An After-School Literacy Program: Investigating the Experiences of Students with Literacy Difficulties, their Volunteer Tutors, and the Tutors' Transition into the Teaching Profession

Doctoral Dissertation

Tiffany Lynn Gallagher (M.Ed.)

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies in Education

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies
Faculty of Education, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

© January, 2005
Abstract

This research responds to a pervasive call for our educational institutions to provide students with literacy skills, and teachers with the instructional supports necessary to facilitate this skill acquisition. Questions were posed to gain information concerning the efficacy of teaching literacy strategies to students with learning difficulties, the impact of this training on their volunteer tutors, and the influence of this experience on these tutors’ ensuing instructional practice as teacher candidates in a pre-service education program.

Study #1 compared a nontreatment group of students with literacy difficulties who participated in the program and found that program participants were superior at reading letter patterns and at comprehending the elements of story grammar. Concurrently, the second study explored the experiences of 19 volunteer tutors and uncovered that they acquired instructional skills as they established a knowledge base in teaching reading and writing, and they affirmed personal goals to become future teachers. Study #3 tracked 6 volunteer tutors into their pre-service year and identified their constructions and beliefs about literacy instruction. These teacher candidates discussed how they had intended to teach reading and writing strategies based on their position that effective teaching of these skills in the primary grades is integral to academic success. The teacher candidates emphasized the need to build rapport with students, and the need to exercise flexibility in lesson plan delivery while including activities to meet emotional and developmental requirements of students.

The teacher candidates entered their pre-service education with an initial cognition set based on the limited teaching context of tutoring. This foundational
perception represented their prior knowledge of literacy instruction, a perception that appeared untenable once they were immersed in a regular instructional setting. This disparity provoked some of the teacher candidates to denounce their teacher mentors for not consistently employing literacy strategies and individualized instruction. This critical perspective could have been a demonstration of cognitive dissonance. In the end, when the teacher candidates began to look toward the future and how they would manage the demands of an inclusive classroom, they recognized the differences in the contexts. With an appreciation for the need for balance between prior and present knowledge, the teacher candidates remained committed to implementing their tutoring strategies in future teaching positions. This document highlights the need for teacher candidates with instructional experience prior to teacher education, to engage in cognitive negotiations to assimilate newly acquired pedagogies into existing pedagogies.
Acknowledgements

This is my much anticipated opportunity to acknowledge all of the individuals in my life that have made this document a reality. I would like to recognize the assistance that I have been given from the Faculty of Education at Brock University and the support of the Faculties of Education associated with the Joint Ph.D. in Educational Studies program. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Anne Elliott and Dr. Larry Morton for serving on my committee and providing feedback at each juncture of this research. The greatest extent of my gratitude is reserved for my advisor, Dr. Vera Woloshyn. Through her unfailing guidance, she has sustained my enthusiasm to not only complete this dissertation, but to pursue a new career path. She is an unequivocal role model.

Special appreciation is expressed to my colleagues, friends, and family for their interest and patience throughout this entire process. This gratitude extends to the research participants and the many individuals who assisted with the mechanics of this project, including my revision coach, Sylvia. As well, I could not have done without the encouragement from my friends, Glenda, Kelly, and Kerri; my mother, Gail; my mother-in-law, Elaine; and my great aunt, Blythe. Of course, I could never forget to express my love to my “little cheerleaders,” Olivia and Victoria: girls, you have been so tolerant of “Mommy’s work.” Furthermore, I would especially like to thank my husband, Michael, who has unyieldingly allowed me to realize my goals.

Throughout this journey I perceive that I have been piloted by a spirit, a guardian angel, and his name is Joseph. Even though he has not been beside me all of the way, his presence has been the guiding light that directed me through to the end of my voyage. Even now, as I venture down a new road facing exciting challenges, I am confident that his support will be steadfast.
## Table of Contents

Abstract .............................................................................................................. ii  
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................... iv  

**CHAPTER ONE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

- Cognitive Constructivist Theory and Literacy Instruction ................................ 4  
- The Needs of Children with Literacy Difficulties ........................................... 7  
- Tutorial Instruction: In-School Literacy Programs ........................................ 10  
- After-School Volunteer Tutoring Programs .................................................. 16  
- The Components of Volunteer Tutoring Programs ....................................... 22  
- The Experience of the Undergraduate Volunteer Tutors ............................ 27  
- Teacher Candidates as Volunteer Tutors .................................................... 29  
- Teacher Candidates' Beliefs About Literacy Instruction ............................. 32  
- Teacher Education as Preparation for Literacy Instruction ......................... 34  
- Proposal of Research Questions ................................................................ 38  
- Overview of the Remainder of the Document ............................................. 41

**CHAPTER TWO: THE AFTER-SCHOOL LITERACY PROGRAM-MONITORING STUDENTS' GROWTH**

- Strategy Instruction .................................................................................... 44  
- The After-School Literacy Program ............................................................ 58  
- Study #1 .................................................................................................... 60  
- Conclusions and Discussion ......................................................................... 64

**CHAPTER THREE: THE EXPERIENCES OF THE VOLUNTEER TUTORS**

- Study #2 .................................................................................................... 72  
- Data Analyses ............................................................................................. 79  
- Methodological Limitations ......................................................................... 80  
- Ethical Review ............................................................................................... 81  
- Results .......................................................................................................... 81  
- Conclusions and Discussion ......................................................................... 101

**CHAPTER FOUR: FORMER VOLUNTEER TUTORS AS TEACHER CANDIDATES**

- Study #3 .................................................................................................... 107  
- Methodology ............................................................................................... 108  
- Data ............................................................................................................. 112  
- Data Analyses ............................................................................................. 116  
- Methodological Limitations ......................................................................... 118  
- Ethical Review ............................................................................................... 119  
- Results .......................................................................................................... 119  
- (1) Teacher Education ................................................................................. 120  
- (2) Tutoring Experiences Related to Practica ............................................. 131  
- (3) Beliefs About How to Teach Reading and Writing ............................... 138  
- (4) Teaching Students with Literacy Difficulties ...................................... 142
(5) Lesson Planning ................................................................. 147
(6) Classroom Management ............................................................ 149
(7) Assessment and Evaluation ............................................................. 156
(8) Future Teaching Practice ............................................................... 161
(9) Growth from Tutors to Beginning Teachers ........................................ 169
Conclusion .................................................................................. 174

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION .......................................................... 180

The After-School Literacy Program ...................................................... 180
The Volunteer Tutors ........................................................................ 181
Beliefs of Tutors Versus Teacher Candidates ...................................... 185
Tutors as Teacher Candidates ............................................................. 187
Constructivism ................................................................................. 191
Conceptual Change ........................................................................... 195
Implications for Practice and Theory ................................................... 199
Implications for Future Research .......................................................... 205

References ..................................................................................... 210
Appendix A: Sample Lesson Plan .......................................................... 239
Appendix B: Jolly Phonics Worksheet ..................................................... 242
Appendix C: Benchmark 120 Letter Patterns ........................................ 243
Appendix D: Predictive Story Frame ....................................................... 244
Appendix E: “C & C” House ................................................................. 245
Appendix F: “E” Step with Predictive Story Frame ................................... 246
Appendix G: “E” Step with “C & C” House ........................................... 247
Appendix H: Table 1 ........................................................................ 248
Appendix I: Table 2 .......................................................................... 249
Appendix J: Volunteer Tutors’ Interview #1 .............................................. 250
Appendix K: Volunteer Tutors’ Interview #2 .............................................. 251
Appendix L: Tutors’ Evaluation .............................................................. 252
Appendix M: Teacher Candidates’ Interview #1 ...................................... 254
Appendix N: Teacher Candidates’ Interview #2 ...................................... 255
Appendix O: Ethical Review Documents for Study #1 & #2 ...................... 256
Appendix P: Ethical Review Documents for Study #3 ................................ 261
CHAPTER ONE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Schools are microenvironments that mirror the current state of the larger political, economic, and social environments (Bates, 1997; Invernizzi, Juel, & Rosemary, 1996). Consequently, school systems are affected by shifts in political agenda, changes to educational funding, and demands for public accountability. Currently, the political environment in the province of Ontario is influencing the practice of education through mandates such as standardized student testing, entry to the profession examinations for beginning teachers, and in-service teacher professional development requirements (Ministry of Education of Ontario, 2002). These mandates are present in the face of fiscal restraint and funding cutbacks (Foot, 2001), thus, forcing publicly funded schools to make adjustments to such items as staffing models (Dei & Karumancegrity, 1999). Yet, politicians and society as a whole continue to demand trained, highly competent teachers and well-educated students (Darling-Hammond & Scian, 1996). Teacher education programs are charged with the responsibility of preparing their candidates for these challenges of modern education.

The goal of pre-service education is to prepare teacher candidates for a career in teaching. In Ontario, the Ministry of Education holds an accountability framework for teacher education programs within the Education Act (Government of Ontario, R.S.O. 1990, c. E. 2). This legislation explicitly states that a university or college of a university will provide for the professional education of teachers and boards shall permit its schools to be used for observation and practice teaching. The Ontario College of Teachers accredits teacher education programs to deliver professional education. The primary goal of this professional education is to equip prospective teachers to enter the profession and
meet the challenges of preparing children to become members of our society (Ontario College of Teachers, 1999). Candidates must acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of a demanding provincial curriculum and diverse students' needs (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). As part of their initial teacher preparation, teacher candidates must also understand basic concepts of developmental and cognitive psychology so that they may match learning and performance opportunities to the needs of their students (Darling-Hammond & Sclan). In this way, professional knowledge must exist in recognizing students' strengths and weaknesses and how to teach those students with exceptionalities, effectively (Darling-Hammond & Sclan).

Teacher candidates are also required to hold high academic credentials prior to pre-service program inception (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, 2004; York University Faculty of Education, 2004). In addition to these high academic standards, institutions prefer candidates who have experience working with children, especially in educational settings (Brock University Faculty of Education, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Queen's University Faculty of Education, 2004). It is believed that these practical experiences will afford teacher candidates an appreciation for the spectrum of students' learning needs (Darling-Hammond & Sclan).

One way for potential teacher candidates to gain relevant experience working with students is by volunteering. Undergraduate students who aspire to future careers in education often seek volunteer experiences in schools (Fischetti, Maloy, & Heffley, 1989). Consequently, the profile of the typical elementary school volunteer is changing from the mother of school-aged children to the university student (Wasik, 1998a). Often
these individuals derive personal satisfaction from volunteering, as well as, an enhanced resume (Invernizzi, Juel, & Rosemary, 1996).

On average, volunteers spend 3 hours per week in the elementary school setting (Wasik, 1998a). Volunteers aid school staff by providing support and assistance with a variety of tasks. For example, volunteers often manage breakfast programs, lunch supervision, and school canteen sales. They may provide clerical assistance in circulating notices, collecting order forms, or supervising fieldtrips. According to Wasik, overwhelmingly, the most common practice for school volunteers is to lend direct instructional support to students (Wasik). This means that the role of the volunteer increasingly includes responsibilities that are typical for teachers (Wasik). Wasik (1998b) illustrates that 50% of the activities of the school volunteer are those traditionally belonging to classroom teachers including providing support for students who are academically lagging behind their classmates. This entails such tasks as monitoring students’ seatwork, grading assignments, one-on-one reading (Wasik, 1998a), or literacy tutoring (Wasik, 1998b).

There is popular belief that volunteers' participation in schools is beneficial and positive, though very little has been researched about the effects of school-based volunteerism on the students (Wasik, 1998a). Given the increasing reliance on volunteerism, it is concerning that there are few guidelines for how to use volunteers productively, especially with respect to the delivery of literacy instruction. There are only a few volunteer literacy programs that have been empirically evaluated with respect to their effectiveness for students, and even less literature available tracking the experience of the volunteer tutor. Of particular relevance to the research presented here, is whether
volunteer tutors benefit from formative instructional preparation or if this experience influences their future as literacy teachers.

This research proposes it is possible to provide prospective teacher candidates with tutoring experiences that introduce them to teaching strategies; and affords them the opportunity to gain simulated teaching experiences prior to formal teacher education. Specifically, opportunities to preview the diversity of students’ learning needs and the importance of literacy in the provincial curriculum may assist some candidates in their teacher education year. It is also believed that this opportunity will further provide the teacher candidates with enhanced confidence in teaching reading and writing as part of their practicum.

The purpose of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with the background information that has encompassed this research. Viewed through a constructivist lens, in which learning and teaching are interconnected experiences, the following literature presents the needs of students with literacy difficulties and how their needs are often met through both in-school and after-school supplemental instruction. Volunteer tutoring programs are reviewed along with a brief discussion of the role of the tutor. The impact of volunteer tutoring for both undergraduate students and teacher candidates is highlighted with a particular interest on its bearing on teacher education experiences in courses, field placements, and pedagogical beliefs. In accordance with constructivism, learning experiences were explored for the students with literacy difficulties, their volunteer learners, and teacher candidates.

**Cognitive Constructivist Theory and Literacy Instruction**

The current research was situated in a cognitive constructivist model of learning. The general principles of cognitive constructivism are extracted from educational
philosophers such as William James and John Dewey, and educational theory postulated by Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner (Morrow, 2001). A cognitive constructivist model of learning views the role of the student in a learning experience as actively self-discovering. The goal is to provide students with learning opportunities, which provide practice in manipulating ideas, information, and the environment. The teacher's function is to arrange and initiate sensory activities in which students can make logical connections between objects and learning experiences that facilitate stage-relevant thinking. The cognitive constructivist perspective supports the active role of learners in using experience to build an understanding of information (Pearson & Stephens, 1994). "In short, at every level, experience is necessary to the development of intelligence" (Piaget, 1952, p. 362).

Cognitive constructivist educators encourage learners to experience and discover knowledge and to reflect and think critically (Kroll & LaBoskey, 1996; Pearson & Stephens, 1994; Torff & Sternberg, 2001). In this fashion, learners use constructive processes to operate, form, elaborate, and test mental structures (Driscoll, 2000). The information obtained through this experience is assimilated or incorporated into existing mental structures or concepts (Piaget, 1952). Through these actions, learners develop schemas or an organized knowledge of the world (Anderson, 1994; Driscoll, 2000). "So it is at every level the subject assimilates the environment, that is to say, incorporates it to the schemata while maintaining the latter through this use and by means of a constant generalization" (Piaget, p. 372). Furthermore, the constructivist approach emphasizes that learning takes place in the context of meaningful activity (Driscoll, 2000). For example, the volunteers who participated in the current research called on their knowledge of child
development and incorporated the tutoring experience to refine their understanding of how children learn to read and write.

For the student participants, cognitive constructivist theory contends that reading instruction should focus on decoding, understanding words, constructing meaning, and developing reading comprehension strategies (Morrow, 2001). Decoding by matching letters and their sounds is facilitated by the cognitive process of manipulating and thinking about sounds (Ehri, 1994). Further, readers construct meaning by using their background knowledge and knowledge of individual words and how they are linked (Samuels, 1994). Finally, the constructivist approach emphasizes instruction in metacognitive strategies to help students comprehend and remember what they read (e.g., Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1994).

Similarly, the cognitive constructivist approach purports that writing instruction should include metacognitive strategies that impart knowledge about the planning and organization needed to produce good writing (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). Teaching students effective writing skills involves active listening and manipulating letters and sounds, as well as creating new patterns of assimilating words and phrases. Hayes and Flower (1987) observe that writing is a problem-solving process in which the writer must integrate different types of knowledge (e.g., the subject, the language system, and the writing problem or purpose). According to cognitive constructivists, effective writing and reading includes constructing meaning and developing strategies (Rosenblatt, 1994). This premise is linked with the goal of education being retention, understanding, and active use of knowledge and skills (Driscoll, 2000, p. 379).
The Needs of Children with Literacy Difficulties

Acquiring basic literacy skills does not come easily to all students. Statistics from the United States demonstrate that 36% of Grade 4 students are reading below a basic functioning level; 25% of Grade 8 students and 26% of Grade 12 students are reading below this basic level (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). For writing, 14% of Grades 4 and 8 students and 26% of Grade 12 students are performing below the basic level of writing achievement (U.S. Department of Education). "Basic" is defined as partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for each grade (U.S. Department of Education). Trends in Canada are even more pronounced: 58% of Grade 8 students and 28% of Grade 11 students are below average reading level (Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 1998). For writing, 30% of Grade 8 students and 15% of Grade 11 students are performing below the basic level of writing achievement (Council of Ministers of Education Canada). This "basic level" is a rank of 3 or less on a 5-point scale and implies a surface level of interpretation in reading and writing that conveys simplistic meaning (Council of Ministers of Education Canada).

Unfortunately, students with literacy difficulties may continue to read and write poorly because they dislike reading and writing and consequently read and write less (Stanovich, 1986). Therefore, these students who suffer the "Matthew Effect" (Stanovich) lose the opportunity to enhance their skills. Thus, remediation that takes place before students develop ineffective literacy habits and damaged self-esteem is likely to be most beneficial.

Accordingly, there is an emphasis on early identification and intervention for literacy difficulties. It is well-known that beginning readers who fall behind in the Primary grades will have difficulty catching up with their peers (Jenkins, Vadasy,
Firebaugh, & Profiet, 2000; Juel, 1996; Morris, Shaw, & Perney, 1990; Vadasy, Jenkins, & Pool, 2001; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). Specifically, if students in Grade 1 are poor readers, they are likely, without intervention, to continue to be poor readers (Fitzgerald, 2001; Gunning, 2002; Moats, 1999). Students who do not reach Grade 3 with adequate literacy skills will have to fight for educational success with the support of remediation (Gunning, 2002; Jenkins et al., 2000; Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Livermon, & Dolan, 1990; Spiegel, 1995; Vadasy, Jenkins, Antil, Wayne, & O’Connor, 1997), which may or may not require formal assessment and identification.

Some of these students who have poor literacy skills are formally diagnosed with reading disabilities and/or writing difficulties. Simply, a reading disability is present when a difference exists between the student’s reading ability and overall achievement (Gunning, 2002), and a student’s achievement fails to meet a certain standard or interferes with the reader’s functioning. A student with writing difficulty composes pieces with few ideas and little elaboration. The composition is difficult to decipher due to the mechanical errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Additionally, a student with writing difficulty is reluctant to write and often becomes frustrated while writing (Graham, Harris, & Larsen, 2001).

Ongoing literacy remediation is optimal for students with reading disabilities beyond the Primary grades. For instance, Lovett and Steinbach (1997) randomly assigned 122 students with reading disabilities (Grades 2-6) to one of three program conditions: (a) direct instruction in phonological analysis and blending, (b) instruction in four metacognitive decoding strategies, and (c) a control program. Students received 35 hours of programming in a 2:1 student to teacher ratio. The results revealed significant
improvement for students in both the first and second program conditions in word
identification and attack skills (Lovett & Steinbach). Students at all grade levels realized
gains, suggesting that intense remediation of phonological deficits is effective across the
Primary and Junior grades.

Abbott and Berninger (1999) present a second example of successful remediation
for Grades 4-7 students with reading disabilities. Sixteen hours of instruction in structural
analysis, phonological skills, oral reading, and comprehension were provided to students
by teachers. Reading measures were compared for the intervention students versus the
nonintervention control students. The results significantly favoured performance of the
intervention group who had received this remedial instruction (Abbott & Berninger,
1999). These latter two studies illustrate the need for ongoing literacy remediation for
students beyond Grade 3.

Literacy difficulties also manifest themselves in the writing skills of students. The
compositions of struggling writers are analogous to transcribed conversation in which
they include everything that they know about a selected topic without their own
interpretation (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1982). Since this writing is simply knowledge
telling, it is linear and nonreflective. Struggling writers often stagnate at this knowledge-
telling stage of writing. Often, they are not taught how to write with an overall plan,
much less the skills of critical writing (Gunning, 2002).

In general, struggling writers lack a strategic approach for learning the writing
process. Flower and Hayes (1981) find that struggling writers do not appreciate all of the
steps in the writing process and have a limited repertoire of alternatives for solving
problems as they write. These students are often not capable of monitoring the need to move from one step in the process to another (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1982).

The connection between reading and writing skills is often not obvious for students with literacy difficulties. Struggling writers will often produce a plot summary by directly copying parts of the story. This plot summary is similar to providing an oral explanation without any planning. Copying is indicative that the students are struggling to construct meaning from the passage, so they retell the story in the author's original words (Collins, 1998). Less capable writers write without stopping to think about their writing; they are not likely to use strategies or assess their writing (Tompkins, 2002). Yet, through strategy instruction and the use of effective writing practices, struggling writers can improve their composition skills. This can be accomplished through explicitly teaching the writing process (Tompkins), and providing ongoing academic support (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

**Tutorial Instruction: In-School Literacy Programs**

The popularity of tutorial and in-school remedial literacy programs has burgeoned in North America since the 1990s (Shanahan, 1998). Tutoring is cited as being the oldest form of education (Wasik & Slavin, 1993). In general, a tutor is an instructor or teacher who assists and supports the learning of a student. This individual may or may not be a certified teacher and tutoring may or may not take place in a school setting. Often, the tutor is intensely committed to the academic enhancement of the tutee and a bond of trust develops between the two parties (Morrow & Woo, 2001).

Comparing three instructional methods, traditional group instruction, mastery learning group instruction, and tutoring, Bloom (1984) illustrates that tutoring is one of the most effective forms of instruction. In fact, according to Bloom, tutored students
scored two standard deviations higher than the traditional group on subject-specific achievement tests. Students assigned to the mastery learning condition performed about one standard deviation above the average of the traditional group instruction students.

Tutoring allows the tutor to modify the instruction to meet the individual needs of the student. This results in positive effects on both the academic performance and attitudes of the students (Bloom, 1984). A meta-analysis of 65 in-school tutoring programs from two decades past (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982) concluded that tutored students outperformed controls on examinations, and the tutees had more positive attitudes with respect to their tutored subject area. The tutoring programs that were structured, versus informal homework support, provided the strongest effects (Cohen et al., 1982). The results of this meta-analysis concluded that tutoring benefits tutees on both cognitive and affective levels.

In an effort to derive a set of characteristics of exemplary in-school reading programs, Duffy-Hester (1999) reviewed six programs that have had a positive effect on reading growth in elementary students. They concluded that the components and elements of the program should be based on multiple theoretical perspectives. Beyond the foundation, the method of instruction should include the explicit teaching of word identification, comprehension, and vocabulary strategies along with authentic reading at a variety of levels and writing tasks (Duffy-Hester). Placement in the program should be preceded by assessment with continuous adjustments being made throughout the course of the program. Student success should be measured through acquisition of a series of goals, and tutors should be provided with ongoing professional development and encouraged to reflect on their practice (Duffy-Hester).
The success of in-school tutoring programs is enhanced when the tutors are certified teachers. Meta-analyses show that teacher-tutors are the most effective tutors (Roe & Vukelich, 2001). Not surprisingly, the student benefits from not only the structured curriculum and low student-to-teacher ratio, but also the tutor’s training and expertise. There are three well-documented, highly structured, teacher-acting-as-tutor programs that have improved students’ literacy performances: Reading Recovery (Clay, 1991), Success for All (Slavin et al., 1990), and Early Steps (Santa & Høien, 1999). Following is a brief review of these three in-school tutoring programs.

Reading Recovery (Clay, 1991), Success for All (Slavin et al., 1990), and Early Steps (Santa & Høien, 1999) are supplemental programs developed for students with reading difficulties. Reading Recovery was developed in the late 1970s, for Grade 1 students struggling with literacy skills. It is often referred to as a supplemental reading and writing program (Wasik & Slavin, 1993). Success for All, developed by Slavin et al. (1990), is a school-based tutorial program implemented in schools for disadvantaged children. This program is based on the principles of prevention and immediate intervention for Grade 1 students (Chambers, Abrami, Massue, & Morrison, 1998). Early Steps, developed by Morris, Shaw, & Perney (1990) addressed at-risk Grade 1 students. This program is based on the reading tenets of Reading Recovery with greater emphasis on explicit instruction in phonological analysis for acquiring reading skills (Santa & Høien, 1999).

Although the tutorial aspect of each of these programs is similar, the details of the instructional approaches lend themselves to differentiation. Smith-Burke (2001) qualifies that Reading Recovery requires a certified teacher to work at a one-on-one ratio with at-
risk Grade 1 students. Teachers complete over 100 hours of training prior to instruction (Spiegel, 1995). Over the course of 20 weeks students receive 30 minutes of daily remediation in reading and writing (Wasik & Slavin, 1993). This program is intense and teachers may teach only eight students throughout the academic year. *Success for All* requires low achieving Grade 1 students to be tutored by teachers or paraprofessionals (Smith-Burke, 2001). These students are engaged in daily 20-minute sessions through Grade 1, and if required, into Grades 2 and 3 (Slavin et al., 1990). *Early Steps* requires Grade 1 teachers to take part in an in-service tutor training program prior to commencing intervention (Santa & Hóien, 1999). An on-site co-ordinator supervised the tutoring sessions and provided feedback on the 30-minute daily lessons.

These programs implement different strategies to accomplish specific goals for literacy acquisition. In *Reading Recovery*, Clay (1991) there is a focus on letter identification, high frequency word recognition, print concepts, writing vocabulary, hearing and recording sounds in words, and text readings (Smith-Burke, 2001). These lessons included rereading familiar and unfamiliar textbooks, letter/word work, writing composition, and assembling cut-up stories. Lessons were individualized and children were taught a variety of literacy strategies. These skills included self-monitoring information, figuring out unknown words, and/or self-correcting while reading (Smith-Burke, 2001). The tutors' goals were to foster independent problem solving and continued motivation to read and write.

Teacher tutors in *Success for All* work within the objectives of the regular reading curriculum. Students are grouped according to their reading levels (Slavin, Madden, Dolan, & Wasik, 1996) and given direct instruction in reading comprehension strategies
and story-related writing (Slavin et al., 1990). Phonics is systematically taught as a decoding strategy and students are encouraged to read phonetically controlled vocabulary books (Slavin et al., 1996). Students are taught metacognitive strategies to facilitate the relationship between reading words and comprehension. Acquiring the concepts of when, how, and why in literacy strategies, the students repeat selected readings to improve fluency and comprehension (Slavin et al., 1996).

*Early Steps* engaged the students using both phonologically based and whole language-based theories. Instruction in phonological analysis included phonemic awareness and letter-sound correspondences. In the remainder of the instructional session children read authentic literature. As a response to their reading, daily writing was encouraged (Santa & Høien, 1999). This was proposed as a balanced strategy in which students applied phonological skills to read connected text and write in response to the reading assignment to support reading comprehension.

The implementation and success of each of these reading programs has been documented and subsequent evaluations are cited in the research literature (Santa & Høien, 1999; Slavin et al., 1996; Smith-Burke, 2001). Although *Reading Recovery* originated in New Zealand, it has been practiced in thousands of North American schools since the mid-1980s (Wasik, 1998a). This program has been the subject of investigation by many reviews (Askew, Fountas, Lyons, Pinnell & Schmitt, 1998 as cited in Smith-Burke, 2001). Overall, the program holds a success rate of 81-88% of students that are able to function in a regular classroom setting (Smith-Burke, 2001). Specific improvements in phonological awareness (Iversen & Tunmer, 1993) and metalinguistic knowledge, as a result of this program, are documented. Longitudinal studies
demonstrated that graduates of *Reading Recovery* perform in the average range of Grades 3 and 4 and continue to maintain reading skills (Smith-Burke, 2001).

Studies illustrated that following the first year of implementation, students involved in *Success for All* performed better than control group participants on standardized reading measures of word identification, word attack, comprehension and vocabulary (Slavin et al., 1990). Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Dolan, and Wasik (1993) collected longitudinal data illustrating that *Success for All* had a positive significant effect on individually administered reading measures across over a period of 3-4 years. Students in the program were also less likely to require resource assistance or to be retained than the students in a control group (Madden et al., 1993). Chambers et al. (1998) completed a study with several hundred disadvantaged students in Montreal, Canada where 40% possessed learning disabilities. *Success for All* resulted in improved word attack, word identification and oral reading skills in all four elementary schools as compared to a non-treatment control group (Chamber et al., 1998).

Santa & Hőien (1999) compared students from two schools who had completed an *Early Steps* 8-month program with a control group from another school. The students were pretested and posttested for spelling performance, letter knowledge, word recognition, and CLOZE reading comprehension (Santa & Hőien, 1999). In posttest measures the experimental group outperformed the control group (Santa & Hőien). These results were maintained on delayed posttests at the beginning of Grade 2 (Santa & Hőien).

These tutoring literacy intervention programs demonstrated significant limitations in their methodological approaches, thus influencing the success of their results. Several
researchers (Heibert, 1994; Rasinski, 1995a; Shanahan & Barr, 1995) have reviewed the *Reading Recovery* studies and questioned the nature, design, and reporting of information. There are a number of students with severe reading difficulties who complete this program without learning how to read (Santa & Høien, 1999). Methodological flaws, such as no randomly assigned control group, regression to the mean effects, and exclusion of subjects who do not complete the program are reported (Shanahan & Barr, 1995). Though gains were maintained two grades later, in some studies, these students had received ongoing academic support (Shanahan & Barr).

Rasinski (1995b) cautioned that the benefits of a program like *Reading Recovery* were costly due to the intense teacher training and the small number of students served by a single teacher.

*Success for All* was implemented in only one experimental school populated by a disproportionate percentage of students with learning disabilities (Chambers et al., 1998). Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to all Canadian schools. As well, there was only one school involved as a nontreatment school (Wasik & Slavin, 1993). The cost of the program was high due to the low student-to-teacher ratios. Similarly, Santa and Hoein (1999) demonstrated that the generalization of the results in the *Early Steps* program was compromised by the lack of random assignment of conditions, students and teachers.

**After-School Volunteer Tutoring Programs**

Despite the perceived value of in-school, structured tutorial instruction, the present supply of reading specialists and tutors cannot satisfy student demand (Wasik, 1997). After-school tutoring programs, both privately and publicly funded, may prove to be feasible alternatives. In North America there is a significant growth in popularity of
after-school learning centers that are operated privately and for profit (Graybill, 1992). Parents and other sponsors, who are concerned about children's academic progress, may seek the professional assessment and remedial instruction services that these after-school tutoring centers provide for a fee (Graybill).

Often the concern addressed is the gap between children’s actual academic performance and their capabilities (Graybill, 1992). This provides parents with a sense of control over their children’s education process. However, this sense comes with a financial cost that many families cannot bear. The affordable solution for many families is often found in subsidized or volunteer-staffed tutoring programs.

Wasik (1998b) and Morrow and Woo (2001) reviewed several volunteer tutoring programs. Based on their results, effective volunteer tutoring programs can be divided into two broad categories: those that employ experimental design methods and those that do not employ experimental design methods. The Charlottesville Volunteer Tutorial, otherwise known as Book Buddies (Invernizzi et al., 1996) is an example of the latter. It, along with The Howard Street Tutoring Program (Morris et al., 1990), and Juel's (1996) tutoring program, are three currently existing programs and are reviewed below.

Book Buddies (Invernizzi, 2001) has been in operation in Charlottesville, Virginia for the last decade. Originally, the program began in one inner-city pilot school, as The Charlottesville Volunteer Tutorial. The Howard Street Tutoring Program (Morris et al., 1990) was incepted in the late 1970s in Chicago and continues to operate today. Juel (1996) developed a tutoring program in which at-risk students were tutored by at-risk undergraduates who were also poor readers. Juel's 1996 tutoring program is presently in operation as well.
These three tutorial programs involve Grade 1 students and are all after-school literacy instruction programs. The goal of these programs is to provide early intervention, low-cost, and one-to-one tutoring instruction to Primary students who are having difficulty learning to read and write. *Book Buddies'* rationale rests on the assumptions that children learn to read in meaningful social contexts through interactions with others; phonics instruction should be taught systematically; reading, writing, and spelling develop in synchrony, and instruction should be individualized to the learner's needs (Invernizzi, Rosemary, Juel, & Richards, 1997).

*The Howard Street Tutoring Program* is based on the assumption that struggling readers require phonics instruction coupled with semantic and syntactic support in reading authentic literature (Morris, 1993). Juel's (1996) Volunteer Tutoring Program is an intervention for students at risk for the "Matthew Effect" (Stanovich, 1986). The "Matthew Effect" is the tendency for students who are behind in reading skills to remain behind and consequently, fall further behind in school and ultimately may find it difficult to obtain rewarding employment. Seemingly, Juel's (1996) Volunteer Tutoring Program works on the premise that undergraduate students who are by-products of the "Matthew Effect" are especially empathetic to their students.

The tutors in each of these remedial tutoring programs are recruited from different sources to complement the goals of the programs. The volunteer tutors for *Book Buddies* are recruited from the community and given intensive, structured training and ongoing supervision throughout the program. Training is provided at the University of Virginia by the program developers, who are also reading researchers (Invernizzi et al., 1997). In these training sessions, information is provided by an on-site co-ordinator, who acts as a
supervisor of reading and writing instruction methods. Tutoring sessions are modeled for the volunteers. The lesson plans are developed by the supervisor. The tutors are expected to provide a written evaluation of each tutorial session and meet with their supervising on-site co-ordinator on a weekly basis (Invernizzi et al., 1997).

The volunteer tutors for The Howard Street Tutoring Program are recruited from the parent population, undergraduate students, and retirees. During training, the volunteers observed instruction and were provided with feedback by the supervisor who was a reading specialist (Morris, 2001). Similar to the Book Buddies program, the supervisor trained the tutors, created their lesson plans, provided ongoing feedback, and monitored instruction. This supervisor also assessed the students before tutorial instruction began. The role of supervisor is not addressed in Juel's (1996) tutorial program. However, the volunteer undergraduate tutors received instruction from their professor in literacy development and were trained in the components of the tutoring instruction. The tutors met on a weekly basis to review lesson plans and debrief about the tutoring experience.

In the Book Buddies tutorial program, the on-site co-ordinators reported the students' progress to the parents and maintained a liaison with the classroom teacher (Invernizzi et al., 1997). In The Howard Street Tutoring Program and Juel's (1996) tutorial program, the volunteer tutors reported to the classroom teacher, who in turn provided an evaluation and assessment to the students' parents.

Each of the tutoring sessions in Book Buddies included instructional time for phonics, reading, and writing. Students received direct instruction in letter sounds and patterns. The lesson plans included rereading familiar books, word study of words taken
from familiar texts, writing words and simple sentences, and reading a new story (Invernizzi et al., 1997). There were two sets of lesson plans: one for the emergent readers and a second set for students reading at a primer or mid-first grade level (Invernizzi, 2001). The tutoring sessions were 45 minutes in length and took place twice a week for 20 weeks.

In *The Howard Street Tutoring Program* the lessons are pedagogically similar to *Reading Recovery* lessons (Wasik, 1998b). Tutors were provided with a manual that includes the components of the program and lesson plans. The 1-hour tutoring session included contextual reading, word study, and writing. Students attend two sessions per week. At the end of the sessions the tutors read to the students. The supervisor ensured the appropriateness of the lessons and that the needs of the tutees were addressed.

Juel's (1996) volunteer tutorial program offered the students two 45-minute session weekly throughout the school year. Tutoring provided instruction in rhyming and alphabet books, letter sound activities, reading high frequency words, journal writing, and reading to the students (Juel, 1996).

The three tutoring supplementary reading programs have been studied and evaluated. Each of them shows effectiveness over time and warrants their continued implementation. The reported effectiveness of *Book Buddies* was based on quasi-experimental research of three cohorts of students. Statistically significant growth was measured for letter recognition, concept of words in text, phoneme-grapheme knowledge, and word recognition (Invernizzi et al., 1997). These finding have been replicated across 3 years of data.
Posttests and matched controls of the tutored students in *The Howard Street Tutoring Program* have revealed positive effects for the tutored group on measures of spelling, word recognition, and sight word recognition (Morris et al., 1990). In a 2-year longitudinal study of Grades 2 and 3 students, similar findings were illustrated, with approximately one third of the students able to read at their own grade level (Morris, 2001). The control students showed gains in their reading, but progressed at a slower rate than their peers.

The students in Juel's (1996) volunteer tutorial program were pretested and posttested on standardized measures of letter recognition, word recognition, decoding, reading comprehension, spelling, and writing. A control group of Grade 1 students were tested who did not receive tutoring in reading. At pretest, there were significant differences between the treatment and control group favouring the control group. At posttest, the treatment group of students outperformed the control group on standardized measures of reading comprehension and writing (Juel, 1996).

