaching I had the opportunity to become a graduate assistant at the university that I attended as an undergraduate student. As part of my assistantship, I worked with the same study for struggling readers. I found myself a part of this study as an experienced teacher of 3 years, where I trained the tutors to work in the classrooms tutoring struggling middle school readers. I continued to see my passion for helping struggling students come to fruition in this new work.

The Struggling Reader Study, that was the focus of this research, is in its fifth year. The study was the concept of an experienced Language Arts teacher of 20 years who wanted to see the effects of one-to-one tutoring provided by preservice teachers to struggling middle school readers. The director of the study, Judy Eggemeier, left her sixth grade classroom to come to a local university as a Teacher-In-Residence. After she had left her life as a middle school teacher, she always thought, "What could I have done better?" and she realized something that was always nagging at her were those struggling readers who were passed on to the seventh grade even though they still needed much help and attention in the area of reading. She wanted to give back to her district that had given her this great opportunity to experience teaching at the college

level, and she developed the idea of conducting a study to help improve the reading of struggling middle school readers. During her first year of teaching classes at the university level she realized that there was a great resource available, pre-service teachers that could be tapped for their knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm to work with struggling readers.

There were two main components to the Struggling Reader study. The first was a solid structure of professional development for teachers. The teachers involved in the study met with Judy at least once a month and together they read and discussed current research in reading and would also work around a common text. Part of the professional development for the teachers took place over the summer. They read a professional book and met two times over the summer to discuss the book. There was also an on-line discussion over the summer as part of the teachers' professional development in reading and struggling readers. The second key component to the study was that it would rely on preservice teachers from the university to go out into the schools to work one-to-one with struggling readers, inside the classroom. The program was designed to occur within the regular classroom, as Judy believed that the struggling readers needed to be in the classroom to avoid missing any instruction. The tutoring was structured around the research based book *Strategies That Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (2000), and the strategies were taught to the teachers who were part of the program. The comprehension strategies discussed by Harvey and Goudvis (2000) were the framework for the classroom instruction, as well as the framework for the one-to-one tutoring. The tutors were

also trained in the comprehension strategies from Harvey and Goudvis. The tutors also met to discuss how to work one-to-one with a struggling reader. The tutors, like the teachers in the program, worked with the book *Strategies That Work* to learn about best practices in reading. They worked together to learn how best to instruct a struggling middle school reader. When the study began, it involved one school and 7 tutors. After the first year another school joined in, and this required more tutors. The study is now in its fifth year and it has now grown to include 4 schools and 32 tutors. My work with the study as both an undergraduate and graduate student has resulted in my own research interests related to the study and its influence on preservice teachers.

Significance of Study

As college professors themselves, Worthy and Prater (1998), state "it became clear to me that the reading methods courses I taught were not much more effective than the one I had taken in my own teacher preparation" (p. 485). Worthy and Prater looked into the use of preservice teachers as tutors for struggling readers. They determined that placing preservice teachers in a one-to-one tutorial program would allow for a deeper understanding of the content they were learning in the classroom. This is an area that has not been widely studied, though there is some research which supports the practice. Preservice teachers are knowledgeable about education, excited about working with students, and willing to work in schools to meet course requirements. In our schools, struggling readers sit in need of attention and assistance. The study that is the focus of my

investigation pairs preservice teachers with struggling readers, putting two groups with compatible needs together.

For preservice teachers, this experience might impact them in such a way that they graduate as completely different teachers than they might otherwise have. Fang and Ashley (2004) looked at different approaches used at the university level in teacher education. Their study demonstrated that students enrolled in an "interdisciplinary block" (involving one-to-one tutoring) outperformed those in the university-based literacy block (not tutoring) in regard to their knowledge base about literacy education (p. 40). This experience for preservice teachers gave them insight to teaching that they might not otherwise have received, even during student teaching. To be able to work one-to-one with a student who struggles and to really dig deep into who that student is and what he or she needs can speak volumes when that preservice teacher has an opportunity to tackle a room full of students that need assistance. The use of preservice teachers in one-to-one tutoring programs for struggling readers can positively impact the teaching and learning of struggling readers in middle school classrooms.

Background of the Problem

I planned to investigate the ways in which the one-to-one tutoring program for struggling readers impacted the way that preservice teachers approached instructing a struggling reader, their attitude toward working with struggling readers, and their beliefs about teaching reading. My question can be categorized into three main areas that I planned to investigate: struggling

readers, one-to-one tutoring, and preservice teachers as tutors. The first component of the study examined the complexities of working with struggling readers. As teachers, every day we are faced with struggling readers in our classrooms. According to Wright and Cleary (2006), "Elementary-school children across the nation demonstrate reading deficits serious enough to interfere with learning. A recent government study indicated that nearly 40% of fourth-grade students fell below grade level on state reading tests in 2003" (p. 99). This is a statistic that is all too real for some teachers. Struggling readers come to us with a wide range of problems and the cause of those problems is just as varied. According to Diamond (2006), life at school can be incredibly stressful for adolescent students who struggle. Diamond continues by stating that, "Besides poor academic achievement, these students frequently suffer emotional and psychological consequences from their reading problems, including anxiety and low self-esteem" (p. 10). We live in a world where many students are failing and we have to do something about it.

One intervention that has been shown to be effective at bolstering both the confidence and skills of struggling readers is one-to-one tutoring. According to Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, and Moody (2000), one-to-one instruction is "generally considered to be the most effective way of increasing students' achievement" (p. 605). There has been much research to support this belief. According to Juel (1996), "The benefits of one-on-one tutoring are clear" (p. 268). This method of instruction can have dramatic effects on the reading ability of a struggling student. "The immediate nature of individualized, contextual feedback given in

the tutorial may provide more effective cues to guide the fledgling reader toward useful reading strategies and away from nonproductive ones," states Juel (1996, p. 268). If one-to-one tutoring is so effective, then why are our students not receiving it? As teachers, we know that devoting individual time to our students is very difficult to do when we are in our own classrooms. We have 25 other students to deal with at once and we have to reach each student every day. One-to-one time can be quite limited. One way in which teachers meet this challenge is by relying on resources outside of their classrooms to provide the intensive instruction they know their struggling readers need.

One way to do this is to incorporate the use of preservice teachers as tutors in school programs. One use of preservice teachers is through service learning programs, "Between 1987 and 2002, the number of institutions of higher education in the USA utilizing service-learning (SL) pedagogy expanded from 98 to 868," according to Hart and King (2007). Incorporating service-learning into teacher education programs can have a positive effect on preservice teachers because it "allows preservice teachers to go beyond the boundaries of university classrooms and connect theory to practice inside meaningful, authentic experiences" (Hart & King, 2007, p. 324).

Using preservice teachers as tutors for struggling readers is one practice relied upon in classrooms across the country. Worthy and Prater (1998) state "university instruction will make a difference in teachers' beliefs and practices only when it is firmly embedded in extensive, carefully structured, exemplary field experiences in real schools with real children" (p. 486). By using preservice

teachers as tutors several groups can benefit. First, the struggling students will benefit. They receive increased instructional time and have the benefit of someone focusing specifically on them in an area where they greatly need assistance. Next, the classroom teacher benefits as his/her students are being helped, but she is receiving assistance from someone else, so she can keep her focus on the rest of her class. Finally, the preservice teachers themselves can benefit from the experience of working one-to-one with a struggling reader and learning how to adjust instruction accordingly.

Research Questions

The research question for this study was: How does participation in the tutorial experience influence the knowledge and confidence of the preservice teachers in becoming teachers of struggling readers?

1. What is the influence of the tutorial experience on the preservice teachers' beliefs about struggling readers?
2. What is the influence of the tutorial experience on the ways in which the preservice teachers planned and executed instruction for struggling readers?
3. What aspects of the tutorial experience are the most important for their learning?

Summary

This chapter introduced the research surrounding the study, the purposes of the study, and the significance of the study. The research questions were clearly stated. Chapter 2 will present a review of the literature surrounding the

major topics of this study: struggling readers, the use of preservice teachers as tutors and one-to-one tutoring and the impact it has on the preservice teachers.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher will review the major literature surrounding this study. The three topics that this study will focus on, and thus the three major divisions of this chapter, are: struggling readers, one-to-one tutoring, and the use of preservice teachers as tutors, focusing on the benefits for the preservice teachers.

Struggling Readers

Classroom teachers are increasingly expected to take the primary role in raising the reading level of their students (Duffy-Hester, 1999). However, this reality can be a difficult challenge for most teachers because many teacher education programs do not provide adequate training to support students with reading related problems. Although teachers are expected to support the struggling readers in their classrooms, "a recent national survey of elementary school teachers revealed that many were unsure of how to meet the needs of readers who struggle. Many teachers stated that teaching struggling readers was one of their greatest challenges" (Duffy-Hester, 1999, p. 481).

Another challenge for teachers is when students continue to struggle with reading as they move into middle school. When a student in the sixth grade cannot read, teachers face seemingly insurmountable challenges. However, this is all too much a reality for many teachers. It is common for younger students to struggle with reading, but there is a multitude of research that says the same for middle school students. Struggling middle school readers are complex. Ivey (1999) researched struggling middle school readers and found that they "exhibit great range and diversity in their reading behaviors" (p. 372). Due to this fact, middle school teachers and preservice teachers have a lot to concern themselves with when it comes to instructing struggling middle school readers. Ivey researched and found several recurring themes common to middle school struggling readers.

Ivey (1999) offers four important themes that were discovered through research on struggling middle school readers. First, struggling readers need access to a wide range of literature, including topic and difficulty level. Often, struggling readers lose interest in the type of reading that they are typically required to do in school. Ivey affirms that "the matter of interest pertains not only to reluctant readers, but also to avid and successful middle school readers (p. 373). Struggling middle school readers also need access to both easy and difficult books. According to Ivey, teachers should make "difficult books accessible" and "easy books acceptable" even in middle grades to give every student what they need (p. 374). A second theme that Ivey found is that struggling middle school readers want to share reading experiences with their

teachers and classmates. The classroom environment is especially important for a struggling reader. Included in this, Ivey found that equally important to struggling readers is the opportunity to read one-to-one with a peer or a teacher (p. 375). Ivey believes that there are key benefits to one-to-one reading time, but "perhaps their fundamental value is that they are shared literacy experiences that are both personalized and individualized (p. 375).

A third theme that Ivey (1999) found to be true for struggling middle school readers is that they need a real purpose for reading. They need to see a purpose for what they are reading and often enjoy being able to bring in their own selections to read in the classroom. And fourth, Ivey found that struggling middle school readers want to become good readers and that they can, but "only when they experience instructional environments that foster optimism for improvement" (p. 381). Ivey believes that the best programs for struggling readers "are those that promote both skill and will and combine both enablement and engagement for reading" (p. 381).

Leal (2004) writes about the important characteristics of successful literacy tutoring. Leal points out that motivation for struggling readers is a crucial part of making a difference in their ability and confidence in reading. A student's lack of self-confidence and interest in reading can play a key role in that students' lack of successful reading. Leal points out three types of motivation that must be tied to students' reading and writing experience. The first is a motivating and caring experience, often in the form of a tutor (p. 5). Many of these older struggling readers have already given up on their teachers. Building a

dependable and stable relationship between the tutor and the student is a crucial first step. This supportive relationship motivates the student to try and succeed for that person.

As mentioned by Ivey (1999) earlier, Leal (2004) also notes that a type of motivation is to offer motivating materials, including appropriate reading levels. It is important for a tutor to get to know the students and their likes and dislikes. It is important for the tutor to plan lessons around the students' interests and abilities.

Finally, Leal also (2004) suggests that a tutor needs to offer motivating goals and activities so the struggling reader can have ownership and choice. Goal setting is a strategy that Leal recommends to motivate students in tutoring sessions. The goals should be specific and should challenge the students without frustrating them. The struggling reader must also commit to the goal and take ownership of it. Leal offers these characteristics so that struggling readers can find success in tutoring programs. As teachers, it is important to understand the needs of our struggling readers and to be aware of how to meet those needs. Ivey (1999) and Leal point out some of the important findings on struggling readers.

One-To-One Tutoring

"Tutoring is the oldest form of instruction," according to Wasik and Slavin (1993, p. 179). Parents use one-to-one instruction at home with their children and various learning settings from job training to driving instruction employ one-to-one instruction because of the effectiveness of this type of instruction. According

to Hedrick (1999), it is believed that "a one-on-one teaching situation is widely considered to be the most effective method of instruction" (p. 211). However, the reality of a classroom is that one-to-one instruction is often impossible. In elementary and secondary classrooms, this type of instruction occurs in the context of group instruction (Wasik & Slavin, 1993, p. 179). According to Elbaum et al. (2000), classroom teachers support the belief that one-to-one instruction is ideal; however, they admit that they rarely have the time to implement this type of instruction in their classrooms (p. 605). Much research has been conducted over the past several decades on the benefits of one-to-one tutoring, specifically for students that struggle.