Although it is often the case that most students make learning gains over time, with or without tutoring, the presented tutoring programs have positively influenced the reading skills of their student participants. Some programs, such as *The Howard Street Tutoring Program* have also stood the test of time. Lessons learned from the program over the last two decades have been recorded (Morris, 2001). Adaptations of such after-school programs have been made, but inconsistently documented. On the whole, research into the effectiveness of after-school tutoring programs lacks rigor. Instead, a culmination of the components of effective tutoring programs exists as a guideline for individuals who wish to conduct a program.
The Components of Volunteer Tutoring Programs

Several authors (Invernizzi & Juel, 1996; Juel, 1996; Morrow & Walker, 1997; Morrow & Woo, 2001; Roe & Vukelich, 2001; Shanahan, 1998; Topping, 1998; Walker & Morrow, 1998; Wasik, 1998a, 1998b) have documented eight basic components that contribute to the effectiveness of volunteer tutoring programs:

1. A certified reading specialist should supervise the instruction. This specialist should assess the students, develop lesson plans, and supervise the program operations (Shanahan, 1998). An essential function of this supervisor is to provide an accurate diagnosis of the students' reading problems and subsequent recommendations of teaching techniques and learning strategies for the tutors. This knowledge about the reading and writing processes is required to ensure that the volunteer tutoring program is pedagogically sound. Through training, the supervisor should provide the tutors with a basic understanding of the reading and writing processes and how children learn (Wasik, 1998b).

The program supervisor is likely to be responsible for highlighting the nature of the program's guidelines and devising the initial curricula in which the lessons are readily implemented by the tutors (Roe & Vukelich, 2001). The lessons must be structured with clear objectives and basic learning activities (Wasik, 1998b). The quality and supervision of the tutoring activities is even more important than the duration of the tutoring sessions (Juel, 1996).

2. Tutors need ongoing training and immediate feedback from their supervisor. The supervisor's task is to educate on two levels: educate the volunteer tutors about how to tutor and facilitate the tutors' education of the tutees (Morris et al., 1990; Wasik,
1998b). The chosen supervisor should be a confident individual who has the ability to work constructively with other adults (Morris et al., 1990).

The tutors should be provided with a basic understanding of the reading process and how children learn to read (Wasik, 1998b). Volunteer tutors must be provided with both initial and ongoing training that capitalizes on their natural teaching strengths and compensates for their lack of formal experience. Loenen (1989) recommends the supervisor or trainer model reading techniques during volunteer tutor training. The training should also cover what tutors should do if they make a mistake and what they should do when their students make mistakes (Topping, 1998). Ongoing, formal tutor training should include in-service-type seminars.

Monitoring should occur on a daily basis, and feedback from the supervisor to the tutor should directly follow the tutoring session. The volunteer tutors are not professional educators, and therefore require constructive suggestions and feedback to work effectively with the students. Tutors often appreciate and report that they benefit from the experience of receiving comments from their supervisor with respect to honing their tutoring abilities (Invernizzi et al., 1996).

The consequence of inadequately trained and monitored tutors is that they perform in haphazard ways. This is especially true if the tutors are required to make any choices or decisions during the tutoring sessions and/or if the tutors have a lack of supervision (Topping, 1998).

3. Tutoring sessions need to be structured. If the program is structured with prescribed materials and pre-made lesson plans, less training is required. Lessons should include a number of the following elements: direct letter-sound instruction, rereading
familiar text, word analysis skills exercises, reading new stories, comprehension strategies, and writing activities (Juel, 1996; Wasik, 1998b).

Scaffolding and using explicit modeling are effective strategies for tutoring instruction (Juel, 1996). Scaffolding is the process of providing information or segmenting a task into parts so that children may be able to complete the task. Effective tutors are trained to break down a learning task, scaffold reading and writing experiences, and provide explicit cognitive modeling of the reading and writing processes for their students to experience success. Throughout the tutoring sessions, tutors should frequently reinforce the students' progress.

4. Tutoring needs to be concentrated and consistent. At the minimum, students should receive 1.5 to 2 hours of tutoring per week with the same tutor. Ideally, tutoring should span the course of a school year, as the student will have more opportunity to practice and master skills (Invernizzi & Juel, 1996; Wasik, 1998a). Session consistency facilitates the tutors' understanding for the specific needs of the children and contributes to building dyad rapport (Roe & Vukelich, 2001; Walker & Morrow, 1998).

5. Quality literature needs to be available and used. Tutors should have access to different milieus of literature. Access to the school or public library should be prearranged or books should be gathered on site for the purposes of the program (Morrow & Walker, 1997). As well, the reading materials should be labeled according to grade levels.

6. Assessment should be ongoing. Initial assessments will help to individualize the students' lesson plans, while ongoing measures will assist in adjusting the program to meet the students' needs. At the close of the program, it is necessary to evaluate the
success of individual students and the volunteer program as a whole (Walker, Scherry, & Morrow, 1999).

7. *The tutors should be appreciated and rewarded for their work.* Tokens of appreciation, such as certificates and gestures of gratitude, should be offered to the volunteer tutors (Morrow & Walker, 1997). The supervisor should ensure that community members who volunteer receive public recognition to celebrate their efforts.

8. *There should be co-ordination with the classroom teacher.* The co-ordination of tutoring services and classroom experiences benefit the students by providing a consistent, unified educational approach (Wasik, 1998b). The students can then be tutored with strategies that complement class work (Wasik, 1998a). To facilitate this, the supervisor should ensure that a communication system is in place between the tutor and the classroom teacher (Wasik, 1998a).

Finally, a key consideration of the supervisor or on-site co-coordinator is to nurture partnerships and maintain synergy among the volunteers, the hosting school, and the community (Roe & Vukelich, 2001).

Tutoring is an effective instructional milieu (Bloom, 1984; Cohen et al., 1982); however, it is difficult to definitively state that one volunteer tutoring program is more effective than another when so few programs use formal evaluation procedures (Wasik, 1997). Thus, a volunteer tutoring program may be effective under one set of circumstances but not necessarily under other conditions (Topping, 1998). However, it is apparent that one of the most critical components contributing to the effectiveness of a volunteer tutoring program is the tutors’ ongoing training, supervision and feedback from their supervisor (Topping).
There is some existing literature that questions the effectiveness of volunteer tutoring programs (Loenen, 1989; Shanahan, 1998; Topping, 1998). For instance, Loenen (1989) profiled a volunteer tutoring program called *Volunteer Reading Help* that was not effective in improving reading. The students were identified by their classroom teachers as those experiencing difficulty in reading. There were two equal groups of students, treatment and non treatment, who received pretests and posttests.

Community volunteers tutored the 6-month program. One-on-one tutoring 30-minute sessions took place twice per week (Loenen, 1989). Prior to commencement of the program, the tutors received instructor training. The tutors were allowed to select relevant reading materials to read with the student (Loenen). When the students miscued, the tutors were to provide direct help with reading. The tutors were encouraged to ask the tutees to predict what was going to happen in the story (Loenen).

The findings showed no significant effect on measures of the students’ reading comprehension, reading accuracy, general self-concept, and self-concept of reading (Loenen, 1989). This effect was attributed to the disparity between the recommended tutoring approach and the approach used in practice. Specifically, the tutors did not stress the strategies of reading for meaning and talking aloud with the tutees. There was a lack of active support and feedback for the volunteer reading tutors. Loenen's findings accentuate the importance of supervision, training, and support of the volunteer tutor.

Roe and Vukelich (2001) also observed some of the difficulties incurred with volunteer tutors. In their research, undergraduates were trained to tutor at-risk Primary-age students according to a prescribed reading tutorial manual. The tutors received initial training and on-site assistance from program supervisors. The tutors were audiotaped
throughout the course of the program, and running records were taken of their daily sessions. At the end of the program, the tutors completed surveys that were designed to analyze how closely the implemented program matched with the prescribed program. Roe and Vukelich concluded that the tutors did not deliver their prescribed lesson plans with consistency. These tutors often omitted reading strategy instruction, and they tended to devise their own versions of lessons. Furthermore, the tutors selected leveled books that were too difficult for their students.

As a result of these findings, some academics (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Topping, 1998; Wasik, 1999) suggest that volunteer tutors should not “teach” students per se. Volunteer tutors should serve as coaches, providing practice and motivational support to struggling students (Snow et al., 1998). An optimal role for volunteer tutors is to facilitate students’ literacy development as a reading coach. Reading coaches model good reading behaviour, provide opportunities for children to read, and ask comprehension questions (Wasik, 1999).

Regardless of the tutoring program composition, little regard has been given to the experience of the volunteer tutor. In general, volunteer tutors express that they feel positive about the assistance that they have provided for their tutees (Invernizzi et al., 1996; Topping, 1998). Yet, ironically, there is very little literature that describes the role of the tutor in the operation of a volunteer tutoring program.

**The Experience of the Undergraduate Volunteer Tutors**

A survey of volunteer tutors who participated in a community-based tutorial reported they had taken on this role to make a difference in the lives of the children who lived in the community (Invernizzi et al., 1996). These tutors reported they enjoyed their experience and had received unexpected benefits (Invernizzi et al.). Volunteer tutors also
reported an increased sense of empathy for the children as they participated in improving their motivation, self-esteem, and self-confidence (Topping, 1998).

Further, there is documentation that the more dedicated undergraduate volunteer tutors are to their work, the greater benefit that both the tutors and their students derive from the experience (Worthy & Patterson, 2001; Worthy, Patterson, Salas, Prater, & Turner, 2002). Tutors that took personal responsibility for their students’ progress and devoted extra time and effort to ensure that their lessons were appropriately planned and that reading materials appealed to their students’ reading interests achieved success and gratification in these efforts. Their students also made strides in reading achievement and voluntary reading motivation due to the dedication and consequently, more intense relationship with their tutors (Worthy et al., 2002).

The benefits of volunteer tutoring extended beyond a sense of personal gratification. Undergraduate students aspiring to teach are especially likely to find the volunteer tutoring experience to be professionally affirming and relevant. Juel (1996) profiled a tutoring program in which volunteer undergraduates tutored students with reading difficulties. The tutoring was a component of a reading methods class and included writing children's stories, self-selected readings, and journal response writing. Surprisingly, participating in this tutoring program contributed to the literacy growth of the tutors, as well as the students. Where the literacy performance of the undergraduate tutors was compared to the students not involved in this tutoring project, the volunteer tutors also demonstrated an increased sense of responsibility toward school, less anxiety, and improved concentration on academic tasks (Juel, 1996).
Taken collectively, this research literature informally describes the experience of undergraduate volunteer tutors. Insufficient significant research data have been generated to articulate the tutors' voice. There does not exist significant documentation illustrating future implications toward potential career paths as educators for these individuals (Invernizzi et al., 1996; Topping, 1998). Of particular interest to this research, is the lack of specific information on undergraduate students who participate in tutoring programs as a means of acquiring teaching experience prior to future teacher education. Furthermore, there is no research that tracks the development volunteer tutors who continue into preservice programs. To date, there is only literature describing the experience of teacher candidates who serve as volunteer tutors while concurrently enrolled in teacher education.

**Teacher Candidates as Volunteer Tutors**

A few studies have compared teacher candidates who have tutored during preservice education with their peers who have not. Teacher candidates who tutored struggling readers during their teacher education programs were better able to understand the needs of at-risk students (Bacon, 1992). They also made more informed instructional choices than those without tutoring experiences (Roskos & Walker, 1994). Some teacher candidates incorporated reading diagnosis information with their practice and thereby advanced their instructional expertise (Roskos & Walker). Even casual, in-school contact assisting teachers with struggling students afforded teacher candidates with the opportunity to relate literacy teaching and subject matter (Cox et al., 1998). These teacher candidates also possessed greater pedagogical knowledge, including knowledge of instructional strategies, than a group of teacher candidates who did not have the same experience.
Other studies describe the self-reported experiences of teacher candidates who tutor as part of their teacher education program requirements. These teacher candidates tended to possess positive attitudes towards students who were struggling (Fresko, 1999). Tutoring while in teacher education tended to affirm teacher candidates’ decision to become teachers and increased their sense of personal efficacy in teaching (Newman & Wilson, 1999). As well, teacher candidates who tutor experienced a clarification of their perceptions of teaching, and improved their ability to reflect on their work (Harwell, 1995). Tutoring promoted a feeling of increased personal satisfaction and responsibility for their children’s learning (Newman & Wilson, 1999; Worthy, 2001).

Pedagogically, teacher candidates who tutor during teacher education demonstrate increased content and procedural knowledge (Hill & Topping, 1995; Worthy, 2001), and make more informed decisions about their instructional choices (Billings, Shroyer, & Wells, 2000). These teacher candidates also reported that they realized growth in their understanding of teaching and learning (Billings et al., 2000; Hill & Topping, 1995). Further, the teacher candidates experienced a shift in focus on their role as a teacher. Initially, they were concerned with their relationship with the children. As the program progressed they became focused on the content of the tutorial lesson. Finally, they devoted attention to the individualized needs of their students (Harwell, 1995).

A key study by Worthy and Prater (1998) focused on the specific benefits that a tutorial placement can provide for teacher candidates. A pre-service reading methods course involving a tutorial placement was designed to encourage teacher candidates to critically examine their beliefs and practices, and increase their confidence in implementing novel approaches in their teaching placements. Teacher candidates studied
and applied reading process theory, children’s literature, and instructional strategies (Worthy & Prater). This program emphasized word recognition, spelling, comprehension, and writing. The teacher candidates tutored students for 1 hour twice per week and conferred weekly to discuss lesson plans and share their tutoring experiences.

The tutorial experience played a critical role in increasing knowledge and confidence in teaching reading and writing beyond the candidates' theoretical coursework (Worthy & Prater, 1998). Teacher candidates reported that the opportunity to put theory into practice while still having the support of their professors and peers was a valuable educative opportunity.

The pragmatic methods instruction provided teacher candidates with the opportunity for critical reflection (Worthy & Prater, 1998). These reflections effected permanent changes in their belief system concerning the importance of individualized and relevant instruction as inherent to effective teaching practices. These individuals experienced an overall increased awareness of the different needs of students in their practicum placements. The teacher candidates believed this tutoring experience would influence their teaching careers (Worthy & Prater).

The teacher candidates noted that some of the strategies taught in the methods course and the tutoring program were different than those used by their associate/supervising teachers in their practicum placements (Worthy & Prater, 1998). In follow-up interviews, the majority of the former tutors still implemented many of these word study and writing process strategies in their placements (Worthy & Prater). These teacher candidates were inspired to continue to study literacy acquisition strategies, and
they were in a position to be examining their tutoring experiences in light of their past experiences and beliefs.

**Teacher Candidates’ Beliefs About Literacy Instruction**

Candidates’ existing beliefs about teaching and learning greatly influence their teaching practice (Fellows, 1993; Jensen, 2001). Usually, their childhood school experiences have more influence over their teaching methods than their teacher education experiences (Fellows; McMahon, 1997; Roskos & Walker, 1994). Most teacher candidates are a product of their past and their own observations of teaching as students (Swafford, Peters, & Lee, 1998). Perhaps this is due to the quantity of time or number of years spent being a pupil (Wham, 1993). However, it is possible this premise may be an oversimplification of the complex interrelationship among school experience, personal belief systems, and teaching practice.

Previous beliefs about reading, like existing beliefs about teaching, tend to have a powerful impact on practice. Teacher’s beliefs and theories about learning to read impact the reading methods used in their classrooms (Wham, 1993). These belief systems control teachers’ expectations and the philosophical principles that guide them in decisions about reading instruction. A teacher’s orientation can even affect students’ actions and subsequent approach to the reading process (Wham).

Generally, teachers are theoretically oriented to one of the three following approaches to the reading process: sound/symbol relationship (i.e., phonics approach), specific skills (i.e., reading is the mastery of a hierarchy of discrete skills), or holistic orientation (i.e., whole language approach). Faculties of Education offer reading methods courses that address these three orientations to varying degrees (Wham, 1993). Typically, teacher candidates place their prior experiences ahead of their teacher education course
work (Wham). Despite the instruction in pedagogy, teacher candidates’ belief systems with respect to reading instruction remain fixed.

A contrast in perspective may exist with respect to instruction about the writing process. Franklin (1992) surveyed teacher candidates at the beginning and end of their coursework regarding their knowledge of and confidence in teaching writing. In the beginning, the candidates reported that their previous educational experiences had provided them with little or no knowledge of the writing process. These candidates felt they were unprepared to teach writing (Franklin). All teacher candidates in the study took a methods course on writing strategies, the components of the writing process, and the different genres of writing. Afterwards, the teacher candidates reported that they appreciated learning about the steps of the writing process and that they were more comfortable with teaching students to read and write (Franklin).

Within a constructivist framework, in order for teacher candidates to make sense of information from teacher education courses and practica, they need to assimilate new information with their existing beliefs and revise their schema (Piaget, 1950 as cited in Fellows, 1993). These schemas should be explored and acknowledged within teacher education programs. Making these conceptual shifts is an especially difficult process for some teacher candidates, as they possess deeply entrenched beliefs about teaching and specific teaching models (Fellows). These existing beliefs often have more influence on their teaching methods than the teacher education instruction. Thus, in order to change practice in teacher candidates, previous experiences must be examined, de-constructed and discussed, filtered, and then integrated with new knowledge and experience.
Teacher Education as Preparation for Literacy Instruction

Ideally, the goals of teacher education programs are to provide current theory and research to assist teacher candidates to develop and implement personal conceptions of teaching into practice (Gitlin, Barlow, Burbank, Kauchak, & Stevens, 1999). Most teacher education programs are organized to disseminate a knowledge base of theory constructed by experts (Gitlin et al., 1999). But teacher educators need to be aware that the theories offered in textbooks can be challenged or confirmed through candidacy classroom practice (Gitlin et al.). McMahon (1997) argues that teachers must define the act of teaching for themselves. Ideally, this definition is composed of knowledge from several sources: teacher education courses, practica, and previous experiences.

The ability of teacher candidates to translate and apply course and textbook knowledge into reading instruction in the classroom is of specific concern here. Even though teacher candidates use a variety of reading methods, their course experiences do not translate into literacy lessons in the classroom consistently (Smith, 1989), as educational methods courses sometimes fail to have a lasting impression on teacher candidates. Again, this is due to personal education experiences being more ingrained than the theory presented in faculties of education (Worthy & Prater, 1998).

Some teacher educators believe that teacher candidates need to be taught explicit methods of instructional delivery. In these cases, the teacher educators set up a micro-classroom within their classrooms. Specifically, language arts methods courses need to explicitly model teaching strategies if teacher candidates are expected to implement this information in their classrooms (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Morton, 1991).

According to The International Dyslexia Association, there are three essential elements required for skillful reading instruction (Brady & Moats). Teacher candidates
must be given knowledge of literacy development and the reading process, knowledge of
the structure of language which includes phonetics, orthography, syntax, and supervised
practice in teaching reading (Brady & Moats, 1997). In addition, there should be a core
curriculum for teacher preparation. This curriculum should cover reading development
and language structure, application of best practices in reading instruction, and the use of
validated, reliable assessments to inform classroom teaching.

Morton (1991) designed a study to determine whether explicitly teaching
strategies for writing would improve teacher candidates' future teaching of the writing
process. Teacher candidates were given relevant theoretical background instruction of
how authors write and were guided through authentic tasks such as engaging in the
writing process to produce a short story.

Throughout the process, the teacher candidates were encouraged to work with
their peers and conference on their teaching practice. At the end of the course, the teacher
candidates reported that they had greater confidence about teaching and understanding
the writing process. They reported that they had learned the value of collaborative editing
in order to improve their own writing (Morton, 1991). In their first year of teaching, they
were found to be competently implementing writers' workshops in their classrooms.
Moreover, interviews revealed that these teachers felt comfortable with authentic writing
tasks. They credited the modeling experience that they had gained in their teacher
education year (Morton).

Throughout the pre-service education year, teacher candidates need practical
strategies and relevant experience to build new knowledge structures associated with the
effective teaching of both reading and writing. They need to be encouraged to question
their beliefs and focus on the differences between the presented new models and their own beliefs developed throughout their own educational experiences. Teacher candidates' thinking about how to teach are most likely to change as a result of solving real problems as they teach (Fellows, 1993). Teacher candidates move toward this goal by testing methods and evaluating and reflecting on the outcomes.

When teacher candidates make connections between practice and theory, they are questioning their theoretical understandings in real situations (Roskos & Walker, 1994) and thereby developing as reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983). Roberts and his colleagues (Roberts, Putney, Ogletree, & McNinch, 1998) provided teacher candidates with a site-based experience and subsequent instruction that included reading strategies. The site-based experience included a one-on-one student assessment and appropriate reading intervention. Topics for direct instruction included the reading process, emergent literacy, and assessment and diagnosis of reading problems. During the study, the teacher candidates shared their interpretations and reflections about the frameworks for facilitating reading skills. Roberts et al., demonstrated that direct instruction focusing on the skills and strategies of reading, coupled with the site-based experiences, increased teacher candidates' ability and confidence to teach reading. In this way, theory and practice were connected for the teacher candidates.

In addition to this, effective teacher preparation encourages teacher candidates to examine their personal theories and beliefs in relation to research and theory (Pajares, 1992). Teacher candidates should be encouraged to revise and expand their conceptions of teaching reading and writing to include current theory and research (McMahon, 1997). Reflecting on these beliefs and their classroom experiences forces teacher candidates to
confront and adjust their personal beliefs about teaching literacy skills (Kagan, 1992). Consistent with cognitive constructivist theory, teacher candidates need direct literacy teaching experience to confront and adjust their belief systems about teaching reading and writing from prior experiential beliefs to theory-based practice (Pearson & Stephens, 1994).

Over the past two decades, Faculties of Education have focused their courses of study on constructivist teaching strategies (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). For example, many language arts professors focus on teaching their candidates relevant language arts pedagogy (Nolen, McCutchen, & Berninger, 1990). This practice directly augments teachers’ understanding of the cognitive processes involved in reading and writing. As well, with the opportunity for practice and reflection on practice experiences, this pedagogical theory will translate into actual teaching practice for many of these teacher candidates (Wham, 1993).

There are instances in which teacher candidates are assigned to work with teachers that practice instructional methods that are taught in present teacher education courses. Teaching practices dissimilar to their course content may evoke confusion in teacher candidates. In a case study of teacher candidates, McMahon (1997) documents the disparity between course content and actual teaching practice. The teacher candidate participants who were enrolled in an elementary literature-based reading course were tracked during their first field placement. The participants were given a journal to express and reflect on reading instruction issues.

The students in a study conducted by McMahon (1997) acknowledged incompatibility between their course content and their experiences in the classroom. One
participant responded by consistently focusing on his intended lesson plans without regard to the instructional approaches in the class. Other participants were more willing to try techniques other than those presented in their coursework. These teacher candidates adopted the stance of an investigator searching for the teaching approach that was best suited to the students’ needs (McMahon, 1997; Worthy & Prater, 1998).

The connections and compatibilities between teacher education programs, teacher candidates’ beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction, and their previous tutoring experiences will be explored as the focus of this research. Unique to this study is the fact that prior to teacher candidacy, these individuals had past experience as volunteer tutors for students with literacy difficulties.

**Proposal of Research Questions**

This three-part study investigated the effects of the After-School Literacy Program on students who were experiencing literacy difficulties, their undergraduate volunteer tutors, and these former tutors as teacher candidates. The research questions were formulated to gain information concerning teaching literacy strategies to students with learning disabilities, the influence of this instructional training on the practices of teacher candidates in an education program, and the impact of the experience on their future aspirations to become educators. Accordingly, there were two temporal periods or phases of study: The first phase took place during the After-School Literacy Program in which the experiences of students with learning difficulties and their volunteer tutors were tracked. The second phase of study involved the pre-service education year in which these volunteer tutors became teacher candidates.

The first phase of the study demonstrated the effects of the tutoring program for the participating students with learning exceptionalities. A significant area explored
involved the learning gains of the students in the tutoring program in comparison to a non-treatment group. Areas considered were receptive vocabulary, phonics and word analysis skills, sight-word recognition and spelling, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and writing composition. To uncover the effects of the tutoring program for the students with learning difficulties, the following research question was explored:

1. As compared to a nontreatment control group, do students with learning difficulties who have completed a volunteer after-school literacy program, demonstrate significant learning gains in the following areas: receptive vocabulary, phonics and word analysis skills, sight-word recognition, spelling, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and writing composition?

The first phase also described the volunteer tutors' experiences and highlighted the benefits of this formative training on their potential futures as literacy teachers. These tutors were introduced to instructional strategies and gained experience working with students with learning difficulties. Their experiences were followed from the inception of the program to its conclusion through observations and interviews.

Based on the observation that there is relatively no literature that tracks volunteer tutors prior to pre-service education, the first phase of the study also sought to highlight whether these volunteer tutors benefited from formative training and how they defined themselves as literacy teachers. Accordingly, the following research questions were posed:

1. What is the experience of volunteer tutors in this literacy program?
   - Do the tutors develop their knowledge of effective literacy strategies?
- Do the tutors perceive that they were able to effectively instruct students with literacy difficulties with these strategies?
- Do the tutors connect their knowledge of child development to tutoring practice?

2. How does this tutoring experience influence the volunteer tutors’ beliefs about teaching?
- Do these tutors become aware of the individualized needs of students with literacy difficulties?
- Has tutoring altered their conceptualization of the teaching profession?
- Does this experience influence their ambition to pursue a teaching career?

The second phase of study extended beyond the tutorial program into the teacher education program. Specifically, six former tutors were followed throughout their pre-service year. Throughout the year the teacher candidates were interviewed to determine the effect of their previous tutoring experience on their pre-service candidacy. They were also asked about their beliefs about how to best teach reading and writing. As well, teacher candidates’ constructions concerning how students acquire literacy skills and how they could facilitate this process were tracked. Associated with this research were the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of former volunteer tutors in teacher education programs?
- Do they recall reading and writing strategies from the literacy program?
- How do the teacher candidates relate their tutoring experiences to their teacher mentors’ practice and their own pre-service practice?
• How did the teacher candidates manage the classroom, lesson planning, and assessment?

2. How does tutoring experience influence teacher candidates’ perceptions of their teacher candidacy and future practice?

• How do these teacher candidates believe reading and writing should be taught?

• How do these teacher candidates believe that classroom teachers should provide for the individualized needs of students with literacy difficulties?

• How do they believe that they will teach language arts in the future?

• How have these individuals grown professionally from being volunteer tutors to beginning teachers?

Overview of the Remainder of the Document

The first phase of study is explained in the next three chapters of this document. Chapter 2 explains the premise, curriculum, and operation of the After-School Literacy Program. The quantifiable measures of student learning gains are also presented in chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the process of monitoring the volunteer tutors during the After-School Literacy Program, and then as teacher candidates. Descriptions of the volunteer tutors’ experiences within the program are described in chapter 4 of this document.

Finally, the outcome of the second phase of this study is outlined in chapter 5. This phase focused on how the six former literacy tutors developed as educators over the course of their pre-service year. Chapter 6 is a discussion of the findings drawn from the shared critical incidents and significant events of these teacher candidates. This chapter concludes with a general discussion about the impact of tutoring experience on the
transition into teacher education and the extended influence on beginning teachers’ beliefs.
Chapter 1 of this document provided a review of the literature that supports the implementation of literacy tutoring programs. Aspects of effective in-school (i.e., Reading Recovery, Success for All, Early Steps) and volunteer tutoring (Book Buddies, Howard Street Tutoring Program) programs were consulted to form the basis of the After-School Literacy Program presented here. Recommendations made by Wasik (1998b) regarding the successful operation of volunteer tutoring programs were also considered.

Prior to the development of the program a descriptive survey was created with the Learning Resource Teachers from the local school board. These teachers offered insights about the specific learning needs of their students. Across all of the elementary grades, the three most common curriculum areas of need were decoding, reading comprehension, and writing organization. Thus, the goal for the program was to answer this call with a curriculum that addressed these three key literacy skills.

Empirically supported strategies were selected to address the learning needs of the targeted students, including those associated with decoding (imagery and integrated picture mnemonics), reading-by-analogy (letter patterns), comprehension (prediction strategies and graphic organizers) and writing composition (memory process mnemonics). These strategies were incorporated into scripted lesson plans, which were consistent with explicit strategy instruction (e.g., Ashman & Conway, 1997).
**Strategy Instruction**

To be literate, lifelong learners, students must possess a flexible repertoire of reading and writing strategies. Promotion of these basic literacy skills is especially essential for students with learning difficulties. Explicit strategy instruction includes metacognitive information explaining when and where to use each learning strategy, enhances the learning process (e.g., Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995; Wood, Woloshyn, & Willoughby, 1995) and has been found to be a viable venue to instruct students with literacy difficulties (e.g., Harris & Graham, 1996; Scheid, 1993).

Metacognition includes an individual’s awareness and ability to monitor, adjust, and regulate his or her cognitive actions with regard to learning (Swanson & Alexander, 1997). Specifically, this monitoring includes checking problem-solving attempts, planning and evaluating the effectiveness of an action, testing and revising strategies, and taking remedial action to overcome encountered difficulties (Baker & Brown, 1984, as cited in Chan & Cole, 1986). Cognitive strategy instruction encourages students to think about their learning across a variety of situations (Ashman & Conway, 1997). Swanson and Alexander (1997) illustrate that while learning disabled readers possess a certain degree of metacognitive knowledge, they do not always access it unless specifically told to do so.

Provision of this metacognitive information is one of the fundamental underpinnings of explicit cognitive strategy instruction. Gaskins and Elliot (1991) among others (e.g., Deshler & Schumaker, 1986; Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995; Swanson, 1999) stated that students learn best when strategy instruction is explicit versus implicit. This is notably the case with reading and writing instruction (Woloshyn & Elliott, 1998). There are eight basic components of explicit strategy instruction with steps connected over
multiple lessons. In the initial stages, the teachers state both the process and content objectives and tell students why it is helpful to learn a particular strategy. As a way of emphasizing the importance of strategy use, teachers then share personal experiences of strategy use with their students. Then teachers explicitly tell students when to use the strategy and under what circumstances the strategy is useful. The process and steps for carrying out the strategy are reviewed, and the teacher models the strategy while verbalizing metacognitive information about it. Students are encouraged to experiment and practice the strategy across several learning contexts. Gradually, the teacher’s directives are withdrawn to encourage the students to be independent strategy users. For example, the teacher may assist the students with the first few steps for carrying out the strategy and then refrain from further comment. Educators provide a supportive environment in which to apply these skills and give reminders to use strategies on a consistent basis.

Explicit lesson plans were written for each component of the program (i.e., letter-sound recognition, reading-by-analogy, reading comprehension, and writing composition). The program focused on the first seven components of explicit strategy instruction because the duration of instruction was relatively short term (i.e., 8 weeks). These seven components were each addressed in the tutors’ lesson plans (see Appendix A for a sample lesson plan). There were three sets of lesson plans; one for each of the Primary, Junior, and Intermediate age tutees. The tutors were provided with two protocols of lesson plans. The first emphasized tutor modeling and verbalization of metacognitive information. The second provided guided or scaffolded instruction for independent practice.
The strategies chosen for the After-School Literacy Program were fashioned after those of previous tutoring programs. Similar to the Early Steps Program (Santa & Hóien, 1999), Reading Recovery (Clay, 1991) and Success for All (Slavin et al., 1990), there was a focus on letter-sound correspondences. In the present program, letter-sound correspondence skills were addressed through imagery and integrated picture mnemonics. For decoding, the Howard Street Tutoring Program (Morris, Shaw, & Perney, 1990), the Early Steps Program (Santa & Hóien, 1999), Book Buddies (Invernizzi, 2001), and Success for All (Slavin et al., 1990) used reading-by-analogy strategies. Specifically, these programs taught students to sort words into letter patterns and use common phonograms to decode unfamiliar vocabulary. To enhance students’ reading comprehension, Book Buddies (Invernizzi, 2001) and Success for All (Slavin et al., 1990) used prediction strategies while emphasizing story structure and summarization. In the current study, these strategies were integrated into a graphic organizer. Finally, both the Howard Street Tutoring Program (Morris et al., 1990) and the Early Steps Program (Santa & Hóien, 1999) had tutors support the students through each step of the writing process. Specifically, the tutors in the Howard Street Tutoring Program scribed for their students; tutors in the current program also scribed for their students and used mnemonics as guides for the writing process.

**Imagery and Integrated Picture Mnemonics**

Decoding is the understanding of how letters or symbols relate to sounds (Gunning, 2002). The first step in this process for beginning readers is to acquire letter-sound correspondences. As these letter-sound correspondences are internalized and decoding becomes automatic, cognitive attention can be directed from the mechanical task of reading to reading for comprehension (Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995). However,
many young readers and students with learning difficulties experience difficulty cracking the alphabet code (Gunning, 2002).

The key elements to successful decoding are phonological awareness (identifying the sounds in words and relating them to letters), letter-sound correspondence, and blending skills (Lloyd, 1998). Currently, a commonly used method of instruction for decoding with emergent readers is the *Jolly Phonics* program (Dare, 1999; Lloyd, 1998). *Jolly Phonics* is a systematic phonics program that teaches the 42 main sounds of the English language. This includes consonant sounds, blends, digraphs, and a few irregular vowel patterns.

Beginning readers are presented with a multisensory, kinesthetic method that begins with associating the letters to the sounds and moves on to blending sounds to form words and then to read words independently (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001; Lloyd, 1998). To facilitate the learning of letter-sounds, students are taught associative hand actions. For example, for the sound of the letter, “s”, students curve and slither their hands in the motion of a snake while they make the letter-sound. This kinesthetic aid is used to promote independent recall of the sound of the letter (Dare, 1999; Ehri et al., 2001). Students are also encouraged to make the sounds of letters as they practice tracing and forming the letters on Primary print lines. Letter sounds are not taught alphabetically, but in an order that promotes reading of simple words. Upon successful acquisition of a few of these sounds, blending these letter sounds together is encouraged 's-a-t' (Ehri et al., 2001; Ehri & Robbins, 1992; Lloyd, 1998).

An empirically supported strategy is the use of imagery as an approach for developing knowledge of letters and their sounds. For example, students print a letter and
convert their letter into a drawing of an object that begins with the letter's sound (Ehri, Deffner, & Wilce, 1984). These images remind students about the sounds of the letters. Children receiving this type of integrated picture training could recall more letter-sound relations than those individuals who did not receive this training (Ehri et al., 1984; Fulk, Lohman, & Belfiore, 1997).

In the letter-sound correspondence lessons, the integrated visualization strategy was married with the kinesthetic component of the *Jolly Phonics* curriculum materials. The tutors modeled and encouraged the students to visualize the featured letter integrated into the illustration on the *Jolly Phonics* worksheet (see Appendix B). For Intermediate-level students, modifications were made to the kinesthetic component of the letter-sound correspondence lessons to make them age appropriate. For example, students in this group needed to review the short “e” sound and used the key word, “extreme” to remind them of the two sounds of “e.” The associated kinesthetic action was a thumbs-up action that signified something that was cool or “extreme.”

**Reading-by-Analogy**

Phonological decoding skills are prerequisites to more sophisticated reading approaches such as using letter patterns or what is otherwise known as reading by analogy. To read by analogy, students use a familiar letter pattern to decode an unfamiliar word (e.g., using the “i-m-e” in the old word “time” to read the new word, “dime”). This rime-rhyme connection can also be used to support spelling development by making reference to a rhyming word when trying to spell an unknown word. Over time, the sequences of the letter patterns become familiar (Cunningham, 2000). When children are able to read words easily, attention can be devoted to comprehension and personal
response (Allen, 1998). Letter patterns commonly found in the English language have been compiled by Gaskins (1998; see Appendix C). Gaskins has categorized these letter patterns by their initial vowel and in a list called “Benchmark 120.” Benchmark teachers model and provide guided practice of word identification strategies within the context of connected text (Gaskins, 1998). Gaskins (1998) found that students with reading difficulties were successful at decoding and reading unknown words by using analogous known words.

Allen (1998) reported similar success with the context of reading authentic literature. Readers in Grades 2 and 3 used rhymes to learn key words and focused on the letter patterns to decode new words by analogy. Tutors modeled the strategy and students applied the principles when reading children’s literature. This instruction is supported by research that indicates that good readers look for letter patterns rather than individual letters as they decode words. When children are able to decode words easily, attention can be devoted to comprehension.

In the After-School Literacy Program, imagery was used to emphasize unknown letter patterns in the students’ memory. The Primary students “painted” the Benchmark Word in the sky and imagined the letters of the painting. Then, they closed their eyes and visualized the word in their mind. The Junior/Intermediate level students used a “keyboard” to “type” letter patterns. The students imagined themselves typing a word/letter pattern. Similarly, they closed their eyes and visualized the word they had typed.

Students were also taught to use these letter patterns to decode unfamiliar words. These lessons emphasized how familiar letter patterns can be used to read unknown
words that have the same letter pattern. As a reference, the Benchmark 120 letter patterns were compiled by initial vowel into a “Word Detective Book.” Students used this book to refer to familiar letter patterns when attempting to decode unfamiliar words.

**Reading Comprehension Strategies**

Story schema is the knowledge that readers possess with respect to the elements of narrative literature (Williams, 1993), including character(s), setting(s), critical event(s), and resolution(s). Students who possess this knowledge are usually able to comprehend narrative text effectively (Vaughan, Gersten, & Chard, 2000; Williams). Unfortunately, students with learning difficulties often have difficulty identifying story elements (Vaughan et al.; Williams).

Students with learning difficulties require instructional supports for comprehending text. Vaughan et al. (2000) found that one of the most effective comprehension interventions for students with learning difficulties involved using text structuring. Text structuring is a general term for the categorization and organization of text. The After-School Literacy Program incorporated cognitive organizers to structure text along with prediction and summarization strategies to aid in the comprehension of narrative and expository text.

**Comprehension of Narrative and Expository Text**

Narratives are readings such as short stories, chronicles, history passages, reports and parables. Students are involved in narrative reading when they are studying curriculum subjects needed to augment their knowledge of their lives and the world in which they live. Expository text involves the reading of accounts, commentaries, critiques, presentations, and descriptive writing. In expository reading, students must
make interpretations, find explanations, and look for illustrative components. Narratives involve fictional readings and expository text involves nonfictional reading.

Educational research documents several effective strategies for enhancing students’ comprehension of narrative and expository text (Vaughan et al., 2000). The following section reviews the use of graphic organizers, prediction questions, and summarization as learning strategies.

**Graphic organizers.** Boyle and Weishaar (1997) define graphic organizers as cognitive maps or visual displays that students use to arrange details from text so implicit relationships between ideas are made explicit. These organizers engage students in a visual-spatial arrangement of information that is connected graphically to form a meaningful diagram. Story mapping involves identifying the common components of a narrative story (Idol, 1987). Strategies that use story mapping help readers to form connections between their prior knowledge and new, textual material.

In a pioneering study on narrative comprehension (Idol, 1987), teachers explicitly modeled how to construct story maps to record setting, characters, problem, action (events), and outcome. Idol was one of the first researchers to document that story mapping was effective at improving the reading comprehension of poor readers at the Grade 3 and 4 levels. These improvements were generally measured in listening comprehension, criterion-referenced tests, and students' journal writing. Since this work, others (e.g., Chmielewski & Dansereau, 1998; Davis & McPherson, 1989; Gardill & Jitendra, 1999; Mathes, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1997) have found that through mapping narrative text, students realize enhanced reading comprehension.
Many students have difficulty recognizing the components of an expository passage and consequently understanding non-fiction material (Stevens, 1988). This is especially true for struggling readers. Less skilled readers recall less text information and have difficulty relating information to the main ideas of the passage (Stevens; Vaughan et al., 2000).

Some graphic organizers combine reading, studying, and evaluating text into one exercise. Horton, Lovitt, and Bergerud (1990) examined the performance of both remedial students and nonremedial students who received instruction about how to use graphic organizers. These organizers resembled a hierarchical outline with major and minor categories clearly identified (Horton et al., 1990). The middle and high school students were provided with step-by-step procedures for reading and evaluating passages before completing these graphic organizers. Students practiced producing graphic organizers with expository text from their social studies and science curriculum. Graphic organizers were more effective than self-study for all types of students and were efficient in condensing expository information and aiding recall (Horton). These positive findings have been replicated by other educational researchers (e.g., Boyle & Weishaar, 1997; DiCecco & Gleason, 2002; Doyle, 1999; Guastello, Beasley, & Sinatra, 2000; Horton et al., 1990).

**Prediction questions.** Prediction is a commonly used prereading strategy. Researchers have demonstrated that readers who activate their prior knowledge and connect it to new text could enhance their reading comprehension (Hansen, 1991; Spires & Donley, 1998). Formulating predictions and evaluating the prompts helps readers to make inferences about what might happen in a story, synthesize text information, and
evaluate inferences (Coffman, 1997). Further, students who write down their predictions and events tend to facilitate their comprehension (Denner & McGinley, 1992).

Prediction strategies also enhance the students’ comprehension of expository text across the elementary and secondary school grades (Afflerbach, 1990; Scanlon, Duran, Reyes, & Gallego, 1992). Students, in Grades 4 through 12 with learning disabilities were taught how to make predictions on a semantic map (Scanlon et al., 1992). The instructor modeled the process of completing a semantic map based on an expository reading passage. The first step identified the main idea and noted the connecting details. These details were clustered into related concepts and labeled, forming the subtopics. Students with learning disabilities shared their prior knowledge, engaged in prediction questioning and justified their ideas. Students’ learning was measured from pretest to a 1-month delayed posttest and it was found that those in the strategy group had greater recall and comprehension of content area concepts than those who did not have the same strategies.

Stevens provided students with learning difficulties, in Grades 11 through 12, with direct instruction for making predictions of expository text. Students learned to predict the main ideas of paragraphs based on the topic sentences. They were taught to use metacognitive strategies for checking their main idea hypothesis. This self-checking trained the students to test the accuracy of the main ideas to summarize information in the paragraph. The results demonstrated that prediction strategies can improve students' abilities to identify the main idea in expository passages (Stevens, 1998).

Davis (1994) effectively combined the strategies of prediction and graphic organizers. In this study, students used an organizer that resembled a web to record predictions. Collaboratively, students developed this organizer prior to reading text. The
teacher posed questions to stimulate discussion and develop background knowledge. Included in the organizer were responses that predicted the main ideas and supporting details of the story. Davis illustrated that for Grade 3 students, both inferential and literal comprehension was improved with prereading story mapping. As well, the time students took to record their predictions in a story format or graphic organizer facilitated subsequent comprehension (Davis, 1994).

**Summarization.** Students with literacy difficulties also derive benefit from comprehension strategies that highlight how text can be deconstructed or summarized (Pressley, Brown, Beard El-Dinary, & Afflerbach, 1995). Seminal work demonstrates summarization as a valid strategy enhancing comprehension skills for students (Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertag, 1987; Berkowitz, 1986; Levin & Pressley, 1981). This research contends that responsive readers routinely use summarization strategies to augment their understanding and retention of material and they discern the most important points made in the text (Pressley et al., 1995).

Students with literacy difficulties improved their comprehension of expository text material through generating main idea statements as part of a summarization strategy (Jitendra, Hoppes, & Xin, 2000). These students were explicitly taught to identify and classify main idea sentences before they were presented with passages to evaluate and summarize. The summaries included identification and a description of the issues. The students' increase in comprehension was maintained over time and they were still using the strategies when tested 6 weeks later (Jitendra et al., 2000).

Gajria & Salvia (1992) required students to delete unnecessary information, generalize main ideas, and construct a sequence of ideas and a means of summarizing
information. Direct instruction in this summarization exercise increased comprehension of expository text for students with learning disabilities. Further, studies done over a decade ago, also found that students with reading disabilities derived comprehension benefit from constructing graphic organizers and writing summaries to monitor their understanding of expository text (Weisberg & Balajthy, 1990).

In the current study, one graphic organizer was developed that required students to engage in story grammar (e.g., Idol, 1987), prediction (e.g., Hanen & Pearson, 1983), and summarization (e.g., Jitendra et al., 2000). These strategies were organized into a graphic organizer called, "Predictive Story Frame" (see Appendix D). The "Predictive Story Frame" resembled a rectangular picture frame with two shadowed regions around the outside perimeter. The outer region was designated for the prereading predictions, and the middle region for the during-reading predictions (including revising predictions) and the center of the frame was for the story summary. Each of the shadowed regions had places to note the story grammar components: character, setting, problem, and solution.

As well, this research integrated prediction and summarization strategies into a graphic organizer called the "Comprehension and Composition House" or "C & C House" (see Appendix E). This organizer was a simple illustration of a house that included labels for the components of expository text including introduction, thesis, topics, and conclusion. The porch of the house was for making predictions based on the pictures and subtitles of the text. The doormat of the house was used to document introductory points. In the door to the house the thesis statement was reiterated. The three rooms of the house were for the subtopics of the text. Subtopics were written within each of these rooms, and the details that supported the subtopics were written in the pillars,
which supported the structure of the house. The conclusion was noted on the roof of the house. In sum, both organizers engaged students in visual-spatial arrangement of information, which graphically formed a diagram. Students were guided through an interactive process with their tutors to make these connections. They were encouraged to assimilate prior knowledge with new information. The students learned to apply graphic organizers, prediction questions, and summarization strategies to reading material to facilitate their reading comprehension.

*Writing Composition Strategies*

If reading and writing are combined in an integrated fashion, it is more likely that students will understand text and experience improved learning (Shanahan, 1997). Shanahan also states that this type of integrated instruction leads to a better attitude towards learning. The current study promoted the connection between reading and writing by using the same narrative and expository comprehension organizers as the instructional tool for writing composition.

The writing process is not one that comes naturally to many students (Gunning, 2002). Good writers plan and organize their ideas before beginning their initial draft. An initial draft is edited (perhaps several times) and rewritten before production of the final copy. McAlister, Nelson, and Bahr (1999) demonstrated that students with learning difficulties couldn’t explain the prewriting elements of planning and organizing. Their knowledge of revising is focused on editing conventions (e.g., spelling, grammar) more than on revising content.

Sexton, Harris, and Graham (1998) found modest to large gains in the writing performance of students with learning disabilities who completed a scaffolded and collaborative strategy for planning and writing essays. This strategy instruction began
with activities that focused on initially defining, identifying, and generating the parts of an essay. These students were given self-regulating instructions for managing the remaining steps of the writing process. They were encouraged to write a draft, edit/revise, and publish their papers. These students' compositions were judged to be more complete than those they had written prior to the intervention.

Memory mnemonics can also be used to reinforce the five steps of the writing process (e.g., the mnemonic word, “P. O. W. E. R.”; (Stevens & Fear, 1987). In this program, the first step of this process was “P” for planning. Brainstorming was used to acquire possible topics (e.g., Harris & Graham, 1996). The tutor scribed these generated ideas with the students and then decided to focus on one topic. In the “O” or organization step, students categorized their ideas in a logical fashion. To facilitate this organization, ideas were written on graphic organizers. These organizers were the same ones that were used in the comprehension lessons. Thus, for the Primary and early Junior level students, the “Predictive Story Frame” was used as a worksheet for narrative composition.

In a similar way, the “C & C House” was used to organize expository text. The “W” in the mnemonic represents writing the first draft. This rough copy incorporates all of the ideas that were arranged on the graphic organizers. The “E” step is the editing and this was done with a series of editing questions that were used as prompts to ensure that all necessary text components were included in the draft (e.g., “Is the place or setting for the story described?”; “Is the main character described?”; “Is the critical event described?”; “Is there a thesis statement?”; “Is the topic introduced?”; “Does the passage have a definite conclusion?”; see Appendices F & G). Finally, the “R” is the rewriting phase in which the students completed their final draft copy. The students and the tutor
jointly wrote this story. The tutor scribed the collaboratively composed story. Students completed a final draft that was word processed with graphic illustrations and bound for presentation.

**The After-School Literacy Program**

Volunteers were recruited from the local university and trained to serve as tutors for the program. Prior to the start of the program, the instructors were provided with an overview of explicit strategy instruction and introduced to the decoding and reading comprehension teaching materials and resources. Specifically, the instructors were provided with explicit modeling of the strategies that were used within the program by a faculty of education member and the researcher (who also acted as the School-Based Coordinator). This included a demonstration of the procedural steps of explicit strategy instruction along with the inclusion of metacognitive information. The volunteer tutors were also provided with scripted lesson plans and a summary of their students’ assessment results, as well as an overview of the program structure. At the end of the training session, the tutors worked in pairs to coordinate and sequence the delivery of instruction.

At the midpoint of the program (Week 5), an additional training session was held. The purpose of this training was to train the tutors for the final writing lessons. This session followed a similar format in that scripted writing lesson plans were distributed and explicitly modeled for the volunteers. Tutors were provided with exemplars for each of the five stages of the writing process. Lesson plans were disseminated along with supplementary resources such as the graphic organizers. Finally, the tutors worked collaboratively to plan the last 4 weeks of the program.
Throughout the tutoring sessions, the researcher acted as a School-Based Co-
ordinator and provided supervision and support to the volunteer tutors. The School-Based Co-ordinator was responsible for the daily operations of the program, which included monitoring the lessons and teaching materials.

The program ran for 9 weeks from October through December. The students attended two 90-minute sessions each week. The sessions were held after school (approximately 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm) in the library of the school. In sum, there were 18 sessions of 90 minutes for a total of 27 hours of programming. The first week of the program was unstructured to allow the tutors and their students to get to know each other. For the remaining 8 weeks, there was a typical 90-minute model. For the first 10-15 minutes of the session, the students had an informal social time and snack with their tutor. This period provided the tutors with opportunities to build rapport with their students.

Following their snack, the students received approximately 60 minutes of tutoring: 30 minutes of letter-sound correspondence instruction and 30 minutes of comprehension or composition. For the most part, the Primary grade students received instruction that focused on letter-sound knowledge, whereas, the Junior/Intermediate students received instruction that focused on learning and using letter patterns. Decoding instruction was included for the full duration of the program.

For the first half of the program, reading comprehension instruction was emphasized. Students in the Primary and early Junior grades read narrative stories and used the “Predictive Story Frame.” Students in the later Junior and Intermediate grades
also read expository articles and used the "C & C House" organizer. The tutees received 30 minutes of reading comprehension per day for the first half of the program.

For the latter half of the program, approximately 30 minutes were devoted to writing composition. Following the "P.O.W.E.R." mnemonic, the students collaboratively wrote a composition. The same graphic organizers that the students used in the comprehension lessons were used as an organizer for their writing. The Primary and Junior grade students wrote narrative stories, whereas Intermediate students wrote a short expository composition.

**Study #1**

A quantitative evaluation was completed on The After-School Literacy Program through examining the pretest and posttest learning measures of the elementary students. The following research question was asked: As compared to a nontreatment control group, do students with learning difficulties who have completed a volunteer after-school literacy program demonstrate significant learning gains in the following areas: receptive vocabulary, phonics and word analysis skills, sight-word recognition, spelling, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and writing composition?

**Methodology**

Empirical study of volunteer tutoring programs is lacking. Despite the popularity of tutoring programs (Bloom, 1984; Cohen et al., 1982), only a few researchers (e.g., Juel, 1996; Morris, Shaw, & Perney, 1990) have used experimental designs to demonstrate gains for tutees (Morrow & Woo, 2001). When inquiry is based upon the use of an experimental design, there is a supposition that information will be systematically collected and statistically analyzed in an effort to identify potential cause-and-effect relationships (Isaac & Michael, 1997). Through quantifiable measurement, the
relationships are evaluated for their tenability. These relationships are then interpreted and statements about the connections between variables are made as conclusions (Isaac & Michael).

Participants

This research was completed in a public elementary school in Southern Ontario, which was representative of a suburban middle-class neighborhood within close proximity to the local university. Approximately 480 students (Grades 1-8) attended the school throughout the year. Students were predominately Caucasian and were native English speakers.

Their classroom teachers nominated prospective tutees. In order to be considered for the program, students needed to be experiencing difficulties in decoding, spelling, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and/or writing organization. It was not necessary that they be formally identified with a learning exceptionality.

A total of 35 students (21 males and 14 females) were randomly divided into two groups. The first group of 18 (male=13 and female=5) included Primary=7 (2 Grade 2 students and 5 Grade 3 students) and Junior/Intermediate=11 (3 Grade 4 students, 5 Grade 6 students, and 3 Grade 7 students) who participated in the program from October through December of 2001 (data were collected during this period). The second group of 17 (male=8 and female=9) included Primary=9 (2 Grade 1 students and 4 Grade 2 students) and Junior/Intermediate=8 (6 Grade 5 students and 2 Grade 6 students) who received the program from January through April 2002. In this way group 2 acted as a control for group 1 and vice versa.
Data

Quantitative learning measures were collected prior to commencing phase 1 of the program (pretest) and after phase 1 of the program (posttest). The pretest battery measured students’ receptive vocabulary level (Peabody Picture Vocabulary-Revised, Form M; Dunn & Dunn, 1981); letter pattern awareness (Benchmark 120 Word List; Gaskins, 1998); letter-sound recognition, phonics/word analysis, and reading comprehension levels (Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory; Ekwall & Shanker, 2000); written expression (Test of Written Language –2; Hammill & Larsen, 1988); and spelling (WRAT; Jastak & Jastak, 1978).

Additional questions (e.g., “Describe where the story takes place or the setting,” “What is the author's thesis statement or what point is the author trying to make?”) devised by the researcher were posed after each passage to evaluate the students’ knowledge of narrative (setting, characters, problem, events, and solution) and expository (introduction, thesis statement, subtopics, and conclusion) text elements. These additional questions were posed after students read each passage of the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory comprehension subtest. An additional scoring checklist was also used to assess the inclusion of story grammar elements (i.e., title, characters, setting, events, problem, solution) in the students’ samples of written expression. Taken together, these data were used to create individual profiles and identify students’ literacy strengths and weaknesses.

Data Analysis and Results

For each dependent measure, pretest and posttest assessment scores were compared using a 2 x 2 x 2 three-way ANOVA with Grade Division (Primary, Junior/Intermediate), Group (experimental, control), and Time (pretest, posttest), as the independent variables. The ANOVA was chosen based on two design limitations. First,
several of the dependent measures were scored on different scales such as standard scores, reading levels, or percentages. Accordingly, the measures needed to be analyzed separately due to these unique numerical properties. Secondly, there were both ceiling and floor effects on a few measures because of the participants' grade levels. For example, on measures of letter-sound recognition, Intermediate students demonstrated ceiling scores, whereas, Primary students had floor level scores. Thus, it was necessary to maintain separate analyses of these variables. The ANOVA seemed an appropriate manner to address these limitations.

However, with this practice there is an increased likelihood of committing a TYPE 1 Error, or reporting a difference between pretest and posttest measures when in fact a difference does not exist (Isaac & Michael, 1997). To minimize this discrepancy, the following data analyses adopted a conservative probability level of $p \leq .01$. Thus, there will be a very high confidence level of at least 99% that reported differences between the means of the two groups of participants (experimental and control) were statistically significant.

At the beginning of the study the student participants were randomly divided into two groups. Despite this randomization, there were initial group differences across gender and grade distribution: The experimental group was predominantly Junior/Intermediate males and the control group slightly favoured Primary females. To mitigate this inequity, when significant differences were found between the groups with the ANOVA measures, secondary analyses were completed with an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) using the standardized measure, TOWL-2 as a covariate. A
covariate is a variable that correlates with the dependent variables and adjusts for the results of initial differences among the participants (Isaac & Michael, 1997).

There were two measures with time-by-group interactions, Phonograms and Knowledge of Story Elements (oral reading). Both of these interactions were driven by the superior performance of the experimental group over the control group. Further analysis of these results was completed with an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA with the TOWL-2 as the covariate). There were significant interaction effects for Phonograms (on the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory), $F(1, 29)=6.87, p \leq .01$, and for Knowledge of Story Elements (oral reading), $F(1, 29)=8.96, p \leq .01$. These time-by-group interaction effects favoured the performance of the experimental group. There was one significant main effect for Group for Knowledge of Story Elements (silent reading), $F(1, 29)=7.72, p<.01$. This group effect favoured the performance of the experimental group. Table 1 (see Appendix H) provides a summary of students’ Phonograms, Knowledge of Story Elements (oral, silent reading) mean and standard deviation performance scores as a function of grade division by group by time (ANCOVA).

**Conclusions and Discussion**

At the end of the program, the students in the experimental group were more skilled at reading letter patterns or phonograms than their peers in the control group. In other words, the students were using common phonograms as tools to decode rhyming words on the phonics/word analysis subtest of the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory. It has been found that through direct instruction, letter patterns or phonograms likely become familiar (Cunningham, 2000). Students with reading difficulties have been found to be successful at decoding and reading unknown words by using familiar analogous letter patterns (Gaskins, 1998). The students in the After-School Literacy Program
worked with these letter patterns through mental imagery. Then, they applied their knowledge of these letter patterns to decode words.

Interestingly, there was not a significant change in students’ ability to read the words from The Benchmark 120 Word List (Gaskins, 1998) that were used for training the letter patterns. In other words, the significant gains were not in their ability to read the words that were used to practice the mental imagery, but words used to test the application of the mental imagery. This may indicate that the letter patterns embedded in the words of The Benchmark 120 Word List, were internalized by the students and then used as an application tool to facilitate decoding of analogous words.

Past research (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1997) has found efficacy in the use of a repertoire of instructional strategies for improving the comprehension skills of students with literacy difficulties. As part of the After-School Literacy Program, the Predictive Story Frame was introduced to students as a graphic organizer to help them remember the elements of a story (characters, setting, critical event, and problem). It has been found that students with learning difficulties often have difficulty identifying story elements (Vaughan et al., 2000; Williams, 1993). The Predictive Story Frame integrated three strategies that have literature to support their efficacy: a graphic organizer (e.g., Boyle & Weishaar, 1997; DiCecco & Gleason, 2002; Doyle, 1999; Guastello, Beasley, & Sinatra, 2000; Horton, Lovitt, & Bergerud, 1990) with prediction (e.g., Afflerbach, 1990; Coffman, 1997; Davis, 1994; Denner & McGinley, 1992; Scanlon, Duran, Reyes, & Gallego, 1992; Stevens, 1998) and summarization (e.g., Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertag, 1987; Berkowitz, 1986; Jitendra et al., 2000; Levin & Pressley, 1981; Pressley et al., 1995).
At posttest, the elements of a story were more salient for students who participated in the program as compared to students who did not receive strategic instruction with the Predictive Story Frame. These organizers engaged students in a visual-spatial arrangement of information and this graphic illustration supported the understanding and retention of aspects of narrative text. Recall of these elements was most apparent when the volunteer tutors read authentic literature to their students. Given this context, the students who participated in the program were trained to listen for the elements of the story and able to focus on this task as they were being read to by their tutors.

In contrast, there was not significant growth in the elements of story grammar for program participants for oral and silent reading measures. The difference here was that these students needed to decode text, comprehend information, and retain the elements of story grammar. It is likely that these students were experiencing an overload of demand on their working memory and both decoding and comprehension were compromised (Gunning, 2002). Often, students with reading difficulties are not able to process and store information efficiently and this hinders their comprehension (Gunning). Thus, the requirements of the oral and silent reading measures may have encumbered students' recall of the elements of story grammar.

The other subtests of letter-sound recognition from the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory, did not reveal significant student learning gains over the duration of the Program. This is likely attributable to either ceiling or floor effects. Ceiling effects were present for the Junior/Intermediate student participants who knew most of their letter-sounds at both pre- and posttest; consequently, there was no opportunity for learning
gains. Baseline effects occurred for the Primary students who had very few of these skills. Simply, the amount of instructional time devoted to these basic components (approximately 8 hours over the course of the 9 weeks of the program) was not sufficient to make a significant impact on the students' ability to master these letter-sound correspondences.

Nonsignificant results for the writing composition may be due to the lack of compatibility between how the students were assessed and how written composition was addressed during instruction. For the TOWL-2 writing sample, students were required to compose a piece based on a picture prompt. This was done according to the guidelines in the TOWL-2 Administration Manual (Hammill & Larsen, 1988); the exception was for those Primary level students that needed assistance scribing their story. In the Program, the volunteer tutors scribed a composition that was collectively revised and word-processed. The act of scribing facilitated the writing process as the tutor assumed the responsibility of handwriting. In this manner, the mechanics of handwriting did not stifle the creativity and fluency of composition (Tompkins, 2000). Given this fact, the students' performance on the TOWL-2 may not have reflected their learning gains in understanding the steps of the writing process and the components of composition because of the burden of legible handwriting.

Finally, the lack of learning gains on measures of receptive vocabulary (Peabody Picture Vocabulary-Revised; Dunn & Dunn, 1981) and spelling (WRAT; Jastak & Jastak, 1978) were attributable to lack of explicit emphasis within the Program curriculum. Table 2 (see Appendix I) provides a summary of students' vocabulary (Peabody Picture Vocabulary), spelling (WRAT), and composition thematic maturity (TOWL-2) mean and
standard deviation performance scores as a function of grade division by group by time (ANOVA). The volunteer tutors were encouraged to engage in rich verbal exchange with the students, but there was not any explicit training around strategies to enhance receptive vocabulary. Similarly, spelling skills were not emphasized within the written expression portion of the Program as the focus was on the content of the piece and not the mechanics or conventions.

Empirically supported strategies were selected to address the learning needs of the students in the After-School Literacy Program. Existing literature supports the efficacy of these strategies, however, there is often a focus on the use of a single strategy, such as exclusively an integrated picture mnemonic (Ehri, Deffner, & Wilce, 1984; Fulk, Lohman, & Belfiore, 1997). Indeed, students should possess a flexible repertoire of reading and writing strategies to be literate (e.g., Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995; Wood, Woloshyn, & Willoughby, 1995). This was the original intent: to provide the students in the Program with a host of strategies for each of the targeted literacy skills. However, little research exists to substantiate the simultaneous training of these strategies. It was assumed that providing a few strategies to address each of the skills of letter-sound correspondence, decoding, comprehension and composition would be beneficial for the students. Perhaps pilot testing should have been done with the combined strategies for each skill to best determine the nature and duration of instruction needed to maximize the learning gains.

These strategies have been proven effective when delivered by trained educators such as classroom teachers, special educators, reading specialists, and researchers. For example, research on reading-by-analogy strategies cited (Gaskins, 1998; Gaskins, Ehri,
Cress, O’Hara, & Donnelly, 1997) was done with strategy researchers and classroom
teachers in laboratory and mainstream schools by Gaskins (1998). According to several
authors (Invernizzi & Juel, 1996; Juel, 1996; Morrow & Walker, 1997; Morrow & Woo,
2001; Roe & Vukelich, 2001; Shanahan, 1998; Topping, 1998; Walker & Morrow, 1998;
Wasik, 1998a, 1998b), the Program’s instruction was delivered in a conducive volunteer
tutoring environment; however, the instructors in this tutoring program context were not
trained educators. Thus, implementation integrity may have been compromised (National
Research Center on Learning Disabilities, 2004) as the protocol for addressing students’
difficulties was different. Thus, the inconsistent student learning gains may be due to the
basic differences between the educators’ experience with such empirically supported
strategies.

The results of this study are also limited by the sample size and selection. This
limits the generalizability of the findings. Generalizability is a problem of external
validity (Isaac & Michaels, 1997). Since only 35 students from one school participated in
this study it is difficult to generalize the findings beyond this school. As well, the
students who were selected by their teachers possessed specified qualities such as
attentiveness, cooperation, and potential to benefit from supplemental instruction. These
students may not be typical and consequently do not represent a valid cross-section of
students with reading and writing difficulties.

The elementary students who participated in this program realized a degree of
growth in aspects of decoding and reading comprehension skills. The findings validated
these particular aspects of the After-School Literacy Program’s pedagogy. Having
established this base, the current study shifted focus to the volunteer tutors. The volunteer
undergraduate tutors were tracked over the course of their service and their experiences are explored in chapter 3.
CHAPTER THREE: 
THE EXPERIENCES OF THE VOLUNTEER TUTORS

Creswell (1998) contends that qualitative research takes place in a natural setting in which the researcher collects data, analyzes them inductively with a focus on the participants, and then describes the associated process. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state that qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter based on a particular paradigm or overarching philosophical system that represents a belief system.

Constructivist theory situates this particular qualitative research study. Denzin and Lincoln state:

The constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology assuming multiple realities; a subjectivist epistemology which assumes knower and subject create understandings; and, a naturalistic set of methodological procedures as set in the natural world. (pp. 13-14)

Within constructivist theory, there are several perspectives or interpretations. This particular research is not strictly aligned with any single perspective; however, social constructivism resonates in the interpretations made of the volunteer tutors’ experiences. The experiences of the volunteer tutors were examined from a social constructivist perspective as these participants were immersed in a learning environment (i.e., the After-School Literacy Program) that was socially mediated and personally meaningful (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). This perspective is appropriate as these volunteer tutors attempted to adapt their actions to the norms and practices within in the tutoring setting (Cobb, 1998).
Study #2

Structured volunteer tutoring programs such as *The Howard Street Tutoring Program* (Morris, 2001) and *Book Buddies* (Invernizzi, 2001) have documented a certain degree of effectiveness. The successes of these programs depend on the extensive training, supervision, and structure provided to the volunteer tutors (Wasik, 1998a). Specifically, these volunteers are provided with initial training in the use of program materials from a qualified reading specialist who continues to provide support and feedback throughout the duration of the program (Wasik).

Ironically, the experience of the volunteer tutor in such structured literacy programs is a sparsely researched topic. General findings suggest that volunteer literacy tutors value the experience of working with struggling students (Invernizzi, Juel, & Rosemary, 1996), and report acquiring a deeper understanding for the needs of students as a result of these tutoring experiences (Topping, 1998). However, existing literature fails to explore tutors' experiences and beliefs beyond the act of tutoring. Hence, this portion of research explored the volunteer tutors' understanding of literacy processes and the instructional strategies, as well as their overall impressions of the teaching profession.

The After-School Literacy Program is described in chapter 2 of this document. For the duration of the program, qualitative data were collected to track the day-to-day experiences of the volunteer tutors. The purpose of Study #2 was to explore the volunteer tutors' beliefs about literacy instruction, individualized lesson planning, and teaching as a profession. Thus, the following research questions were asked:

1. What is the experience of volunteer tutors in this literacy program?
   - Do the tutors develop their knowledge of effective literacy strategies?
• Do the tutors perceive that they were able to effectively instruct students with literacy difficulties with these strategies?
• Do the tutors connect their knowledge of child development to tutoring practice?

2. How does this tutoring experience influence the volunteer tutors' beliefs about teaching?
• Do these tutors become aware of the individualized needs of students with literacy difficulties?
• Has tutoring altered their conceptualization of the teaching profession?
• Does this experience influence their ambition to pursue a teaching career?

Methodology

The goal of this research was to re-present the context in which the participants constructed their knowledge. For the undergraduates this context was the Literacy Program where they were trained and monitored as volunteer tutors. In the tradition of qualitative inquiry, case study methods were used to provide a detailed examination of a setting (Creswell, 1998). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), case study describes an issue, the participants, their experiences, and what is learned. Case study methods present the experiences of the participants through interviewing methods, observations, and analyses of their documents (Creswell, 1998). Meaning is extracted from data that outline what was experienced and how it was experienced (Creswell). Through case study the experiences of volunteer undergraduate tutors were documented along with their conceptualizations about literacy instruction and teaching.

This research was completed in a public elementary school close in proximity to the local university. Many of the volunteer tutors took public transit or shared
transportation to the site. The administration, teaching staff, and parent community welcomed the After-School Literacy Program.

Each tutor attended one after-school session per week from October through December. The tutors often arrived early so that they could begin to prepare their tutoring session materials. Immediately after school, the students shared a snack with the volunteer tutors in the school lunchroom. This was a large cafeteria-like room with six rows of picnic tables joined end to end. During this time the tutors and students engaged in casual conversation building rapport.

After snack, the volunteer tutors escorted their students to the school library where the academic component of the program took place. Scattered throughout the library were large round and rectangular tables with chairs where the volunteer tutors worked with their students. Each tutor had stationery supplies and teaching materials in a plastic bin at her table. A photocopy room, adjacent to the library was available to the tutors. This learning environment was informal yet conducive to small group instruction.

Participants

Nineteen undergraduates volunteered once a week as part of the After-School Literacy Program. Data were collected from all of these volunteers, however, a cross-section of these is presented here. These individuals were students in the Department of Child and Youth Studies at the local university. This degree program integrates psychological, sociological, and educational approaches. All volunteer tutors were female and in their second, third, or fourth year of their baccalaureate degree, and had completed undergraduate courses in child development, family sociology, and children with special needs. Child and Youth Studies is a competitive program in which students must maintain a “B” average to remain in the program. The volunteer tutors were recruited
through announcements made in undergraduate courses and through postings on campus. A number of the volunteer tutors were referred by friends.

The undergraduate tutors had varied experiences working with children. Some had worked in daycare or preschool settings and some had experience working in camps or recreational settings. A few had had opportunities working in educational settings. However, their experiences were limited to assisting teachers and did not involve teaching students. Consequently, most of the volunteer tutors were interested in gaining practical experience to submit as part of their application to teacher education programs. They considered the opportunity to instruct children to be a valuable and instrumental one. All volunteers received “experience” credit on their university transcripts for their participation as a tutor.

All volunteer tutors were required to attend a 3-hour pre-program training session, where they were provided with strategy instruction relevant to teaching students with learning disabilities. At the initial training session, these volunteer instructors were given scripted lesson plans that they followed throughout the course of the program. In addition, each volunteer tutor was given a summary of the assessment results that had been compiled for her students. Mid-program, a second training session was held for the writing composition pertaining to the program. On a weekly basis, the School-Based Coordinator debriefed with each tutor to maintain consistent and structured tutoring sessions.

Data

As reviewed in chapter 1, there is little literature that describes the experience of volunteer tutors (Invernizzi et al., 1996; Topping, 1998). The information that does exist documents how the tutors delivered tutoring sessions (Roe & Vukelich, 2000) or the
personal gratification that the tutors derived from their volunteering (Juel, 1996; Worthy et al., 2002). In Study #2, the researcher sought to advance the existing literature by systematically tracking the experiences of the volunteer literacy tutors. Specifically, data were collected through three means: interviews with the volunteer tutors, field notes and observations, and the tutors' summative evaluations.

In keeping with qualitative inquiry, the participants in Study #2 were observed in their natural contexts and the collected data were interpreted to shed meaning on their collective experiences. Adhering to the requirements of conducting credible qualitative research, several types of data were collected supporting triangulation and enhancing the credibility of the study (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). “This use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question... triangulation is an alternative to validation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). Triangulation, as corroborating evidence from different sources, describes the experience of the volunteer tutor and serves to illuminate the perceptions of the teacher candidates (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This was attempted through a variety of data sources including interviews, observations of tutors during tutoring sessions, and documents that were reviewed to interpret reflections.

The process of interviewing provides an opportunity for the participant to expand upon his/her reflections and for the researcher to document the details of the recollection. The researcher becomes immersed in the interview to understand the participant’s story from his/her vantage point (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Gluck & Patai, 1991). The researcher needs to listen to the description of the experience for recurring themes that relate to each other and inform the participant’s interpretation of his/her experience.
(Bogdan & Biklen; Gluck & Patai). For this reason, interviews are sometimes relatively open-ended yet focus around particular topics guided by some general questions—this is referred to as being semistructured (Bogden & Biklen). In an attempt to capture the participant’s words and allow the analysis to emerge, interviews are often audiotaped, and transcribed verbatim.

Observation is another type of data collection that was used in Study #2. During observation, field notes are recorded by the observing researcher to describe and reflect on the activities that the participants engage in the context of the study (Creswell, 1998). The physical setting is described and the events that occur there are recorded through the researcher’s eyes. The purpose of observation is to provide the researcher with an intuitive understanding of what is going on in a context, and observation further informs the meaning of the other forms of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In this study, the tutors were each observed for approximately 10 minutes of the tutoring session. Field notes were taken by the researcher during this observation.

Documents are often collected and used as supplemental information as part of case study when the main data source is participant observation or interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Documents can provide rich description and be used inductively in the process of constructing meaning. In this research, the tutors’ evaluations of their students’ efforts, comprehension of the lesson, and independent work habits were used to extend and corroborate the information that was supplied by the participants.

**Interviews.** Volunteer tutors were interviewed thrice over the course of the After-School Literacy Program. These semistructured interviews were completed face-to-face and audiotaped for subsequent transcription. The first interviews were completed after the
introductory tutor training and after the volunteers had met their students (see Appendix J for interview questions). This interview allowed participants to share why they volunteered as tutors and their initial impressions of their students. To extend the documentation of their experience, the tutors were asked to speculate on what they expected to learn from this experience and what they expected their students to learn from them. Since the tutors had completed training that focused on direct instruction with reading and writing strategies, they were asked to offer their impressions about explicit strategy instruction.

At the midway point in the program, after training for the writing composition lessons was completed, the tutors were interviewed again. During this interview the researcher gathered the tutors' initial impressions of their writing training session, the writing lessons, and the strategies for teaching the writing process. As a means of tracking tutor development, they were asked to comment on what they believed that they were learning from the tutoring experience (see Appendix K).