Wasik and Slavin (1993) reported a study in which they researched the effectiveness of five programs and their use of one-to-one tutoring. The programs that they studied were Reading Recovery, Success for All, Prevention of Learning Disabilities, Wallach Tutoring Program, and Programmed Tutorial Reading. Each of the five programs had its own unique structure for who did the tutoring, for how long, and what method was used to tutor. However, the main goal of the research was to see the effectiveness of the one-to-one tutoring. The research showed that one-to-one tutoring shows potential as an effective type of instruction (1993, p. 195). Wasik and Slavin admit that the five programs that they studied varied greatly; however, they were able to report some common themes shared between programs that incorporate one-to-one tutoring. First, the programs that were most successful were those that included the most comprehensive models of reading. Second, the structure of the tutoring program

was also vital to its effectiveness. The use of tutors was clearly beneficial; however, the way the tutoring was executed was also crucial to the success of the tutoring (p. 196). Wasik and Slavin also found that the use of certified teachers versus paraprofessionals showed a greater impact.

One drawback that Wasik and Slavin (1993) found was that one-to-one tutoring can be very expensive and may not be practical for many schools. However, research conducted on one-to-one tutoring by Elbaum et al. (2000) found that "college students and trained, reliable community volunteers were able to provide significant help to struggling readers. This finding suggests that it may be possible to reduce the cost of providing effective, supplemental, one-to-one instruction" for struggling readers (p. 616). Elbaum et al. continue by asserting that the one-to-one instruction provided by trained college students was a supplement to, not a substitute for, quality classroom instruction (p. 616).

Preservice Teachers as Tutors

Knowledge of what struggling readers need is crucial for teacher education programs. The research shows that struggling readers need our help and any in-service teacher can speak of experiences with these types of students. We must train our preservice teachers adequately to prepare them to work successfully with struggling readers. Worthy and Prater (1998) state that "research in teacher preparation is full of disheartening conclusions that education methods courses fail to have lasting impressions on would-be teachers" (p. 485). Ivey (1999) also supports this idea by stating that "we still

have a long way to go in offering adequate reading methods courses in general for preservice middle school teachers" (p. 381).

Several recent studies have been conducted on the use of preservice teachers as tutors for struggling readers. Worthy and Prater (1998) found that "university instruction will make a difference in teachers' beliefs and practices only when it is firmly embedded in extensive, carefully structured, exemplary field experiences in real schools with real children" (p. 486). Many teacher education programs are being revamped to include practical, hands-on experiences in one-to-one literacy tutoring. These studies have found a variety of benefits for the preservice teachers as they begin to enter their careers as teachers.

Field-based Reading Block

The first study conducted by Fang and Ashley (2004) looked at a 9-hour, field-based reading block in which preservice teachers tutored first and second graders who were identified by their teachers as "most at risk for reading failure" (p. 41). Using qualitative research, the researchers analyzed a variety of data sources. Fang and Ashley employed a constant comparative method of analyzing data. The use of surveys, journals, observation notes, interviews, and case study reports guided their research throughout the study. The data were collected and analyzed in three phases. The data were coded looking for emerging patterns and themes. Fang and Ashley suggested that the importance of addressing this issue is to see if they could create a teacher preparation program that was both "intensely academic" and "intensely practical" in order to

develop the preparedness of preservice teachers about to go out into the professional field of education (p. 39).

Fang and Ashley's study (2004) included 28 preservice teachers enrolled in a 9-hour reading block and 14 first and second grade students who were labeled at risk for reading failure. The reading block was structured into three parts. The first part was a 3-week overview of the theoretical issues in language and learning. The second part of the program was a 3-week overview of assessment. The tutors were introduced to a variety of reading assessments that they could use to assess the children's literacy abilities. The third part was 8 weeks in length, and provided instructional guidelines for helping children reach their literacy potential. The second and third parts were accompanied by field experience.

As a result of their experience in the reading block, the preservice teachers developed much more confidence about themselves as teachers. They were able to not only acquire more knowledge on the subject of reading, but they were also able to put that knowledge into practice with the tutoring. One preservice teacher observed, "After being involved in the reading block, I feel much more prepared to become a literacy teacher in the near future...I have become confident in my ability to diagnose and remediate reading difficulties among children of varying backgrounds, skills, and knowledge" (Fang & Ashley, 2004, p. 44).

The preservice teachers also found that having the experience of working so closely with one child allowed them an immense amount of hands-on practice

that would prepare them for the experiences they would have in their own classrooms. Fang and Ashley (2004) also noted that the preservice teachers gained the knowledge that teaching makes a difference. They found that roughly one-third of the students noted that they were "not merely teachers, but child advocates and agents of social change" (p. 50).

Reading Methods Course with Tutorial Experience

An additional study that was conducted also looked at the use of preservice teachers as tutors for struggling readers. The study, conducted by Worthy and Prater (1998), used qualitative research and a constant comparative method of analyzing data. The data for the study consisted of surveys, case studies, reflections, and journals. The data analysis focused on the surveys, interview and reflections. The remaining pieces of data were used to add dimension to the primary sources. The constant comparative approach used coding that took place in several stages. Independent analyses were compared and combined together to create new themes. This study, conducted by Worthy and Prater (1998), added a tutorial experience to their reading methods course (p. 486). A large portion of the time for the reading methods course was dedicated to the tutoring. The preservice teachers tutored students twice weekly for one hour during the first semester. They also spent one hour each week after tutoring to discuss strategies and share ideas. In addition to the tutoring time, approximately 50% of class time was dedicated to learning strategies that could be used during tutoring sessions. Worthy and Prater wanted to see the effects that this type of coursework would have on the preservice teachers' perspectives

as a teacher. They wanted to know "whether the tutorial experience added to their knowledge and confidence in teaching reading, and what it was about the tutoring that was valuable" (p. 486).

The participants in the study were 16 preservice teachers enrolled in a reading methods course and 19 children who were referred by their teachers to join an after-school reading club. The preservice teachers tutored the students twice weekly for one hour during the first semester. The tutors each used a common lesson plan framework, though each individual session was structured based on assessments that had been given to the students at the start of the tutoring program.

The results from this study showed that the preservice teachers gained great insight into struggling readers and teaching reading. As one preservice teacher noted, "My confidence level has risen drastically over the course of the semester because of the following: (1) abundant instruction and materials about reading and writing; (2) interaction with students in the general classroom; and (3) the most helpful: one-on-one tutorial experiences with [my student] in the Reading Club" (Worthy & Prater, 1998, p. 489). Worthy and Prater suggest two major findings about preservice teacher learning. The first is the process of learning through the tutorial experience. The second theme they found was the nature of learning through the tutorial experience.

The Process of Learning By studying the responses from the preservice teachers, the researchers found that the most valuable experience was having the opportunity to continually put theory into practice through the tutoring. Their

data revealed that it was the combination of the book learning done in class with the hands-on experience of tutoring that helped students learn the way they did. One preservice teacher noted, "I can't imagine how I could have been prepared to be a teacher without this class" (Worthy & Prater, 1998, p. 490).

Research also showed that the preservice teachers found it invaluable to have the chance to build a relationship with their students through the tutoring experience. It was clear to the researchers that the relationship benefited the students' learning and confidence, but the preservice teachers noted that the experience was equally positive for them (Worthy & Prater, 1998).

A third benefit for the preservice teachers was the community that was created through the Reading Club program, amongst the preservice teachers, the researchers and the students. They realized that "effective teaching depends on continued learning and that learning is best accomplished through membership in a community of learners" (Worthy & Prater, 1998, p. 492).

The Nature of Learning The research pointed to three aspects of the preservice teachers' learning. The first was that they became more aware of "responsive teaching." Preservice teachers realized that each student they work with is an individual with unique needs and that they need to adjust their instruction accordingly, depending on the child, "Seeing how much help struggling readers need has made me more aware of all the readers in my classroom" (Worthy & Prater, 1998, p. 492).

A second aspect is that the preservice teachers gained a vision for the future. The knowledge they gained by working with one student gave them

confidence to move on to new teaching situations and to feel prepared. They began to look into their own careers as teachers and feel open to tackling the challenges that it will bring.

A final aspect that the research found was the ability of the preservice teachers to make changes. The preservice teachers talked about ways they would make changes in their own classroom as well as in their cooperating teachers' classroom. The researchers followed the preservice teachers into their student teaching classrooms and found that the majority were implementing many of the ideas used in the Reading Club.

Preservice Teachers' Impact on Struggling Readers

A third study that was conducted by Hedrick (1999) looked at a similar structure; however, this time taking a slightly different approach. Using quantitative research, Hedrick calculated beginning and ending reading levels by analyzing portfolios. Included in the portfolios were "daily running records, comprehension assessments, and writing samples collected by the tutors" (Hedrick, p. 213). The researcher analyzed the contents of the portfolio and the Basic Reading Inventory to determine reading levels. The participants in the study were 40 university students enrolled in a reading course that required one-to-one tutoring. The study also included 26 children in second grade, 20 children in third grade, 4 children in fourth grade, and 12 children in fifth grade. Each tutored a minimum of 2 children twice weekly. The child also received two other tutoring sessions during a week that were administered by a different tutor. Each child received one-to-one tutoring four times per week. The lesson was

structured by the tutor using a balance of instruction focused on reading, writing, and word work.

The study conducted by Hedrick (1999) looked at the effects of a one-on-one tutoring program that involved pre-service teachers and third, fourth, and fifth graders using a balanced literacy framework. Hedrick realized the push for volunteer tutoring at the time this study was done and wanted to see the impact of one-to-one tutoring, which was said to be "the most effective method of instruction" (p. 211). The researcher was looking to see the benefits for the struggling readers in a tutoring program. As part of the data collection, tutors computed daily running records by calculating the percentage of words the child read correctly (Hedrick). Tutors also assessed comprehension by asking questions about the reading or by listening to a retelling of the story by the student.

Hedrick believes that this study shows that students who are reading below grade level can significantly benefit from "intensive one-on-one tutoring delivered by preservice teachers" (1999, p. 216). Hedrick found two areas of importance when analyzing the results of this study. First, it shows that one-to-one tutoring provided to children older than the first grade results in much progress in reading that may allow them to "catch-up" to grade level. Second, Hedrick also states that tutoring can produce results in children even when the tutors are not highly trained teachers, but preservice teachers with some knowledge of reading instruction. The tutors involved in Hedrick's study had at least two courses in reading while others had more.

Implications of Studies

The three research studies that were just mentioned vary in several ways: how the tutoring was executed, how often the tutoring was done, and the age of the students being tutored. However, more importantly, is what they have in common: all three use preservice teachers as tutors, use one-to-one tutoring as the method of instruction, and all three provide extra instruction for struggling readers. The following section will discuss these similarities in detail.

The studies conducted by Fang and Ashley (2004) and Worthy and Prater (1998) used qualitative research and looked at the benefits for the preservice teachers. The first major benefit was the preservice teachers' confidence as a reading teacher. Both studies showed that after the experience of the tutorial program the preservice teachers "developed a much more positive sense of themselves as reading teachers" (Fang & Ashley, 2004, p. 44). The preservice teachers also realized that they would be able to apply this knowledge to their own classrooms (Worthy & Prater, 1998, p. 492). Worthy and Prater also noticed that it "made them more aware of the complexities of being literacy teachers" (p. 493). Another benefit that both studies found was that the preservice teachers were able to put theory into practice with this experience (Fang & Ashley; Worthy & Prater). These experiences showed that "it was the combination of book learning and the application of that learning that made students feel the way they did" (Worthy & Prater, p. 490). The preservice teachers became more aware of the rapport with their students, the importance of community building, communication with parents, and continuous professional development. (Fang &

Ashley; Worthy & Prater). Overall, Fang and Ashley found that the preservice teachers that were involved in the reading block "developed substantial knowledge about, skills in, and insights into teaching children who experience reading difficulties" (p. 50).

The remaining study that was mentioned by Hedrick (1999) used quantitative research to focus more on the benefits that one-to-one tutoring using preservice teachers as tutors would have on the struggling readers. Hedrick wanted to know the answer to the question: "Will accelerated reading progress in 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders be demonstrated after one year of one-on-one tutoring by pre-service teachers?" (p. 211). The students that were being tutored were chosen because they had been labeled "at-risk" for failure by their teachers and were at least one year or more behind in their reading. The results of the study showed significant differences in the children from September to April. At each grade level the children made more than one year's growth in reading, but a closer look at each grade level shows differences in one grade to the next. Looking at the data from the study, 60% of the children gained at least one year of growth while involved in the one-to-one tutoring program. Hedrick was able to show the progress of the students in this one-to-one tutoring program. Progress was made even though the tutors were preservice teachers, who had little to no experience teaching students how to read. The tutors had some background knowledge from reading courses they had previously taken.