The final interview took place after the last tutoring session. The volunteer tutors were presented with a single leading prompt: “Tell me about your experience as a volunteer tutor in the After-School Literacy Program.” In the ensuing guided conversation (Bogden & Biklen, 1998), the researcher encourages the participant to talk generally and then further probes critical issues that emerge through conversation. Supplementary questions emerging from participants’ responses were posed to ensure that the tutors had an opportunity to comment on all aspects of their experiences. As well, it was important to prompt the volunteer tutors to comment on their futures as potential educators.
**Field Notes and Observations.** Throughout each of the 90-minute tutoring sessions, program activities and participant interactions were recorded by the researcher. Approximately 10 minutes of observational time was devoted to each of the volunteer tutors. To ensure anonymity, the volunteer tutors and their elementary students were assigned pseudonyms and participant code numbers, respectively. At the end of each of the tutoring sessions, the researcher audio recorded the field notes including impressions about lesson activities, volunteer tutors, and student dynamics. These audio-recorded notes were transcribed and used for data analysis. These observations were taken to provide documentation of the context of the study and to situate the other data.

**Tutors’ Evaluations.** After each tutoring session, the volunteer tutors completed a summative tool which evaluated students’ efforts, comprehension of the lesson, and independent work habits on a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix L). In addition, the volunteer tutors made anecdotal notes about the students’ performances, activities, and materials used during the session, as well as recommendations for subsequent sessions. This document was collected as a means of verifying the tutors’ recollection of their students’ performances.

**Data Analyses**

The interviews were transcribed and compiled chronologically. As part of a member-checking process, the participants were invited to edit and elaborate on their comments from these interviews (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Then the interview data were coded with coloured highlighters to sort out the general discussion topics. Categories emerged from these data and the categorical clusters were collapsed to form general patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). For Study #2, field notes and tutors’ evaluations were used to
corroborate patterns found from the verbal data. The field notes were coded as documentation of the tutors' teaching interactions with their students and were used to confirm the teacher candidates' perceptions of their expertise (Bogden & Biklen; Cole & Knowles, 1993; Miles & Huberman). A second rater verified the credibility of these themes.

Four distinct themes emerged, illustrating the tutors' experience over the course of the program: (A) Acquiring Strategy Instruction Skills; (B) Applying Theory to Practice; (C) Appreciation for Effective Teaching; and, (D) Affirmation of Self-as-Teacher. These themes are described below along with supporting subthemes. The participants were asked to verify the researcher's interpretations of these themes and later the associated conclusions (Bogden & Biklen; Miles & Huberman).

**Methodological Limitations**

Homogeneity of the participants is a central limitation to this study. The tutors were all females in their early 20s, Caucasian, and middle-class. They were in the process of completing undergraduate degrees in Child and Youth Studies. These tutors were motivated individuals who sought experience working directly with students in an educational setting. They were individuals who had attained the necessarily high credentials to enter teacher education programs.

The nature of inquiry in Study #2 was unique in that volunteer tutors are an understudied population. Case study methods were appropriate to illuminate the experiences of this select group of participants. Case study provides information as it was experienced and this contributes to the understandings of those readers that identify with the case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus, this method should be regarded as simply an
opportunity to build on the readers’ tacit knowledge (Lincoln & Guba) of the volunteer tutors’ experience.

**Ethical Review**

Study #1 and Study #2 followed the Tri-Council Policy Statement conventions for ethical research. Brock University Research Ethics Board approved this initial phase of research. Ethics documents are included as Appendix M.

**Results**

The following is a presentation of the results of Study #2, the volunteer tutors' experiences in the After-School Literacy Program. This program provided learning opportunities for both the student participants and the tutor volunteers. Throughout the program, the volunteers acquired knowledge in literacy strategies and delivery of these strategies through explicit instruction. These undergraduates connected theory with practice and refined their literacy instructional practices. A number of these individuals appeared to acquire a conception of the teaching profession prior to formal teacher education. It also informed their goal to become exemplary literacy teachers.

**(A) Acquiring Strategy and Instruction Skills**

Over the course of the After-School Literacy Program, the volunteer tutors increased their understanding of explicit instruction and reading and writing strategies. The initial training session provided basic pedagogy and a rationale of the Literacy Program. As well, they received scripted lesson plans that included metacognitive information and learning strategies (e.g., Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995; Wood, Woloshyn, & Willoughby, 1995). In her first interview, Lila, a third-year undergraduate student, commented on her impression of the Literacy Program’s pedagogy:
I like the explicitness of the instruction. The lesson plans give me a model that I can follow. I know I have to adapt the program to my own students, but I have the lesson plan which is based on a theory and can be adapted to different situations. (Lila, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

Yet, several of the volunteer tutors were overwhelmed and intimidated by the extent of these lesson plans:

I’ve definitely been overwhelmed. There is a lot of information to take in at once. I learn best when I can apply my learning and actually do it. I know that going through these lessons will be a matter of routine and working through them with the students. It is trial and error for me as much as it is for them. (Linda, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

The uneasiness that the tutors experienced seemed to stem from the detail and specificity of the lesson plans. By design, the lesson plans were scripted to include strategic components and metacognitive information. For many of the tutors, this was their first experience working with this type of instruction. Following the initial tutoring sessions, the volunteer tutors required continued support in implementing the details of the lesson plans. “Linda and Sophia were anxious about using the lesson plans. I spent 10 minutes focusing their attention on their students’ needs and how the lessons could address them” (Researcher, Field Notes, Oct. 9/01).

At the onset of the program some of the volunteer tutors followed the lesson plans verbatim and did not deviate from the instructions. Lila worked with three Grade 6/7 male students and made notes about how she followed the lesson plan model:

I read the objectives in the lesson plan, but sometimes it is difficult to remember what I read. I told the students that I have to remember what I read in the texts. I told them that a story frame could be used to assist them in remembering what they read at school or at the library. I followed steps to teach this strategy. I talked through the steps with them and we tried this strategy with a book. (Tutor’s Evaluation, Oct. 18/01)
Linda also thought that the lessons were to be taught in a prescribed and step-by-step fashion: "The scripted lessons have no margin for error. This is what you do, how to follow through, and help them go through" (Linda, Interview #2, Nov. 2001). By mid-program, Linda had taken a more pragmatic perspective with respect to the scripted lesson plans and like most of the tutors began to appreciate that the lesson plans could be adapted to the students' needs and interests. This was illustrated as they became comfortable in making required accommodations for individualized instruction.

Nina was placed with Grade 3 and 4 students who were at the same reading level and had similar decoding needs. She individualized her instruction and became adept in accommodating her lessons to the learning needs of her students:

I think the prepared lesson plans are a good idea except that every student is different, so there's always going to be modifications. You can have a guideline, but until you are in the teaching situation, you will not know if your lesson will be successful. So you just have to be ready to change things. (Nina, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

If students are each working on different assignments that interest them and they are happy working on their own seatwork, then the instruction is successful. (Nina, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

I think I've learned that you really have to adapt instruction to the child and you really have to understand each child to be effective. I think my last lesson was more effective than my first. I think a lot had to do with getting to know the students. (Nina, Interview #3, March 2002)

The tutors realized explicit instruction involved explaining what strategy students were learning and why they were learning it (e.g., Deshler & Schumaker, 1986; Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995; Swanson, 1999). The volunteer tutors learned that the students needed to be made aware of a variety of learning strategies to meet their different learning needs. Students who possess a repertoire of strategies also possess alternative approaches to learning (Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995). The volunteer tutors were trained
to impart metacognitive information and explicitly teach comprehension and writing strategies:

I think that these lessons will help the children understand what they need to know. I will tell them they need these particular strategies to learn to read. Teachers cannot make students use the strategies when they don’t really understand why they are using them. I will tell them why they are learning them and how the strategies will help them. I think this will be very useful for the students. (Jan, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

I hope that my students pick up the lesson of using different strategies. If one strategy doesn’t work, then we implement plan B, C, D, or E. (Melanie, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

By the completion of the After-School Literacy Program, a number of the tutors believed that they had facilitated their students’ learning experiences. Jordan, a tutor with a learning disability, offered her perspective: “I think anybody can lead children, but if you can guide them instead of overtly leading, that’s significant. I think guidance in learning is what students need most of all” (Jordan, Interview #3, Dec. 2001).

Jordan’s perspective was typical of the majority of the tutors’ perceptions of the plans and pedagogy of the After-School Literacy Program. Most of the tutors taught from the lesson plans and accepted the strategic methods, but did not consistently articulate their understanding of the nature of explicit strategy instruction. A few of the tutors, such as Sophia, Lila, Jan, and Melanie, expressed the importance of providing students with a repertoire of strategies and accompanying metacognitive information. For example, Sophia stated, “I think the students are coming to recognize different strategies for approaching a problem. They think in their head, ‘Okay, let me remember what I did with Sophia and this will help me with my work today’” (Sophia, Interview #2, Nov. 2001). Another example is Jan, who stated:
My impression of explicit strategy instruction is that it really helps the kids understand what they need to know. You tell them, “This is what you need to do to learn to read,” rather than just making them do this and they don’t really understand why they are doing it. (Jan, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

Across the duration of the Program, there was an evolution in the tutors’ perceptions in the usefulness of literacy strategies.

Program beginning: Perceptions of strategies. The tutors were introduced to delivery of literacy strategies that addressed basic letter-sound correspondence, decoding, comprehension, and composition. At the beginning of the program, the tutors accepted this training at face value and began tutoring. The tutors had some initial perceptions of these strategies; these perceptions changed over the duration of the program as the tutors worked through the strategies with their students and came to appreciate the efficacy of the chosen literacy strategies.

Teaching beginning phonics was unfamiliar to some of the volunteers. For example, Sharon had little knowledge of beginning phonics when she was assigned three Intermediate-level students with letter-sound correspondence needs: “I’m learning how to teach older students about vowels, phonetic rules, and strategies for reading. It’s good” (Sharon, Interview #2, Nov. 2001). Teaching basic phonetic concepts was also an instructional focus with Primary and Junior age students:

The majority of these children need to learn the vowels and blend letter sounds to help them read. Hopefully, they’ll get it. I was not taught these strategies as a child and I wish I had, but I am learning these strategies as I am teaching them now. (Laurie, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

The volunteer tutors were impressed with the efficacy of teaching decoding with analogous letter patterns (Allen, 1998; Gaskins, 1998). A group of Grade 7/8 students learned the letter pattern “ue,” as in words such as “glue,” to assist them to read words
such as "continued." Specifically, the students learned how to divide words, such as "continued" into syllables "con-tin-ued," and use an analogous letter pattern, such as "ue" to decode the last syllable. "They are learning how easy it is to read words. Instead of looking at a big word and being intimidated, they're kind of learning how to break it apart and make it easier" (Sharon, Interview #2, Nov. 2001). Wendy, an experienced tutor, affirmed the effectiveness of this strategy: "I've tutored reading before but never with this strategy. I was really interested in trying to show them how to read independently. Teaching this skill proved very effective" (Wendy, Interview #1, Sept. 2001).

The program employed two different graphic organizers for reading comprehension (Boyle & Weishaar, 1997). Within a few tutoring sessions, the volunteer tutors perceived that their students readily recalled the components of story grammar (Vaughan et al., 2000) using the Predictive Story Frame (Appendix D):

They seem to understand a lot better already. But the first couple of times they could not tell me the problem of the story. They were just recounting everything that happened. Now they can also pick out the three major events in the story. (Cassandra, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

The volunteer tutors who worked with Junior/Intermediate students believed this strategy facilitated the teaching of difficult concepts, such as the thesis of an expository article (Stevens, 1988; Vaughan et al., 2000). "I worked on the comprehension of two articles. The second time around, when I asked them, 'What is the thesis?' They could tell me. Once I thoroughly explained the concept using the 'C & C House' (Appendix E) - they grasped it" (Jan. Interview #2, Nov. 2001).

**Program middle: Extending the strategies.** Initial perceptions of the strategies changed as the tutors gained experience with the literacy strategies. The tutors began to
recognize the importance of providing their students with opportunities to extend and reinforce skills. The tutors became aware of the interconnectedness of reading and writing skills and the prospects of encouraging their students to assist each other.

The volunteer tutors created activities and games requiring the students to apply newly acquired letter-sound knowledge. As well, tutors of older students devised meaningful age-appropriate tasks that reviewed and reinforced this basic understanding:

Linda is leading the Vowel Bingo Game. Sammy states the rules of the game before Linda can give the directions. Sammy uses an example with the sound for short â and reviews the sound and recalls the image of an apple. Linda smiles as Andy uses the Jolly Phonics actions to remember the sound of the short vowel â. (Researcher, Field Note, Nov. 6, 2001)

Sharon is using a character from The Simpsons who says, “Excellent” with his fingers touching repetitively. These are their keyword and action for remembering the short e sound. (Researcher, Field Notes, Oct. 16, 2001)

Today’s sound was “au” – they had a cue card made up with the character Austin Powers on it and the gesture that Austin Powers makes is the gesture that the students are making to associate the “au” sound as in Austin. (Researcher, Field Notes, Oct. 18, 2001)

In a similar fashion, the volunteer tutors reinforced letter patterns with rhyming word families. For example, Laurie challenged her students to recall words that rhyme with “mail,” two of the students thought of “snail, pail, tail, nail, and fail” and her third student also added the name “Gail” (Laurie, Tutor’s Evaluation, Nov. 8/01). Overall, the students responded enthusiastically to this competitive challenge:

Tutors, Minnie and Selma make a competitive game out of generating rhymes. Billy reads his rhymes and Tim and Julia check their rhymes. The students react when they hear a word not on their list. Tim proudly proclaims that he’s got 31 words now. They all had “ee” or “or” in them. (Researcher, Field Notes, Nov. 8, 2001)

The volunteer tutors perceived success in teaching some of their students the reading-by-analogy strategy. These students became versed in this strategy to the degree
that they instructed their peers. This reciprocal instruction conveyed the students had
internalized this strategy (Webb & Palincsar, 1996):

Well, at first I didn’t think they were learning a whole lot. I wondered why the boys were here. I was wondering what they were learning from this and then I saw how Bobby was struggling through the reading. Ben whispered to him, “Break it down,” and told him where to segment the words and which letter patterns were the familiar ones. So now I know that they are learning how to make decoding simpler by using patterns—instead of looking at this big word and being intimidated, they’re kind of learning how to make it easier. (Sharon, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

At mid-point of the After-School Literacy Program, the volunteer tutors focused their instruction on the writing process for both narrative and expository compositions. Research suggests that students who are taught story grammar components are able to transfer this knowledge into their story writing (Sexton et al., 1998). Tutors noted their students' retention for story grammar components and their enhanced story writing skills:

When I began our tutoring sessions, the students would ask, “What is a setting?” They didn’t know. Now they just rhyme it off. It is obvious that they know it now when we were writing our own stories. They were able to think of so many settings they found it difficult to choose the one they liked best. (Cora, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

It’s great that we had “C & C House” for reading comprehension, as the students used this strategy in their writing, as well. They were able to organize their ideas based on skills with which they had already become familiar. It really helped them. (Wendy, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

**Program end: Strategy transfer.** By the conclusion of the After-School Literacy Program, the volunteer tutors had gained an understanding of teaching strategies and skills for students with literacy difficulties. Through addressing the learning needs of their students, the tutors were beginning to understand the rationale behind the skills, strategies, and pedagogy that were employed in the After-School Literacy Program. The
tutors were beginning to understand that the goal of strategy instruction is skill transfer and future application.

As the tutors acquired effective skills in literacy instruction they also became aware of valuable educational resources. They realized the importance of teaching letter-sound correspondence skills and developed teaching strategies using contemporary teaching materials such as the *Jolly Phonics* program (Lloyd, 1998). The tutors combined this program with the integrated picture mnemonic strategy to motivate letter-sound correspondence acquisition:

The students are able to have fun learning letters and drawing pictures with a letter in them. This helps the children memorize the letters and sounds and it's very motivating for them. (Laurie, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

It's an amazing way to teach letter-sound correspondence by incorporating everything into movements and actions. I think it was a great addition to the program. (Jenna, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

They are reviewing the action for the short ù sound. Laurie anticipates Charlie finishing early so she pulls out a paper to trace ù and draw around it with a gel pen. (Researcher, Field Notes, October 25, 2001)

After several tutoring sessions, the volunteer tutors observed that some of their students internalized letter-sound correspondences as students recalled the sounds without prompting:

Cameron has progressed with his long and short vowels. He knows the differences and in the beginning he didn’t even know what a short vowel was, so that’s pretty good. (Nina, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

I’m not expecting them to be great readers, but I think that they are better than when they started this program. Now they begin to read without hesitating and they can sound out words better than when we started the program. (Sharon, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)
As the program drew to a close, the tutors perceived that graphic organizers such as the Predictive Story Frame were an effective tool to facilitate comprehension and story grammar:

Andy was readily able to answer questions about the problem, characters, and setting. He shared this learning with the others in his group. (Researcher, Field Notes, Oct. 25, 2001)

My Grade 3 and 4 students can readily identify the characteristics of a story. (Jordan, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

The students are able to write their predictions on the frame (graphic organizer). They are independent and focused. Cora reads Santa Claus Express while they listen. At about the middle of the story, Cora puts down the book and their hands go up unprompted to offer new predictions. (Researcher, Field Notes, Nov. 6, 2001)

In their final interviews, a number of the volunteer tutors were optimistic that the comprehension strategies they had taught to their students would be of future value. Cora believed that strategy transfer could possibly extend several grades beyond the students' current grade level:

These are the basic literary concepts that they didn’t know and now you see they do know them. The learning strategies they use in the classroom, they can transfer to their regular classroom setting with subjects such as geography. If they do not have reading comprehension skills, they cannot effectively understand a story in language arts or the readings in a history text in Grade 9. (Cora, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

The learned literacy strategies extended beyond directly teaching elementary students. Through practicing strategic instruction, some of these undergraduate volunteer tutors began to personally internalize the literacy strategies. Their literacy competence grew as they refined their knowledge and skills. As an undergraduate and tutor, Amanda, derived personal benefit from reviewing the essay-writing process:

“P.O.W.E.R. [Plan. Organize. Write. Edit. Revise.]” has helped me with my own writing of assignments and essays. As I learned about it and I applied it to my
tutoring lessons and I realize it is very good for the students to be knowledgeable of this strategy. I always had a hard time writing essays and papers and since I learned this strategy, it’s been a lot easier for me. (Amanda, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

(B) Applying Theory to Practice

Most of the volunteer tutors in the After-School Literacy Program were aspiring to become elementary teachers. Tutoring provided these undergraduates with the opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice. These tutors had acquired a certain amount of background knowledge about child development, including students’ motivation, behaviour management, and individualized instruction. Yet, most of the tutors lacked face-to-face experience working with students. Tutoring offered the opportunity to interact with children of differing ages and perceive how child development theory informs teaching behaviour. Participation in the After-School Literacy Program gave these undergraduates pragmatic experience, which further enriched their respective undergraduate course content.

Students’ motivation and confidence. Minnie found it difficult to maintain her 8-year-old boys on task. She discovered that these Grade 2 students were interested in “whatever was gross and nasty and gooey” (Minnie, Interview #2, Nov. 2001). Consequently, Minnie made specific choices in reading material to reflect the students' interest. Similarly, Cora learned how to appeal to the interests of her Grade 5 boys: “I thought that Jacob Two-Two looked age-appropriate but it bored them to death, so I scratched it. We moved on to a book by Dr. Seuss and they are now able to show me how to use the story frame” (Cora, Tutor’s Evaluation, Nov. 3, 2001).

Katrina and Jenna requested to work with older students to balance their previous experiences with younger children. These volunteer tutors taught lessons that were
intrinsically motivating for these adolescent students. "Katrina spent a lot of time doing the letter pattern lessons by creatively choosing words from TEEN magazine to decode words such as "Neutrogena." The three adolescent girls were keenly interested and involved in this activity" (Researcher, Field Notes, March 6, 2002). Lila's students were adolescent boys who found short expository articles more appealing than the novel she had originally chosen. Lila concluded that, regardless of the comprehension strategy, her students would recall very little unless she engaged their interests. "I got them articles about the sports that they like including snowboarding and basketball. It was more interesting to them and this was important for me to consider" (Lila, Interview #3, Dec. 2001).

At times, engaging the students meant role-playing and providing activities they perceived as fun. The tutors realized that alternative activities could be highly motivating and also provide effective skill review. Jordan's students seemed to enjoy when they were allowed to reverse roles and become the teachers:

I found that the more that they taught me the more that they liked it. So I pretended sometimes not to understand what they were talking about. I empowered them as I kept control of the learning situation. (Jordan, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

Selma engaged her Grade 2 and 3 students by offering educational activities which they found enjoyable, as well. Selma documented a number of creative extension activities that she did with her students to reinforce concepts:

- played TROUBLE game by filling in sentences and clues for words with “oy” (Selma, Tutor’s Evaluation, Oct. 25, 2001);
- created a skit with words that had the sound “ch” at the beginning (Selma, Tutor’s Evaluation, Nov. 1, 2002);
- played Vowel Bingo and in order to win the students had to properly identify a vowel and whether it was long or short. (Selma, Tutor’s Evaluation, Nov. 8, 2001)
Tutors expected that these alternative activities would be highly motivating for their students. Research demonstrates students enjoy being involved in hands-on learning activities (Enzle, Wright, & Redondo, 1996). From a teaching perspective, the tutors learned that skill review activities could also serve to intrinsically motivate students’ literacy skill acquisition.

A number of the volunteer tutors remarked about their students’ sensitivity, self-esteem, and confidence (Castle, 1994; Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). For instance, two adolescent males in Jenna’s co-ed group competed to answer comprehension questions while the female student did not participate unless she was specifically requested. Jenna found that she often had to work one-on-one with this adolescent student who behaved very differently when she was given individual attention:

When we work one-on-one, she knows and she understands. I think once you throw some guys in the group, she becomes very self-conscious and she worries about the way she acts. (Jenna, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

Bettina, one of Cassandra’s female adolescent students, also appeared to be self-conscious when in a group tutoring class. Cassandra observed that this self-consciousness stemmed from her difficulty in reading:

I realize each child is so different. Bettina is quiet and shy and if you don’t ask her what she thinks, she won’t talk. It is, at times, overwhelming for her when the other two students are talking, but I know she has good ideas to share. I make sure all the students have a turn to participate, and that Bettina gets the chance to explain how well she comprehends. (Cassandra, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

Stipak (1996) demonstrates that students with difficulties will easily give up if they do not grasp concepts immediately. The volunteer tutors began to understand the challenges of students with average to above average intelligence that have learning
disabilities. The challenges that these students experience in reading and writing are often manifested in negative self-esteem (Brady & Moats, 1997). Self-esteem plays a significant role in the achievement of students with learning disabilities (Castle, 1994). A number of volunteer tutors worked with students who demonstrated characteristics of negative self-esteem:

This student is not very confident at all. Every time she writes a word, she’ll say, “I don’t think that’s right.” I hope she gains confidence. (Wendy, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

Sometimes if students don’t have the skills, they get angry and they demonstrate a major attitude. Before I started I was kind of nervous of what they were going to be like. They would say, “I can’t read and I don’t care.” But I was surprised, they were really, really good. (Sharon, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

The thing that bothers me the most is that they seem so bright and it bothers me because it’s almost like they are not trying. I will try to help them but it’s really up to them and this is frustrating as an instructor. If they would just try they could do it so easily but they are not willing. (Kathleen, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

Tony is one of the brightest children I’ve ever met in my life and he has told me he doesn’t know it. I don’t think his teachers realize it, either. That really bothers me because I see so much potential in him. (Jenna, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

By the conclusion of the After-School Literacy Program, a number of the volunteer tutors perceived improvements in their students’ confidence levels. “Ally still needs a lot of encouragement, but it’s going well. She’s more confident and if she needs help, she will ask for it” (Wendy, Interview #2, Nov. 2001).

Behaviour management and attention. From the beginning of the program, the tutors were challenged to ensure that each learner was engaged and attentive during the tutoring session. Guyer (2000) demonstrates that students have differences in their abilities to attend to task and their receptivity to learning. Julia tutored three Grade 4
students and she realized that, regardless of the amount of preparation prior to tutoring, she needed to be aware of student engagement:

I found, with my group, that if I read the lessons from my paper I’d lose them completely. So I prepared my lesson presentation before class. I would deliver my lesson while I monitored the students’ attention. (Julia, Interview #1, Oct. 2001)

I am respectful of children’s differences. I know that each child comes from a different background and may be dealing with a lot of things outside of school. I realize that if the child is not paying attention that it might be a situational circumstance. (Julia, Interview #3, Mar. 2002)

A number of the tutors successfully used simple strategies when their students became distracted. In some cases they increased attention to their students and in other situations they modified the conditions of the learning environment:

Cora is good at maintaining the table control and ensuring that the students are on task. As Braden’s attention drifts, Cora grasps his attention and puts him back on task by saying his name and asking him to read. (Researcher, Field Notes, November 1, 2001)

Brenna is very prepared. She planned her letter-sound lesson last week and the worksheets were prepared. On the table beside her she has the TROUBLE game and the writing materials she will need for later. Her students Cindy and Camilla are now quiet and cooperative. Keeping these students busy is an effective management strategy. (Researcher, Field Notes, November 22, 2001)

Brenna is conducting her tutoring in the school library. Louis is not listening. He says he is too tired to listen. Brenna takes the group to work in the hallway to eliminate other distractions. They are all now working quietly and Louis is focused. (Researcher, Field Notes, Oct. 16, 2001)

Although the tutors’ evaluation forms (Appendix L) were designed to document the content and perceived effectiveness of the tutoring sessions, the tutors often used these forms to comment on their students’ attention and behaviour, “...didn’t really pay attention,” “hard worker,” “always talking,” “very independent,” “didn’t concentrate well,” “usually stays on task.” For these evaluation forms, the volunteer tutors focused on the students’ work habits rather than their comprehension of the lesson. The tutors
recognized the crucial role that attention and behaviour management play in instruction. Students with literacy difficulties may often be distracted, off-task and fidgety (Hutchison, 2002). Tutoring afforded these volunteers the opportunity to practice their behaviour management skills with these students with literacy difficulties.

*Individualized instruction.* The volunteer tutors were provided with an assessment profile detailing the instructional needs for each of their students. The tutors had taken courses in learning exceptionalities and possessed some theoretical knowledge about working with students with exceptionalities. For instance, they were aware that students with learning disabilities derive benefit from learning strategies (Gunning, 2002). “I think P.O.W.E.R. is great. I’m taking a course and they introduced this acronym as an effective strategy to use with students with learning disabilities” (Melanie, Interview #2, Nov. 2001).

From their Child and Youth Studies University Program, many of the volunteer tutors had learned about individual students’ needs and they hoped to apply this knowledge to their tutorial instruction: “From this tutorial experience I hope to learn how to deal with different children, and learn how each one learns differently and how it may take some students longer than others to assimilate new knowledge” (Jody, Interview #1, Sept. 2001). Jody adjusted her expectations for each of her students as she observed that children possess different skill mastery levels. “Tim had great ideas and I supported his participation but didn’t make him write” (Jody, Summative Evaluation, Nov. 20, 2001).

The volunteer tutors embraced the challenge inherent in teaching students who demonstrated different levels of comprehension and learning abilities. The tutors ensured their students received appropriate individual instruction, thus demonstrating flexibility
as effective educators. Responsibility placed on the teacher to provide effective
instruction assumes the premise that students with literacy difficulties can learn
(Nikiforuk, 1998). The tutors learned to personalize instruction to individual skill levels
and groups:

I think it will be a challenge. Two out of the three boys don’t have as many sound
problems as the one does, so it makes it hard to teach the group. I have to balance
my instruction to a level, which allows all three of my students to feel motivated
to learn. I don’t want the two other boys who don’t have so many problems to get
bored when I’m working with the one. (Lila, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

Sometimes, I am frustrated by having to adapt the lessons to fit their behaviour,
but I realize as a facilitator of learning I must meet their needs. Each student is an
individual learner and that is what I have to teach to. I used to think that I could
teach my group as a whole, now I realize that they are all unique. (Lila, Interview
#2, Nov. 2001)

They have a little trouble doing some tests on their own. Sometimes they don’t
comprehend things and you have to work with them each differently a couple of
times before they actually get it. (Minnie, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

Ensuring that each of their students received appropriate instruction was a crucial
element of demonstrating flexibility as educators:

I’ve learned a lot about teaching. You have to be patient and you have to try and
meet their needs, and teach them all individually especially when some need help
in one area and another person needs help in another. (Brenna, Interview #2, Nov.
2001)

It is really important to know that each child is different. You’re told this in
courses, but you don’t see it until you experience it. Everyone’s different. Every
day is different, too. (Linda, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

(C) Appreciation for Effective Teaching

As the volunteer tutors gained a certain degree of instructional expertise, their
enthusiasm for the teaching profession was counterbalanced with a cautiously realistic
perspective about the demands of teaching. From the outset of the After-School Literacy
Program, the volunteer tutors believed that teachers should devote their time to making learning an engaging process and grasping the concepts presented in their lessons:

A good teacher is someone who has the desire to make learning fun. They’re not afraid to put the extra time into their planning and preparation. (Sharon, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

After just the first week, the lessons were working well and the students seemed to be learning successfully. The strategies were easy for the tutors to understand and easy for the students to learn. They were doing everything exactly how they were instructed. (Cassandra, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

In the initial phases of the Program, the volunteer tutors followed the details of the prescribed lesson plans while maintaining students’ enthusiasm to learn. After some time, the volunteer tutors became cognizant that teaching meant not only what to teach, but also how to teach. These tutors began to see themselves as agents responsible for delivery of effective instruction (Invernizzi et al., 1996). Many of the tutors appreciated the need for augmenting lesson plans for the adaptability necessary to meet learning requirements:

I’m finding that the After-School Literacy Program is really helping me in the planning stages of teaching. Then, I go home and actually think about what I am going to teach next week and how I am going to strategically teach it. (Cassandra, Interview #2, Oct. 2001)

I didn’t think that this was what teaching was about: breaking down skills and teaching students how to learn. It is a lot of work. (Kathleen, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

Teaching strategies is a lot harder than I thought it would be at first. It involves planning how you are going to teach as much as teaching what you planned… I’ve always known that you should have a lesson prepared and I know they’re already prepared for us, but I also focused on how to use the plans effectively. (Melanie, Interview #2, Dec. 2001)

We were given a lot of lesson plans and this was sort of scary. We each had to take them and then work with them. It’s probably like real teachers have to do when they’re given a curriculum and told to work with it. (Jenna, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)
I am learning about how much work is involved in teaching. As you are teaching, you are thinking and you need to be prepared with backup activities. You need to consider what to do if the students don’t understand. You need to consider how you can say things differently. (Cassandra, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)

I think to be the best teacher you can be, you need tons of experience and tons of different opportunities. (Jordan, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)

A good educator is someone who can interact with the students, has patience, and realizes that every student has a different way of learning. Many different learning strategies are needed, especially for children having difficulty. (Jordan, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

Over the course of the program, these volunteer tutors realized that “good” lessons incorporate “good” teaching strategies and that effective teaching strategies were particularly important for students who struggle as learners (Gunning, 2002). Many of the volunteer tutors worked in this program to gain experience with these students in an academic setting. Despite the context disparity between small group tutoring and inclusive classroom settings, some tutors perceived that they had acquired experience that would inform their future practice:

I think by being involved as tutors in the After-School Literacy Program we obtained superior knowledge that can be used in a classroom. I think it’s important for every teacher to know how to teach students to read and write. (Melanie, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

This experience will help me down the road, especially in terms of teaching children with disabilities. I have learned how to teach strategies to children. The more experience I have, the better a teacher I will be. I want to walk into a classroom knowing what I’m doing. (Laurie, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

Some of these tutors seemed certain of the characteristics of an effective remedial teacher and believed that in the future they could deliver effective instruction to students who struggled with reading and writing: “A good resource teacher discovers the students’
problem, builds lessons, and teaches the children in the way that they learn best”

(D) Affirmation of Self-as-Teacher

Some of the volunteer tutors entered the After-School Literacy Program questioning whether teaching would be a career choice for them. They recognized the opportunity to tutor as one that would offer them a chance to test their desire and ability to teach children. They also recognized that tutoring in the After-School Literacy Program would be a key volunteer experience to potentially use on Faculty of Education applications. By the end of the After-School Literacy Program, a number of the volunteer tutors commented that their experience in the program either affirmed or re-affirmed their desire to become teachers. For some of the tutors, their tutoring experience refined their desire to work with certain populations of students.

A number of the volunteer tutors requested adolescent students to gain teaching experience with this age group. These tutors learned to provide support and were inspired to consider teaching students with learning disabilities at the Junior level in the future:

I have never worked with this age group before. At first I was scared because I wasn’t used to it and I have always worked with students in Grade 2 or 3. It was good to have exposure to this age group, especially to the boys. They are more challenging because girls that age are not as easily bored. I am more comfortable working with the Junior level now that I have some experience in this area. I think that I would like to teach them one day. (Lila, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

For some tutors, this experience identified their desire to teach students with learning disabilities. These tutors perceived that as teachers they would be able to relate to students who were experiencing difficulty and appreciate their challenges:

When I become a teacher, I want to focus on working with students with disabilities and ADHD. This also has to do with my own experience growing up as a student with a learning disability. I’ve seen a lot of other students like me
give up. I want to give back the encouragement that I was given. (Jordan, Interview #1, Sept. 2001)...I can look at the students with learning disabilities and say, “Look, I made it. You can make it, too.” I think that’s why I am motivated to teach. If I can make an impact on one person’s life, then I’ve made a positive difference. (Jordan, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

I want to be a good teacher and give students learning strategies they may not otherwise receive. One teacher can change a student and put him onto the right track and change his life. I want to be one of these teachers who inspires children believe in themselves. (Jenna, Interview #2, Nov. 2001)...I see so much potential in my students and that is what makes me want to be a teacher even more. (Jenna, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

The volunteer tutors worked in a small group setting and this experience seemed to enhance their motivation to teach: “I went into this questioning if I wanted to pursue a teaching career. I thought that I might not like being with children one-on-one. Now, I know that I definitely do want to teach” (Linda, Interview #3, Dec. 2001). For many of the volunteer tutors, the tutoring experience was a formative one that crystallized their notions about teaching and their future role as a teacher:

Well, I think that all the strategies that were used were really good ideas and I think that they are good to keep for the next time I am teaching. Obviously, they all worked very well. I think the tutoring experience has helped me to take on the teacher’s role. (Sophia, Interview #3, Dec. 2001)

**Conclusions and Discussion**

The After-School Literacy Program was a simulated teaching context for the volunteer tutors. These undergraduates were trained and encouraged to deliver reading and writing strategy instruction through scripted lesson plans. Initially, the tutors were overwhelmed by the specificity of the plans and intricacies of the explicit strategies. Some of the tutors needed to follow the plans verbatim before they felt confident adapting the plans to their students’ needs and interests. Continued experience with these plans and the Program pedagogy afforded the tutors a degree of confidence.
However, it is uncertain how the tutors adapted the lesson plans and whether or not critical pedagogical components remained consistently intact. A few of the tutors (e.g., Sophia, Jan, Lila, Melanie) recognized the efficacy of explicit instruction and the inclusion of metacognitive information; for other tutors (e.g., Misty, Lindsay), recognition of this efficacy was only implied in their post-program discussions and reflections. For example, “I helped students learn the P.O.W.E.R. strategy which will help them break down the steps and remember how to write” (Misty, Interview #3, Dec. 2001). Despite the fact that this pedagogy was emphasized in tutor training and monitored for the duration of the program, it is apparent that the volunteer tutors required extensive explicit instruction and continuous retraining opportunities. Nevertheless, over the course of the Program, all volunteer tutors demonstrated a perception for the purpose and use of the literacy strategies.

For most of the volunteer tutors, this was their first introduction to strategies that addressed basic letter-sound correspondence, decoding, comprehension, and composition. As they gained familiarity, the tutors started to appreciate the efficacy of the strategies. Then, once the tutors perceived that they had mastered the skill of delivering strategic instruction, they started to consider various applications of the strategies. The tutors recognized how to extend, connect, and reinforce reading and writing skills. Beyond this, a few of the volunteer tutors started to understand that the ultimate goal of strategy instruction is knowledge and skill transfer.