When looking at these three uniquely individual research studies, the benefits that the use of preservice teachers as tutors can have can be seen. The

effects of this method of instruction can result in benefits for both the preservice teachers, as demonstrated by both Fang and Ashley (2004) and Worthy and Prater (1998), and can have benefits for those struggling readers in our classrooms, as demonstrated by Hedrick (1999).

Summary

The research surrounding struggling readers, one-to-one tutoring, and preservice teachers as tutors was reviewed in this chapter. The following chapter will describe the study and detail how it was conducted.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research study was to explore how preservice teachers are influenced when they participated in a one-to-one tutoring program for struggling readers. Qualitative research was used to address the research questions in this study. According to Merriam (1998), "Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible" (p. 5). Qualitative researchers want to understand how and what people experience in their own world. Chapter 3 describes the procedures used to conduct this study by giving an overview of the design, detailed descriptions of the participants, setting, and the context for the study, and how data were collected and analyzed.

Participants

The participants for this study were third-year undergraduate education majors pursuing licensure in an Intervention Specialist program from a Catholic, Midwestern university. Six preservice teachers were selected from a group of 32 tutors involved in the Struggling Reader Study. All of the participants volunteered to participate in the Struggling Reader Study in addition to their required field work for their courses. Each of the 6 participants was asked to sign a consent

form for their willingness to participate in this study (see Appendix A). The preservice teachers were selected based on the following criteria: their willingness to participate, their participation in the Struggling Reader Study, and the grade level of the students they were tutoring needed to be in a middle level classroom. All 6 of the participants were female and all 6 were pursuing licensure as Intervention Specialists. The Struggling Reader study consisted of both Intervention Specialist Education majors and Middle Childhood Education majors. It was not intentional that the 6 participants were Intervention Specialist majors. The selection was based on the criteria mentioned above and based on the use of three different schools. The 6 participants happened to be Intervention Specialist majors. The 6 participants had been involved in the tutoring program for approximately 8 weeks when the data collection began. The researcher kept this in mind when data were collected, knowing that the preservice teachers were not new to the tutoring program. Interviews that were conducted at the beginning of the data collection asked the preservice teachers to reflect on the time that they had already been involved in the tutorial program. The questions that guided the interview referred to the fact that the preservice teachers had already had some one-to-one tutoring experience.

Context for the Study

Within the large context of the Struggling Reader Study, this particular case study will focus on the tutoring program involving university students and students from area schools. The university is located in a Midwestern city, and enrolls approximately 10,000 students.

Struggling Reader Study

In conjunction with their field experience for educational coursework, the preservice teachers were placed in an area school to work one-to-one with a student identified as a struggling reader by his or her teacher. The Struggling Reader Study trains preservice teachers to tutor struggling readers one-to-one in a middle school classroom. The preservice teachers participate in training sessions during the first and second semester of the school year. During the first semester the preservice teachers attended six training sessions. As the graduate assistant assigned to the Struggling Reader Study, I was responsible for designing and leading these sessions. The training sessions were developed around the book *Strategies That Work* (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). These strategies from Harvey and Goudvis were integrated into the lessons taught by the cooperating teachers in classrooms in which the participants were tutoring. The strategies also influenced the lessons taught by the preservice teachers during the one-to-one tutoring sessions. During the second semester, the preservice teachers attended three additional training sessions. The preservice teachers were also supported by the graduate assistant with e-mails, individual meetings and any other support that they might need to make their tutoring situation as effective as possible.

The preservice teachers tutored two students each once a week for approximately 30 minutes per student, or approximately one hour each week. The field experience for the undergraduate students began in September, though the actual tutoring began in October. The one-to-one-tutoring continued weekly

until the end of April. The sessions consisted of instruction based on the teachers' stated lesson plans for each week. Each teacher and preservice teacher participating in the Struggling Reader Study participated in an on-line threaded discussion called Quickplace. Each week the teacher was to post a lesson plan for the preservice teacher to use in her tutoring session. The lesson plan was based on the needs of the individual student, as well as the lesson being taught to the students in the regular classroom. The one-to-one tutoring occurred within the regular classroom; therefore, the lesson was also to be structured around the lesson for the rest of the classroom. Quickplace was also used by the preservice teachers. The preservice teachers were required to post a reflection each time they tutored. They were asked to reflect on what they did during their tutoring session, what they noticed about their students that particular day, any progress or regression and overall, how they thought the session went. In response, the teachers were asked to reply to the preservice teachers, answering any questions they had and giving advice on what to work on during the next session. The preservice teachers were able to get to know their students in ways that their teacher could not because of the demands of their classrooms. The preservice teachers became the eyes and ears for the cooperating teachers and they were able to share with the cooperating teacher important information about that student, his or her interests, and needs as a reader. Quickplace was a vital mode of communication used by both preservice teachers and cooperating teachers during the Struggling Reader Study.

Schools

Each of the 6 preservice teachers was placed at a local school for her field placement and tutoring. Participants were placed in pairs in three different middle schools. Two preservice teachers were placed in a suburban middle school containing Grades 6 through 8. The school followed a traditional middle school setting, including the use of teaming. The school has a student population of about 1,000, approximately 30% of whom receive free or reduced lunch. Two preservice teachers were placed in a different suburban middle school containing Grades 6 through 8. This school also followed a traditional middle school setting. The school has a student population of about 700 students, approximately 17% of whom receive free or reduced lunch. The remaining 2 preservice teachers were placed in an urban Catholic school containing Grades pre-kindergarten through 8. The school was a newly reorganized school, having recently combined from five larger Catholic schools in the area that has since been combined into two schools. The preservice teachers were both placed in the same building. The school has a student population of about 250 students. Nearly 100% of the student population is African American.

Research Design

Data Collection

The types of data collected were in the form of interviews, observations, surveys, and document collection. The preservice teachers were my informants for this research. A timeline was followed for the data collection (See Figure 1).

Question	Data	Date Collected
Knowledge and confidence of preservice teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Observations • Documents (reflections/journals/Quickplace) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February and April • 4 times throughout semester • Ongoing (Jan.-April)
Influence of tutorial exp. on the beliefs of PST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Documents (reflections/journals/Quick place) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February and April • Ongoing (Jan.-April)
Influence of tutorial exp. on how PST execute instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Document Collection (teacher's lesson plans) • Document Collection (Quickplace) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 times throughout semester • Lesson plans will be collected with each observation • Ongoing (participants will post each week they tutor)
What aspects of tutorial exp. were most important for their learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Document collection (tutoring journal-provided by the researcher, Quickplace) • Researcher journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February and April • Ongoing (Jan.-April)

PST-preservice teachers

Figure 1 Data Collection Timeline

Interviews Semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B) were conducted with the 6 preservice teachers who were selected from the Struggling Reader Study. Interviews were conducted in February, the beginning of the data collection, to gather information on the preservice teachers' knowledge and confidence in the area of tutoring one-to-one with a struggling reader. The interviews focused on how the preservice teachers felt about their ability to tutor a struggling reader, their weaknesses and strengths, and the knowledge they feel they possess after

2 or 3 years in an undergraduate program. The semi-structured protocol allowed the researcher to expand the interview based on the direction that it was taking.

Observations Observations were made on the preservice teachers as they tutored one-to-one with a struggling reader. The observations were made by the researcher four times throughout the data collection period. An observation form (see Appendix C) was used by the researcher for each observation made, though as the observations continued field notes became the primary method of record keeping for the observations. The purpose of the observations was to see how the tutorial experience had an influence on how the preservice teachers execute their lessons. The researcher was also observing the knowledge and confidence that each of the preservice teachers displayed during a tutoring session.

Document Collection A third data source included documents from the tutorial experience. Three different documents were collected. The first documents that were collected and analyzed were the lesson plans for each tutoring session that was observed. As mentioned earlier, four observations were made for each of the 6 preservice teachers. This was a total of 24 lesson plans collected. The lesson plans were written by the teachers of the students being tutored; however, the preservice teachers had to teach the lessons and possibly adapt a lesson as they saw fit. This document, which was posted weekly on Quickplace, was used in conjunction with the observations that were made. The purpose of collecting

this piece of data was to see how the tutoring influenced the preservice teachers' ability to execute the teaching of a lesson.

The second document that was collected was a completion of an online threaded discussion located in Quickplace. Each preservice teacher was required to post on the web discussion each time that they went out to tutor. The preservice teachers were asked to reflect on what happened during each tutoring session, what went well, what they could do better, and any observations they might have about the 2 students that they tutor. The Quickplace web discussion was checked by the researcher and was considered part of the data of this study. The researcher was looking for a reflection from each preservice teacher and was also looking for changes that occurred over the 4 months of data collection.

The third document that was collected was a tutoring journal that the preservice teachers kept. A journal was provided to the 6 preservice teachers by the researcher. The journal was a folder with a form inside (see Appendix D). The form was to be filled out each week that they went out to the schools to tutor. The purpose of the tutoring journal was for the preservice teacher to reflect on what they learned that day, focusing on what went well and what did not go well. These data were analyzed to answer the research question regarding the aspects of the tutorial program that were most important. These data were also analyzed to look at the ways that the tutoring influenced how they executed a lesson.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed throughout the entire period using a constant-comparative approach. Ongoing analysis of the data allowed for one piece of data to influence the future data collection. Merriam (1998) described this process as follows,

The researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set. These comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances. (p.159)

The goal of analyzing the data was to find common themes throughout the research study in regard to the preservice teachers and their work with one-to-one tutoring with struggling readers.

In order to generate the themes, the researcher read the interview data several times, then began coding them for emerging categories. The same was done for the tutor journals, observations, and Quickplace entries. The lesson plans were collected as noted in the data collection, but the data were not analyzed. The researcher reread all the data at the end of the data collection and coded the data. Themes and patterns began to emerge during this process. Data were read again and the researcher began to recognize categories and subcategories. Each participant's data were analyzed separately for the most common themes, before being analyzed to look for common themes across participants. Journals were analyzed using document analysis which the researcher coded looking for common themes. The Quickplace web discussions

were printed and analyzed in the same fashion. Interviews were recorded, with permission from the participants, and transcribed. Transcripts of the interviews were coded for emerging themes and patterns.

The process is one of breaking data down into bits of information and then assigning these bits to categories or classes which brings these bits together again....In the process we begin to discriminate more clearly between the criteria for allocating data to one category or another. Then some categories may be subdivided, and others subsumed under more abstract categories. (Merriam, 1998, p. 180)

As the data were analyzed, categories began to emerge that were both common to all participants and unique to individual participants. The categories that emerged were Confidence in Teaching, Knowledge of Appropriate Instruction, Communication, Importance of a Mentor Relationship, and Knowledge of Struggling Readers.

Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the methodology used to complete this study, including a description of the study, descriptions of the participants, setting and context, data collection, and data analysis. Categories that emerged will be presented in greater depth in chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This multiple case study research focused on 6 preservice teachers in their tutoring placements. The data were analyzed for themes among each student's pieces of evidence, as well as themes across the participants. This chapter focuses on the individual results of each student's experience. The results presented here represent the most significant findings from each participant's data sources. Some of the participants may have had data that represented additional categories, but based on the volume and consistency of their responses, the researcher chose to focus on only those that were most significant to the individual participant and the study.

Kristi

Kristi's tutoring experience was in a large suburban middle school that contained Grades 6-8. Kristi worked in a seventh grade Language Arts classroom. The Language Arts class was taught in a 90-minute block. Her cooperating teacher had been part of the Struggling Reader Study for 4 of the 5 years, being part of the school where the study originated. Kristi's knowledge of struggling readers and her confidence in her abilities as a teacher, specifically a reading teacher, changed over the course of the semester. Kristi's tutoring

placement was the same during the previous semester, so she had already developed a relationship with her 2 students and had gained some confidence in her ability to work with struggling readers, although she continued to build further confidence throughout the second semester, when this study took place.

Confidence in Teaching

During the first interview, Kristi indicated that she had not felt very confident at the beginning of the program. She felt unsure of how she was going to be able to impact the learning of a struggling reader. However, over the second semester she felt that her confidence in her ability grew dramatically. During her second interview at the end of the tutoring program she stated, "I do feel more confident. Just to have the one-on-one interactions with the students and being in the same classroom all year, I think it was good. I just feel very comfortable" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). Part of Kristi's tutoring experience was dealing with a student who was often not interested in receiving any extra help. Kristi tried to overcome this challenge and tried not to take it personally. On one such day Kristi's student told her, "Why can't you just go help someone else? I don't need your help!" (Quickplace entry, 1/30/08). Kristi took experiences like this one and, instead of becoming frustrated, took them as a learning opportunity, "I think by working with him I'll be more prepared in the future for working with students like him because they really need so much support and encouragement" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). Kristi's confidence in her ability to work with struggling readers grew even more when she learned that her student, who had given her trouble over the semester, had completed a survey about the

Struggling Reader Study. In the survey, he had written how appreciative he was to have had Kristi work with him. Kristi wrote about this on a Quickplace entry in April, writing, "I can't even describe how rewarding that is!" (Quickplace entry, 4/16/08).

Kristi also benefited from the actual hands-on experience of the tutoring program. In addition to her increased confidence as mentioned above, she learned tremendously from the experience itself. In her first interview, when asked about having the experience of tutoring, Kristi noted, "It definitely helps to have the real-life situation; it wasn't just like taking notes in class and listening to the teacher. I could actually, the next morning, go and do it. It was just more meaningful and it makes class more enjoyable" (Interview #1, 2/28/08). Kristi made mention several times during interviews and in her tutor journal that she learned from trying something new. An entry in her tutor journal described her use of a mock spelling test to help her student. After describing the activity she commented, "I was proud of myself for coming up with something extra and beneficial for him and he was receptive to it!" (Tutor Journal, 3/12/08).

Knowledge of Struggling Readers

In addition to strengthening her confidence in her ability to teach reading to struggling students, Kristi's knowledge of how to instruct struggling students also changed. Kristi noted in her first interview that she had opened up more to the idea of teaching struggling readers. "We've been told in my classes, it doesn't matter what you are teaching, what subject, but if you are IS (intervention specialist) you will be a reading teacher...I feel like I can help students learn how

to read...I just feel like I know so many strategies now" (Interview #1, 2/28/08).

Kristi credited a lot of what she had learned about motivating struggling readers to her literacy courses at the university. Kristi noted that throughout the semester she learned a lot about struggling readers, how they learn and the support that they need in order to be successful.

Kristi learned that motivating a struggling reader is incredibly important to the impact on their learning. She learned that oftentimes the books struggling readers are required to read are not meeting their interests or ability. When they were able to pick their own book, it was then that Kristi noticed a difference, "When they got to pick their own book off the shelf and they definitely took the books they liked, so I just realized that it's important to cater to their interests" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). It was apparent during observations of tutoring sessions that Kristi worked hard to help motivate her students and encourage them to find success. Her caring nature and patience during times of frustration were evidence of her emphasis on motivating her students.

Kristi acknowledged the importance of meeting the needs of each individual student. She indicated in her final interview that you cannot teach all students in the same way. Each student has individual needs and she learned to differentiate instruction to meet those individual needs. Throughout the tutoring experience, Kristi became more aware of her instruction with each student, "I think I did a good job with monitoring his comprehension. I made sure to stop frequently to make sure he was following the story line" (Tutor journal, 3/26/08).

Kristi made note several times of monitoring the comprehension of a struggling reader and how important this practice is for developing reading skills.

She also realized the importance of the activities that go along with the reading. Though her cooperating teacher was the one creating the lesson plans, she had to put them into action with her students. "I've come to understand the importance of how those activities support learning (Interview #1, 2/28/08). The influence of her cooperating teacher's knowledge of best practices in reading taught Kristi the importance of this type of instruction in reading, specifically for struggling readers.

Kristi's tutoring experience provided her with the confidence in herself that she was lacking before. She learned that she does have the ability to be a teacher and can impact the lives of students with whom she works. She also learned the importance of motivating struggling readers to do well. She learned that giving them choice in what they read will in turn motivate them to read. She also witnessed and practiced reading instruction that demonstrated best practices.

Susan

Susan's tutoring experience was in a suburban middle school that contained Grades 6-8. She was placed in a seventh grade Language Arts classroom. The Language Arts class was taught in a 90-minute block. Susan participated in the same classroom during the previous semester, so she was familiar with the teacher and the students in her classroom. However, at the beginning of the data collection one of the students that she had tutored during

the previous semester changed. The student that Susan had tutored had become habitually absent, including the days she was supposed to be tutored. Susan's cooperating teacher decided that it would be best if she selected another student who would benefit from the extra help in reading. She began working with a new student at the beginning of the data collection period. This did not seem to impact Susan's confidence or her ability to work with a struggling reader. Shortly after the change in students that she tutored, Susan reflected on Quickplace about her feelings regarding the situation, "It is not that I regret working with Hannah, but I am just glad that I am seeing some small, but beneficial changes [in my other student]. It is just too bad that Hannah doesn't understand how much she can benefit from this program" (Quickplace entry, 1/22/08). Susan continued in the same reflection to talk about the student she had worked with all year and the new student with whom she had begun to work, "We have a better student-teacher relationship now and I feel like she is comfortable working with me. I can definitely see how quiet Lauren is and hopefully soon I will be able to get her to open up and speak out a little more about what she is thinking" (Quick place entry, 1/22/08). Susan was greatly impacted as a teacher throughout this tutorial experience.

Confidence in Teaching

When asked to reflect on how she felt at the very beginning of the program, Susan admitted that she was very unsure of herself and what she would be doing, "I would say, not very confident at all. I haven't had a class or anything that taught me how to teach other people to read and that's kind of why I did this

because I knew that any subject I teach I'm going to need to teach reading" (Interview #1, 2/29/08).

Susan credited the actual experience of tutoring to how she became more confident and learned how to help students become better readers. She mentioned throughout interviews and in her tutor journal that she would try new things to see how her students would benefit from them. This was also evident during observations of her tutoring session. Susan continued to try new ideas and use the experience of practice to learn and grow as a teacher. In her mind, the opportunity of tutoring was the best experience, "It was nice to actually do it because you learn all these ideas, and it was nice to put it in action. We do all these lesson plans and it's always hypothetical, I would do this, I would do that, but with this I was actually able to talk to a student and work with them and you don't get to do that very often" (Interview #2, 4/25/08). During her first interview, Susan talked about trying to use some of her own ideas. Since her cooperating teacher wrote the lesson plans, she worried that she was not using her own ideas enough. However, in a March entry of her tutoring journal, Susan reflected on a lesson in which she tried her own idea during a lesson with one of her students, "I tried incorporating my own ideas into the lesson. I tried using a graphic organizer last week" (Tutor journal, 3/11/08).

Susan noted in her final interview how much the actual experience helped her improve her confidence in herself as a teacher, "Now I'm more confident than when I started, now that I have the experience. I think just the experience has

helped me figure out what they need and then use the appropriate activities to help them out" (Interview #2, 4/25/08).

Knowledge of Appropriate Instruction

As the tutoring experience progressed, Susan began to increase her knowledge of instruction for struggling readers. Her confidence and experience that were mentioned in the previous section helped her to realize the importance of appropriate instruction for her students. Susan mentioned a university course that she had taken that taught her how best to meet the needs of her students, "It helped me think of all the different activities I could do...talking about differentiation and one of my students, she's outgoing and I can tell she'd do better with talking more and the other one is quiet so I can tell she'd be better at showing me...[the course] helped me look at their needs and figure out what would be most helpful" (Interview #2, 4/25/08).

Susan often wrote in Quickplace about a lesson and exactly what she did to help reach both of her students. She shared very deliberate thinking and it was apparent that she put much thought into the needs of each of her students. Susan reflected on a lesson with one of her students on Quickplace, "She seems to be just reading the words just to move from page to page. I need to check more often that her comprehension is keeping up with her reading...I started working with her in the middle of the book and from day one she has had a hard time explaining it to me" (Quickplace entry, 1/29/08). It was also apparent in observations of tutoring sessions that Susan tried a wide range of strategies and worked diligently to meet the needs of her 2 students. During one particular

observation Susan was working with one of her students on an independent reading book and they stopped to discuss the main character. Susan stops her student and notes, "Good. Just from reading this paragraph, it makes me think of something we've done before, making connections. We're able to think of our own experiences and connect that to the story and to understand it better" (Observation #2, 3/25/08). Susan's confidence in her knowledge of struggling readers showed in an interview with her, "Now that I know my students and know what they need I feel like I have more of a kind of library of strategies that I know I can use to help them" (Interview #1, 2/29/08).

Knowledge of Struggling Readers

Throughout the tutoring experience, Susan became aware of the impact that her instruction had on her students. She was aware of the difficulties that struggling readers face every day, "struggling readers are going to struggle in all areas and that hurts their confidence, it keeps them from learning anywhere...improving their reading can help in all areas" (Interview #2, 4/25/08). Through her instruction, Susan worked to improve the ability of her students. Her work on strategies, comprehension, vocabulary and other reading skills showed during observations of tutoring sessions. She reflected on a particular lesson in her tutor journal, "I think today may have been my best day with them as far as main idea is concerned. We didn't overdo it too much, but worked on it just enough to remind them what is important and how to come to a conclusion of what the main idea of a passage is" (Tutor journal, 3/25/08).

Susan also knew to be patient about seeing change in her students. She was well aware of her students' struggle to improve and she embraced the success that she did see, "I really do see an improvement in both of them. It's kind of hard for me to tell because I am with them each week, but I feel like if I were to go back and watch them on day one and compare it to today I would definitely see improvement" (Quickplace entry, 4/7/08).

Susan not only developed more confidence in herself from the experience but she also learned about instruction that works for struggling readers and how best to reach this type of student to help him or her be successful. Susan's willingness to learn and try new things allowed her to develop as a teacher of reading throughout the tutoring experience. She was open to change and was open to trying new things, "I need to jump into doing something new and have a positive attitude and just do it...I really wasn't a good reader either and I really didn't have the confidence...so just try it, if it doesn't work out we'll alter however I need to, so whether it works or not, just try it" (Interview #2, 4/25/08). This attitude showed throughout the data collection and was evident in interviews, reflections, and observations from Susan.

Anne

Anne's tutoring experience took place in a small, urban Catholic school containing Grades K-8. Anne participated in the tutoring program in the same school the previous semester, so she was familiar with the school, the teacher, and the classroom. Anne's tutoring took place in a seventh grade Language Arts classroom and an eighth grade Language Arts classroom. She tutored one

seventh grade student and one eighth grade student. During part of the tutoring experience Anne's class was taught by a student teacher from the university.

Anne credited some of her learning to the student teacher.

Confidence in Teaching

Anne went into the tutoring experience with a lack of confidence in herself, "I really wasn't that confident at all...I never went to Catholic school so I think that combination starting was overwhelming but I was really, really nervous and it was the first year my teacher did it so it was kind of, so I really wasn't that confident."

(Interview #1, 2/28/08). Throughout the experience she began to learn more about herself as a teacher and more about different types of schools. Part of Anne's trepidation was her unfamiliarity with an urban, Catholic school. During her first interview, Anne was asked about what she had learned so far during the previous semester of tutoring. She responded by saying, "I would definitely just say more confident. Even though all schools are different, like the way they're structured, so just never assume anything....because I've learned that it's completely different, it's great, but it's completely different than anything I've ever experienced" (Interview #1, 2/28/08).

During the tutoring program, Anne began to realize the importance of teaching children and reaching out to those who struggle, even though they may have different needs. It became apparent to Anne that many of her students struggled outside of school because of their home lives, but she learned that she could not let this stop her from helping them, if anything it taught her to work

harder with them, "You know, when it comes down to it, they're just any other student, you're just going to teach them anyways" (Interview #1, 2/28/08).

Anne credited a lot of her growth in confidence to the actual experience of working with students and having the hands-on experience. She learned that the more she worked with students and the more strategies she tried, the more she was able to take away from the experience. Anne reflected in her tutor journal about a particular lesson that she taught, "I think that the questions I asked the students about what they were reading went over well. At first, the students were not understanding the information. Once I started to ask them questions where they had to think about what they were reading, they did a lot better" (Tutor Journal, 3/13/08). Anne's experience helped her to be more aware of the needs of her students and how to reach them and meet their needs. Anne made a point in saying that struggling readers need guidance to learn and to improve, realizing that this was true even in the upper grades. She knew that her guidance was going to help them, "Just knowing how to ask questions and know that this is what they need to do...you can't just be like, go read this and then hope for the best. You have to be very specific, especially for the struggling readers, so it will help me as a teacher, just knowing that" (Interview #2, 4/24/08).

Throughout the tutoring experience Anne grew in her knowledge of herself as a teacher tremendously. She realized what experienced teachers realize, "I know it's going to be okay and not everything's going to be perfect and you have to get over it...I've realized too, it's really hard and you don't always know what is going on and that's okay and it's trial and error...that didn't work, try something new

next time" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). Anne's practical experience and confidence throughout this tutoring experience will guide her through as she develops as a teacher.

Knowledge of Struggling Readers

In addition to growing in her confidence and experience, Anne also became more aware of the needs of her struggling readers and how best to reach them. She credited some of what she learned from a reading course she took at the university. She learned through this class to pick things that the students are interested in and to encourage them by meeting their interests. During her first interview she described how she took what she had learned and applied it to one of her students, "We learned to go off things they're interested in, so he really likes basketball so we try to go off of that and try to read stuff that had to do with basketball" (Interview #1, 2/28/08). Anne also describes how this level of interest can motivate a student to want to succeed. She saw this happen when one of her students selected a book that she feared was going to be too challenging for him. However, the student was very interested in reading the book and she learned quickly how important that was for him, "he wanted to read it so bad and he tried so much harder and it actually did kind of work out" (Interview #1, 2/28/08).