For the volunteer tutors, this developmental progression mimics beginning teachers’ experience as their practice develops over time. Seminal literature in this area (Shulman, 1987) demonstrates that teachers must have a clear understanding of their
instructional goals and they must first comprehend the material to be taught. Appropriate pedagogical knowledge must be transformed into teachable information and instruction is mitigated by students' learning demands. Generally, teachers evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction and consider implications for future practice (Shulman). The volunteer tutors followed this teaching cycle as they gained knowledge of the literacy strategies, strategic instruction, and how to teach to students’ needs.

The tutoring experience also encouraged these undergraduates to integrate theory with practice. Theoretical knowledge acquired from their undergraduate studies was legitimated through interaction with children who were experiencing literacy difficulties. These students avoided risk-taking opportunities and demonstrated negative self-esteem, low confidence, and off-task attention. Initially, the tutors did not expect that they would have to make further instructional modifications in their lesson planning. Implicitly, the tutors became aware of the affective requirements of their students and the need for appropriate instruction.

In the present study, tutors practiced some constructs and approaches common to educational psychology theory. Confronted with challenges to enhance students’ motivation and confidence, the volunteer tutors appealed to students’ interests (Cameron & Pierce, 2002), included motivating, meaningful games and activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), and provided encouragement (Cameron, Banko, & Pierce, 2001). The tutors attempted to ensure that they were managing the behaviour and attention of their students during the session (Kounin, 1970), while preparing conducive learning environments (Evertson et al., 2003). Appreciating the need to individualize instruction, the tutors altered lessons to address students’ needs (Snow, Corno,
Jackson, 1996) and mastery levels (Bloom, 1976). This type of practical experience has been found to encourage teacher candidates to evaluate their theoretical understanding (Roskos & Walker, 1994) and in the present study, it was the volunteer tutors that began to consider their theoretical awareness.

The findings of the present study of volunteer tutors are similar to those changes in tutors’ conceptual knowledge that have been previously documented (Berrill, 2003). Specifically, tutors have realized gains in knowledge of reading terminology (e.g., “comprehending,” “word family”) and decoding strategies for emergent readers (e.g., “find little words inside the bigger word”). Tutors were able to identify the characteristics of students with learning disabilities and associated reading strategies. Additionally, tutoring experience encouraged empathy and understanding for the challenges of students with learning disabilities. The tutors also realized the association between students’ self-esteem and their ability to read. Collectively, this knowledge is imperative for prospective educators as a foundation for learning about learning disabilities (Berrill, 2003).

As a result of working with their students, the volunteer tutors appreciated the planning, adaptability, and expertise of teachers of students with literacy difficulties. Initially, the tutors believed that a teacher devotes time and effort to provide fun and meaningful activities for students. Over time, the tutors’ impression changed and they started to believe that a teacher needs to understand how students learn and how teachers should teach. They believed their concept of teaching was authenticated through their tutoring experience. For a number of these individuals, this tutoring experience affirmed their aspirations to become teachers and they were confident in their ability to attain this
future goal. Recognizing the intense commitment of teachers to meet the needs of all their students, the volunteer tutors expressed respect for the teachers and their profession.

The volunteer tutors demonstrated growth as instructors as they established a knowledge base in teaching reading and writing skills. Their initial apprehensions in regard to tutoring with specific and strategically planned lessons grew into a respect for the efficacy of this type of instruction. This respect for the After-School Literacy Program's pedagogy evolved such that a number of tutors believed that these strategies and methods could be applied in their future classroom practice. This foundational perception would become their prior knowledge of literacy instruction (Glaser, 1984) and this established conceptualization of how to teach literacy skills would become firmly entrenched (Driscoll, 2000).

This chapter has presented the experiential learning gains of volunteer undergraduate tutors in a literacy program setting. At the close of the program, some of these tutors received acceptance into teacher education programs across the province. The tutors believed that they could apply the pedagogy that they had practiced in the After-School Literacy Program. A final path of inquiry was designed to track the tutors' entry into teacher education programs and determine the influence of the volunteer tutoring experience on early literacy instruction. In Study #3, the impact of these teaching experiences on teacher candidacy practica was explored through case study methods. The experiences of 6 of these teacher candidates follows in chapter 4.
CHAPTER FOUR:
FORMER VOLUNTEER TUTORS AS TEACHER CANDIDATES

This final study examined the professional growth of 6 teacher candidates during their teacher education programs. These participants were all undergraduates in Child and Youth Studies at Brock University who had previously worked as volunteer tutors in an After-School Literacy Program. Study #3 includes the participants' subjective assessment of their teaching experience.

The training and tutoring opportunities acquired prior to formal teacher education were unique in that these 6 teacher candidates were practiced in specific decoding, comprehension, and writing strategies and all had opportunities to work in small group settings with students who experienced literacy difficulties. In this study they were asked to recall and reassess their tutoring experiences, as well as, reflect on their experiences while completing their teacher education programs. Similar to the methodological rationale in Study #2, this final phase of qualitative research took place in a natural setting Creswell (1998) and consequently, warranted an interpretive approach to the subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). For this particular research, radical constructivism resonates in the interpretations made of the teacher candidates' experiences. These past experiences of the teacher candidates imposed order on their flow of teaching experience and in some instances, there was tension when their former constructs of how to teach literacy skills were attempting to assimilate new experiences (von Glasersfeld, 1990). Radical constructivism states that we have no way of knowing what that reality might be (von Glasersfeld). The experiences of the teacher candidates are derived from the participants' consciousness; these experiences are relative and may vary according to the participants.
Study #3

This final study tracked six volunteer tutors into their pre-service year and explored their perceptions and beliefs about literacy instruction throughout their education program. Teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning influence their practice (Fellows, 1993; Jensen, 2001), and their lived experiences influence pedagogical practices during formal teacher preparation (McMahon, 1997; Roskos & Walker, 1994). Further, teachers’ pedagogical beliefs, professional confidence, and instructional practices may be shaped by pre-training volunteer experiences (Worthy & Prater, 1998). Thus, Study #3 not only investigated the participants' understanding of reading and writing instructional practices, but also their overall experiences while in the After-School Literacy Program.

Since teaching reading and writing can be a daunting endeavour for beginning teachers (Roberts, Putney, Ogletree, & McNinch, 1998), the focus of Study #3 was on describing these teacher candidates' perceptions of reading and writing instruction. They were also asked to illustrate how participating in the tutoring program influenced these beliefs. This inquiry prompted the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of former volunteer tutors in teacher education programs?
   - Do they recall reading and writing strategies from the literacy program?
   - How do the teacher candidates relate their tutoring experiences to their teacher mentors’ practice and their own pre-service practice?
   - How did the teacher candidates manage the classroom, lesson planning, and assessment?
2. How does tutoring experience influence teacher candidates’ perceptions of their teacher candidacy and future practice?

- How do these teacher candidates believe reading and writing should be taught?
- How do these teacher candidates believe that classroom teachers should provide for the individualized needs of students with literacy difficulties?
- How do they believe that they will teach language arts in the future?
- How have these individuals professionally grown from volunteer tutors to beginning teachers?

**Methodology**

This qualitative study explored the perceptions and experiences of 6 former volunteer tutors during teacher education programs. Similar to Study #2, case study methods were used to describe the participants’ experiences through interview, e-mail communication; and analyses of their documents (Creswell, 1998). These data offer an outline of what was experienced. Meaning was then extracted to document the conceptualizations of the pre-service teacher candidates. Subsequently, Study #3 illuminates the impact of tutoring experience on pre-service education particularly in the area of reading and writing instruction.

This study took place over 8 months of the pre-service education year. The consecutive pre-service education program includes coursework and internship practicum placements. All teacher candidates were required to complete courses in language arts or reading/writing methods. These courses offered teaching methods and practice within the provincial language arts curriculum. Internships provided the opportunity to observe instructional practice in a classroom setting. Teacher candidates also assisted in the daily
administrative and supervisory duties of their teacher mentors. During practica, the teacher candidates assumed the responsibilities of planning and delivering lessons and managed student discipline. Practica were supervised by the teacher mentors and evaluated by both the teacher mentors and university faculty. At some institutions, the internship was blended with the practica.

For the purpose of this study, there was a focus on the teacher candidates’ experiences as they related to reading and writing instruction. Other aspects of the teacher education experience, including classroom management, assessment and evaluation were also tracked, due to the pervasive influence that these factors have on the profession.

Participants

Of the 19 former volunteer tutors, 6 individuals participated in Study #3. These individuals were among the few who had been accepted into pre-service education programs for the upcoming year. All participants were females under the age of 26 who had graduated from Brock University’s Child and Youth Studies Program. The group was subdivided into two groups of 3 according to where they attended their teacher education program. Three of the participants, Julia, Amanda, and Melanie attended teacher education program at the same small Southern Ontario university. The remaining 3 participants were educated elsewhere in the province, spanning from northern to eastern to central Ontario.

The participants viewed me, the researcher, as a familiar confidante; the teacher candidates had a previous relationship with me dating back to the After-School Literacy Program. This relationship was conducive to a sense of mutual trust and supported reciprocity for this research (Tilley, 1998).
**Nina.** As a volunteer, Nina gained varied experiences in the After-School Literacy program. Nina worked as a tutor and test administrator in the After-School Literacy Program. As a tutor, she worked with Grade 3 and 5 students and as a test administrator she gained experience administering students’ pretest and posttest learning measures. Nina’s four pre-service practica consisted of three split-grade classrooms, a Grade 1/2, Grade 2/3, and SK/Grade 1 and an alternative placement in a Children’s Museum. Nina continually compared these placements to her pre-training tutoring experience, “I think if I hadn’t worked with the Literacy Program, I wouldn’t have had a clue about teaching letter-sound correspondence...so I am critical about what I perceive the mentor teacher is not doing” (Nina, Teacher Candidate Interview 4, p. 16 of 26).

**Jordan.** In the After-School Literacy Program, Jordan tutored Grade 3 readers. Prompted by her own learning disability, Jordan focused on special education in her teacher education program. Jordan experienced three pre-service practica that included a Grade 6 class, with several students with behaviour management issues, and two successive Grade 2 placements. Jordan stated, “...the students respond better to me than they do to their classroom teacher... I laugh and I talk with them, but I’m also serious...The two or three who really like me seem to influence the whole class” (Jordan, Interview 1, p. 15 of 21). She continued to demonstrate a sensitive and empathetic approach to students with literacy difficulties as she addressed the emotional and learning needs of the students in her teaching placements.

**Julia.** Julia volunteered in the After-School Literacy Program for one semester and tutored Grade 1 children. Julia completed three practica in which her classroom placements were in a split SK/JK, Grade 4, and Grade 1 classes. Her assignments
included several language arts lessons addressing comprehension and writing skills. Julia implemented some of the literacy instruction strategies that she had learned during her tutoring experience, "...the students would read the story and I would model the lesson with the graphic organizer... We would do the first one together as a group...We talked about a summary being sort of a short version of the story" (Julia, Interview 4, pp. 1 and 6 of 31). She perceived a sense of competency as her mentor teacher held similar pedagogical beliefs and practiced methodologies similar to those in the After-School Volunteer Program.

**Amanda.** Amanda devoted one semester of volunteering to the After-School Literacy Program and tutored Grade 5 boys. She brought 2 years of past experience as an Educational Assistant with the local school board where she had worked with students with learning disabilities. Amanda applied many of the literacy acquisition strategies she had learned as Educational Assistant and as a tutor to her placements in Grade 1, Grade 5, and a split JK/SK class. As an example, Amanda stated, "We [mentor teacher] have the same beliefs about the Word-Wall and reading strategies. I will probably use similar instructional strategies in my classroom such as the Four Blocks, the Word-Walls, and Jolly Phonics" (Amanda, Interview 4, p. 21 of 24).

**Melanie.** Melanie volunteered for one semester in the After-School Literacy Program working with Grade 4/5 boys. Melanie approached her teaching placements in Grade 5, Grade 1, and a split Grade 1/2 classroom with a bias toward the teaching approaches of her tutoring experience which emphasized meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities through individualized programming. She became discouraged by the structured and teacher-centered methodology in her last placement. Melanie
perceived that the methodologies presented in her teacher education courses and the strategies from the After-School Literacy Program were not reflected in this placement.

"The way I like to teach reflects some of the activities I used in the After-School Literacy Program... Teaching reading with phonics and letter-sound recognition would have assisted the students to learn... I was never given the opportunity to teach those skills" (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 18 of 22).

Kathleen. Kathleen volunteered for one semester in the After-School Literacy Program. She tutored children aged 6-8 years. Kathleen’s teaching placements were a Grade 5/6 class, with one of her own past elementary school teachers as a mentor, a Grade 3 class, and a split JK/SK. Kathleen was able to implement some of the literacy acquisition strategies from the After-School Literacy Program such as reading-by-analogy. Kathleen also appreciated the support and guidance from her mentors whose practices reflected her own style: "My mentor teacher told me she noticed when I am in a classroom I really care about the children... I do not think there is a line dividing being a person and being a teacher" (Kathleen, Interview 3, pp. 29-30 of 33). She felt competent in her abilities to provide for the needs of student with learning disabilities based on her volunteer experiences.

Data

Research has not devoted attention to the implications that tutoring has on the career paths of former volunteer tutors (Invernizzi et al., 1996; Topping, 1998). Further, there has not been substantial documentation of the impact of the tutoring experience on the tutors' conceptualization of teaching reading and writing (Shanahan, 1998). A unique characteristic of this study is that it tracked the development of former tutors through teacher education. Four sources of data were used in Study #3: one-on-one interviews, e-mail communication, field documents including participants’ practica lesson plans and evaluations, and focus group discussion.

As in Study #2, this study employed qualitative inquiry. The participants in Study #3 were observed in their natural contexts and several types of data were collected supporting triangulation and enhancing the credibility of the study (Creswell, 1998; Miles
Triangulation, as corroborating evidence from different sources, describes the experience and the perceptions of the teacher candidates (Miles & Huberman). To accomplish this, a variety of data sources ranging from interviews to documents to e-mail reflections were collected for analyses.

The process of interviewing was selected to provide an opportunity for the participant to express their reflections and for the researcher to document the details of the recollection. As in Study #2, the researcher listened to the description of their experience for recurring themes that relate to each other and inform the participant’s interpretation of his/her teacher education experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Gluck & Patai, 1991). The interviews were open-ended yet focused around particular topics guided by some general questions about teacher education—this is referred to as being semistructured (Bogdan & Biklen). The interviews were audiotaped, and transcribed verbatim.

Documents were collected and used as supplemental information for the case study methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In this research, documents such as lesson plans and teaching evaluations were used to extend and corroborate the information that was supplied by the participants.

A focus group discussion is similar to a group interview in which a number of participants are brought together and encouraged to discuss common interests (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In this way, a focus group discussion may have a specific, well-defined goal to draw out conversation on a particular issue. In light of the fact that the participants had volunteered together as undergraduate tutors, the focus group discussions
were used as an opportunity for them to reflect on their respective teacher education programs in relation to their common prefatory experience.

**Interviews**

Each of the 6 participants was interviewed four times throughout their pre-service programs. The general purpose of the questions was to describe the development of the teacher candidates’ literacy teaching beliefs and practices over the course of their pre-service year.

The first interview occurred approximately 6 weeks into the academic year and explained the saliency of the participants’ previous tutoring experience and their initial impressions of pre-service education. At the time of the first interview, Nina and Jordan had completed their initial teaching placements, whereas the other participants had completed internships in which they observed and assisted experienced teachers. During this first interview, the teacher candidates were requested to recall their experiences as volunteer tutors in the After-School Literacy Program (see Appendix N). This was done to determine the degree to which this experience impacted on their perceptions of how reading and writing should be taught in inclusive classroom settings.

At the end of the first teaching placement, the teacher candidates were interviewed again (see Appendix O). In order to describe their impressions about the teaching practicum, the teacher candidates were asked questions about the impact of their previous tutoring experience in relation to their current teaching placement practicum. This line of questioning has been used in research with other beginning teacher candidates (e.g., Blumenfeld, Krajcik, Marx, & Soloway, 1994; Borko & Putnam, 1996).
The participants were encouraged to provide anecdotes from their practicum when discussing how to teach students with learning difficulties.

The teacher candidates were interviewed two more times: after each of their last two teaching placements. They were also requested to describe their most recent practice experiences and to comment on their rapport with their teacher mentors and their students. The teacher candidates described how they provided reading and writing lessons for students with literacy difficulties and to elaborate on the nature of the literacy strategies they used. As well, they were asked to reflect on their confidence in themselves as teachers and their beliefs about effective literacy instruction. These final two interviews represented guided conversations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

During the final interview, the teacher candidates were also asked to discuss the notable events from their last placement and recall their entire pre-service year. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their teaching experiences and their pre-service coursework in relation to their tutoring experiences. They also described their personal goals as future literacy teachers and speculated on their prospective careers as teachers.

**Teacher Candidates’ E-mail Communications**

Throughout each teaching practica I maintained communication with the teacher candidates through e-mail. On a weekly basis, the teacher candidates were encouraged to discuss their perceptions of “life” in the classroom while they taught. Specifically, they discussed pertinent, problematic, and interesting issues with respect to teaching reading and writing. The participants shared critical teaching incidents and reflected on the significance of these events. E-mail communication served as a venue for participants to
vent their frustrations and express their accomplishments. As well, these written reflections were used to verify the semistructured interview data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Lesson Plans and Teaching Evaluations**

The teacher candidates brought copies of their language arts lesson plans and evaluations to each interview. During the interview, the participants elaborated on the types of information, strategies, and exercises used in their lessons. Accommodations for students with learning difficulties were also discussed. In this way, the teacher candidates could elaborate on the nature of these documents, which in turn assisted me to make valid interpretations of the interview transcriptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). I also reviewed mentor teachers' and faculty supervisors' evaluations of the participants to verify the teacher candidates' reflections about their teaching practice and sense of self-efficacy. For example, if a candidate stated that she perceived that she individualized lessons for her students' needs, this assertion was checked against the exemplars and comments in the candidate's evaluations.

**Focus Group Discussion**

Two focus group sessions were held at the end of the study. The first included 3 participants, Nina, Jordan, and Melanie; the second included the remaining 3 participants, Amanda, Julia, and Kathleen. Through an open-ended discussion, the participants reflected on their pre-service education year and recalled the ideas or concepts that most profoundly influenced their growth as educators. The teacher candidates were asked to articulate their beliefs about effective reading and writing instruction. They also
discussed educational provisions for the future instruction of students with literacy difficulties.

**Data Analyses**

All verbal data (interviews and focus group sessions) were transcribed and compiled chronologically for this study. As in Study #2, the participants were invited to edit and elaborate on their comments from these interviews as part of the member-checking process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The teacher candidates were asked to verify the researcher's interpretations of these interviews and later the associated conclusions (Bogdan & Biklen; Miles & Huberman).

The interview data were first coded and categorized and then were collapsed to form general patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). For Study #3, the interview transcripts were analyzed in the same fashion as they were for Study #2 (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). To lend credibility to the study (Creswell, 1998) e-mail correspondence, lesson plans, and teaching evaluations were used to verify the interview data. E-mail transcripts, lesson plans, and evaluations were coded using the same themes as in the interview and focus group data. As in Study #2, a second rater verified the credibility of these themes. Finally, the teacher candidates' interviews were compared to those gathered when they were volunteer tutors. In this fashion, the teacher candidates’ tutoring background was confirmed as the foundation against which they based their current conceptions about teaching reading and writing.

Initially, these data were crafted into separate case studies that told the stories of each of the six teacher candidates. These cases began with a summary of the teacher candidates’ prefatory tutoring experiences and then presented their impressions of
effective reading and writing instruction and perceptions of teacher education courses and practica. A number of reoccurring ideas resonated from these six cases. These common ideas were reorganized into a copulation of nine themes: (1) The Teacher Education Program and Coursework; (2) Tutoring Experiences related to Practica; (3) Beliefs about How to Teach Reading and Writing; (4) Teaching Students with Literacy Difficulties; (5) Lesson Planning; (6) Classroom Management; (7) Assessment and Evaluation; (8) Growth from Tutor to Teacher Candidate; and (9) Future Teaching Practice. Again, these themes were verified with a second rater.

**Methodological Limitations**

Homogeneity of the participants is also a limitation to Study #3. Demographically, the teacher candidates were similar and they held undergraduate degrees in Child and Youth Studies. This undergraduate degree provided the teacher candidates with prior knowledge about students with special needs and social emotional development. Additionally, these teacher candidates were unique in the prefatory experience that they had gained as literacy tutors. This homogeneity of the participants challenges the generalization of the findings.

The role of the researcher could be considered a limitation. The relationship between the pre-service teachers and the researcher was one of trust that afforded them the opportunity to be open and critical. This relationship was founded in the initial training stages of the tutoring program and nurtured over the course of the teacher candidates’ pre-service year. It is also possible that the participants provided responses that they believed were consistent with the researcher's wishes. However, the collection
of data over the course the entire pre-service year lessens the likelihood of such a response bias (Creswell, 1998).

Across Study #3, there was a distinct emphasis on collecting data around the teacher candidates' practica experiences. For all four of the interviews, the interview questions were focused on describing the events of the practice teaching placement. In addition to this, e-mail communication was maintained and documents (lesson plans and evaluations) were collected in concert with the practica. The teacher candidates did have opportunities to discuss other aspects of the teacher education experience, but there was less emphasis on such components as teacher education courses. This lack of attention might have implicitly devalued the integral role of coursework in teacher education.

The nature of inquiry in both Study #2 and Study #3 was unique in that former volunteer tutors as teacher candidates are an understudied population. Similar to Study #2, the method of case study was appropriate to illuminate their experiences. However, it should be noted that the presentation of these perceptions cannot be used to postulate conclusions regarding the beliefs and experiences of larger populations (Stake, 1995).

**Ethical Review**

This study also followed the Tri-Council Policy Statement conventions for ethical research. In a modification request, Brock University Research Ethics Board approved this study. Ethics documents are included as Appendix P.

**Results**

At the beginning of the teacher education program, the teacher candidates were required to teach and also to observe the instruction of their teacher mentors. They perceived that they could implement similar language arts strategies as those in the After-School Literacy Program. These teacher candidates also evaluated the teaching practices
of their mentors in comparison to their personal teaching experiences. It is not surprising that in a number of situations, there was disparity between the practices of the teacher mentors and the former tutors.

In some practica, these 6 teacher candidates were able to apply their tutoring strategies into their reading and writing lessons. In other instances, they were not able to do so. In all cases, the teacher candidates complied with their mentors’ recommendations in their practica. This chapter will present these various dynamics along with how the teacher candidates negotiated these circumstances.

At the end of their respective programs, the teacher candidates reflected on their pre-training with the reading and writing tutoring, their teacher mentors, and their own teaching practice. Professional growth, especially with respect to inclusive instruction for students with literacy difficulties, developed as they analyzed, synthesized, and evaluated these sources. Personal reflection resulted in constructing their sense of teaching as a profession, as well as refining their image of the ideal language arts teacher.

Nine themes emerged based on the experiences of these 6 teacher candidates. First, the teacher candidates provided impressions about their “Teacher Education” over the course of the pre-service year. These impressions were drawn based on their previous knowledge of “Tutoring Experiences that Related to Practica.” The teacher candidates spoke to their distinct “Beliefs about How to Teach Reading and Writing” and their beliefs about “Teaching Students with Literacy Difficulties.” There were three aspects of practice teaching that the teacher candidates came to recognize as integral: “Lesson Planning,” “Classroom Management,” and “Assessment and Evaluation.” As the teacher candidates looked beyond their pre-service year, they imagined their “Future Teaching
Practices.” Finally, an account of their “Growth from Tutors to Beginning Teachers” was provided as a conclusion. For each of these nine themes, a detailed description of the supporting subthemes will follow in this chapter.

(1) Teacher Education

Three of the teacher candidates held a positive impression of their language arts professors; the other teacher candidates held a sense of ambivalence toward these professors. They appeared to be receptive to both the pedagogical philosophies and the methodologies of teaching. These teacher candidates recognized the pedagogical similarities between their tutoring experiences and their language arts courses.

Interestingly, these three teacher candidates all attended the same teacher education program, at the same institution that supported the After-School Literacy Program. For example, from the beginning of her teacher education program, Julia noted the importance of strategically teaching reading skills and Melanie observed the professor model lessons that were personally meaningful to students. This professor also encouraged the candidates to assess their own beliefs toward literacy instruction:

I recognize all of the reading strategies and the professor uses all the techniques we were taught in the literacy program. It is really helpful as reading is so fundamental. If you can’t read you can’t do anything else, so to take a really good structured language course with a really good professor is very beneficial (Julia, Interview 1, p. 3 of 23) ... The guided reading instructions were to describe a personal experience concerning a special gift. Everyone was expected to contribute a story about something special in their life. The teacher wrote the answers on the board. She made the pupils feel they could make decisions allowing them sense of efficacy. She related the story to their experiences making this lesson a very interactive group activity. She approached us as practice teachers and asked how we would set up our own lessons with this interactive style. (Julia, Interview 1, p. 6 of 23)

She really encouraged you to think about our own philosophy of education. We looked at the top-down approach...I do not perceive the top-down approach as reading. In the bottom-up approach, the students begin with the sounds and put
them together. My philosophy is more of a bottom-up approach. (Melanie, Interview 1, pp. 2-3 of 15)

Language arts methods courses generally are designed to provide teacher candidates with a variety of teaching methodologies so that teacher candidates can construct their personal approach to the teaching of literacy skills (Gitlin et al., 1999; Ransom & Weisenbach, 1994; Wham, 1993). In this way, teacher candidates' educative beliefs become a blend of practices, learning, teaching, and coursework. However, some of the teacher candidates in this study did not perceive a compatible blend between these components. Approximately half-way through her teacher education program, Jordan felt that her course content was meaningless and expressed these sentiments in her e-mails: “classes are pretty much the same – boring” (Jordan, e-mail Communication, January 28, 2003). From the beginning of her teacher education program, Kathleen also expressed that the course work did not offer enough practical information: “I am finding that there is no real value in my courses because I am not able to use the knowledge in the classroom” (Kathleen, Interview 1, p. 1 of 24). Kathleen believed her emerging teaching philosophy rested on her practice teaching and felt there was little value in studying education theory without application in the classroom.

Two of the teacher candidates believed that their teacher education program did not supply them with useful information or adequate resources. Jordan attended a pre-service reading workshop which she perceived as dissimilar in philosophy and style to both her practica and volunteer training. Confused, she decided to rely on her prior experiences and self-study to build her practical knowledge with respect to language arts instruction. Kathleen perceived that she did not receive sufficient lesson plans and instructional materials from her courses. She augmented her resources by finding useful
teaching ideas on-line and in various libraries. These two teacher candidates completed the teacher education program believing their courses did not prepare them to teach. They resorted to their own resourcefulness to compensate for this perceived void.

All of the teacher candidates believed that the teacher education program courses deluged them with information and demanded a great deal of work. In particular, they believed that a number of their assignments were excessive and in some cases impractical. Some candidates found little value in summarizing large amounts of repetitive information, some were more concerned with acquiring teaching resources than learning theory, and anxiety resulted as candidates simultaneously searched for teaching sources while completing required assignments:

It is more introductory information and concepts. The teacher educators insist we need to know this and do this work. I do not find this information useful and I am wondering how much of it is really practical for use in the classroom. In fact there is little new information here. (Nina, Interview 1, p. 1 of 20)

I try not to get bogged down with assignments. One day I was really upset because I could not find the novels I needed. My teacher helped by giving me 45 minutes to drive to the library to search for the material. I sat there and I thought that I had fought my entire life to be here and now I was bitter. (Jordan, Interview 1, p. 20 of 21)

The teacher candidates did not seem to appreciate opportunities for reflection and discussion with peers and faculty. A number of them believed that the demands to complete assignments left insufficient time for reflection. They often underestimated the value of counseling and collaborating and, at times, were not open to discussing relevant teaching issues, and did not invite reflective exchange of teaching techniques:

We met once a week and we basically talked about the problems with our class and how our teacher could help us. It’s more like a socializing class. (Nina, Interview 1, p. 2 of 20)
I do not think a student graduates from teacher education and all of a sudden becomes a teacher. I think the teacher education program has given me the tools I need to build upon. The assignments I worried about that kept me up at night did not prepare me to teach. I had no time to just think. (Kathleen, Interview 4, pp. 27-28 of 31)

*Practica Experience*

Early in the teacher education program, a number of the teacher candidates were not able to assimilate course work with practice, unless association was blatantly apparent. Initially, they did not connect course assignments to authentic classroom application. Instead, they preferred to receive ready-made lesson plans that could be used in the classroom. This desire is a common among teacher candidates at the beginning of their teacher education program (Massey, 2002). Some teacher candidates do not possess the readiness to connect their coursework with practice (Risko, Vukelich, Roskos, & Carpenter, 2002). The teacher candidates were discouraged by those professors who focused on theoretical background information; they appreciated the professors who offered ideas that could be used in their practica and in future practice:

I think the professor's goal was to give us information and resources we will be able to actually implement once we graduate. We discuss instructional approaches and share practical information. (Nina, Interview 1, pp. 17 & 19 of 20)

The teacher candidates perceived that the practica broadened their perspective of teaching and were enthusiastic about their classroom placements. Nina believed her practica assignments were advantageous in comparison to other education programs in that it allowed her to teach almost immediately versus completing involvement in lengthy observation periods. In contrast, Melanie critiqued the amount of time spent in her placements:
Our first block was 3 weeks in length, our second block was 4 weeks, and our last block was 4 weeks. This is not a lot of time as most of the learning took place during my teaching block. (Melanie, Interview 3, p. 24 of 25)

Overall, these 6 teacher candidates perceived their teaching candidacies as valuable experiences. However, they perceived their field experience as more relevant than their course work, “I think I learned so much more in the schools teaching than I’ve learned in the university classrooms” (Nina, Interview 4, p. 16 of 26). Melanie concurred: “I think I grew more in my placements than I did at school” (Melanie, Interview 3, p. 24 of 25). These candidates viewed their teaching placements as more practical than coursework and therefore, more important. This is typical response of teacher candidates (McInteryre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996; McMahon, 1997; Richardson-Koehler, 1988).

A significant factor in the perceived success of the teaching placement was the compatibility of the teacher candidates with their teacher mentors. When teacher mentors’ practice is dissimilar to teacher candidates’ preferred practice, tension may prevail in the mind of the candidate (McMahon, 1997; Richardson, 1996). The 6 teacher candidates experienced at least one practicum in which they “agreed” and one in which they “disagreed” with their mentors' practices. A key factor that contributed to agreement with their mentors’ practices, was compatibility with instructional principles from the After School Literacy Program. Disagreement with their mentors’ practices was related to pedagogical incompatibility and perceived by the teacher candidates as failure:

I don’t think I did a good job of teaching because there is so much that I think I could have done. I would read to them for 15 minutes as they did not have the attention span to listen for a half an hour or 40 minutes. They need to work on their reading skills such as looking for the letter patterns and sounding the words, using new vocabulary. I would teach lessons on synonyms, homonyms, pronouns, and different genres of writing such as letters and reports. These are things that my teacher [mentor] did not do. (Amanda, Interview 3, p. 24 of 31)
When the teacher candidates and their mentor teachers shared similar views about how to teach reading and writing, the candidates perceived their teaching assignment as successful. This compatibility often reflects similarities across course content, teacher mentors’ practice and the teacher candidates’ beliefs (McMahon, 1997). Interestingly, the teacher candidates associate their success with these compatibilities:

My mentor thinks along the same lines and we get along well. We have the same beliefs about the Word Wall and reading strategies. I will probably use similar instructional strategies in my classroom such as the Four Blocks, the Word Walls, and Jolly Phonics. I’m glad I saw these strategies in action with this teacher, especially in language arts. I received background knowledge on the Four Blocks Program to teach reading. (Amanda, Interview 4, p. 21 of 24)

Julia’s Teacher Evaluation (May 2/03) read: “She was eager to learn and try new things. Julia effectively used the resources she was given and presented several highly successful lessons to the students. Julia eagerly participated in our language program based on the Four Blocks model.”

When Melanie was not allowed to use the tutoring strategies she learned from the After-School Literacy Program, she perceived that her practice was incompatible to that of teacher mentor. She had assumed that she could directly apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the Literacy Program to classroom work. When Melanie discovered that she could not teach in her preferred fashion, she evaluated her practica as an unpleasant experience:

The way I like to teach reflects some of the activities I used in the After-School Literacy Program such as graphic organizers for story writing, responding to a story, or writing a chapter summary. Teaching reading with phonics and letter-sound recognition would have assisted the students to learn. However, in this classroom, I was never given the opportunity to teach those skills. (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 18 of 22)

I must inform you, unfortunately, that I am having a terrible block. Success-wise, I am fine, but my teacher and I are not clicking. Nothing I do is right and I was in tears all last week when I got home. (Melanie, e-mail communication, April 28, 2003)
Melanie completed this final placement perceiving that the time spent in this classroom was useful to help her define how she would not teach in the future.

The teacher candidates believed that compliance with their mentor teachers' requests and emulating their teaching approaches was correlated with practica grading. Initially, Amanda experienced apprehension about her assignment in a Grade 5 class as she was not familiar with the curriculum. Amanda would have preferred a Grade 4 assignment as she had tutored Grade 4 students in the After-School Literacy Program. She believed that her associate teacher mentor was critical of her lesson plans and their delivery:

The teacher mentor informed me that I was on the verge of not passing this block. It felt like a threat or like a scare tactic to make me work harder. I was already putting a lot of work into what I was doing. I asked her what she expected and she told me I needed to figure this one out on my own. I put more rubrics in my lesson which was different than what I had learned. I also had to change the format to what she wanted. My lessons were ready the day before so she could look over them and I corrected everything she suggested. (Amanda, Interview 3, pp. 5-6 of 31)

Amanda felt her teacher mentor's demands were intentionally intimidating and strategically allowed this classroom teacher to exert control in the presence of her students and administrators. Amanda's discomfort impeded her efforts to implement familiar reading strategies that she had practiced in the After School Literacy Program. Amanda attributed her perception of ineffective practice teaching to insufficient professional guidance and personal support from her mentor teacher.

Julia also believed that she had put forth a consistent effort during her second practica, but she perceived her grades to be less than ideal. She attributed her performance to perceived instructional incompatibility with her teacher mentor. She received “satisfactory” evaluations for Professional Skills (e.g., such as initiative and
enthusiasm); for Professional Knowledge (e.g., subject knowledge); for Ongoing Learning (e.g., short- and long-term expectations); and Teaching Practices (e.g., fostering critical thinking skills and applying management strategies) as written in a Teacher Evaluation Report (February 8, 2003). Julia's grades evolved from “satisfactory” to “highly successful” across the second and third practica as she was allowed to demonstrate teaching methods that were consistent with her prior experiences as a literacy tutor.