Anne also learned that not only what they read, but the activities they participate in can make a difference in a student's learning. She reflected on an activity in Quickplace about an activity in which the eighth grade class was participating. She realized that her struggling readers benefited greatly from this

activity because of the hands-on variation. The students were working on an activity about similes and metaphors. "They had to put together cut out sheets of paper and then explain why they placed them in that order. Because this activity was hands-on I think that a lot of the students were able to focus the entire period" (Quickplace entry, 2/14/08). Through this experience, Anne became more acutely aware of the needs of her struggling readers. It became evident in her tutor journal and during observations that she paid close attention to the needs of her students as they worked together each week. She wrote about such an occasion in her tutor journal, "I think I need to improve how I word my questions to my students. Many times I'll ask them a question and they don't understand any part of the answer, maybe if the questions were worded differently the students would be able to better answer" (Tutor journal, 4/3/08).

Anne's understanding of struggling readers and their needs increased through the courses she took at the university, but primarily her experience tutoring showed her how struggling readers learn. She became more confident in herself as a teacher and used the hands-on tutoring experience to grow in her confidence and her knowledge of teaching reading and struggling readers. She spoke about how much her confidence grew during her final interview and spoke about what she learned on how best to instruct struggling readers, "I think you just have to constantly be asking the questions and making sure they are engaged, because if they're not then they're really not going to get it" (Interview #2, 4/24/08).

Rachael

Rachael's tutoring experience was in a large suburban middle school that contained Grades 6-8. Rachael worked in a seventh grade Language Arts classroom. The Language Arts class was taught in a 90-minute block. Rachael's tutoring placement was the same during the previous semester, so she had the opportunity to work with her students and learn from the teacher for the entire school year. She was placed in a classroom in which the cooperating teacher had a great knowledge of struggling readers and their needs. Her cooperating teacher had been part of the Struggling Reader Study for 4 of the 5 years, being part of the school where the study originated. Her experience in the Struggling Reader Study increased her knowledge of struggling readers and their needs and this influenced her instruction to all students in her classroom. Rachael learned a great deal throughout the tutoring experience.

Confidence in Teaching

One of the aspects of Rachael's learning dealt with her own experience. She talked about her uncertainty in being a teacher and how this experience had taught her that she is capable. In her final interview, Rachael describe herself as a shy person and talked about people's confusion when she told them she was studying to become a teacher. She talked about how this experience gave her the confidence to realize she is capable, "I know more than I thought I did...it's so much at this point that I think I don't know it, but once I get into a situation, I do, and I think I've just learned that I'm a teacher and I'm qualified, or almost qualified...but after dealing with them in this situation I definitely feel like I have

the ability and as a teacher I'm going to be strong and know what to do...I think it's just unteachable" (Interview #2, 4/24/08).

Rachael returned to this theme throughout much of her interviews and even in her tutor journal and Quickplace entries. She acknowledged that simply having had the experience of tutoring made her more confident in her abilities and in her career choice. It was apparent she had questioned herself and her own ability to teach. Her statements, both verbal and written, indicate that she has taken this experience as a learning lesson and used it to increase her confidence, not only in herself, but also in the confidence of her students. "That I'm comfortable with kids and I'm comfortable with teaching. Sometimes I think I feel like I'm not one of the strongest readers so sometimes it was intimidating...having to read aloud too...but realizing that it kind of comforts them when you make a mistake and learning that even if I'm not the best at anything it makes me more real" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). This realization not only helped Rachael's confidence, it helped her to be more aware of the needs of her students, which she demonstrated throughout the tutoring experience as well. Rachael also wrote about this experience in a reflection on Quickplace, "this became a bit distracting for admittedly both of us and we each had trouble reading at certain points. I think it comforted him to see me stumbling over words, it taught him that we all have our rough days and situations have a great impact on this" (Quickplace entry, 2/26/08).

In an interview, Rachael was asked how this experience was going to help her in her career as a teacher. Her response showed her strong belief in the

experience itself, "Definitely just already having the hands-on, one-on-one experience and going through certain trying times but to come ahead and having them prior to being with 30 other students. I'm already kind of prepared and know what's coming so that is going to help me. And then just having that bag of tricks already and working on some of them rather than just have someone tell me what to do, but to actually have gotten the chance to put it into practice"

(Interview #2, 4/24/08).

Knowledge of Appropriate Instruction

The ability of a teacher to understand the needs of an individual student takes time and careful thought. This was a skill that Rachael talked about and put into practice throughout the tutoring experience. Each week, Rachael would read the lesson plan posted by her cooperating teacher on Quickplace and think about how best to use this lesson plan to instruct her work with each student. It was apparent in her interviews and through observations of tutoring sessions that Rachael put thought into this process. During her first interview, Rachael described the process she went through when thinking about how to execute a particular lesson, "I just try to sit there and look at, one, what I did with the student last time and not do the same activities this time cause I only get a chance to silent read with one of my students a week. So, I try to switch off and then from there, thinking about what previous book they were in and if they're still going to be in it and try to figure out what else I can do with them" (Interview #1, 2/27/08). As the semester progressed, it was apparent that Rachael's thinking progressed as well. She was asked a similar question about executing instruction

at the end of the tutoring program and her thinking had changed and developed even more from earlier in the semester, "The biggest thing I think about was who I was going to work with, there might be something that I knew one of my students would have a more difficult time with...I would know who I should probably focus more on...so I just kind of try to piece it all together and think about timing" (Interview #2, 4/24/08).

Rachael also developed knowledge of and experimented with differentiating her instruction based on the individual student with whom she was working. She credited her coursework as an intervention specialist for this knowledge. She talked about the specialization of instruction that she had been taught in class and how she applied that to her experience tutoring. "I feel like I've learned a lot about how to realize what one student needs and looking into that student as a person and realizing that some approaches aren't going to work for that student, rather than, this was the approach I was taught, so that has to work" (Interview #1, 2/27/08). She reflected in many Quickplace entries that she tried a new approach to see what would work for one of her students. Many of Rachael's statements and reflections throughout the tutoring program indicated her belief in meeting the needs of individual learners and trying to find what worked best for them. Rachael wrote in multiple Quickplace entries about one of her students and her silent reading abilities. "It almost made me wonder if she was really reading or if her eyes were moving but the words weren't making it past that. I really want to figure this mystery out" (Quickplace entry, 1/23/08). The following week she wrote again about this student. "After working with her last

week, I wanted to deeply look into how her comprehension is when she reads silently. I took today to look at some of this" (Quickplace entry, 1/30/08). A few weeks passed and Rachael again investigated an area in which she hoped to best meet the needs of one of her students. "I was very pleased that I had decided to continue on with my curiosity of her comprehension...I was very pleased with the outcome of this and want to try doing this next week only with us reading out loud. I want to compare her comprehension level with these two different styles" (Quickplace entry, 2/20/08). These multiple entries show Rachael's dedication to her student and her commitment to learning about who she is as a reader and what she can do as a tutor to help her improve. This commitment was noticed by Rachael's cooperating teacher and she remarked on this on Quickplace, "I love how you are really thinking almost like an investigator and trying to uncover as much information as possible about each student. Being a teacher is more than just planning lessons and grading, it's doing what you are so naturally inclined to do: gathering as much as you can about each student and then using that information to help guide your instruction." (Quickplace entry, 2/20/08). This sentiment, expressed by Rachael's cooperating teacher puts Rachael's action into words. It is evident that Rachael worked hard to learn as much as she could about her students and used this information to guide her instruction during the tutoring sessions.

Knowledge of Struggling Readers

Rachael's understanding of struggling readers and their needs as described in the previous section was strongly influenced by her knowledge and use of reading strategies that were at the foundation of this tutoring program. She mentioned in interviews the benefit that she gained by learning the strategies. She talked about the strategies in two ways. First during her interviews, she spoke of learning the strategies in community with the other tutors, "with all of our meetings, going through just strategy by strategy and picking out the good things and the bad things, really looking in depth at them rather than glazing over them...and then trying to implement it, so not just talking about it, but really putting it into action" (Interview #1, 2/27/08). She also talked about how the book, *Strategies That Work* (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000), was beneficial for her during her tutoring experience, "the book went into great detail of this is how teachers use this in their classrooms...it really helped me...having it go into so much detail about how to actually do it with your students" (Interview #2, 4/24/08).

Rachael was able to use this knowledge of reading strategies to impact and motivate her struggling readers. Rachael wrote about a particular tutoring session in which her student was reading her independent reading book. They were reading the book *Rules* (Lord, 2007), a book Rachael's student had selected and were working on using the strategy of making connections. Rachael reflected on Quickplace about this lesson, "She seems to really like this book and it's an easy read for her. We spent some time linking it to her real life, even though she doesn't have a brother with autism, she could still relate to

some of things that were going on. I was really pleased that she could find a way to relate it to her own life" (Quickplace entry, 3/12/08). Another example of Rachael's use of strategies is evident in a reflection in her tutor journal, "I thought his creative writing skills were much improved from the beginning of the year. I thought my questioning and making him think ahead were very good and useful strategies when helping him write a story" (Tutor journal, 3/26/08).

Rachael's knowledge from her coursework at the university, the tutor training sessions and from the hands-on experience of tutoring all led her to become more confident in herself as a teacher. This confidence allowed her to broaden her use of strategies and to guide her instruction to meet the needs of the students with whom she worked. She developed a better understanding of herself as a teacher as well as an understanding of the needs of struggling students.

Lynn

Lynn's tutoring experience was in a large suburban middle school that contained Grades 6-8. Lynn worked in a seventh grade Language Arts classroom. The Language Arts class was taught in a 90-minute block. Lynn admittedly was reluctant to go into a middle school placement for the program as a special education major. She was uncertain because her own experience in middle school was unpleasant and she was not looking forward to dealing with the "cattiness that surrounds middle school" (Interview #1, 2/27/08). She also was unsure of being a special education major in a regular education classroom. Lynn realized quickly from her cooperating teacher that she had much to learn

about the middle school experience and the experience in a regular education classroom. Lynn talked about her cooperating teacher as well during her first interview. Though it was the cooperating teacher's first year participating in the tutoring program, Lynn still credited a lot of her learning to her cooperating teacher, "She's made me fall in love with these kids and her teaching methods, she has a classroom filled with books and teaching with all the methods we are learning are best practice and just really, it's been very inspiring" (Interview #1, 2/27/08). Lynn's tutoring placement was the same during the previous semester, so she had the opportunity to work with her students and learn from her cooperating teacher for the entire school year.

Importance of a Mentor Relationship

One aspect of Lynn's understanding about how to meet the needs of struggling readers was creating a strong mentor relationship. One component of the Struggling Reader Study is the relationship that is created between the student and the preservice teacher. Lynn took this to heart and spoke enthusiastically about this aspect of her experiences in her interviews and reflected on it in her tutor journal and on Quickplace. In her first interview, Lynn was asked about the mentoring side to the tutoring program,

I think it's important in any relationship, but especially important when you are trying to teach them...they need to have something that they can relate to and they're not going to learn, not going to have the excitement about reading unless it's something that's relevant to them, so if you can

get to them and then you can relate what you're teaching back to them as people I think that helps a lot. (Interview #1, 2/27/08)

Lynn continued to talk about one of her students who comes from a rocky home life and has a record of poor attendance in school. When comparing her previous attendance to her attendance on days when Lynn came to tutor, Lynn and her cooperating teacher learned that this student had only missed one tutoring day all year. Lynn saw her efforts in trying to make her students feel comfortable and supported pay off.

When asked about the qualities she possesses as a tutor, Lynn again reflected on the aspect of being a mentor to her students and pointed to the importance of this relationship. "I try hard to get to know the girls on a personal level...They both come from really rough lives and they've both really opened up and started to share some stories so I feel like I'm there to tutor them, but I'm there to build their confidence and a large part in building their confidence in reading is helping them become comfortable with our situation, so that component is a big one" (Interview #1, 2/27/08).

In addition to the mentor relationship that Lynn worked to create, she also worked on specific ways in which she could help her students find more success in the classroom. She reflected on working with her students on creating and sharing a book talk with the class. Lynn reflected on Quickplace about a book talk that she shared with the entire class,

Hopefully my book talk will serve as a good example for them and make them feel comfortable about completing their own. I think that this book

talk will be a great opportunity for the girls to "master" a book and have enough enthusiasm about the story to share it with their classmates. I also think that practicing the book talk beforehand will help them see the characteristics that are important to understand about a story when you plan on sharing it with others. (Quickplace entry, 3/11/08)

Lynn continued to see the importance of the mentor relationship throughout her tutoring experience. It was apparent that she took this aspect of the program seriously and also that she saw that importance in her students as well. She reflected in her tutor journal toward the end of the program, "I like that usually the other kids in the class tell my girls that they are lucky to get to work with me. I hope this attitude keeps up!" (Tutor journal, 3/11/08). On the last day of the tutoring program Lynn spent time talking with her 2 students about their successes and about how proud she was of them. She wanted them to know that she will always be there for them if they need her, "I talked to her about keeping in touch and how I am always there for her as 'Lynn' not only 'Miss Watson.' I saw a light in her eyes when I said that" (Tutor journal, 4/22/08). Lynn had witnessed very positive results from the mentor relationship as part of the tutoring program. It was evident that not only Lynn, but also her students found success from the development of the mentor relationship.

Knowledge of Struggling Readers

In addition to the importance of the mentor relationship, Lynn also gained knowledge about struggling readers and how best to motivate them and instruct them to increase their knowledge and use of reading skills. Lynn saw firsthand

the influence that motivation can have on a student when she was able to sit in on a parent-teacher conference. She described this experience during her first interview,

It's been very interesting how much a student can change in such little time and that has blown my mind. I mean, it really has and how much motivation plays a role in their ability to learn and the one little girl, for instance, she was the one I got to go to parent teacher conferences with, her mother said that over the summer last year she couldn't get her to read, it was pulling teeth to get her to sit down and read a book and when she did read she wasn't understanding it...She has to beg her to come to dinner because she won't put her book down. She found a genre, she loves mystery and now she has built her confidence in reading she is opening her eyes to different types of books and all because of motivation. I feel like knowing that will help me so much as a teacher in the future, knowing that even if I don't know every strategy and don't know every best practice, if I can inspire these kids to want to learn it, they'll learn them.

That is a big part of it. (Interview #1, 2/27/08)

Lynn was also faced with the issues that teachers face when dealing with students that struggle, "I cannot figure out how to motivate her. Her mood changes so much from session to session that on her bad days I cannot figure out how to read her and on her good days she is amazing. I need to improve on my strategies to deal with her bad days" (Tutor journal, 4/1/08). This realization showed that Lynn was perceptive to the needs of her students and was also

aware that this is a learning process for her as well. As a preservice teacher she is still learning how best to meet the needs of her students and she used these tutoring experiences to help her get there.

Lynn reflected on an experience with her students that she used to try to motivate them and excite them about reading. During a particular tutoring session, she brought in the book *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* (Canfield, Hansen, & Kirberger, 1997) and had both of her students select a story with which they felt a connection. Lynn wrote about this experience on Quickplace, "I think that this option allowed for them to each show a little bit about themselves through the poem they chose...I really enjoyed this activity because it allowed me to connect with the girls on a more personal level and practice reading skills at the same time. I think the girls' reading skills also excelled while they read a piece that they could relate to and had chosen themselves" (Quickplace entry, 2/18/08). Lynn was able to see the positive influence that motivating her students could have. She continued to emphasize this goal during interviews and it was apparent that she put it into practice during observations of tutoring sessions. She worked hard to make certain that the work she was doing with her students met their needs and inspired them to want to improve.

During her final interview, Lynn was asked what the most important thing was that she learned about struggling readers. Her answer reflected the evidence that was just shared about her belief in motivating struggling readers, "I have learned that it is as much about their attitude as it is about their strategies because if they don't want to read then they're not going to practice the strategies and I felt that

both of my students were at a very similar level at the beginning of the year, one gained that love for reading and she really excelled and my other student is still struggling. She doesn't like to read...the other student is a much better reader overall because she has the motivation to read" (Interview #2, 25/08).

Lynn's experience tutoring in a general education classroom allowed her to explore the mentor relationship with her students. She developed an understanding of a positive relationship with her students that will motivate her teaching as she continues in her career. She also learned the importance of motivating struggling readers by working with their interests and using strategies to help them become more successful. Lynn opened her eyes to the experience in a general education classroom and reflected on this during her final interview, "being in a general education classroom, it was a great experience and it really hit home for me and I realized that everybody struggles. You would expect that everybody had their weaknesses and everybody has their strengths and not only to see that in IS students, but to see that in everyone, just to a different degree, was very helpful" (Interview #2, 4/25/08).

Mary

Mary's tutoring experience took place in a small, urban Catholic school containing Grades K-8. Mary participated in the tutoring program in the same school the previous semester, so she was familiar with the school, the teacher, and the classroom. Mary's tutoring took place in a seventh grade Language Arts classroom and an eighth grade Language Arts classroom. She tutored one seventh grade student and one eighth grade student. During part of the tutoring

experience Mary's class was taught by a student teacher from the university. Mary was also the only participant who had participated in the tutoring program during the previous school year. Though this impacted her thinking overall, it did not appear to impact the data too greatly. This was the first year that Mary's cooperating teacher participated in the program.

Importance of a Mentor Relationship

Mary's perspective on working with struggling readers grew throughout the tutoring program, especially in her understanding of the importance of the mentor relationship with her students. She often reflected on the importance for her students that she spend time with them not only on school work but on fostering a relationship,

These kids just need a mentor, a lot of them just need that...the 2 students I worked with haven't come from the best backgrounds and stuff and I guess if just the teachers understand that, that every child that walks into your classroom with different needs and they have different home lives, different families and that all affects how they learn. So I guess just being a mentor for the students not as a teacher, but as a mentor...is definitely something I've taken away from this. (Interview #2, 4/24/08)

Mary saw the importance of this relationship during her tutoring experience when one of her students was dealing with a personal issue. Mary reflected on this situation on Quickplace, "When the students came in, one of the girls was very upset and crying. I took her out in the hall and we talked for a bit" (Quickplace entry, 1/31/08). Mary observed and dealt with a real-life situation in a classroom

that teachers have to deal with. Her awareness of the mentor relationship allowed her to better handle the situation.

Part of Mary's own perception of herself as a tutor deals with her relationship with her students. She talked about this during her final interview and it was apparent that she held strongly to this belief.

I try to get the kids pumped up about what they're doing cause of a lot of them they're not a lot of motivation behind it...I always try to be really like excited about it and trying to help them really capitalize on their strengths, because they, I mean, they know they're struggling, they don't need to be told something they're doing wrong so using their strengths and kind of focusing on those and then help them compensate for those weaknesses, I think I do that a lot. (Interview #2, 4/24/08)

It was evident that Mary took this realization to heart. She reflected on the mentor relationship not only in her interviews and in her Quickplace entries, but it was also apparent during observations of tutoring sessions that she continually fostered the mentor relationship with her students. During one observation, Mary worked on finding a book and a section of a book that her student would be interested in reading. They selected a book on animals and then focused on a particular animal that her student was interested in reading about. It was clear during this observation that Mary was tuned into the interests of her student and that the relationship had already developed. During her first interview, Mary reflected on how creating a mentor relationship with her students was going to

help her as she continued in her career as a teacher. She talked about the importance of having the tutoring experience and what she had learned from it,

I think it's so important to have this experience to know what these kids are going through at this time and that you know, just like offering extra help to them and recognizing them and like celebrating their successes with them no matter how big or small is so huge for these kids. It's just like you're creating a whole classroom atmosphere and I think this has really helped me out with just really, like I said again, just to make sure all the kids feel really important in the class because I think some of these students in the past years they maybe have felt left behind or you know kind of given up on. You just can't let your students feel that way.

(Interview #1, 2/28/08).

Mary's understanding of struggling readers was built around an understanding of the importance of creating and fostering a mentor relationship.

Knowledge of Appropriate Instruction

Mary displayed an important understanding of differentiating instruction to meet the needs of her students, which she felt was an imperative aspect to the learning of struggling readers. Mary's awareness of the differing types of students was evident during her interviews, "there are so many different types of students out there and so many different types of learners" (Interview #1/2/8/08). Mary mentions the importance of meeting the needs of students in her final interview. It is apparent that her 2 years of experience in the Struggling Reader Study had impacted her knowledge of differentiating instruction, "all students

learn differently and that you concentrate on their strengths and I really just think it helped my understanding that students really do learn differently, like some are struggling, some are not struggling but you just have to be able to differentiate...your activities can meet the needs of those students in the classroom" (Interview #2, 4/24/08).

Mary's awareness of the need to differentiate was also reflected upon in her tutor journal. She responded to the needs of her students by ensuring that the work they did would be of benefit to her students and their unique learning styles. "During both the tutoring sessions my students were responding very well to my questions that I was asking them. They seemed to enjoy the fact that the questions that I was asking them helped them focus on the important aspects of their book. I also thought that doing group reading with [my student] in the seventh grade class was very beneficial because he didn't seem to be singled out" (Tutor journal, 3/13/08).

Mary reflected on another lesson that she worked on with her student. In this tutoring session she described a book project that her student was able to work on,

The students were able to pick which book they were going to read based on their interests. For the most part, the boys picked the basketball novel and the girls picked the book about a young African American girl attending an all White school. The students all seemed very engaged in their reading, especially because they were able to read a novel that they are interested in. I was able to work with [one student] during this time...At

different points throughout the chapter, I was also able to stop and ask comprehension questions. She had a difficult time making inferences about what was going on in the book, but with more guided questions she was able to develop a response to the questions. She does a great job at making connections with the story. For their reading journal, they were asked to go back through the book and write down a piece of advice that the girl's mom tells her and how that advice can relate to their lives. She found a couple pieces of advice that she can relate to and she was very eager to share them with me. (Quickplace entry, 2/21/08)

Mary's experience tutoring developed her understanding of the importance of differentiating instruction to meet the needs of struggling students, as is evidenced by her comment during an interview, "I think they just need to focus on people's abilities rather than their weaknesses, um, and try to just point out to them....what they can do instead of what they can't do" (Interview #1, 2/28/08).

Knowledge of Struggling Readers

In direct relationship to her understanding of choosing appropriate instruction for struggling readers was Mary's understanding of what struggling readers needed to be successful in the classroom. Mary credited a lot of her learning to one of her university courses, Classroom Environment for Middle Childhood. In this course, Mary explained, the professor focused on creating a positive learning environment in the classroom where all students feel accepted and important. Mary talked about how she created this type of positive environment in her own tutoring sessions during her final interview, "What I thought really helped my

students this year was just like giving students responsibilities and like having them feel like really important, that they are special, no matter how big or small and I think especially in a middle school classroom...this teacher trusts you to do something....really raises their confidence and it's cool to see them have student ownership for what they're doing" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). Mary displayed evidence of internalizing this concept during a reflection of a lesson in her tutor journal. "The strategy of the cooperative learning groups really worked well with the two classes. My students in particular liked to have a responsibility that they need to fulfill in order to contribute to the group" (Tutor journal, 4/10/08). In her final interview, Mary reflected on how the tutoring experience had changed her as a teacher. She used that opportunity to again emphasize her knowledge of struggling readers and what they need in order to be successful.

I think it's really important to hold your students to high expectations and challenge them but you also have to meet them where they're at and then challenge them...you don't want to frustrate them more.... [I] think I'm trying to understand where students are at, the level they're at. It's hard, I think it's really hard to teach when you look at all your students, this one's here, this one's here, this one's there and I think I'm getting a little more comfortable like saying, you're at this level, this is what you need to feel comfortable and have your expectations to challenge them but doesn't [sic] reach the point of frustration. (Interview #2, 4/24/08)

Mary witnessed success with her students and her own teaching in working to meet the needs of her struggling readers. Her understanding of struggling readers transferred into her practice.

Mary developed in her knowledge of instruction and needs of struggling readers throughout the tutoring experience. Her experience in the program for a second year allowed her to develop more as a teacher. She also developed an understanding of a mentor relationship between herself and her students.

Summary

This chapter has presented the results of each participant's interviews, written artifacts, and classroom observations, grouped based on the most significant categories that emerged for each participant. Additional categories may have been part of an individual participant's data, but only the data that were most significant to the participant and the study were presented here. The results showed some different categories for the participants, as well as several common categories. The reasons for this and the implications of the results of this study will be discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Participation in a literacy based tutoring program allows preservice teachers to extend the knowledge they gain from their university coursework into the field (Fang & Ashley, 2004). The impact that this type of experience can have on preservice teachers understanding of struggling readers and of themselves as teachers goes beyond what they learn within their coursework alone.

Understanding the influence that a tutoring program can have on the preservice teachers can not only impact their learning, but can impact the teacher education courses and the way that they deliver material to their students. The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research study was to explore how preservice teachers are influenced when they participate in a one-to-one tutoring program for struggling readers. Chapter 5 describes the common themes found across participants, discusses how the new findings link to current research, and provides recommendations for the future.

Cross-Case Analysis

Throughout the data analysis there were themes that were common for all the participants. As mentioned in chapter 4, there were themes that were common to individual participants, as well as across all 6 participants. In this

section, three themes that were found to be common amongst all 6 participants and the significance of those themes will be discussed.

"Communication is key"

Though this theme was not mentioned frequently throughout the data, it was apparent that all 6 participants found the aspect of communication to be a vital part of the Struggling Reader Study. When asked what the most important aspect was of the tutoring program, all 6 participants reported that communication was vital to their growth throughout the program. Communication was mentioned on separate occasions at least three times by each preservice teacher during the interviews. For all 6 participants, communication played an important role in their understanding of working with struggling readers and their growth throughout the program. There were two different types of communication that influenced the preservice teachers' learning: communication with other preservice teachers and communication with their cooperating teachers.