Conversely, Jordan and Melanie attempted to demonstrate their personal teaching style despite the incompatibilities that existed between them and their teacher mentors. Faced with resistance to assert their teaching style in their practica, Jordan and Melanie regarded their teacher mentors as restricting their teaching approaches:

I had to put my teaching style on the back burner and tell myself that I am in someone else’s classroom and I have to abide by their rules. I will remember what I’ve learned and appease this classroom teacher. (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 18 of 22)

When given latitude to practice as she preferred, Jordan achieved high grades. This was reflected in her teaching practica evaluations on November 12, 2002, and February 20 and April 22, 2003, which showed consistent Level 4 (A+ - Excellent) levels of performance for Professional Responsibilities, Classroom Environment, Planning and Preparation, and Instruction:

I’ve come to the point, especially with this final placement that I really don’t care. I care about the students. When the mentor teacher and teacher educator tell me to instruct in a certain manner I will do it, but soon as they leave the room, I’ll do it my way. (Jordan, Interview 4, p. 2 of 30)

Integration of Learnings
Upon entering the teacher education program, these 6 teacher candidates were confident of their reading and writing teaching approaches. They attributed this to their Child and Youth Studies undergraduate degree and tutoring experience. They expressed familiarity with concepts concerning child development and family dynamics presented in the teacher education program. For instance, in her undergraduate courses, Kathleen had studied the influences of family dynamics on children's learning and found the application of this knowledge in an authentic context meaningful:

The influence of the family on child development is real. I have written papers on this subject, but now I am in an environment where I can begin to know the children and understand where they are coming from and this is different. We are not talking about case studies, but actual children and families. (Kathleen, Interview 4, p. 21 of 31)

As well, based on their prefatory tutoring experience, these teacher candidates had an awareness of the cognitive and emotional needs of students. They held beliefs concerning teacher-student interactions that were aligned with social constructivist approaches. This approach emphasizes the social contexts of learning and contends that knowledge of the world is mutually constructed (Palincsar, 1998). For example, the teacher candidates tended to believe that, as teachers, they needed to be engaged in social interactions with their students and closely monitor their students’ perspectives, thoughts and feelings. This is characteristic of a social constructivist classroom (Oldfather, West, White, & Wilmarth, 1999). This type of personal interaction was central to the teacher candidates’ former tutoring practice. Findings from Study #2 position the tutors’ awareness of students’ learning requirements as integral to effective instruction. Regardless of their teacher mentors’ approaches, the teacher candidates sought to be highly responsive to their students’ needs:
She [teacher mentor] is not one to walk around the room and see how the students are doing. That is what I did continuously. I walked around the room and asked them by their name how they were doing. In this way I got to know them. (Melanie, Interview 3, pp. 3-4 of 25)

I seem to see the students respond better to me than they do to their classroom teacher. It may be my age or how interact with them. I laugh and I talk with them, but I’m also serious. A teacher needs to know when to be serious and when not to be serious. But they seem to respond much better to me. The two or three who really like me seem to influence the whole class. (Jordan, Interview 1, p. 15 of 21)

As well, 2 of the teacher candidates were critical of the instructional practices of their teacher mentors. These teacher candidates questioned the effectiveness of their mentors' teaching strategies. Jordan perceived her mentor teacher as ineffective in her lesson delivery. She observed this teacher photocopying resource pages to prepare for her lessons:

I do not feel I have learned much from my teaching block. Though, I have learned about organization. I learned to photocopy seatwork for the students from this mentor teacher. But I would not give out this type of seatwork very often. (Jordan, Interview 3, p. 27 of 30)

Melanie believed she understood the students' learning potential more clearly than her final mentor teacher. She compared the writing performance of the Grade 2 students in her final placement to the Grade 2 students in a former placement. Melanie concluded that the weak skills of the students in this final placement were attributed to their teachers' ineffective practice:

It’s hard to walk into the classroom in April when everything is already set in stone. But I think the students were more capable of doing things. At the second placement school they were writing every single day. They could easily compose a paragraph. If I asked the students from my present placement to write a paragraph they wouldn’t be able to write more than two or three sentences because they’re not given enough opportunity to work independently. (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 10 of 22)

(2) Tutoring Experiences Related to Practica
Within their respective practica, the teacher candidates recalled the reading and writing strategies that they had delivered as volunteer tutors. The teacher candidates seized opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and experiences with letter-sound correspondence, reading-by-analogy, comprehension, and writing process strategies.

**Letter-Sound Correspondence Strategies**

Each of the teacher candidates implemented the *Jolly Phonics* program in their placements. Even though this is just one approach to teaching letter-sound correspondence, it was the method that the teacher candidates were most familiar with based on their previous tutoring experience. In some cases, the teacher mentors were already using this resource to teach literacy skills in their classrooms:

> Even if the students cannot identify the letter, they recognize the sound from the action shown in the Jolly Phonics lesson. If they can remember the action then the sound will follow. (Julia, Interview 2, p. 3 of 14)

The candidates perceived that students who were taught with the *Jolly Phonics* program, showed proficiency with the kinesthetic actions for letter-sound correspondence. In placements where the teacher mentors were not consistently using this resource, the teacher candidates became critical of their mentors:

> I was more comfortable because I had already used the *Jolly Phonics* lessons and I already knew how to help the students form sounds. I think if I hadn’t worked with the Literacy Program, I wouldn’t have had a clue about teaching letter-sound correspondence. I had observed the Program work really well so I am critical about what I perceive the mentor teacher is not doing. I think I could have helped the [SK/Grade 1] students learn letter sounds. (Nina, Interview 4, p. 16 of 26)

Although the teacher candidates enthusiastically employed the *Jolly Phonics* approach, some of them also recognized a need to incorporate additional strategies. These teacher candidates believed in augmenting the kinesthetic reinforcement for letter-sound correspondence. Some of the teacher candidates incorporated a combination of action,
sound, and visual aids to anchor letter-sound correspondence. This combination is based on the action and sound association promoted through *Jolly Phonics* (Dare, 1999; Lloyd, 1998) and the visual aid through picture mnemonics (Ehri et al., 1984; Fulk et al., 1997). These were the techniques used in the After-School Literacy Program. Based on this experience, the teacher candidates implemented an imagery strategy to teach letter formation, picture mnemonics to help students learn letters, and additional kinesthetic reinforcement to imprint letter-sound correspondence:

The students have really had trouble with the words and I find it's because of the pronunciation of each letter and hearing the sound. We did the “a” and I taught them the action and we wrote it in the sky—which is a visual imagery strategy. When I concentrate on the letters they learn more effectively and quickly. (Jordan, Interview 1, p. 22 of 23)

I taught a Jolly Phonics lesson to the students. In order to teach the children to recognize and read a letter I would sound it out and make a corresponding action. They were also shown pictures with things which had that particular sound in them. I also asked the students to sound out the letter as I printed it on the board. They printed all the letters on a different page and illustrated drawings to go with the letter. They were also shown a picture of how to do the action for the sound. (Amanda, Interview 2, p. 6 of 16)

In her last placement, Julia used a picture mnemonic strategy to teach reading to Grade 1 students:

They would fill in the “a” and the “e” for the “ake” family to make a word. The students had to draw a detailed picture of the word, such as “cake.” Later in the lesson they all drew in more details. For example, the cake would be drawn with candles on it. (Julia, Interview 4, p. 15 of 31)

Based on her tutoring experience with Junior-level students, Julia was confident in adapting imagery strategies for older students who required letter-sound correspondence instruction, “From the Program, I have experience with different teaching strategies in literacy instruction. I can use Jolly Phonics with Grade 3 or 4 students even though it’s only taught until Grade 1 or 2” (Julia, Interview 4, p. 31 of 31). Julia instructed the
students to print in the air as an extension of the kinesthetic component of *Jolly Phonics*.

Julia found the combination of action, sound, and visual aids anchored letter-sound correspondence for these students. Given the opportunity to do so, these 3 teacher candidates attempted to use kinesthetic, imagery, and picture mnemonics as reinforcements for letter-sound correspondence.

**Reading-by-Analogy Strategies**

During their tutoring sessions, some of the teacher candidates had successfully guided students to work with letter patterns to sound out unfamiliar words. This approach teaches students to use phonograms or a cluster of letters to decode rhyming words (Allen, 1998; Gaskins, 1998). The teacher candidates were able to facilitate lessons on using analogous letter patterns to reinforce decoding skills and teach spelling:

First I place a cut out of the letter “a” down and put the letter “t” beside it. I tell the students I want to make the word -sat- and ask them which letter I need to put in the middle. A student would pick a cut-out letter from the letters I had set out. These letters were placed at the front of the classroom, so the pupils could visually see the letters and the word. The students would instruct me on how to print the letters. I made sure all the children had cut out letters and they practiced making 10 words. They practiced in partners for reinforcement and also took the letters home to practice their letters, sounds, and words. (Amanda, Interview 2, pp. 1-2 of 16)

Students used high frequency words or sight words to create word families and then manipulated the letters to spell as many words as they could to make more words. Once a week we had a different word family and we would write a story with that word family. (Nina, Interview 1, p. 9 of 20)

They used a speller, but I do not agree this is the most effective method of teaching spelling. I focused on the pattern “ought” and “aught” as both letter combinations sound similar, but they are spelled differently. (Kathleen, Interview 3, pp. 24-27 of 33)

Nina described the perceived effectiveness of her reading-by-analogy lessons.

Nina used this strategy to reinforce the fluent reading of high frequency words or sight
words. “It was amazing. Reading these sight words once a day and recognizing the word families helped many of the pupils to actually read the story” (Nina, Interview 1, p. 9 of 20).

**Comprehension Strategies**

During tutoring these 6 teacher candidates used questioning techniques to facilitate reading comprehension. During their interviews, the teacher candidates were able to articulate how they engaged their students in discussions about making predictions and summarizing the components of a story. Making predictions is a prereading strategy that enhances reading comprehension by requiring inferences to be made between text and prior knowledge (Hansen, 1991; Spires & Donley, 1998). Summarization is a post-reading comprehension strategy that encourages students to understand the main components of text and recognize how the pieces are connected (Vaughan et al., 2000; Williams, 1993). These literacy strategies were not unique to the After-School Literacy Program; however, the teacher candidates exclusively attributed them to the program:

I used some of the literacy strategies from the literacy program. I asked the students, "What do you think is going to happen?" I read the title, we looked at the cover, we read the story and I asked comprehension questions. (Amanda, Interview 2, p. 12 of 16)

I introduced prediction questions just like from the program. I drew little pictures on 8 ½ x 11 sheets. These were sequential pictures in which I would omit one picture. The students predicted the story events which contributed to the occurrence of future events. (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 3 of 22)

Some of the teacher candidates were able to strategically address and summarize story grammar elements in their language lessons using a graphic organizer. Researchers (e.g., Boyle & Weishaar, 1997; Idol, 1987) have documented the effectiveness of such
visual aids to encapsulate the major points of a story or article and thereby improve reading comprehension. During her Grade 4 practicum, Julia taught her students to use a graphic organizer to classify story elements and to summarize the beginning, middle, and ending of a story. During her Grade 3 practicum, Kathleen also used the graphic organizer to teach the characteristics of a tale and to summarize the theme, setting, characters, problem, events, and solutions in this type of story. Amanda introduced story grammar elements (characters, setting, problem, solution) to JK/SK and Grade 1 students. After reading a storybook Amanda asked her students to draw the events of the story. Discussion typically involved how the characters were feeling, as well as how the events and problems were linked to each other.

Melanie adapted the concept of a graphic organizer and created a summary sheet to assist her Grade 1 students to isolate and identify story problems and solutions. She emphasized the sequence of events and character development. Melanie noted that this technique assisted her students' comprehension and memory for the components of the story:

The students would use first, next, then, and finally to recall the sequence of events. I would ask them to describe their favourite character and to identify problems and solutions. They would fill in a summary sheet on each chapter. Before I read the next chapter I asked them what we had read in the previous chapter and they were able to remember. (Melanie, Interview 3, p. 16 of 25)

A number of the teacher candidates observed that their students appeared to have little knowledge of story grammar. Nina's Grade 6/7 students struggled when writing plot summaries of the chapters and consequently, they did not know how to use a graphic organizer to summarize information. As well, Jordan's Grade 6 students were not familiar with using a graphic organizer to summarize a story:
After we read the storybook, I asked what the story was about. The students often responded that they did not know. I used the organizer from the Program. I asked the students to look at the front cover and guess things about the story. They did not understand. So we sat down one day and we talked about the setting, how people were acting, and characteristics of the story. (Jordan, Interview 2, pp. 2-3 of 27)

Jordan reviewed the components of a story before she focused on summarization. She taught several lessons on defining and identifying setting, characters, events, problems, and solutions: “I am doing the story charts for the story frame that was taught to us. I have worked on characters, setting and plots to facilitate comprehension” (Jordan, e-mail communication, November, 18, 2002). Julia also introduced a modified version of the graphic organizer to help her students develop summarizing skills:

I helped the students to put their ideas into a sequential order and incorporate first, next, then, and finally. Then the students would read the story and I would model the lesson with the graphic organizer. I would reproduce it either on the board or on overheads. We would do the first one together as a group. I would read a story and ask, “What would be the first good part we could write in our own words?” We talked about a summary being sort of a short version of the story. I questioned, “If you were going to tell mom and dad about your day at school, would you tell them every single thing you did, would you pick out the most important parts of what you did that day, or the most important thing to you or the most important thing that you found?” This is how we completed a summary of their story. (Julia, Interview 4, pp. 1 and 6 of 31)

Writing Process Strategies

A number of the teacher candidates perceived that the writing instruction strategies used by their teacher mentors were ineffective. They believed the students required more explicit information about the writing process and instruction about story grammar elements as components of a well-organized composition. Explicitly providing students with the process writing model has a positive effect on their writing performance
(Sexton et al., 1998). As well, students with literacy difficulties require knowledge of revising composition content (McAlister et al., 1999).

Julia demonstrated graphic organizers as a planning tool using drawings to illustrate Grade 4 students’ ideas before they wrote their rough drafts. Subsequent lessons focused on paragraph organization using the “C & C House” organizer. During her instructional lesson Julia drew an analogy to the rooms in a house:

The students described three rooms in the house. They understood that when I talk about my bedroom it is one paragraph. When I talk about my bathroom it’s another paragraph. Then they had to do the separating, and describe the first room, second room, and third room. By giving them a template, they were able to stay on task. (Julia, Interview 3, pp. 2-3 of 23)

Using the graphic organizer as a tool, Amanda modeled how to draft a composition. Amanda’s Grade 5 students wrote a draft that consisted of one paragraph with a distinct beginning, middle, and ending:

I learned that, for some of the students, writing their ideas comes more easily than for others. Those students who completed their planning sheets did not need assistance. Other students couldn’t really answer the questions of whom, what, where, when, and why. They didn’t understand the questions or the sequence of steps in writing a complete paragraph. (Amanda, Interview 3, p. 21 of 31)

Kathleen believed that the teacher mentor in her second Grade 3 placement could have linked reading and writing instruction more effectively. She noted that while this teacher mentor covered such aspects as story grammar, the students were not certain about how to use these components in story composition. Kathleen witnessed the effect of implicit versus explicit instruction. She perceived she successfully instructed her students to create a story map, although they needed clarification for the problem and solution of the story:

The students had difficulty planning future events in their stories. They identified the problems and the solutions. They could not seem to break it down into the
steps which would lead to the solutions. I instructed there had to be at least three steps involved to clarify the events of their stories. Graphic organizers were created to assist students in this process. I do not think my mentor teacher used graphic organizers and the students needed the practice to enhance their skills in story writing. (Kathleen, Interview 3, pp. 22-23 of 33)

Melanie also believed that an effective writing lesson should emphasize the planning and organization of a composition with attention to revising and editing skills:

The students are basically given the booklet and they are supposed to write a story right away. It would have been more effective to introduce and use a graphic organizer. We could have collaboratively written our own story and filled in part of the organizer and then completed it. The students could follow the same process to write their first drafts. (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 11 of 22)

(3) Beliefs About How to Teach Reading and Writing

These 6 teacher candidates observed their mentor teachers' teaching strategies and offered their personal beliefs about how to teach reading and writing. They critiqued their mentors' pedagogical choices concerning seatwork, instructional resources, and integrating curriculum. The teacher candidates also commented about their mentor teachers' overall approaches to literacy instruction.

Theoretical Approaches

The 6 teacher candidates concluded that the instructional practices of some of their mentor teachers were based on traditional teacher-centered approaches. In these classrooms the teachers seemed to primarily engage their students in independent seatwork exercises. Amanda noted the mentor teacher in her second placement did not seem to practice different instructional reading and writing methods with the Grade 5 students. Amanda believed these students were left to work without instructional guidance:

I would read to them for 15 minutes as they did not have the attention span to listen for a half an hour or 40 minutes. I would establish more personal reading
time. My mentor assigned novel studies, but I would assign novel studies on their own time. They need to work on their reading skills such as looking for the content and sounding the words, using new vocabulary, and vocabulary development. I would expect them to do spelling work at home as independent work. I would teach lessons on synonyms, homonyms, pronouns, and different writing genres such as journals, letters, and writing reports. (Amanda, Interview 3, pp. 24 and 27 of 31)

Melanie also viewed the teaching approach of her last mentor teacher as ineffective. She perceived that this experienced Grade 1 teacher structured her lessons solely on teachers' manuals and guidelines. Melanie also felt traditional teaching methods were antiquated. She believed that an approach beyond structured teacher-directed lessons was required to meet the students' learning needs:

I think this mentor's methodology is very traditional and basically adheres to the teachers' manual in reading and writing. If a lesson is approved by the Ministry and it worked before then you don’t have to do anything else. The worksheets are very basic. I believe these Grade 1 pupils can learn more than they’re learning. (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 6 of 22)

Kathleen’s first mentor teacher practiced traditional seatwork instruction methods. However, she was open to the use of different pedagogies and Kathleen was given the opportunity to teach in styles supporting a variety of theories. For example, using a social constructivist perspective (Palincsar, 1998), Kathleen encouraged the students to work in small groups and help each other learn. Students with strong composition skills supported the students in the group who were challenged by activities such as editing. This cooperative learning approach has been found to improve students’ achievement and promote interdependence (Slavin, 1995). Kathleen believed that her cooperative learning approach was successful, “The lower level learners seemed to be excelling in learner-centered activities.” (Kathleen, Interview 2, p. 8 of 28)

**Instructional Autonomy**
The teacher candidates entered the teacher education program expecting to learn teaching strategies that linked reading and writing. This is a common expectation of teacher candidates at the beginning of their program (Massey, 2002; Riskos et al., 2002). Instead, some of them were instructed to use a basal reading program designed for homogeneous target reading levels. The nature of this instruction had teacher candidates reading from the basal passages and assigning generic and structured comprehension exercises. Teacher candidates believed that the stories and the basal exercises were not always relevant to the students' learning needs and accordingly expressed an aversion to using basals in the future:

I would have not used one single basal in any of my placements. I would have found children’s literature with a similar theme and read to them every day. I would have provided follow-up activities in language arts and introduced the importance of independent reading. I would also have set up a home reading folder with the date and the title of the book so parents or children could comment (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 10 of 22)...I can’t say that I didn’t learn anything because I learned what I don’t want to be like. (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 18 of 22)

Some of the teacher candidates also observed that some of the students were not using strategies in a meaningful way. They believed that students were not aware of the reason they were using certain strategies:

The students knew how to sound out the word, but they did not understand the process of breaking down a word into syllables. This could be why children experience decoding difficulties. They do not know how to read syllables in words. (Jordan, Interview 4, pp. 3-4 of 37)

The teacher candidates were acutely aware of the importance of early literacy instruction. Understanding that Kindergarten and Grade 1 are crucial for reading readiness, Julia believed that she needed to provide a greater challenge for her students than her teacher mentor was providing. She provided her students with drills in letter-sound correspondence:
Literacy is one of the key components in kindergarten instruction because by Grade 1 students are supposed to be ready to begin reading. Teaching a child to read is a big responsibility. Kindergarten is important in facilitating SK students to successfully recognize letters and sounds as they are at the reading readiness stage. This is what I did. (Julia, Interview 1, pp. 3-4 of 23)

At the end of her teacher education program, Julia reiterated her commitment to the integral need for an emphasis on literacy instruction:

I personally feel a balanced literacy program is important and I saw this in my volunteer tutoring and my language arts program at the faculty. There are teachers out there who do not understand the importance of literacy instruction. (Julia, Interview 4, p. 31 of 31)

Integrated Curriculum

The teacher candidates expressed their vision of integrating language skills across the curriculum. At times the associate teachers encouraged the teacher candidates to integrate language arts instruction into the other subjects in the curriculum. In her first placement, Kathleen integrated descriptive and persuasive writing into her social studies unit on government. Kathleen drew on her tutoring experience teaching the writing process:

I assigned the following discussion, "If I were Mayor for a day I would..." We brainstormed the Mayor's responsibilities, his presentation, and the issues occurring in government at the present time. The students wrote a composition, proofread it, and had it peer edited. They were instructed to use the dictionary, attend to detail, grammar, spelling, and paragraph formation. Content was reflected in this work. I became aware they did not know how to use quotations about halfway through the unit. I focused on content, but I realized I had to integrate language arts skills into Social Studies to comprehensively engage students in the writing process. (Kathleen, Interview 2, pp. 16-19 of 28)

In her first teaching placement, Melanie incorporated language arts with her mathematics lessons. She taught geometry with an emphasis on instructing the students to journal the reasoning involved in their work. In this way, Melanie encouraged her students to articulate their own metacognitive awareness of what they were
demonstrating and why they were using such approaches. This metacognitive information was emphasized in the After-School Literacy Program:

I didn’t use the textbook because I didn’t like what the textbook offered. I created all my own worksheets. I added thinking problems and worksheets. The students had to explain their answers even in a Math Journal. I wanted them to know why they were doing what they did and not doing only what they were told. (Melanie, Interview 2, p. 8 of 23)

(4) Teaching Students with Literacy Difficulties

The teacher candidates had an inflated sense of instructional effectiveness. They believed that they could competently identify the needs and skill levels of their students based on their tutoring experience. They also believed that the After-School Literacy Program provided them with foundational knowledge regarding the diversity of students’ needs and strategies to accommodate individuals with low reading skills.

Teacher Mentors’ Practices

The majority of the teacher candidates were discouraged by their mentor teachers’ inability to provide remedial instruction due to resource and time constraints. Jordan was especially sensitive to one boy who seemed to be overlooked:

The classroom teacher would explain what the student needed to know and then he would sit there. She could have given him more help, rather than let him fail. Someone once told me if a student doesn't get it, it is not the student's fault; it is the teacher's responsibility. (Jordan, Interview 3, p. 8 of 30)

As the teacher education program progressed, the teacher candidates became aware of the diversity of students’ literacy needs. The challenges associated with these learning requirements were acutely evident in split grades. The teacher candidates seemed to appreciate the difficulties associated with providing individualized literacy instruction in these classroom settings. Being responsive and adjusting instruction to students’ changing states of needs and abilities is an instructional practice of effective
teachers (Englert, Tarrant, & Mariage, 1992). For instance, Kathleen demonstrated an increased understanding of students with exceptionalities by identifying the tendencies and coping mechanisms that some of her students with literacy difficulties adopted:

One little girl could not concentrate. I would sit with her and draw dot formations for letters. She would trace them. If I did not continue with this exercise she would begin to scribble. She knows if she scribbles, I will draw the dots. She comes in and writes her name perfectly because she wants to have activity time before the bell rings. It is not a question of whether she can do it. Her behaviour inhibits her skill acquisition. (Kathleen, Interview 4, p. 19 of 31)

Kathleen also identified two Grade 3 boys who pretended to read during silent reading. She observed them flipping the pages, pausing to look at the pictures, and feigning reading. Kathleen worked with them on sight-word recognition to help them read independently.

However, not all of the teacher candidates were given the autonomy to make decisions with respect to programming for students' individual needs. For instance, the Grade 6/7 mentor teacher in Nina's first placement divided the class into four groups based on reading ability. Nina thought the assigned work seemed inappropriate:

The majority of the students are doing the collection readings. The group at the lowest academic level worked on 25 photocopied pages which were stapled together. These photocopied pages seemed like Grade 2 level materials. (Nina, Interview 2, p. 22 of 24)

Nina observed that certain students who appeared discouraged did not possess required reading and learning skills. She observed students who she believed did not have "a clue about what they are doing," but after she provided them with individual assistance she observed, "They seem to know what they are doing now" (Nina, Interview 2, p. 15 of 24). Nina supposed her tutoring experience was instrumental in providing students with some appropriate instructional supports.
Melanie perceived a student who was struggling with learning and she contemplated giving him alternative assignments to encourage his best efforts. She believed guided direction would motivate him to take ownership for his work. The classroom teacher did not agree with her approach:

I decided to work on a sheet with the student from in his folder, but my teacher mentor felt he wasn't ready for it. This classroom teacher doesn't challenge her pupils, instead she spoon-feeds them. Even though he has an IEP, I think he's capable of more challenging work than the worksheets he is given. (Melanie, Interview 4, p.15 of 22)

Although the teacher candidates felt they were generally restricted, there were teachable moments when the candidates were allowed to implement teaching approaches or suggestions.

**Individualized Assistance**

The teacher candidates seemed to be aware of planning opportunities to review and reinforce concepts, individualize instruction, and provide situations for the students to apply their knowledge. Whenever possible, the teacher candidates made accommodations, which included scribing for students who struggled with writing and asking oral comprehension questions to assess their learning. They recognized that it is essential to ensure that students are engaged during strategy instruction in order to increase strategy transfer for students with learning difficulties (Jitendra, Hoppes, & Xin, 2000). For example, in her second placement, Amanda attempted different learning strategies and provided positive reinforcement for Grade 5 students with learning exceptionalities:

My mentor worked on a program from a book which she started at the beginning of the year. Every day the students answered a set of five questions. I had to change the manner in which I asked these questions for one of the students in the classroom who had a learning difficulty. I had him answer only three of the five
questions and would help him work through the questions and answers while the other students worked independently. I modeled how I would answer one of the questions and then had the student think of another answer. (Amanda e-mail, March 3/03)

The teacher candidates also attempted to write lessons that were appropriately leveled and included hands-on activities with frequent repetition of directions and concepts. Critical factors in instructional interventions for students with learning difficulties include providing several examples when teaching concepts (Moore, 1998) and ensuring an appropriate level of task difficulty (Vaughan et al., 2000). Comments made by mentor teachers and faculty supervisors reflected the candidates' abilities to provide for students' individualized learning requirements:

Her plans indicate great care and thought for the needs of her students and she used a variety of resources. (Julia, Teacher Report, Nov./02)

Lessons are excellently planned and prepared and reflect Jordan's understanding of the planning process. Excellent materials/visuals and interesting activities are incorporated to support the needs of individual learners. Jordan's plans demonstrate her understanding of the Grade 6 child and the demands of provincial expectations. (Jordan, Teacher Report, May/03)

Planning is extremely detailed, organized, and thorough...You understand how students learn and balance teacher-directed and student hands-on learning. (Amanda, Faculty Report, Nov./02)

**Students' Self-Esteem and Emotional Needs**

The teacher candidates expressed awareness and empathy for the emotional and self-esteem needs of their students with literacy difficulties. They nurtured the self-esteem of these students by encouraging participation and “setting them up” for success:

One boy in particular had social and emotional development issues. Before he could succeed academically he had to address these problems. He needed to feel safe in the classroom environment. He conveyed discomfort as he does not get
along with his peers. He does not have friends and is very angry. (Kathleen, Interview 2, p. 12 of 28)

I picked the lower-level students because they had their hands up and if the teacher chooses the smartest child all of the time, then no one else will learn. So I picked pupils working at different language levels. The principal noticed the two lowest in my class were actually motivated and learning. The principal put up big stars with their names printed on them and that was great. (Julia, Interview 3, pp. 19-20 of 23)

A number of the teacher candidates disagreed with sending children out of the classroom to resource teachers while the remaining students worked in reading groups. They believed that those students who were removed for resource assistance during language arts instruction, often felt isolated from the class. As an alternative method of instruction, Julia believed that students of various grade levels could work productively in small groups:

They really enjoyed the Reading Buddy program. My children love it simply because the older students are paying attention to them. The older students would ask the children to point to the pictures or the word asking them to sound out a word. I would make sure they were reading the words in the book using proper phonetic pronunciation. (Julia, Interview 2, p. 6 of 14)

Julia, along with a number of teacher candidates, expressed her belief that students who are struggling with literacy acquisition require active parental/guardian support. This may come through seeking tutoring or assisting students at home. Julia witnessed how students could be support through tutoring and she believed that parents were responsible for attending to reading skills when the students were at home:

Poor readers, because of their lack of self-esteem give up on reading. If they can’t read simple instructions on an assignment, they just duck it by saying that they don’t like it or it’s boring. These children are not getting the kind of literacy environment at home that is needed to be successful in school. They need to be at home reading every night. (Julia, Interview 3, p. 19-20 of 23)

(5) Lesson Planning
Most of the teacher candidates began their teacher education program with the assumption that the content of their lessons would be their prerogative. They believed their lesson planning would be reflective of their personal creativity and beliefs concerning the curriculum and students' needs. For instance, Melanie had supposed that students would articulate their interests and these ideas would become the basis of their lesson plans:

I don’t think I could actually articulate on paper what I would do in a lesson. I think the students will form their own lesson because you cannot determine how children will answer a question. How they are going to learn is kind of an experiment in itself. (Melanie, Interview 1, p. 3 of 15)

In reality, the teacher candidates' lesson plans were largely influenced by their mentor teachers. In accordance with her teacher mentor’s request, Melanie developed a comprehensive geometry unit with lesson plans days in advance of delivery. She commented, “…during this first block I have been very prepared. I am always four days ahead of schedule and for every lesson I have a plan B, C, D” (Melanie, e-mail communication, Nov. 20/02).

The teacher candidates were challenged by the demands of lesson planning. They not only organized their lesson planning to meet the scheduling requirements of their teacher mentors, but they also made requested revisions:

I had my lessons ready the day before so she could look over them and I could make corrections. I’d have all my lessons planned and then I had to redo them the night before. I was planning up to 10 lessons a night and rewriting my lessons to please her. (Amanda, Interview 3, p. 6 of 31)

The teacher candidates perceived a feeling of “pressure” as a result of these time-lines and revision demands. They also perceived the effectiveness of their lesson delivery
and subsequent student learning was diminished because there was not sufficient time
given to write thoroughly motivating lessons and meet students' needs:

My Mayan social studies lessons are not going as well. I am spending so much
time researching and I cannot plan creative lessons. I also taught a lesson which
really confused most of the students because I did not provide them with enough
background information. On Monday I need to go back and rewrite that lesson. I
think I could improve by going over my lessons more thoroughly before I deliver
them and by asking my teaching associate to give me more positive feedback
instead of just negative criticism. I am finding this block very stressful. (Amanda,
e-mail communication, February/03).

It was a good learning experience, but my mentor teacher does not actively guide
me in my lesson planning. I implemented literacy centers and designed literacy
activities for the class. I did not have input, though I succeeded in writing my
lessons and teaching this class, I am concerned with the effectiveness of my
teaching. (Nina, Interview 4, p. 7 of 26)

The teacher candidates learned that effective educators constantly strive to
improve their practice and modify their lessons. Flexibility and adaptability are necessary
components of all planned lessons (Douglass & Douglass, 1993). In her first placement, a
half-day JK, Julia was able to adapt her lesson planning in a timely fashion as she taught
the same lessons in succession (first in the morning and then repeated in the afternoon):

The one thing I really enjoyed was if a lesson was not successful in the morning, I
could make the necessary modifications for the afternoon class. I could do more
of a direct content-based lesson with the JK's as their attention span is limited. If I
have more SKs I could extend my circles and do more curriculum-based teaching.
I felt I was preparing my pupils for a Grade 1 setting. (Julia, Interview 2, p. 1 of
14)

The teacher candidates learned to recognize when their students' attention was
waning and adjust their lesson delivery accordingly. Conversely, when the students were
engaged and productive, the teacher candidates enthusiastically added more information
or seatwork to their lessons. The teacher candidates were also aware of the need to
improve their skills in lesson time management and anticipate interruptions and other
distractions. For instance, Julia realized it was necessary to pace her lesson time more realistically and in a less structured fashion for Junior and Senior Kindergarten children:

I feel I need to improve my flexibility. I find when things do not always go the way I planned and I get frustrated and discouraged. However, I understand this is part of teaching. By self-reflecting, modifying lessons and teaching styles one can become more effective as a teacher. (Julia, e-mail communication, Nov. 24/02)

Reflecting on lesson planning, teacher candidates drew the impression that effective planning requires collaboration, flexible accommodations, and constant revisions:

Some students require a small group setting or one-on-one instructional time to effectively acquire reading and writing skills. You need to work with the students to find strategies that work for them. Working with a resource teacher or an after-school program would give these students a bit of an edge and improve their confidence. Teachers can modify their lessons to try to meet these requirements, but ultimately students with literacy difficulties need extra instructional time. (Kathleen, Interview 4, pp. 23-24 of 31)

The planning is a lot of work. I realized my lessons may not go the way they were planned. I didn’t really expect the long preparation required for some lessons. (Amanda, Interview 4, p. 20 of 24)

(6) Classroom Management

The teacher education program emphasized the establishment and maintenance of classroom management skills. Some of the teacher candidates felt they had experienced positive modeling of these techniques by their mentor teachers, while others were critical of their mentors’ classroom management practices. Regardless, all teacher candidates were apprehensive about classroom management and experimented with various classroom management techniques while completing their practica.

Some of the teacher candidates perceived that their mentor teachers had well-established classroom management routines, which commanded their students' respect. These mentors were specific in their expectations and their students understood their boundaries. This practice of establishing boundaries between acceptable and
unacceptable classroom behaviour is an essential component of effective classroom management (Weinstein, 1997). Students were involved in routines and activities. The teacher candidates expressed concern about their own skills in balancing their autonomy as teachers while maintaining consistency and effectiveness with existing classroom management routines:

I have learned students do not respect teachers who let their students walk all over them because this denies them the structure and stability they require. (Melanie, e-mail communication, Nov. 20/02)

With respect to her classroom management, the students know her and they know she is serious. I don’t know if my classroom management strategies are contradicting hers. The students might think they can get away with things with me. They do not have many rules because they know what is right. (Kathleen, Interview 1, p. 17 of 24)

My classroom management skills are a little lacking; seeing how my teacher will jump in and control them when they refuse to listen to me. This, I find quite frustrating, but I know it’s a skill I need to learn. (Julia, e-mail communication, Feb. 16, 2003)

During the first week of Jordan's initial practica, she observed the regular classroom activities. She believed that this passive role lent itself to a lack of credibility in her authority. Although she attempted to maintain existing classroom routines and used behaviour management practices similar to her mentor's methods, the students did not convey a positive response:

I sat in the back of the class the entire time and as soon as I would say something to the students they would remark, “Oh you’re the back-of-the-class teacher?” I should have been working in some teaching capacity to establish my authority. (Jordan, Interview 1, p. 1 of 23)

A number of the teacher candidates disagreed with the behaviour management techniques practiced by their teacher mentors. Julia perceived herself as a teacher who
encouraged self-discipline through respect and support. She did not perceive her Grade 4
teacher mentor be a nurturing and inviting educator:

The Grade 4 classroom was really regimented and I’m not used to that because I
like to hear the students discussing their ideas when they are involved in group
work. But the classroom teacher insisted the students had to be quiet or the
science experiment would be done as a class. I told my counselor that these
students need to think and discuss in order to problem solve. But to my mentor
any type of noise was too much. It was a very intimidating atmosphere and I was
starting to doubt my confidence. (Julia, Interview 3, p. 13 of 23)

Nina also experienced challenges in classroom management that she felt were the
result of the teacher mentor’s inability to control student behaviour. She observed the
Grade 6/7 students’ ambivalent attitude toward completing their work and felt this
contributed to the lack of discipline in their classroom. She speculated that if the
classroom teacher was more attentive to the pupils’ literacy needs, the students may have
been less likely to misbehave:

I don’t know if this has something to do with my mentor teacher and how he set
the precedent for acceptable behaviour at the beginning of the school year. There
do not seem to be very many demands on the children. I think they don’t really
care if they hand something in and it is only partially completed. They still get a
half decent mark. They may not feel the need to put in any more effort. The
students cannot seem to sit still, nor do they respect anyone. They have fits, run
out of the classroom, and throw books. They need a teacher to be interacting with
them constantly. (Nina, Interview 2, p. 7 of 26)

Nina also thought the Kindergarten and Grade 1 students in her final placement
may have been afraid of their classroom teacher. She was concerned that this mentor
teacher had an intimidating classroom management style:

I think some of the pupils were petrified of the teacher. I contemplate whether or
not these Kindergarten and Grade 1 will want to come to school next year. I
believe a comfortable classroom environment motivates children to like learning.
(Nina, Interview 4, p. 14 of 26)
Jordan believed her personal style motivated students with behavioural difficulties to be co-operative. Specifically, Jordan believed that her kind and calm manner encouraged the students to be attentive and responsive. Jordan did not credit her teacher education program for her effective class management skills. When asked if her teacher education courses contributed to her ability to reach difficult students she replied, “... no, I’m not learning it in my courses” (Jordan, Interview 1, p. 9 of 21).

**Respect for Students**

The teacher candidates approached their students with a humanistic perspective that influenced their management style. Similar to others (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1991; Hoy, 1967), these teacher candidates believed that the key to classroom management was to genuinely care about and respect their students. They demonstrated respect and empathy toward their students with the goal of making the classroom a comfortable and safe learning environment:

If you respect the students they will respect you. So I started really thinking about the students. I thought about what I could do to show I cared for them. (Jordan, Interview 1, pp. 5-6 of 23)...I am of the belief it is not the student who is unlikable, it is a question of behaviour. I believe teachers have to understand the circumstances children are going through at times and be more understanding with them. It is important to set guidelines because they need the direction and the attention. (Jordan, Interview 2, p. 26 of 27)

We had some problems with some kids in our class bullying, so we stopped our lesson on the environment and discussed being kind to each other by helping out friends instead of hurting them. The students drew a picture about what we had discussed and then wrote a sentence about what they had learned. (Amanda, Interview 4, p. 7 of 24)

I feel that I’m very good at capturing and maintaining the students’ interest and I’m also good at classroom management. I feel that this is due to the fact that I’ve given respect and have gotten it back as well. This reciprocal respect definitely
helps the class run in a smooth manner. (e-mail communication, Julia, Nov. 24/02)

The Kindergarten mentor teacher commented favourably on Julia’s personal teaching style: “The atmosphere in the classroom was one of energy, excitement, and interest in participating. The students respected and trusted Julia as she in turn respected them” (Teacher Evaluation, November 21/02).