Communication amongst other preservice teachers was part of the training sessions that each preservice teacher had to attend throughout the tutoring program. There were six sessions during the first semester and three sessions during the second semester. As part of the training sessions, time was given to the preservice teachers to simply talk about how things were going. They discussed things that were going well with their students, things they were struggling with during the sessions, and any technical issues that needed to be resolved. For example, a preservice teacher may have had questions about how long she should be tutoring each session; this was an issue that could be

discussed during the training sessions. Lynn described the communication amongst preservice teachers in her second interview, "I think hearing the stories from everybody else was the most helpful part....the professors like to call it professional community feedback and that's basically what it was" (Interview #2, 4/25/08). All of the participants mentioned this same feeling that Lynn mentioned in her second interview during their own interviews. When asked what was the most important aspect of the tutoring program and the components of the training sessions, the participants responded with communication 12 out of 12 times. The preservice teachers found that communicating with each other allowed them to reflect on their own tutoring strategies, but also allowed them to be open to hearing others' stories and experiences. A community was created and they were able to learn from each other's experiences, both good and bad. There was also mention of relief when the preservice teachers heard stories from each other that things were not going perfectly. Rachael noted this feeling during her first interview, "It was definitely helpful, especially during the beginning when you're not sure what to expect...it's just a comfort level in knowing, okay I'm not alone in this being not exactly what I thought it was going to be. And just sharing 'my student hated me today' and you're like, 'good, mine did too'...just having that chance is really nice to know that you're not alone" (Interview #1, 2/27/08). They feared that if they were having a problem, that they were the only ones with the problem, but the communication allowed them to realize that other people were struggling too as they learned how to adapt to the program.

Communication with the cooperating teachers was also an important aspect for the preservice teachers throughout the tutoring program. All 6 participants agreed that communicating with their cooperating teacher was helpful and was an important part of the Struggling Reader Study. However, it was clear that they did not all have the best communication with their cooperating teachers throughout the program. Quickplace, which was the required mode of communication, was used at various times by all 6 preservice teachers and their cooperating teachers. However, each preservice teacher found the mode of communication that worked best for her, whether it was via e-mail or by arriving early to each tutoring session. The most important aspect of the communication with the cooperating teachers was the opportunity to reflect on what happened during a particular tutoring session and to get feedback from the cooperating teacher. The feedback was important because it allowed the preservice teachers a chance to hear what an experienced teacher thought and to obtain expert input regarding the student's progress.

Three of the 6 preservice teachers, Kristi, Rachael, and Susan, used Quickplace as their primary mode of communication and found it to be most helpful for their own reflection purposes, as well as to receive feedback from their cooperating teacher. Susan responded during her first interview about communication over Quickplace, "It helps with communication with my teacher...by the weekend my post will be there so she can check it and that was helpful, especially with her giving me the lesson plan and she would read my note...and reply to it...and she would give me a suggestion" (Interview #1,

2/29/08). One reason Quickplace was so beneficial was because it allowed for communication that was not always possible during the tutoring visits. The preservice teachers often came at the beginning of class or when class had already begun and the cooperating teacher did not have time to discuss the day's events before or after the session because of her obligation to teaching the rest of the class. Rachael noted this reality during her second interview, "having the chance to tell my teacher what was going on instead of doing it face-to-face because sometimes that wasn't possible" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). Quickplace gave the preservice teachers a chance to create an open dialogue with their cooperating teacher that might otherwise not be there. Kristi noted the importance of this opportunity for communication during her first interview, "we don't really get to sit down with [our cooperating teacher] and talk over things so I like, she'll reply and she'll give really good....she'll tell us things, like if their parents came in for conferences....it's just really good to get the feedback" (Interview, #1, 2/28/08).

One tutor, Lynn, found that Quickplace was not a tool she and her teacher used often, but she did share that the mode of communication most often used was e-mail. E-mail was a more convenient form of communication for this preservice teacher and she talked very positively about her relationship with her cooperating teacher and how important communicating was for both of them. She also mentioned that she would often arrive early, at the start of the school day and spend time with her cooperating teacher when she had hall duty and this time before class began served as a great tool for them to discuss the classroom

events and the needs of her two students. Lynn felt very strongly about the communication piece and mentioned this during her first interview, "You should have communication because if I walked in every week not knowing what we were going to do, I'd feel very left out of that classroom and I would feel like I was a stranger walking in but instead I feel like I'm part of the class and every time I come in they expect that I know what's going on, they know what to expect from me and that helps the professional relationship...so when I walk in and chit chat conversation before class starts I ask them about what they've already done, they know that I'm with it and I feel like respect comes out of that so I think that that communication is key" (Interview #1, 2/27/08).

Two of the 6 preservice teachers, Anne and Mary, stated that using Quickplace was important, but was not made a priority for them or their cooperating teachers. Anne and Mary were both placed at the Catholic school, which was in its first year of the program. It was not required for them or their cooperating teacher to post each week on Quickplace. They were encouraged to do so if it was possible, but due to the newness of the program it was not required. During the data collection period Anne posted only seven times and Mary posted only five times. The cooperating teacher posted only three times during that same period, all three postings were in response to Mary's reflections. Often, their communication occurred when they arrived to tutor and before they would leave for the day. Though Quickplace was used, because of the lack of frequency, it did not provide much in the way of an opportunity to reflect or communicate. Anne reflected on Quickplace during her first interview, "It was

kinda helpful that I write down what happened, but, I mean, I wouldn't always get feedback, which is fine, it's not that big of a deal but um, it's like [the university] is reflect, reflect, reflect, and it is kind of true, but it really does kind of help"

(Interview #1, 2/28/08). However, Mary, who did not use Quickplace often, did speak highly of its benefits when used. She did agree that it was a good way to communicate and a great way to receive feedback from her cooperating teacher. However, this may have stemmed from her previous experience as a tutor in the Struggling Reader Study the year before. Mary mentioned the benefits of using Quickplace during her first interview, "I think it's good to sit down right after you're done and kind of think about it...and it's good because your cooperating teacher can see it...it's just a good way to get your ideas out there and get feedback on them" (Interview, #1, 2/28/08).

Though communication was used in a wide variety of formats, including communication between preservice teachers and communication with cooperating teachers, all 6 participants were incredibly aware of its importance to their own learning and their growth throughout the program. The participants in this study did indeed witness and identify as effective, communication, in various forms, to allow for reflection and support.

Communication played a role for the preservice teachers throughout the experience. The preservice teachers used communication with their cooperating teachers to aid in planning and executing their lessons each week. They were able to reflect and respond on Quickplace and in person and use this discussion to better their knowledge of adapting instruction. The preservice teachers also

noted communication as the most important aspect of the tutoring experience. They found that this communication allowed them to grow as teachers and made the tutoring program a success. This area of communication answers two areas of the research questions in this study.

"I think the experience was the preparation"

Another theme that was common throughout all 6 participants' remarks was the importance of the real-world teaching experience that the tutoring provided. All 6 preservice teachers were in agreement that they learned the most from actually tutoring. Kristi reflected on this during her first interview, "Yeah, it definitely helped to have the real-life situation, it wasn't just taking notes in class and listening to the teacher. I could actually, the next morning, go and do it, it was just more meaningful and it makes class more enjoyable" (Interview #1, 2/28/08). Lynn also noted the importance of the experience of tutoring, "I learned something new every time" (Interview #2, 4/25/08).

They were aware that what they learned in their coursework was providing the foundation for their knowledge; in fact, many of them referred to specific courses that they used as a reference when they tutored. Susan mentioned one of her courses during her second interview, "Well, all the classes helped me as far as creating activities, since we were making lesson plans in each of our classes, it helped me think of all the different activities I could do, um, I think [Middle School Practices and Principles], talking about differentiation...it helped me look at their needs and figure out what would be most helpful" (Interview #2, 4/25/08).

However, they became increasingly more aware of the importance of the actual experience of tutoring as the semester progressed. Since the tutoring program was an extra opportunity, it went above and beyond what they might normally have done as third-year education majors. Mary reflected on taking knowledge that she learned in the classroom and applying it to her work with her student, "We took a lot of reading classes, so [Foundations of Literacy through Literature] is a great one. I was taking it last year during the struggling reader program...we did go over a lot of the reading strategies...So it was nice because what we were doing with you guys was also being reinforced in my classroom and I was also able to practice it with a struggling reader" (Interview #1, 2/28/08). It allowed them the experience of working one-to-one with a struggling reader and it was in their hands to decide what their student needed. Though the preservice teachers were not writing the lesson plans for the tutoring sessions, their feedback each week on Quickplace or in discussions with their cooperating teachers helped to guide the instructions that the cooperating teachers would write each week.

This hands-on experience was noted many times by all 6 participants in interviews and on Quickplace, and oftentimes, though it was not mentioned directly, it was clear in the data that certain experiences during a tutoring session increased their knowledge of reading and of teaching. The area that was discussed most frequently, mentioned on 15 separate occasions during interviews with the preservice teachers, was taking strategies or ideas that were taught in their university courses or in the training sessions for the Struggling

Reader Study and being able to try the particular strategy with a student. The preservice teachers stated that they were able to learn what worked and what did not work for their own teaching style and for their students. The tutoring sessions also provided opportunities for the preservice teachers to try new ideas that they created on their own. They were able to make each lesson their own and adapt it according to their own style and to the needs of their students. Kristi reflected in her tutor journal how excited she was that she created a new lesson idea for her student and that it seemed to have benefited her student. "He did a good job taking my feedback on the mock spelling test I gave him. I was proud of myself for coming up with something extra and beneficial for him and he was receptive to it!" (Tutor journal, 3/12/08).

Another aspect of the hands-on experience of tutoring was the realization that teaching is difficult and requires a teacher to think on her feet, adapt to changes that occur during a day and to be flexible. Rachael reflected on this during her second interview, "I think it's made me more down to earth and not so focused on the scheduling of it. When you're writing lesson plans you have to have the activities down to a minute and it's like, that is so not the way it works and if you're going to read three chapters I think that is just, it made me realize that everything you write down is not that important. It's more important what they're getting out of it then necessarily them learning every vocab word but so they're making it through without completely collapsing at the end of the day" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). The preservice teachers noted that this realization taught them more about being a teacher than they might otherwise have known at this

stage in their experiences as a preservice teacher. Lynn also reflected at the end of the semester on the importance of being flexible as a teacher. "You really can't be prepared for everything....sometimes going in exhausted and you have no idea what you're going in to...your student is going to be in a really bad mood or your student is going to be in a really good mood you almost can't keep up with them. I just learned that I'm not always prepared, you can't always be as prepared as you want to be" (Interview #2, 4/25/08).

All 6 of the preservice teachers mentioned some of their own experiences throughout the tutoring program and what they learned either from an idea they tried, a difficult student, a failed attempt at getting something done during the time they had, and many other experiences. The experience was priceless and it was clear that having the experience of tutoring was an incredibly effective practice for preservice teachers' learning and knowledge. Susan ended her second interview with the following observation about having the hands-on experience, "As a teacher, it definitely um, it was nice to actually do it because you learn all these ideas and it was nice to put it in action, we do all these lesson plans and it's always hypothetical, I would do this, I would do that but this I was actually able to talk to a student and work with them and you don't get to do that very often, so I guess the experience was the best thing" (Interview #2, 4/25/08).

The hands-on experience of working one-to-one with a struggling reader was identified by the preservice teachers as one of the most important aspects of the tutoring program. They recognized that they learned so much from simply having the experience. This hands-on application of their knowledge leads to an

increase in their confidence as teachers and to their knowledge of instruction. The preservice teachers also noted that having the experience also gave them insight into executing the lessons each week. They were able to learn something each time they tutored and apply that new knowledge with their student the next time they tutored. This hands-on experience answers three of the research questions in this study.

"These kids just need a mentor"

A third common theme that was found across all 6 participants' comments was the importance of creating a mentor relationship with the students. Each tutor found her own way to establish this relationship throughout the program. Often, it was simply asking her students how things were going or asking about their families. Other times it was dealing with a bigger issue that the students brought to the table. And at times, it was simply using that knowledge to guide their instruction or to pick out a book that would meet the interest of the student. Whatever form it took, the mentor relationship was a key aspect to the tutoring for all the preservice teachers. They realized that if the students felt accepted and were shown respect, then they would be more willing to work at improving their reading skills. Susan realized the importance of the mentor relationship and how she encouraged reading with her students, "Well, especially with middle school age students, I can remember whenever I was their age reading wasn't the cool thing to do and I had everything I wanted to do, so if they look up to somebody who is older than them, but not as old as their teacher and they, if I support reading then they support it and they want to do what I do so it kind of

helps that, it makes it more enjoyable for them, something that they want to do, instead of like a task or a job" (Interview #1, 2/29/08).