**Management Approaches**

The teacher candidates attempted to implement positive reinforcement as a class management technique. This approach is based on the principle that appropriate behaviour will reoccur if it has been rewarded:

I use a lot of motivators such as positive comments about how they are sitting. I hand out good guy tickets if they are sitting and properly listening. The more “good guy” tickets they earn for a draw, the better their chances are of getting a prize from the treasure bucket. I usually explain why I’m giving this ticket to a deserving student and then the rest of the class follows the example. (Amanda, Interview 1, p. 13 of 18)

I am learning too. I am learning how to use positive reinforcement and how to get a message across without raising my voice. I feel I am learning a respectful way of establishing discipline because I believe that every single one of the students is special. (Jordan, e-mail communication, Jan. 28, 2003)

In this first placement, Amanda’s mentor teacher approved of Amanda’s classroom management practice: “Amanda has a firm and fair approach and she used many strategies to reinforce positive behaviour” (Teacher Report, placement 1, Nov. 22/02). Amanda’s teacher educator reported, “Class management skills are excellent…” (Faculty Report, Nov. /02).

Kathleen gained confidence in her management techniques during her final placement in a JK/SK classroom. She perceived her teaching style affected student behaviour and was mindful of maintaining motivation in the classroom:
Kathleen was very clear and expressive during circle time. She experimented with changing the levels of her voice and using facial expressions to keep the children’s attention (Teacher Mentor Evaluation, Apr./03)...Kathleen has tremendous skill in maintaining the attention of a JK/SK group. Her strategies, such as voice tone positively affected student participation and the props were excellent motivators. Her awareness of off-task students was very good and she followed through immediately. (Kathleen, Faculty Evaluation, Apr/03)

In Nina's second placement she observed that the Grade 6/7 mentor teacher used tokens for appropriate conduct. Nina decided to personally approach and individually address disruptive students:

I would ask the students about the problem they were obviously experiencing. I spoke rationally with them and gave them an opportunity to tell me if they did not understand the lesson or their seatwork. I instructed them to put up their hand if they did not understand their assignment instead of walking over and talking to a friend. I emphasized this behaviour to be inappropriate and disruptive to the rest of the class. (Nina, Interview 2, p. 16 of 24)

Nina’s Grade 6/7 mentor teacher handed out recess detentions for students who misbehaved. Nina believed that this discipline measure was ineffective. Each day, approximately half the students in the class would be retained for conduct-based detentions. Nina surmised that the students enjoyed staying in for recess during the cold weather, as she observed that this was an ineffective strategy for managing inappropriate conduct.

As the teacher education program progressed, the teacher candidates retracted their initially critical comments about their teacher mentors’ punitive management strategies. Jordan learned to manage the unpredictable and challenging experiences inherent in classroom management:

I would hand out extra sheets if they talked. There’s no other way and I disliked this strategy. I tried the “free time incentive,” but some of the students did not care. The ones who were good were always good and were always getting their free time. The ones
who were misbehaving just didn’t care. My professor said this type of seatwork was effective. (Jordan, Interview 2, p. 7 of 27)

**Student Accountability**

A number of the teacher candidates felt confident that they were able to handle unacceptable behaviour. They held individual students accountable for their misconduct and the consequences of their actions. They also believed young children were capable of being responsible for their behaviour:

My mentor demonstrates good teaching by my definition. She doesn’t treat the Kindergarten children like they’re babies. She treats them like they’re adults and she will reason with them. If they’re crying or if they’re upset she shows care and compassion while saying “O.K. now you need to put away those tears and when you compose yourself you can tell me your problem.” (Julia, Interview 2, p. 8 of 14)

These teacher candidates were pro-active in their classroom management style. They recognized when students were not putting forward a full effort to learn. The teacher candidates personally addressed these students and identified expectations. They encouraged the students to be self-sufficient and empowered to make choices about their behaviours:

I always made sure the students were in control of making the wisest choice. I would instruct them stating, “Make sure to make wise choices about who you sit beside on the carpet because I don’t want to have to ask you to leave. I do like a quiet classroom and I play music in the background. If you cannot hear the music, then you’re talking too loud and the music stops.” (Melanie, Interview 3, pp.19 & 22 of 25)

**(7) Assessment and Evaluation**

The teacher candidates made critical observations about the assessment practices of their mentor teachers. In particular, a number of teacher candidates felt that their
mentors overestimated the importance of tracking seatwork and assignments for report card grading:

Everything those students write every day is marked. There has to be some sort of learning process before a teacher starts marking a written assignment. The students were given 15 minutes to complete their work and then they were collected for grading. Half of the students were not finished their assignments. I am not sure what I am marking. I do not know if I should concentrate on how much they completed, how well it is partially completed, or that they simply followed the instructions and know how to grapple with their instructions. I think, realistically, a teacher should give students time to complete their work. (Nina, Interview 2, pp. 20-21 of 24)

Instead, some of these teacher candidates also believed students’ work could be used as an ongoing assessment to evaluate their educational needs. This is the practice of formative assessment during the course of instruction, rather than after it is completed (Airasian, 1997). This was a requirement that the teacher candidates were familiar with from their experience as tutors in the After-School Literacy Program. As tutors they provided daily anecdotal comments and evaluations of their students’ lesson comprehension. Some of the teacher candidates even offered to grade students’ work on their own time so that they would have assessment information to guide future instruction. The teacher candidates believed that the students would benefit from formative feedback had they been allowed to assess more of the students' work:

The students always handed work in but I never saw it returned. I asked my mentor if I could observe the students and ask them if they are having difficulties with the assignment. My mentor told me not to be concerned because she would do that, but I did not see her addressing individual students. I also did not observe the students' work handed back. The assignments were in a pile that kept getting higher. It seemed the students were doing all this work and the classroom teacher did not realize where they needed assistance. I would have enthusiastically intervened to assist the students and to assist my mentor with her marking. (Nina, Interview 4, p. 10 of 26)
Within her practica, Jordan had an opportunity to practice some of the contemporary assessment measures that she had been studying in her teacher education program:

Jordan creates opportunities for students to be engaged in authentic assessment including highly innovative and creative culminating performances. Assessment and evaluation tools are clear, concise, and skillfully implemented. (Jordan, Block Evaluation, Feb., 2003)

The learning process was also emphasized by Melanie's first teacher mentor who encouraged students to self-regulate and be responsible for their own learning. Through self-regulatory learning, students monitor tasks, select and implement strategies, and evaluate their performance (Butler, 2002). These Grade 5 students were accustomed to contributing to their own assessment tools and using the tools to guide their performance. Collaboratively with the students, Melanie designed a rubric for a novel unit that would highlight how the students self-regulated their learning. Melanie’s evaluation comments in this placement reflect both her mentor's and the faculty supervisor's approval: “She quickly learned evaluation and tracking techniques and successfully tracked students’ work and progress” (Teacher Report, Nov./ 02). “Evaluation rubrics are well prepared and record-keeping is up-to-date. I am very impressed” (Faculty Report, Nov./ 02).

**Discovered Consistencies**

Other teacher mentors effectively demonstrated effective assessment practice:

The assessment process is confusing, but being with a mentor teacher who was always on top of things, I knew exactly what she wanted and when she wanted to do it. It was really hard but at the same time I got to see the assessment process in action. Knowing one assessment is not going to work, one then uses all different types of assessment. (Julia, Interview 4, p. 29 of 31)

Amanda was encouraged to employ less structured assessment measures in her Kindergarten placement. She completed daily anecdotal reports based on curriculum
expectations. She devised a table with students’ names and made notes on their work habits and performance during each of her lessons:

I made certain I had clear expectations. For example, I noted whether or not they shared ideas. During the lessons I wrote down “shared a few ideas” or “shared many ideas” depending on what the pupils contributed to the discussion and if they understood content. Each day it took me a half of an hour to an hour to assess their work. (Amanda, Interview 4, p. 19 of 24)

The teacher candidates learned there were many aspects in appropriately grading students. Sometimes grading a student orally for comprehension reveals a deeper level of understanding than their written answers. There are other times when it is important to grade only part of the assignment. The teacher candidates learned to accommodate both assessment exercises for students with a learning disability and learning expectations when students encountered frustration with the writing process:

The students with learning disabilities were very hard to mark because I didn’t know what to mark and what not to mark and at times one of them would not have completed a portion of work. At other times I could understand only 10 or 15 answers out of 25 questions and I assigned a mark to those. (Jordan, Interview 2, p. 22 of 27)

Lower-level learners would begin to misbehave because the work was too hard. I would modify my rubric, taking into consideration even one sentence which was correct. For their journals I would make sure as long as the pupils had some of the expectations and were doing their best work I would give them a 3. But the teacher would know it was adapted or modified to fit the child, almost like an IEP, except not officially. (Julia, Interview 4, p. 22 of 31)

Kathleen realized the importance of evaluation and assessment in nurturing academic confidence in her students. She was sensitive in maintaining the students’ feelings of pride in their work and to the integrity of the grading process:

I tried to focus in on a couple of things. If there was one word was consistently spelled wrongly I would circle it. But I didn’t mark up all of it because there wouldn’t be a line that didn’t have at least 10 marks on it. (Kathleen, Interview 3, p. 8 of 33)
Discovered Inconsistencies

To some of the teacher candidates, their teacher mentors' instruction, assessment, and evaluation practices seemed inconsistent. For example, Amanda's Grade 5 teacher mentor had an interpretation of rubrics levels:

I put more rubrics in my lessons and made sure they were how she wanted them because she did them differently than what I had learned [in teacher education courses]. My mentor felt attaining a 3 was the same as achieving a 4. I had learned a 3 was not as good as a 4. We discussed this, but I changed my format so it was what she wanted. (Amanda, Interview 3, pp. 5-6 of 31)

Then she asked Amanda to complete an informal evaluation on students' writing compositions instead of using a rubric. Amanda disagreed because she believed that this final writing assignment should have been assessed using an objective rubric to show evidence of revision and improvement of writing style:

Who, What, Where, When, and Why were components of my assessment of a Mayan myth. I also checked spelling and if they had revised their written drafts. I had to set aside my comprehensive assessment rubric aside because my mentor did not want a formal feedback. I just gave them a mark out of 10 for the final draft based on correcting their mistakes and explaining their ideas. (Amanda, Interview 3, p. 19 of 31)

In her first placement, Kathleen perceived the classroom instruction was not consistent with assessment practice. For instance, while her mentor seemed to focus primarily on the literary content of a novel during instruction, Kathleen was asked to grade the students on their writing. This classroom teacher did not seem to attend to the writing process or emphasize the importance of presentation:

The students did not know how to edit their work and that is where they lost their marks. Their average marks did not reflect the excellent content of their writing. (Kathleen, Interview 2, p. 21 of 28)

Melanie's final placement left her confused regarding the process of assessing writing. This classroom teacher emphasized and evaluated the use of mechanics such as
capital letters and periods. This mentor corrected grammar and students were often giving a mark reflecting all aspects of the written composition. Although Melanie followed her mentor's marking practices, she did not accept these methods as viable educational methodology:

I really didn't know how the teacher assessed the students. It seemed the teacher would make grammatical corrections and assign a random mark like A, A-, or a D if the assignment was not finished. I remember my mentor teacher telling me it's all up in her head now. She's been teaching for so long that she'll look at the student's name and know the mark to assign. There were no rubrics. I use rubrics because then you have actual proof if a parent comes in. (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 9 of 22)

Reporting and Accountability

The teacher candidates were challenged by attempting to cover all of the required learning expectations in the Ministry Guidelines. They learned about the intricacies involved in the process of collecting and converting grades into report card marks and the time restrictions imposed on curricula expectations. A number of the teacher candidates observed that, though there were minimal marks collected for some assignments, the teacher had to average a grade for each student. Kathleen experienced this challenge in her second placement: "I had to get all the grades in, but their music mark was based on only 1 ½ half lessons" (Kathleen, Interview 2, p. 10 of 28).

Julia participated in gathering data and writing report card evaluations. Her first placement mentor teacher asked her to participate in assessing the students and offer comments for report cards:

When we were doing speech screenings my mentor teacher asked, "What do you think?" When we were doing report cards she asked, "How are they listening in circle?" She invited me to give input. (Julia, Interview 2, p. 12 of 14)
The teacher candidates recognized the importance of sound assessment practices and accountability. Melanie articulated the importance of being accountable to parents by keeping them informed of their children's progress:

Every assignment the students handed in was expected to be corrected. On the left side of the portfolio is all the work needing corrections and on the right side is all the corrected work. By the end of the month, they have to have all the corrected work into the corrected section and bring it home to their parents. Some teachers put “Xs” and no corrections and this makes it difficult for students to learn from their mistakes. (Melanie, Interview 1, p. 12 of 15)

The teacher candidates were eager to gain practical suggestions around assessment and evaluation and observe the best practices of experienced teachers. They were concerned about accurately evaluating their students and reporting to parents:

My mentor teacher researched the students' OSRs from the previous year. She looked at their language arts evaluation and what they had accomplished. This classroom teacher was confused by one child who had reached a level 3 last year and did not know the letters of the alphabet. My mentor was also concerned with parental attitudes once they realize there is a problem with this child's literacy skills and there was not an apparent problem last year. These parents will likely question their present teacher and possibly be nonsupportive. (Nina, Interview 1, p. 9 of 20)

(8) Future Teaching Practice

During the teacher education program the teacher candidates refined their concept of reading and writing instruction. Based on their experience as tutors, they entered teacher candidacy with a specific concept of reading and writing strategy instruction. Their teacher education courses and practica offered the teacher candidates the opportunity to evaluate teaching pedagogy and affirm positive teaching practices. At times, the teacher candidates needed to negotiate disparity between their beliefs and those of their teacher mentors or the teacher educators. Regardless, the teacher candidates emerged with a personal vision of their future teaching practice based on the learning that took place during their teacher education program.
Relating to Students

Some of the teacher candidates stated that they based their teaching practices on an ethic of care, which is an emphasis on the relationships and concerns of others (Gilligan, 1982). They conveyed compassion for the feelings of students and believed in making the learning environment secure and nurturing:

My mentor teacher told me she noticed when I am in a classroom I really care about the children. I really want to get to know my students and I would talk about things that were important in my life, too. I do not think there is a line dividing being a person and being a teacher. (Kathleen, Interview 3, pp. 29-30 of 33)

My teacher mentor clearly articulated teaching involves the curriculum, but it is all about loving the children. There are going to be colleagues, administration, and parents that may be upset with you. There are going to be children who don't like you. But at the end of the day you're there for one reason and it's to make the students feel safe and to love them unconditionally. (Kathleen, Interview 4, p. 4 of 31)

Recognizing vulnerability and nurturing self-esteem were important aspects in the teaching approaches of Amanda and Jordan. These beliefs were apparent even as tutors. For example, when tutoring, Jordan made her students feel valued when she allowed them to reverse roles and become the teachers. Jordan remarked on how this built their confidence. Often the teacher candidates focused on the positive qualities in their students:

There is one boy who has a learning disability. Sometimes the teacher is very harsh on him. I tried to show him as much encouragement as I could. These are the kids who are close to my heart. One day he said that his purring sound meant he loved me. He sent me a Valentine and he would just try to talk to me. This student melted my heart. (Amanda, Interview 3, p. 10 of 31)

Simple nurturing actions make the world of difference. You have to realize that when you teach children, that you have to treat them with the most respect. You do not know where they've been, and you don't know where they're going (Jordan, Interview 1, p. 20 of 23)... I realized that teaching is all about flexibility; it's about reading your students. It's also about the problems they
carry and how this affects your lessons or your approach. (Jordan, Interview 2, p. 18 of 27)

These teacher candidates believed that innate compassion for children is the essential ingredient for providing them with an optimal learning environment.

Initially, a number of the teacher candidates were apprehensive about teaching at the Junior level. The teacher candidates were educated in child development and many had experiences in early childhood. Many had experienced various tutoring sessions with Primary children and they were familiar with the strategies required to teach prereading skills from the After-School Literacy Program. As the teacher education program progressed the candidates became more familiar with Junior level learners. Though they all successfully completed their practica with this age group, some of the teacher candidates continued to prefer Primary grades.

Kathleen experienced initial doubt in her future efficacy as a Junior level teacher, but she became more competent in this grade level as she gained experience:

This Grade 5/6 teaching block is going fairly well. I have to be honest that at least once every day I question whether or not I made the right decision to become a teacher. However, I am still here and I am learning so much every day. (Kathleen, e-mail Communication, Nov. 19/02)

The 3 weeks I was teaching were unbelievable. One day I would get up and think, “I can’t do this” and the next day I would wake up and say, “I can do this.” So it’s a struggle. But, this experience solidified the fact I want to be a teacher and I can do it. The school had a cozy, homey, very nice feeling. All of the teachers and my colleagues were extremely supportive. (Kathleen, Interview 2, p. 1 of 28)

Melanie’s confidence in her ability to teach at both the Primary and Junior divisions was bolstered by her successful practica experience:

When people ask me whether I prefer Grade 1 over Grade 5, I can’t answer specifically. I loved what I did in Grade 5, but I also loved what I was doing in Grade 1. I think if I were offered a job it wouldn’t matter what grade I had. I’m very confident. (Melanie, Interview 3, p. 20 of 25)
Other teacher candidates maintained their preference for teaching Primary grades and justified their choice based on their perceived self-efficacy with these students:

Teaching in a Junior classroom was very challenging for me. I did learn a lot. I hope to stay with Primary because I know what is expected in Grade 1. (Julia, Interview 4, pp. 27-28 of 31)

I really want to focus on the Primary age group. I think Primary students have the capability of absorbing more than the Junior-level students. These children are eager to learn. The process can be made fun and motivating for both the students and the teacher. The upper grades seem to focus on reinforcing what the students learned in Primary grades. A teacher can observe the literacy acquisition process in Primary-aged children. (Nina, Interview 4, p. 20 of 26)

Relating Literacy and Pedagogy

When asked to envision their future literacy instructional practice, a number of teacher candidates emphasized an approach to reading that promotes readiness and authenticity. This was their background experience as tutors in the After-School Literacy Program. Julia was confident that she would be making a significant contribution to young children’s literacy skills:

A structured literacy program in kindergarten helps students in lower reading levels. There should be more read-aloud, letter recognition, sight words, and early reading. I know the Jolly Phonics program that is introduced in JK. The literacy expectations in Grade 1 are high. Unless reading readiness is addressed in Kindergarten it’s going to be challenging for parents, teachers and students. Literacy is the foundation for all learning. (Julia, Interview 4, pp. 27-28 of 31)

Melanie hoped to immerse her Grade 1 students in authentic children’s literature to provide them with a stimulating reading program. She found the basal reader program to be restrictive in providing her students with an enriched learning experience:

I was not given an opportunity to do things I wanted to do in language arts. My teacher wanted me to follow a strict basal program. The basal readers were very dry. I didn't find they addressed differing reading levels. The stories weren't interesting and it was not possible to assign seatwork other than what was specified in the teacher's guide (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 1 of 22)... I really want to introduce real children’s literature as one of my goals. I want to become more familiar with children’s literature so I can purchase my own books and use them
in my own future classroom. Using only the basal readers in my placement limited what I could do. (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 3 of 22)

Each of the 6 teacher candidates felt they had formed pertinent positions concerning their future pedagogical practice. They became adamant on issues regarding student motivation, mainstream integration, individualized instruction, self-regulated learning, strategy instruction, and co-operative learning.

Comparing her last placement in a split SK/Grade 1 class to her initial Grade 1/2 class, Nina believed every student should benefit from enriched experiences and high standards to allow optimal opportunities to excel. Nina concluded that school demographics influenced teachers’ expectations and instructional strategies:

I observed the teaching and learning process in two different schools. The expectations were very different for each of them. I can make this close comparison because I was in a Grade 1/2 class and then I went to a split SK/Grade 1 classroom. In October, my first placement had children who were miles ahead of the students in my second placement in April. But both groups of children were in roughly the same grade. The expectations in my first placement were higher. I observed the atmosphere in the second school was not as positive and the standards were lower. I believe these lower expectations did not serve to motivate or teach the students effectively. (Nina, Interview 4, p. 6 of 26)

Jordan's educative beliefs centered around respecting students with special needs. She believed that these students should be integrated into the regular classroom with academic accommodations instead of being pulled out of their regular class to receive resource assistance. Jordan’s beliefs were based on her experience as an elementary school student who had required remedial assistance:

When I was a child and I worked with a resource teacher who knew all the students. When she came into the classroom it seemed she was there for everyone. No one knew she was there for an individual person. (Jordan, Interview 3, p. 14 of 30)
Julia intended to incorporate activities in her future classroom that would address a variety of learning styles visual and kinesthetic learners. She felt the foundation of proficient teaching was awareness of students' needs. She believed this could be accomplished by reviewing and assessing skills until they were mastered. Specifically to Primary-aged students, Julia believed that addressing these needs required a multisensory approach:

One of my goals will be to appeal to many different learning styles--kinesthetic, auditory, and visual--as much as possible throughout my lessons and to meet the needs of individual learners. Visual aids in the Primary division are very important in order to grasp their attention and show them concretely what you are talking about. When teaching geometric shapes, a teacher should have those geometric shapes available. (Julia, Interview 2, p. 9 of 14)

Amanda's development as an educator was based on the pedagogical practices that she experienced in her teaching placements. Initially, her teaching style reflected in the teacher-directed lessons that she delivered. Then her approach changed to become more student-centered as a function of her focus on encouraging her students to be independent, self-regulated learners:

I started off my units more teacher-directed and then I realized the students should be researching and discovering this information. They're not really learning from my talking to them. My last 2 weeks I tried to make it more student-centered. I would guide them through discovering knowledge and sharing these ideas to encourage learning. (Amanda, Interview 3, p. 27 of 31)

Throughout her practica, Melanie struggled with covering all aspects of the curriculum within defined timelines. She decided to deliver effective instruction, rather than allowing timelines to dictate when new curricula were introduced:

I believe an effective teacher doesn't teach the entire curriculum and a mediocre teacher does teach the entire curriculum. A good teacher ensures the students understand the concepts they have been taught. Getting the majority of the curriculum covered does not guarantee children are learning. The teacher may not be giving them what they need for the next grade. The teacher is accountable
especially in Grade 1 because the students must be reading by Grade 2. (Melanie, Interview 2, p. 11 of 14)

Kathleen admired the teaching qualities of her Grade 5/6 mentor teacher, commenting: “She is a very warm, caring, and nurturing teacher. I loved that about her when I had her as a teacher” (Kathleen, Interview 2, p. 9 of 28). Kathleen was also aware of the differences in teaching styles as Kathleen perceived herself to be more dynamic and less structured:

My mentor is a very traditional teacher. She’s very teacher-centered in her lesson delivery. Having learned about the relevancy of co-operative group work and social interaction, I would bring these concepts into my classroom. I respect her as a teacher, but there are things I would do differently. (Kathleen, Interview 1, pp. 18-19 of 24)

Relating to Experiences

At the conclusion of their teacher education program, some of the teacher candidates continued to credit their teaching approaches to the After-School Literacy Program. In some cases, the teacher candidates felt the teacher education program had not offered a comprehensive educational experience completely preparing them for an inclusive classroom.

Kathleen felt positive about her professional growth throughout the teacher education program, yet she intended to complete additional qualifications courses in Special Education and Intermediate Qualifications to broaden her knowledge base:

Even if I do not become a special education teacher, I still think the courses are a valuable asset. I will become more aware of teaching strategies for children with learning challenges and assist students who require individual attention. Also, it is important to recognize when you need to refer a child for remedial assistance. (Kathleen, Interview 1, p. 23 of 24)

Melanie also wanted to continue her professional development. She admired her first mentor teacher who attended contemporary courses in educational pedagogy and
practice. Melanie observed a marked contrast in her final placement where the practices of this mentor were not current. “I don’t mean to be judgmental but I think she’s kind of behind on her philosophy. My mentor teacher has not updated on reading and writing programs” (Melanie, Interview 4, p. 6 of 22).

Julia felt her tutorial experience had taught her how to address the needs of students with reading difficulties and that she had learned teaching strategies and awareness of students' differing functional levels when programming and planning for children with reading difficulties. In a school board interview, Julia expressed future aspirations to become a reading specialist:

The literacy program enhanced my knowledge of lower readers. I know how to scaffold, guide, and assist in the different levels. Some children could be at a lower level and some children could be at a higher level. I can develop lessons to meet the needs of different students. (Julia, Interview 4, p. 30 of 31)

When I talk to different professionals, different teachers, different principals and they realize I already have a base in literacy instruction, even before the Teacher Education Program, they’re amazed. They think, “She knows exactly what we’re targeting for in the literacy program and how to motivate children to learn.” (Julia, Interview 4, p. 30 of 31)

Amanda was also interviewed by a local school board. Amanda described her experiences as an educational assistant and her volunteer tutoring of students with learning difficulties. She expressed her knowledge of literacy strategies and voiced confidence in her ability to use various teaching methodologies:

I have always wanted to work with children with special needs. I feel I can assist them in many ways. I can break down concepts to make it easier for them and I want them to surpass their disabilities. I know I can help them because I can work with different levels. This is because of the tutoring program and as an Educational Assistant helping students who have disabilities. (Amanda, Interview 4, p. 22 of 24)
Similar to a number of the other teacher candidates at the conclusion of the teacher education program, Jordan felt she was not prepared to teach in a classroom. She was cognizant of the strategies she had learned in her tutoring experience, but she was also aware of how much more there was to learn to be an effective educator:

I volunteered for 10 years and now that I have experienced teacher candidacy, I realize there is more to being a teacher. There is a difference in volunteering and teaching in a classroom. There are many aspects to teaching which include: planning the lesson, teaching the lesson, time management, and classroom behavioural management. There are also the Ontario government's expectations. The students are not all at the same level of learning and there could be a class with 5 LD kids, 2 gifted, and 7 behavioural issues. (Jordan, Interview 4, p. 36 of 37)

(9) Growth from Tutors to Beginning Teachers

As a result of tutoring in the After-School Literacy Program, all 6 former volunteers perceived that they had acquired essential literacy instructional practices that would support their future teaching practice. They completed their tutoring assignments with a preconceived idea about teaching and a sense of instructional efficacy. Initially, the teacher candidates did not recognize the differences with respect to instructional context between the tutoring and classroom milieus; this created some internal tension. Over the course of the teacher education program, these candidates adapted their notions around effective instructional practice and they renegotiated their future ideals.

_Nina_ volunteered to tutor in the After-School Literacy program to gain resources and experience: “the more experience you have, the more ideas you will have and the better off you are going to be as a teacher” (Nina, Tutor Interview 1, p. 1 of 2). As a tutor, Nina perceived that teachers needed to remain flexible and be willing to modify their chosen lesson plan to meet their students’ learning needs. Nina articulated her appreciation for students’ individual strengths and weaknesses as she worked with Grade
4 students with basic decoding challenges. Nina believed she was competent in individualized instruction and aware of the importance of flexible planning. "I can pretty much plan a learning activity and make it work for any student" (Nina, Tutor Interview 4, p. 1 of 2).

Nina presented herself as a confident pre-service teacher. She felt her tutorial pre-training experience provided her with the competence of an experienced educator. Consequently, she tended to be critical of her teacher mentors and devalued her practica experiences. In the end, she did not feel that she learned effective teaching strategies from her teacher mentors. Nina believed she was prepared for her teaching career due to the prior experience that she had gained as a tutor.

**Jordan** volunteered to be a tutor to gain experience teaching students with literacy difficulties and make an impact on their ability to read and write. She approached the tutoring program with the expectation to grow as an educator and prepare for teacher candidacy. She concluded, “I’ve learned so much from this experience itself…but I’ve learned so much from the students I’ve worked with too” (Jordan, Tutor Interview 3, p. 1 of 4). Initially, she believed a good teacher needed “tons of experience and tons of different opportunities” (Jordan, Tutor Interview 1, p. 2 of 4). As the program concluded, Jordan felt an effective teacher needed to know and understand the child and then be willing to adapt instruction.

Jordan's perception of teaching was a reflection of her own background. She has a learning disability and her own experience as a student influenced her pre-service education. Jordan demonstrated empathy for students who struggled in the academic system and nurtured their self-esteem and their intellectual development.
Yet, this unique perspective also left her critical of other teachers’ practices. Jordan conveyed frustration when she perceived other educators were not as mindful as she was toward students with disabilities. She verbalized her thoughts with a critical view of mentor teachers' pedagogical philosophies and methodologies. She committed herself to making a difference by designing lesson plans that focused on individual differences.

As a result of her practicum, Jordan integrated her own knowledge and experiential base with that of her teacher education. She adapted her ideals to the realities of the classroom, especially with respect to meeting curriculum guidelines and maintaining classroom management. She realized her past experiences as a tutor formed the basis of her continued professional growth.

Initially, Julia had volunteered as a tutor to gain experience with teaching resources and instructional strategies: “It has been an awesome experience. I have learned a lot and have gained the confidence needed to instruct these students” (Julia, e-mail communication, Nov. 29/01). She assessed her students’ literacy development by their reading improvement and enhanced self-esteem. Julia believed her participation as a tutor contributed to her preparedness for teacher education.

The importance of literacy instruction remained a priority for Julia throughout all of her educative experiences. She noted the similarities in her tutorial training, her pre-service education, and her placement teaching experiences. Her pre-service education was congruent with the pedagogical practices and methodology she adopted from her tutorial work, which was also supported by her mentor teachers.

She learned the art of facilitating reading and writing skills by introducing literacy strategies, constantly being aware of students' needs, and modifying lessons to meet
individual requirements. Julia enjoyed a passion for teaching and she identified her keen interest in the Primary division of elementary school teaching. Julia entered the pre-service program to become an elementary educator and though, she found parts of her practica experience frustrating, she accepted each challenge as part of this journey.

As an Educational Assistant, **Amanda** entered the After-School Literacy Program directly experienced in working with students with literacy difficulties. She appreciated observing the efficacy of providing students with a host of multisensory learning strategies.

At the beginning of her teacher education program, Amanda was apprehensive about her ability to teach. However, she believed that she had the required skills to positively impact the learning of students with special needs. This belief stemmed from specialized college coursework and pre-training experiences. Her Primary placements were with teacher mentors who were compatible to her in teaching style. Consequently, she perceived that these practica were successful. She felt the challenges in the Junior classroom practicum were attributed to the incompatibility between her teacher mentor’s teaching methods and beliefs.

Regardless, Amanda attained a sense of accomplishment as she practiced assisting students with disabilities. Amanda displayed a persevering attitude in her goal to become an effective educator. Amanda’s concept of herself as a teacher developed out of her accomplishments and perseverance. She envisioned her future career as based on facilitating learning and success for students with learning disabilities.

**Melanie** commenced the After-School Tutoring Program with apprehension about teaching elementary students to read. She was aware that students have different learning
styles and required different learning strategies. Melanie was unsure as to whether she would be able to provide for their needs. As she built a positive rapport with her Junior level boys she gained a sense of accomplishment and tutoring proficiency. Melanie's tutoring experience confirmed her desire to teach reading and writing. “This tutoring program definitely reinforced the fact that I want to be a teacher” (Melanie, Tutor Interview 3, p. 1 of 3).

Melanie believed the teacher education placement experiences facilitated her teaching skills. Melanie felt confident when she was allowed to practice teaching in a style compatible with her beliefs. She had entered the teacher education program with preconceived ideas about teaching. She based her pedagogy on her tutoring experiences and her empathy for children. She perceived the strategies she learned as a literacy tutor could be effectively applied in an inclusive classroom.

Melanie integrated her tutoring skills in her teaching placements. She was respectful of her students and earned their respect, in turn. Melanie's teaching approach included creating a learning environment, which reflected the diverse aspects of curriculum and students' needs.

A career in teaching had been a long standing goal for Kathleen and she volunteered in the After-School Literacy Program with this objective: “…tutoring will give me a better taste of what teaching is going to be like and what kids are like who have challenges” (Kathleen, Tutor Interview 1, p. 1 of 3). Kathleen observed the low self-esteem of her struggling readers and learned to accommodate individual learning needs by addressing reading levels, attention, behaviour, and motivation. By the end of the
program, Kathleen perceived that her students had developed reading fluency and confidence.

After completing the teacher education program, Kathleen understood the classroom teacher's challenge to meet the learning needs of all students. She believed that individualized and after-school programming were integral to assisting students to learn. Kathleen believed that by promoting literacy skills, a teacher contributes to a child's self-efficacy. She learned that a student's literacy development affected a student's self-esteem.

Kathleen applied her knowledge of how children learn in her courses and teaching placements in the teacher education program. She concentrated on teaching to individual requirements and also considered the impact of her teaching methods on their learning. "You could have all the pedagogical foresight in the world, but when it comes down to being a teacher, it is so much more about those humanistic qualities than anything learned in Teacher's College" (Kathleen, Interview 4, p. 25 of 31).

**Conclusion**

The 6 teacher candidates in this study offered a unique and personal perspective into the teacher education program. This perspective was based on their experience as tutors for the After-School Literacy Program, which they seemed to use as a benchmark with which to evaluate their practicum experience and teacher education courses. As well, tutoring practice was a comparative against which their teacher mentors' practice was analyzed and evaluated. Essentially, the tutoring experience created a referent frame for their teacher education program.
The 6 teacher candidates began their teaching placements eager to implement their experiential knowledge into their practicum. These former volunteer tutors perceived the tutorial literacy strategies were more viable than the teaching methodologies taught in the teacher education courses. To varying degrees, the 6 teacher candidates successfully integrated a few strategic aspects of their tutoring experience into their practica. All of the teacher candidates were able to at least informally emphasize prediction, summarization, and story grammar comprehension strategies. Julia, Nina, Jordan, and Amanda used graphic organizers in some form during their language arts lessons. All teacher candidates except Melanie were able to employ kinesthetic strategies in their letter-sound correspondence lessons. In focus group discussions, teacher candidates expressed that some of their teacher mentors were supportive of these strategies, and in other cases, mentors were insistent on implementing existing educative practices.

The teacher candidates compared their pre-training tutorial experiences to their mentors' practices, specifically with respect to teaching reading and writing. When the teacher candidates felt their mentor teachers held similar beliefs about teaching reading and writing, the teacher candidates found value of their placements. For instance, Melanie believed her placement successes resulted from her compatibility with her first two mentors as they both agreed with Melanie's teaching approaches.

However, when some to the teacher candidates examined their teacher mentors' reading and writing instructional practices, they disagreed with adhering to all aspects of the methodology practiced by their associate teachers. In Nina's second placement, the mentor teacher had divided the class into four groups based on reading ability, but Nina
perceived the assigned work as inappropriate and not meeting the needs of individual students. Kathleen passively discarded teaching practices she disliked, noting she would never teach in certain manners. Jordan was critical of her second mentor teacher, stating that she did not believe that students learn by copying information from blackboards. Amanda believed she could impact the learning of individual students with special needs, though her style was not compatible to her Grade 5 mentor's teaching approach.

A number of teacher candidates perceived their mentor teachers to be unresponsive to their students' needs. In a few instances, disparity insinuated itself between the teacher candidates' beliefs regarding how students with literacy difficulties should be taught and the actual instructional practices. For example, Nina worked with a teacher mentor who regulated students to complete seatwork exercises. Nina became critical of this mentor's teaching practices as he did not actively engage his students in strategic instruction. Melanie also felt that her mentor did not address students' individual learning needs. She perceived this experienced teacher as one who seemingly relied on teacher's manuals and photocopied worksheets. Jordan's criticism toward other teachers' practices was based on her perception that they were not as mindful as she was toward students with disabilities. Based on her own experiences as an individual with a learning disability, Jordan critiqued her mentors' practices. She believed she was more insightful about teaching students with reading and writing difficulties. She committed herself to "making a difference" by voicing her thoughts and designing lesson plans that focused on individual differences. In all three instances, a perception of incompatibility between these three teacher candidates and their teacher mentors resulted, and consequently, these
candidates felt uncomfortable and incompetent teaching in the presence of their mentors.

The 6 teacher candidates began their preservice year believing that level appropriate and appealing instructive materials maximized learning, especially for students with literacy difficulties. At the end of the teacher education program, they realized that the opportunity to integrate this instruction in a regular classroom was difficult. They acknowledged the weighty responsibility of ensuring that students received appropriate programming and experienced concern about their ability to provide such instruction in the future.