Creating the mentor relationship was powerful for both the student and the preservice teacher. All 6 participants commented on the impact that their effort to create a strong relationship had on their students. The theme of the mentor relationship appeared at least four times for each participant in the data. They also realized the impact that it had on their own learning. Kristi noted this importance during her second interview, "Well, I think I've realized the importance of, I don't know how to word it, when you're working with a student it's not all about getting this worksheet done, you might just have to talk to them, you know, 'how was your weekend?' something like that, 'oh how many siblings do you have?' and you know you also have to build their confidence. Being a teacher is not all about the academics" (Interview #2, 4/24/08).

The importance of creating that relationship with any student in any classroom is crucial to creating a positive learning environment. The preservice teachers came to understand that time had to be devoted to conversation and getting to know each other. Lynn recognized this aspect of tutoring as one of her personal strengths during her second interview, "I think that I connect with the girls...but I think especially with the 2 girls that I am working with that was one of the most important things. One of them has got a lot more into reading and I think one of them doesn't like reading, she still doesn't like reading, but her strategies have improved while she has opened up in our relationship, I think that building that relationship with her was the most important thing" (Interview #2, 4/25/08).

Through this dialogue a community was created between student and preservice teacher and, from this community, teaching and learning could occur.

The preservice teachers were able to recognize the importance of this aspect of working with students and see the success that it could bring for their own learning and the impact that it could have on their students. Having the experience of a mentor relationship with a student influenced the preservice teachers' beliefs about working with struggling readers, a component of the research questions in this study. They realized that this type of relationship was important in finding success for struggling readers. They also identified that the mentor relationship had an overall influence on their knowledge of teaching struggling readers and their confidence in working with students. They were able to see the link that this type of relationship had to teaching.

Throughout the data it was apparent that the themes of communication, hands-on teaching experience, and creating a mentor relationship were vitally important to all 6 participants. These themes were evident across all forms of data and across all participants. The significance of these three themes shows their importance in the experience of preservice teachers in a one-to-one tutoring program.

Linking Practice and Findings to Current Research in Preservice Teacher Tutoring Programs

During the Struggling Reader Study, the 6 participants had the time and opportunity to tutor one-to-one with a struggling reader once a week over two semesters. This opportunity, among other things, provided growth in their

knowledge of struggling readers and of literacy instruction and increased their confidence as teachers. This opportunity was in addition to their coursework and their field observations as third-year education majors. This extended amount of time to work one-to-one with students is often not an option for teachers or preservice teachers. Current research on the influence of field-based literacy tutoring on preservice teachers' learning suggests that, in conjunction with university courses, the knowledge and confidence of the preservice teachers will be greatly impacted (Fang & Ashley, 2004). The results of this study suggest that the literacy tutoring did in fact have a great impact on the learning of the preservice teachers. More specifically, the preservice teachers credited their learning to the simple fact that they were tutoring and learning simply from having the hands-on experience, in addition to and beyond what they were learning from their university courses, as the cross-case analysis showed.

This growth in knowledge and confidence rang true for all 6 participants. Though the level of growth varied for each preservice teacher, all 6 spoke about the growth they made and linked that growth to the tutoring experience. This confirms what Worthy and Prater (1998) reported, "Without exception, the preservice teachers reported in their final surveys and interviews that the tutorial experience played a critical role in increasing their knowledge and confidence in teaching reading" (p. 489). Worthy and Prater extend their results by showing that the preservice teachers in their study grew in a variety of ways. There are two specific areas from their results that are confirmed by the present study: putting theory into practice and creating a relationship with their students.

It was evident from the 6 preservice teachers, especially Kristi, Susan and Rachael, that they grew from having the opportunity to execute the lessons each week. They spoke repeatedly during their interviews and in their reflections on Quickplace that the experience of working one-to-one with a student and applying strategies they had learned from their coursework allowed them to grow exponentially in a way that might have taken much more time had they not had the experience tutoring in the Struggling Reader Study. The tutoring provided them with ample opportunities to apply what they were learning in class and to reflect on that practice. Another area of growth mentioned by Worthy and Prater (1998) and extended in this study was the experience of creating a relationship with their students. Worthy and Prater mentioned that building a relationship was not always an easy thing to do and that over time the relationship molded to best fit the preservice teacher and his or her student. The relationship, as was the case with Kristi at times, took patience and perseverance, as some students were not always willing to work with the preservice teachers. However, as noted by Kristi, she took this situation as a challenge and worked hard to build a positive relationship with her student and to learn from it. Two participants, Mary and Lynn, placed great emphasis on the importance of creating a relationship with their students and learned a great deal about themselves as teachers and about students from this aspect of the tutoring experience.

Worthy and Prater (1998) suggest some results that did not surface in this study. They reported that though the preservice teachers in their study learned a great deal about teaching from the experience, nearly everyone in their study

reported that it "opened a can of worms, making them more aware of the complexity of being a literacy teacher, including what they need to become the teachers they want to be" (p. 493). Though the 6 participants learned a great deal from this experience, there was no mention of being overwhelmed with what lies ahead; in fact, there was excitement and confidence in what lies ahead in student teaching and their careers as teachers in their own classrooms. During her second interview, Kristi was asked how this experience was going to help her as she goes into her senior year and student teaching. She responded, "Yeah, I do feel more confident. Just to have the one-on-one interactions with the students and being in the same classroom all year um, I think it was good, I just feel very comfortable I know all the kids in the classroom and they know me, I don't know, I just feel more comfortable being like an authority figure in the classroom" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). Anne also commented on how the experience prepared her for what lies ahead of her in her senior year. She described the tutoring as having a greater impact than simply reading a book, "Yeah, I think I'll know more to ask them and you know I can get a really good book and but like in the classroom...or you try stuff and it doesn't work so you can see that" (Interview #2, 4/24/08). The research states that participation in literacy tutorial programs for preservice teachers will have a greater impact on their learning and confidence than not participating in such a program. The 6 participants' experience supports this research in a variety of ways, showing that their experience in the Struggling Reader Study did have a positive impact on their knowledge and confidence in teaching reading.

Recommendations

This study was designed to fulfill a need for further research on the use of preservice teachers as tutors in a one-to-one tutoring program for struggling readers and to understand the impact that the experience has on the preservice teachers' knowledge and confidence. Based on the results of this study, several recommendations for universities and tutoring programs can be made:

First, preservice teachers benefit greatly from the experience of participating in a one-to-one tutoring program for struggling readers, in addition to their regular coursework and field experiences. Because the tutorial experience was an additional experience, the preservice teachers gained knowledge and practical applications that they might otherwise not have learned. An effort needs to be made to provide extra opportunities such as the Struggling Reader Study or to incorporate such hands-on learning into preservice teacher education programs.

Second, universities need to actively seek out quality opportunities for preservice teachers to participate in similar tutoring programs. Such programs might be part of their coursework and built into their field experience, or, like the Struggling Reader Study, could be in addition to the coursework they take part in through the university.

Third, before placing preservice teachers in such tutoring programs, it is essential that the experience be well supported and planned out. The six participants commented on the structure of the Struggling Reader Study, the training sessions, the use of Quickplace, and the fact that the study was

grounded in research of best practices in reading. These decisions were deliberate and all contributed to the outcome of the preservice teachers' growth. Similar concepts will be critical in other tutoring programs that use preservice teachers as tutors.

The above recommendations were based on the results of this study which showed that participation as a tutor in a one-to-one tutoring program for struggling readers can have a great impact on the knowledge and confidence of preservice teachers. The hands-on, practical experience of tutoring allowed the preservice teachers to grow in their understanding of their profession and their relationship with students. The following recommendations are for further research that needs to be done related to this study:

First, more research needs to be done on the impact that participation in tutoring programs can have on preservice teachers. This study showed that such participation can have a great impact on how preservice teachers view themselves as teachers and how they grow in knowledge and confidence. It was apparent that there was a positive impact on the participants in a variety of ways and that each preservice teacher grew individually. However, more needs to be learned about how this type of experience impacts the learning of preservice teachers and, ultimately, their teaching.

Second, a valuable extension of this study would be to follow the preservice teachers into their student teaching and their first year of teaching to see what impact the experience has on them when they put their learning into practice in their own classrooms. Within this study the preservice teachers

worked one-to-one with struggling students. As they continue into student teaching and to their first year, they will all likely be put into different teaching scenarios. Comparisons could be made between one-to-one instruction and small group or whole group instruction, as all might be possibilities for these 6 Intervention Specialist majors. Following them as they begin to teach will allow for further discoveries on the impact that the one-to-one tutoring program had on their knowledge and confidence as teachers.

Another valuable extension of this study would be to shift the focus to include the learning that occurs in their university courses and to compare that learning to the learning that occurs as part of the Struggling Reader Study and to determine how the university coursework plays a role in the preservice teachers' tutoring experience. Comparisons that could be made between the results of such a study and this study would be valuable in determining how the role of a tutorial program would play a part if built into regular university coursework. The above recommendations are based on the results of this study and on determinations by the researcher about the need for further study in these areas.

In conclusion, teacher preparation programs need to continue to investigate and offer appropriate and effective tutoring opportunities for preservice teachers. By participating in such programs, preservice teachers can reach beyond what they learn within the classroom and are able to put theory into practice with struggling students in real-life situations. The 6 preservice teachers, each pursuing a license in Intervention Specialist education, benefited from the experience. They were placed in different grade levels and in different

school buildings and yet each was able to grow as a teacher. This shows the benefits of the program are strong, as they reach beyond grade level, beyond experience of the cooperating teacher, and beyond the schools' experience in the program. The influence that this experience can have on their knowledge of teaching and their confidence in their ability has been demonstrated through this study. The benefits that this knowledge can have for our teacher education programs and preservice teachers now and into the future is immense, and is the most valuable contribution this study can make to the field of education.

APPENDIX A

Consent Form for Preservice Teachers

February 26, 2008

Dear University Tutor,

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you choose to participate. Your participation is voluntary. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to discuss the study with your friends and family and to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

The purpose of this study is to explore the benefits that one-to-one tutoring can have on preservice teachers as they prepare to become inservice teachers. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a tutor who is participating in the Struggling Reader Study at the University of Dayton.

Procedures/Tasks:

You will be observed by the researcher during one-on-one tutoring sessions. You will also be interviewed by the researcher. These tutoring sessions and interviews will be audio recorded. These recordings will be used by the researcher for data collection purposes and will be stored on the researcher's computer with password protection. You will also be asked to respond on the Quickplace Website and respond in a journal each week after you tutor. You will be asked to complete a survey about your beliefs on reading. These entries will be read and analyzed by the researcher. The data will be stored on the researcher's computer with password protection.

Your participation in this study will last from January 2008, to April 2008. You may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participation in the study, there will be no penalty and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with the University of Dayton.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no anticipated risks as a result of your participation in this study. You will receive the benefit of having experience tutoring one-on-one with a struggling middle school student. In addition, the results of this study will inform the larger educational community regarding the preparation, ability and confidence of preservice teachers.

Confidentiality:

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):

- The University of Dayton Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices

Incentives:

You will receive several pieces of children's literature in gratitude for participation in this study. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

Participant Rights:

You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you are a student or employee at the University of Dayton, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status. If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Dayton reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

Contacts and Questions:

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact **Dr. Mary-Kate Sableski at (937) 229-3910 or Katie Lekan at (937) 271-1282**. Questions about your rights as a subject in research should be directed to Jon Nieberding, Chair, University of Dayton IRB, (937) 229-2919 or jon.nieberding@udri.udayton.edu.

I have read this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Printed name of subject:

Signature of subject:

Date:

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

- How confident do you feel tutoring a struggling reader?
- What strategies have you learned in your coursework that has guided you in instruction of a struggling reader?
- Describe yourself as a reading tutor.
- What is one of your strengths as a reading tutor?
- What is one of your weaknesses as a reading tutor?
- What area would you most like to improve upon as a tutor?
- In general, how do you think this tutoring experience will help you in your career as a teacher?
- Based on your licensure areas, how do you think this tutoring experience will help you in your career as a teacher?
- At this point, what have you learned about yourself as a teacher?
- Have the training sessions been helpful? If so, what specifically has been helpful to you?
- Would more training sessions be helpful?
- How did reading *Strategies That Work* by Harvey and Goudvis help you with your tutoring?
- Did you find Quickplace to be useful? What about it helped you?

- Did you find it beneficial for your teacher to post on Quickplace?

Additional Questions for 2nd Interview (April)

- What is the most important thing you have learned about yourself from this experience?
- What is the most important thing you have learned about struggling readers from this experience?
- What could be done differently to make the training sessions more beneficial?
- How has this experience changed you as a teacher?

APPENDIX C

Observation Guide

Date: _____

Tutor: _____

Time: _____

Activity Being Conducted:**Use of Reading Strategy:****Tutor Instruction:****Behavior of Student:****General Observations:**

APPENDIX D

Tutor Reflection Journal

Date: _____

Briefly describe the activity that took place during today's tutoring session:

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What do you think went well today?

--

What areas need improvement?

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Any general observations/reflections:

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