During the focus group discussions at the conclusion of their teacher education program, these teacher candidates discussed how they would teach reading and writing in the future. They believed that effective teaching of reading and writing skills in the Primary grades as integral to academic success:

I think that in everything that I learned, reading and writing are the cornerstones of our curriculum. You cannot be successful in science or math unless you have a significant background in reading and writing. Teachers are now focused on literacy. In order for kids to be successful that has to be the main focus when they are in school. (Melanie, Focus Group, p. 25 of 40)

The teacher candidates alluded to the teacher's role as that of a facilitator of students' knowledge constructs around reading and writing skills:

I found that the first time I read a story with my Grade 2s and I asked them, what event they thought would come next. They all looked at me with an expression that said, “What do you mean we have to guess what is going to happen next?” Teaching my students why making predictions is important and how to do this was the focus of my subsequent lessons (Jordan, Focus Group, p. 11 of 40)

The teacher candidates saw the need to provide students with hands-on activities and frequent repetition of directions and concepts:
I tried to do as much as possible so that my students were not sitting at their desks just doing work out of a textbook. I had my students using manipulatives everyday. I believe that is how students actually learning – by doing, not by just copying things down and trying to figure out the answers themselves. (Nina, Focus Group, p. 18 of 40).

They observed the need to exercise flexibility in lesson plan delivery while including activities to meet emotional and developmental requirements of students:

Most of my learning happened when I was on my teaching blocks...Something I learned was that as a teacher, you have to be flexible. I was so structured as far as scheduling, and I have learned that it does not always go as planned when teaching. You have to roll with things (Julia, Focus Group, p. 24 of 40).

[A teacher has to make] personal sacrifices to try to reach kids with I.E.P.s or those functioning below level. I don’t think that I realized how tough teaching really is. I didn’t realize how you have to meet their developmental and emotional needs. So that is the one thing that I realized, teaching is a tough job. (Jordan, Focus Group, p. 17 of 40).

Finally, they emphasized the need to build rapport with students and appeal to their interests:

I have learned to try to make learning fun. From what I have experienced, I have discovered that you have to try to get involved and motivated by what the students are learning. Learn with them, not just teach it at them. Learn with them and you will see better results. (Amanda, Focus Group, p. 24 of 40)

The teacher candidates also speculated on the impact of their volunteer tutoring experiences and candidacy placement experiences on their future practice. They felt that their experiences in the After-School Literacy Program enhanced their knowledge of teaching strategies, students' differing functional levels, and programming and planning for children with literacy difficulties:

The Literacy Program helped me to realize that every child is unique and all come with their own abilities and disabilities. Anything that they can do should be recognized... Motivate them and let them know that they are cared for and this is what makes a difference in how they learn. (Amanda, Focus Group, p. 30 of 40)
Although, their pre-training tutorial experience did not offer a cognitive framework of learning theories, their tutorial practices were resonant of this educational pedagogy. Even though many of the teacher candidates were not able to use the strategies and pedagogy from the After-School Literacy Program as part of their practica, the experience proved to be an influential experience. The 6 teacher candidates remained committed to implementing their tutoring strategies in future teaching positions. This commitment is the focus of dialogue in this document’s final chapter.

In chapter 5 there will be a discussion of the impact of the After-School Literacy Program on all of the participants: elementary students, volunteer tutors, and teacher candidates. There will be a focus on the 6 teacher candidates’ growth from volunteer tutors to beginning teachers. The teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching reading and writing and their perceptions with respect to their future practice will be emphasized throughout this final chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Literature has documented the benefits of tutorial instruction with in-school programs (e.g., *Reading Recovery, Early Steps* and *Success for All*) and through volunteer tutoring programs (e.g., *The Howard Street Tutoring Program* and *Book Buddies*). The benefits derived from the tutoring experience for volunteer tutors in these programs have also been reported (e.g., Invernizzi et al., 1996; Topping, 1998). Similarly, the experience of teacher candidates who tutor has been documented (e.g., Bacon, 1992; Roskos & Walker, 1994; Worthy & Prater, 1998). These teacher candidates have realized the value of the tutoring experience for future classroom teaching (Worthy & Prater).

There is a void in the literature that specifically tracks former volunteers into teacher candidacy. This study advanced the existing literature by illuminating how tutoring prior to teacher education influenced teacher candidates’ perceptions of pre-service reading and writing instruction. In sum, three sets of data were collected: measures to position the efficacy of the tutoring program, documentation of the tutors’ experience, and a comprehensive track of the teacher candidates’ pre-service education experience. There was a focus on the former tutors’ prior knowledge around literacy instruction to determine its bearing on advanced knowledge construction during teacher education.

**The After-School Literacy Program**

Learning measures data were gathered from elementary students in the After-School Literacy Program. These learning measures identified the elementary students’ skills in letter-sound correspondence, decoding, reading comprehension, and knowledge and application of the writing process. The data were collected at the beginning of the program and after the first phase of the program. Comparing program participants to
controls, students who had received the tutorial training were more proficient at decoding through the use of reading phonograms. These students used letter patterns (e.g., "-and", "-ime", "-ing", "-ame") to read words that had the same rhyming components (Allen, 1998; Gaskins, 1998). As compared to control students, the students who participated in the Literacy Program possessed greater story element (characters, setting, problem, solution, events) knowledge. After reading a passage verbally, the tutored students had an enhanced ability to recall these components of a story.

The effective use of letter patterns to decode and the recall of the salient components of a narrative story, were two specific aspects of the After-School Literacy Program implemented by the tutors. As the tutors emphasized the components of a story with the elementary students in the Program, they were also grounding their prior knowledge with respect to their future ability to teach story elements. Interestingly, teaching students about story element knowledge was an aspect that retained prominence in the tutors’ repertoire of instructional skills. As teacher candidates, these former tutors emphasized story grammar and the associated comprehension strategies of prediction and summarization in their practica placements. The volunteer tutors’ training, support, and experience, while delivering these strategic lessons, within the After-School Literacy Program was the focus of another phase of research.

**The Volunteer Tutors**

Over the course of the After-School Literacy Program, the volunteer undergraduate tutors were observed and interviewed. Their impressions with respect to tutoring students with learning difficulties were documented and their formative experiences as burgeoning educators were tracked. These data revealed that on a surface
level, the tutors enhanced their knowledge of strategic instruction. The tutors understood how to deliver direct instruction and provide their students with strategies to recall letter-sound correspondences, decode letter patterns, recall story elements, and complete the writing process. This finding is not particularly surprising as the tutors were trained and supported by the researcher and this is component that contributes to the effectiveness of volunteer tutoring (Morris et al., 1990; Wasik, 1998b). Ironically, even though the tutors were aware of how to teach these strategies and the potentially effective nature of the strategy instruction, the elementary students demonstrated growth in only a few of the featured skills.

Since most of the tutors had taken some undergraduate courses in child psychology, they entered the program to gain practical experience with children. In particular, the tutors expressed that they called on their undergraduate coursework knowledge with respect to behaviour management, working with students with learning difficulties, and in encouraging students’ motivation and self-confidence. Through working with the elementary students in the After-School Literacy Program, the tutors were able to apply some of the theory and content knowledge from these courses. In other studies (Abouzeid & Fowler, 1998), tutors expressed that the opportunity to work with students facilitated a theory-to-practice knowledge connection.

These undergraduate tutors found that tutoring a few students at a time was conducive to building rapport between them and their students. They believed this rapport helped to maintain students’ on-task attention during lesson sessions. Sustaining on-task attention of students with learning difficulties is a common challenge (Hutchison, 2002). They perceived that this on-task attention contributed to the productivity of the
tutoring sessions. The tutors were especially sensitive that their students enjoyed participating in fun, educational games at the end of each session. These motivating and meaningful activities commonly pique students’ interest in learning (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

When they completed the tutoring program, the tutors remarked on their new sense of respect for teaching as a profession. After individually working with students with literacy difficulties, they appreciated the concerted effort teachers put forth to meet the needs of all students. Typically, the experience of working individually with students has been found to increase instructional procedural knowledge of teacher candidates (Worthy & Patterson, 2001). These tutors were also grateful for the opportunity to learn about literacy teaching strategies. As well, they perceived that they had practiced what they believed was “authentic teaching” -- an uncommon experience at the undergraduate level. The tutors felt this “real” teaching experience would impact their future work with students positively.

Another significant realization that emerged from their tutoring experience was a commitment to pursue a career in teaching (Newman & Wilson, 1997; Worthy & Patterson, 2001). Many of the tutors entered the Literacy Program for the purposes of gaining experience credit and reference on their resumes; this was an instrumental motivating factor. Some tutors entered the program questioning whether teaching would be an appropriate vocation. For most of the tutors, the tutoring experience established them with a persona of self-as-teacher. In addition to confirming their desire to become teachers, the tutors remarked that they derived a sense of fulfillment in providing assistance for students in need.
In particular, the tutors experienced firsthand the challenges that many students with learning disabilities face with respect to literacy acquisition (Brady & Moats, 1997). This gave them insight into the nature of learning disabilities and the instructional approaches that are most effective for students with these needs. The tutors developed an understanding for the characteristics of students with learning disabilities as individuals who are often intellectually bright, yet may be discouraged by their difficulties around their reading and writing skills (Fresko, 1999). With this understanding, some of the tutors were frustrated by the fact that some of the classroom teachers seemingly did not recognize the learning potential in their students with literacy difficulties.

This appreciation for the needs of students with literacy difficulties also dovetailed with their awareness of effective instructional strategies. The tutors seemed to regard their training and use of the strategies from the After-School Literacy Program as absolute: these strategies were optimal for teaching decoding, reading comprehension and writing composition. One tutor regarded this as, “superior knowledge that can be used in a classroom” (Melanie, Tutor Interview #3, Dec. 2001). However, this sense of egocentrism was shortsighted as the tutors had not yet received any formal teacher education nor any mainstream classroom teaching experience.

This portion of research established the notion that structured volunteer tutoring programs have the potential to provide learning opportunities for not only the student participants, but also for the volunteer tutors. In brief, the volunteers were able to associate theory with practice, and refine and individualize their literacy instructional practices. For several individuals, this experience affirmed their goal of becoming exemplary literacy teachers. However, this notion was founded on a simulated, idealistic
vision of the teaching profession. The impact of this perception was realized when the former tutors entered teacher education and received professional preparation and classroom practicum experiences.

**Beliefs of Tutors Versus Teacher Candidates**

The former volunteer literacy tutors entered teacher education programs with an atypical prefatory experience. Tutoring provided them with an enhanced awareness of strategy instruction and individualized programming for students with reading and writing difficulties. These experiences were acquired in a supported context that was conducive to delivering explicit instruction without the constraints of a regular classroom. For the undergraduate tutors, this experience generated a collective set of conceptions about strategic reading and writing instruction. Upon entering teacher education programs, it became apparent that these conceptions were anomalous to those of their colleagues and as defined in the literature (Risko, Roskos, & Vukelich, 2002).

For example, typical beginning teacher candidates hold conceptions that are formed on the basis of their own experience as students and are often traditional, teacher-directed pedagogies (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Jensen, 2001; Risko et al., 2002; Roskos, Vukelich, & Risko, 2001; Swafford, Peters, & Lee, 1998). After their tutoring experience, these beginning teacher candidates articulated their familiarity with teaching through strategic instructional methods and expressed a belief in the efficacy of individualizing instruction to meet the needs of students. Further, typical beginning teacher candidates tend to view literacy teaching as a process of following a set of sequential tasks that are comprehensively supported by resources and texts (Blumenfeld, Krajcik, Marx, & Soloway, 1994; Moore, 2000). The beginning teacher candidates in this study expressed that they viewed teaching as modeling and facilitating the application of
decoding, comprehension, and writing composition strategies. Prospective teacher candidates anticipate that the necessary knowledge about teaching will be imparted through their coursework (Calderhead, 1991; Massey, 2002; Risko, Vukelich, Roskos, & Carpenter, 2002) or evolve as a function of their experience (Book, Byers, & Freeman, 1983; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Manofo, 2000; Ransom & Weisenbach, 1994). The former tutors believed that they had acquired foundational experience from tutoring, and they speculated that these experiences would continue to influence their practice as they developed as future teachers.

The former tutors expressed that they viewed themselves as holding an integral role in understanding their students’ learning needs and making learning motivating. By contrast, typical beginning teacher candidates view learning as dependent on the motivation of students; failure of students to learn is perceived to be due to lack of motivation (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Worthy & Patterson, 2001; Worthy, Patterson, Salas, Prater & Turner, 2002). Typical teacher candidates do not see student motivation as a factor they can readily influence, and consequently, they hold this as a quality reserved for exemplary teachers. The beginning teacher candidates in this study believed that they were responsible for appealing to individual students’ interests and that they were able to enhance their students’ confidence.

Similar to typical beginning teacher candidates, the former tutors regarded the ability to relate to students as important to their perceived self-efficacy as a teacher (Worthy & Patterson, 2001; Worthy et al., 2002). These individuals noted that as educators they needed to build and maintain rapport and sustain the on-task attention of their students. Collectively, these former tutors also believed that students have differing
learning needs, which demand complementary teaching methods. This differs from other beginning teacher candidates who tend to view teaching as a prescribed process (Blumenfeld et al., 1996, Moore, 2000). Yet, these former tutors were typical with respect to their concerns around sustaining attention and managing student behaviour. Teacher candidates report concerns with dealing with disruptive behaviour (Kyriacou & Stephens, 1998) and possess classroom management anxiety throughout the duration of their practice teaching (Morton, Vesko, Williams, & Awender, 1997).

**Tutors as Teacher Candidates**

Finally, 6 former undergraduate tutors were followed over the course of their pre-service education. These former tutors entered their respective programs with specific pre-training experience in language arts strategic instruction. The teacher candidates shared critical incidents and significant events from their teaching and learning experiences. They reflected on their pre-service courses and practicum experiences during interviews with the researcher. Interview questions focused on establishing their knowledge structures and beliefs about teaching reading and writing processes as they developed and changed over the course of their pre-service year.

Initially, the 6 participants presented themselves as distinctive beginning teacher candidates entering their teacher education programs with specific training and experience with strategic teaching pedagogy. Within the first few weeks of their respective programs, the teacher candidates were overcome by the workload and information that they were engaged in during their pre-service courses. Instead of assimilating this new information into their preexisting set, the teacher candidates averted both the theoretical and practical components of their pre-service courses and recalled their tutoring instruction. This is a common procedure as teacher candidates' store of tacit
knowledge about teaching and learning has a powerful influence on what they are willing to attend to, learn, and retain during their pre-service training (Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 1996).

Further, teacher candidates' knowledge and beliefs about pre-service teaching are influenced by experience with formal knowledge and personal experience (Richardson, 1996). Specifically, pre-service teachers are the product of their own learning literacy skills experiences (Jensen, 2001; Mahurt, 1998; O'Callaghan, 1997; Risko et al., 2002; Swafford et al., 1998; Wham, 1993) and reading methods theory that is taught in teacher education programs is not always translated into classroom lessons (Worthy & Prater, 1998). The teacher candidates in this study had been trained in strategic instruction and delivered individualized lessons to elementary students with literacy difficulties. This was their first exposure to formal teaching methods and for most of them it became a salient personal experience.

Teacher candidates’ beliefs and theoretical conceptions about learning influence their instructional behaviour (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). At the beginning of the pre-service year, many of the teacher candidates believed that they could duplicate the reading and writing lessons that they had delivered as tutors. It is not uncommon for teacher candidates’ conceptions of how to teach to be entrenched and manifested as practices that may be in opposition to those of their teacher mentors (Patrick & Pintrich). Given the number of contextual differences between the tutoring context and the classroom environment, this was an especially unrealistic assumption.

However, all of the teacher candidates were able to integrate some of the comprehension strategic components from the Literacy Program into their lessons.
During oral reading, the teacher candidates attempted to incorporate the elements of a story into their lessons by asking students prediction and story grammar questions. Either formally within a reading lesson, or informally during impromptu oral reading, the teacher candidates elicited and confirmed students’ predictions about the characters, setting, problem, solution, and the events of the story. It was surprising to many of the teacher candidates, that their students had very little experience with this type of exercise. Interestingly, the tutors readily recalled story grammar elements. These were salient aspects of literacy skills that they were supported in teaching; and the elementary students they tutored experienced a recollection of these components as well.

The reading and writing instructional practices of the mentor teachers were open to scrutiny by the teacher candidates. In some cases, these practices were aligned with what the teacher candidates also regarded as effective pedagogy; in other situations, the mentors’ practice was more teacher-directed. These mentor teachers used basal readers and reproducible seatwork exercises. In general, teacher candidates tend to believe that traditional teaching is ineffective and effective teaching is innovative and strategic (Woolfolk, Hoy, & Murphy, 2001). In a similar vein, teacher candidates view authentic teaching tasks and authentic assessment as more efficacious practice than traditional and standardized testing. They tend to overlook the fact that poorly constructed performance based assessments are also biased measures (Woolfolk et al., 2001). The mentor teachers whom the current teacher candidates regarded as “good” were often the ones that were contemporary and familiar in their practices.

Initially, based on their tutoring experience, the teacher candidates tended to observe their mentor teachers’ practices with a critical eye. Over the course of the pre-
service year, the teacher candidates gained both knowledge and experience that served to renegotiate these initial conceptions. This process of restructuring conceptions through teacher education requires cognitive effort (Pajares, 1992). As a result of teacher education courses, some change is accomplished with respect to the conceptions of classroom instruction held by teacher candidates. Previously held beliefs about learning are not replaced, but coexist with their new beliefs. This results in incomplete conceptual change and at times, teacher candidates misconceive important constructs (Holt-Reynolds, 1992).

For example, the teacher candidates initially underestimated the challenges that classroom teachers assume through attempting to integrate and modify instruction for all of their students. At times, they were even critical of what they perceived to be their mentor teacher’s disregard for the needs of some struggling students. Often the teacher candidates pulled aside struggling students to work with them one-on-one, offering them an abundance of encouragement and praise to compensate for what they perceived to be neglect. However, by the end of the pre-service year, the teacher candidates began to recognize challenges associated with individual programming and acknowledge that meeting the needs of all students would be a challenge to their future roles as classroom teachers. The issues around integration had been discussed in their teacher education classes; however, the teacher candidates could not appreciate the challenge in practicing these principles until they had completed their pre-service programs.

Finally, the teacher candidates in this study were similar to others in that they believed that all of their teaching experiences (from both tutoring and pre-service practica) would be useful for their future practice. In the minds of the teacher candidates,
the strategies and pedagogy from the After-School Literacy Program retained as salient an authentic teaching practice. Typically, teacher candidates view experience as their best teacher and often discredit the impact of their formal teacher education courses (McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996; McMahon, 1997; Richardson-Koehler, 1988). Further, the present teacher candidates had a sense of confidence about their future practice that they attributed to their perceived comprehensive experience. This is a common finding, as teacher candidates tend to be optimistic about their teaching abilities and expect to excel in their future teaching (Conway, 2000; Weinstein, 1989; Worthy & Patterson, 2001).

**Constructivism**

As literacy tutors, many of the undergraduates began to develop their understanding of teaching students who have literacy difficulties. These tutors constructed their own schema for strategic instruction, building rapport with students, and teaching demands. They built on their existing knowledge from undergraduate studies as it pertained to behaviour management and emotional development. In their interviews, the tutors often recalled topics of study or assignments that they had completed on such topics as Attention Deficit Disorder, children’s self-esteem, and motivation. In this way, they made a theory-to-practice connection. As a function of building on this connection, the teacher candidates confirmed their future desire to become teachers.

The teacher candidates were followed during a period of time in which they were building on their current knowledge structures. Construction of these knowledge structures began in their undergraduate studies and tutoring experience and continued throughout pre-service education. As builders of knowledge, their interactions with students refined how they made meaning out their pre-service teaching experience. At
times, some of the teacher candidates attempted to organize, understand, and build meaning around teaching methods and learning strategies that they were experiencing in their pre-service practica. For instance, in language arts methods courses, the teacher candidates covered beginning phonics and in particular, programs such as *Jolly Phonics*. The teacher candidates who were placed in Kindergarten and Grade 1 practica, also observed and used the *Jolly Phonics* materials. From their experience in the After-School Literacy Program, these teacher candidates recalled the additional strategic aids that were used with these materials and when possible, they attempted to incorporate aspects of these strategies into their practica lessons.

However, assimilation of the pre-service teaching knowledge and experience into their prior teaching experiences (i.e., tutoring) was more often an inconstant process. On the most basic level, the teacher candidates had to adjust to the differences in educational contexts. Pre-service teaching in an inclusive classroom was dissimilar to direct instruction in a small group setting. In several instances, some of the teacher candidates were required to use basal reading resources instead of children's literature. These teacher candidates had difficulty assuming these teaching methods and longed to use authentic text and accompanying comprehension strategic aids such as they had used in the After-School Literacy program. These conflicting experiences erected blocks to the assimilation of the alternative contexts and methods and the teacher candidates were not able to imagine how they might be able to use some of the strategies from the program within an inclusive classroom and with a resource such as a basal reader text.

Constructivism postulates that individuals construct knowledge by building on prior knowledge and experiences (Miller, 1989). Individuals learn by fitting new
information together with what they already know and construct their understanding based on previous experience (Miller). The teacher candidates attempted to make sense of information from their teacher education courses and practica, yet to successfully accomplish this, they would have to assimilate this information into their beliefs (Piaget, 1950, as cited in Fellows, 1993). The experiential knowledge gained while tutoring seemed to hinder the assimilation of new knowledge and experience acquired during pre-service education. Further, constructivist principles also state, that at times, individuals explore new information with a critical awareness (Driscoll, 2000). In this way, individuals explore what results from an alternate perspective (Driscoll). Here, the teacher candidates held an alternative perspective about reading and writing instruction that was used to critique their mentor teachers.

During the pre-service experience, the teacher candidates attempted to make connections between what they knew (tutoring experience) and what they were currently learning (pre-service coursework and practica). However, even though relevant prior knowledge was activated, it was not always used appropriately. At times these individuals viewed the information they were learning as separate and distinct from their prior knowledge (Cox et al., 1998; Spiro, 1977). The teacher candidates favoured teaching the decoding, reading comprehension, and writing composition teaching strategies that they were trained to use during the After-School Literacy Program. In this way, new learning experiences were not assimilated into related prior knowledge (Driscoll, 2000).

Prior knowledge has an influence on the learning of new information. Yet it is difficult to determine when relevant prior knowledge should be applied (Driscoll, 2000).
For example, it is well-documented that teacher candidates are likely to adopt practices they remember from their own experiences as students (Goodman, 1994). Other experiences in educational settings, such as tutoring, also offer potential prior knowledge sets for some teacher candidates. However, the beliefs and knowledge acquired from past experiences do not always support the theory and pedagogy taught in their pre-service courses (Anderson, 2001). This tended to be the case with the teacher candidates in this current study as they were resistant and critical of some of the information presented in their courses.

Belief systems, like other forms of knowledge, are organized around situations (Anderson, 2001). The belief systems with which teacher candidates enter their pre-service year are powerful at shaping their perceptions about teaching and subsequent learning. This was especially true of the teacher candidates in this study; their entering beliefs with respect to employing reading and writing strategies were based on their experiences as tutors in the After-School Literacy Program. These beliefs contributed to the teacher candidates’ expectations to re-create the pedagogy of the After-School Literacy Program. Initially, they failed to identify the myriad distinctions between the two teaching contexts.

The conceptions of teacher candidates upon pre-service entry come to bear on the nature of what they extract from the pre-service experience (Anderson, 2001). Teacher candidates that commence their coursework with their own schemas about how to teach, interpret pre-service experiences through this lens. When these conceptions are consistent with pre-service experiences, teacher candidates tend to be receptive to their teacher educators expanding and augmenting these conceptions (Anderson). Teacher educators
are able to facilitate activities that provoke self-examination of ideas about learning and reconstruction of their conceptions. However, there are those teacher candidates who do not experience symbiosis between their conceptions and pre-service preparation. These teacher candidates may require alternative instructional approaches in course content and practicum experience to promote meaning and new learning about teaching.

**Conceptual Change**

Conceptual change challenges old ideas and leads to the continual construction and reorganization of knowledge (Lefrancois, 2000). To facilitate conceptual change, individuals must reflect on their beliefs and become aware that they may not be adequate (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). Individuals must then engage in the material at a deeper level of processing to produce a deeper understanding and facilitate conceptual change (Patrick & Pintrich). Conceptual change requires focused and committed cognitive and metacognitive engagement, thus making the process often challenging (Patrick & Pintrich). Teacher educators need to understand how to elicit positive change in the knowledge base of teacher candidates, thus contributing to their conceptual development (Patrick & Pintrich).

As a group, teacher candidates may not be amenable to conceptual change with respect to certain aspects of practice. Examples are found in their concepts of classroom management and student motivation. Generally, teacher candidates are more interested in classroom operational issues than issues of learning and development (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). Teacher candidates tend to have a sense that their teaching efficacy is related to how well they maintain order and discipline (Tabachnik & Zeichner, 1984) or the degree to which their students are motivated (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). Teacher candidates tend to regard student motivation as largely outside of their control, yet they believe this should
be the focus of teachers’ attention (Weinstein, 1989). Further, teacher candidates believe that they should motivate their students through thought-provoking or interesting activities (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). In this study, students’ behaviour and motivation was of concern to the volunteer tutors who worked with students with literacy difficulties. As teacher candidates, classroom management, and student motivation issues were alluded to, however, the most salient and prominent discussions encompassed how their students should be taught reading and writing skills. These were the aspects of practice that were least amenable to conceptual change for this group of teacher candidates.

Teacher candidates implicitly expected that their pre-training and pre-service experiences would be more congruent. In the few instances where the teacher educators’ methods or the mentor teachers’ beliefs were similar to those in the After-School Literacy Program, the course or placement was viewed positively. However, most of the teacher candidates experienced discrepancies between their pre-training experience, pre-service coursework, and practica. This disparity presented a need for some type of conceptual adjustment.

However, the disparity was not immediately resolved and tension or dissonance existed. The theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) proposes a theoretical model for explaining the critical perspective that the teacher candidates possessed from the beginning of their teacher education year. Festinger noted that a state of tension is created in an individual when two cognitions are contradictory; hence the term, cognitive dissonance. These cognitions are based on prior knowledge and beliefs and may include opinions or perceptions. Thus, sources of dissonance are incompatibilities between information or existent beliefs exist. When an individual is presented with two
contradictory situations, the individual will seek to reduce the contradiction or dissonance. Dissonance explains the behaviours that an individual engages in to reduce the conflict (Lefrancois, 2000).

Dissonance may be reduced by altering perceptions, or allowing individuals to compartmentalize the contradictory situations in distinct categories and negotiate them separately (Festinger, 1957). Individuals strive to reduce dissonance among their cognitions. In general, the cognition that is reduced is the one that is least salient (Festinger). For the teacher candidates in this study, their pre-service teaching experience appeared to be the least salient. The teacher candidates had an opportunity to build on their knowledge and alter their perceptions throughout their pre-service coursework and practica.

Exposure to information that will increase dissonance sets up defensive processes, which prevent the new cognition from becoming firmly established. When new information is present, individuals will evade the impact of dissonance by misperceiving the information and denying its validity (Festinger, 1957). Some of the teacher candidates in this study realized the opportunity to build on their knowledge and others did not. This was largely a function of circumstances within their placements that were mitigated by their mentor teachers. Regardless, the teacher candidates needed to be supported in the realization that their different teaching experiences (literacy tutoring and pre-service practica) were distinct teaching contexts.

Teacher candidates who are confident in their ability to learn and perceive that they have control over their learning are open to new ideas and theories that challenge their beliefs (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). They recognize that the classroom practicum
experience does not always reflect what they learn in their courses nor does it exemplify their ideal teaching beliefs (Dunne, 1992). Often teacher candidates who are aware of these disparities temporarily compromise their ideals, with the anticipation of future practice in this manner (Dunne). This was true of the teacher candidates in this study: They were confident in their abilities and they believed that in the future they would have opportunity to practice strategies of their choice.

Yet, to reduce the conflict is a conscious effort and an individual may not be entirely successful at independently resolving the dissonance; such was the case with the teacher candidates in the current study. These teacher candidates initially struggled with their conceptions of teaching reading and writing. In fact, models of conceptual change describing the transformation of the beliefs of teachers have not been prolifically documented in the literature (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). Teacher conceptions that are inaccurate or simply inappropriate need to be revised and restructured as a function of teacher education. This process can be time-consuming and require a substantive degree of self-reflection (Pajares, 1992). Facilitating conceptual change within teacher education programs is very difficult (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). Consequently, teacher candidates only partially incorporate information from methods courses into their views about instruction (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). Thus, new beliefs do not replace prior conceptions about teaching, but coexist in the minds of teacher candidates. The teacher candidates in this study were typical in that they held on to their prior conceptions about teaching reading and writing based on their tutoring experience and they struggled with conceptual change.
Implications for Practice and Theory

The role of prior knowledge in the learning process is significant and salient (Risko et al., 2002). The prior teaching experience of the former tutors served as a lens through which they filtered their pre-service education experience. This practice served as an example of the scope of applicability of this construct. At the beginning of the pre-service year, the former tutors were primed to engage in furthering their knowledge and experience through formal teacher education. The teacher candidates were poised to continue the knowledge construction phase. Ironically, they were primed for some degree of conceptual change; the former tutors should have been primed prior to teacher education to facilitate future knowledge construction within their pre-service year.

One of the findings of the present study was that the beginning teacher candidates' prior experience from the Literacy Program was retained as salient. Therefore, steps should be taken to explicitly clarify that this was a specific type of pedagogy. This is a useful illustration of the efficacy of small group instruction, but it cannot always be generalized to other learning contexts. Those individuals who train volunteer tutors should specify how the tutoring context is different from the classroom learning context. Tutoring procedures should include qualifiers around pedagogical applications and specify that certain learning environments demand specific approaches. These disclaimers must be explicit and frequently presented to promote relevance.

Individuals who are training and supporting tutors need to be aware of tutors' potential perceptions of their pre-training experiences. The volunteer tutors, who intend to proceed on to pre-service education, should be given strategies to assist them in accepting the dissonance between their strategic pre-training and their future pre-service experience. These ameliorative measures would begin with a validation of the salience of
their previous experiences. Then the former tutors should be assured that their initial experiences would not be discredited, but expanded during teacher education (Anderson, 2001).

Teacher education institutions require that their prospective teacher candidates enter with authentic teaching experience with students (Dolmage, 1996). Accordingly, these teacher candidates enter pre-service education with enriched teaching experiences and thus require enhanced learning opportunities and placement modifications. This experiential knowledge should also be respected and taken into consideration when planning course curricula and placements. For example, literature on conceptual change suggests that teacher candidates should engage in course material using processing strategies such as elaboration or organizational strategies (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). This experience will result in a deeper understanding of content and promote conceptual change.

Teacher candidates who are engaged in course content that they perceived to be useful, are likely to be cognitively engaged (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). When courses are relevant and appropriate, teacher candidates are likely to consider how they can revise their own beliefs about learning in light of the new information. Some teacher candidates represent their knowledge of teaching in terms of narratives (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). Contextualizing psychological principles and theories in teacher education courses can facilitate this process. This contextualization is just one component that is required to facilitate the acceptance of new knowledge and ensuing conceptual change.

In addition to this, effective teacher preparation encourages teacher candidates to examine their personal theories and beliefs in relation to research and theory (Pajares,
Teacher candidates should be encouraged to revise and expand their conceptions of teaching reading and writing to include current theory and research (McMahon, 1997). Reflecting on these beliefs and their classroom experiences forces teacher candidates to confront and adjust their personal beliefs about teaching literacy skills (Kagan, 1992). Consistent with cognitive constructivist theory, teacher candidates need direct literacy teaching experience to confront and adjust their belief systems about teaching reading and writing from prior experiential beliefs to theory-based practice (Pearson & Stephens, 1994).

For those teacher candidates that do not enter with these prefatory experiences, courses might be offered to provide this learning context. Some of the benefits for teacher candidates tutoring during their teacher education program have been documented. Teacher candidates who tutored were better able to understand the needs of at-risk students (Bacon, 1992; Fresko, 1999), make more informed instructional choices (Billings et al., 2000; Roskos & Walker, 1994) and possessed greater pedagogical knowledge (Billings et al.; Roskos & Walker) including knowledge of instructional strategies (Hill & Topping, 1995; Worthy & Patterson, 2001) than a group of teacher candidates without tutoring experiences (Cox et al., 1998). Pre-service courses could be designed to include a tutorial placement. In such cases, the tutorial experience increased teacher candidates' knowledge and confidence in teaching reading and writing and provided them with the opportunity for critical reflection around those experiences (Worthy & Prater, 1998). As well, some of the teacher candidates noted that the strategies taught in the methods course and used in the tutoring program were different than those used by their mentor teachers in their practicum placements (Worthy & Prater). Yet,
these teacher candidates appreciated the challenges of a literacy teacher and accepted these differing strategies as diverse methodology.

Moreover, mentor teachers should be made aware of teacher candidates who arrive for their placements with prior knowledge in reading and writing instruction. The mentor teachers should be encouraged to provide their teacher candidates with placement opportunities in which they can synthesize their past and present teaching experiences. These mentors need to be made aware of the capabilities and professional growth needs of their teacher candidates. This would require communication between the pre-service education institution and the placement mentor teacher. This demands a personalized approach to the practica experience. In other words, this demands time and resources to be devoted to the placement process.

Teacher candidates have been known to mimic the methods of their teacher mentor (McMahon, 1997; Worthy & Prater, 1998). This approach does little to help teacher candidates develop a deeper understanding of the various reading and writing processes they would discover through their own practice. Instead, teacher candidates should be encouraged to question classroom practices and procedures, express their theories, and analyze their beliefs about reading instruction (Wham, 1993). As in the present study, the teacher candidates with pre-training experience would arrive with distinct beliefs that require validation. This questioning can help them to connect their theories to instructional decision making. Both written and oral reflection also allow teacher candidates to relate issues from their prior experience, course content across their practice teaching experiences, and refine their definitions of teaching (McMahon, 1997).
The theoretical construct of prior knowledge needs to be considered by teacher educators and its influence needs to be accommodated into teacher education program goals. With the understanding that their students enter pre-service education with beliefs about teaching and learning, teacher educators should attempt to take the perspective of their teacher candidates. From the initial stages of the teacher education program, teacher educators should seek to set up situations that allow them to gain an awareness of their teacher candidates’ beliefs. Teacher educators should appreciate how their students view the teacher education program in light of their entering conceptions. The teacher educators that are able to identify their teacher candidates’ entering beliefs about how students learn, are able to facilitate the growth of frames for thinking about instruction:

Teacher educators must attend not only to general pedagogical and program characteristics, but they must also listen to the interpretations of prospective teachers and use of the program content and recognize that conceptual change is dynamic, gradual, nuanced, and diverse. In that regard, teacher educators are no different from any other teacher. (Anderson, 2001, p. 212)

Through course discussions, teacher candidates could be encouraged to become aware of their own beliefs, thereby challenging and confronting them. Teacher candidates who are engaged in this type of instruction, will feel that their initial beliefs and experiences are valued (Anderson, 2001).

Teacher candidates should be supported in their attempts to reflect on and revise their existing beliefs. Reflection is a cognitive process in which individuals are actively involved in addressing practical problems and contemplating possible solutions (Schön, 1987). According to John Dewey (1933), the concept of cognitive reflection as a
problem-solving strategy is a thought process resulting from a state of doubt and leading to a search for new information. More specifically, reflection is a form of problem solving that resolves an issue that requires a careful ordering of linked ideas (Dewey, 1933). Dewey contended that reflection requires that consideration be given to various forms of knowledge and beliefs. Schön (1987) has elaborated on Dewey’s concept of cognitive reflection and stated that teachers’ beliefs about the outcomes of their practice are “reflective practice.” Schön argues that teachers need to be reflective during and after teaching as a means of improving their practice.

At the beginning of their teacher education, teacher candidates possess ability for self-examination of their skills and previous experience applied in a controlled setting. As the teacher education program progresses, teacher candidates practice reflection-on-action in which they can analyze their own performance in a professional role (Schön, 1983). In this manner, reflection-on-practice tends to be complex, and teacher education programs must provide opportunities for candidates to practice such thinking and receive feedback regularly. Teacher candidates can use reflection as a forum to experiment with ideas as they form schemas for their future classroom teaching (McMahon, 1997; Stover, 1986). The teacher candidates in this study had already begun to form their schema. Assimilation of this schema into their existing ideas needed to be facilitated by reflection.

Reflection-on-practice impacts teacher candidates’ attitudes about the importance of reading and writing within the language arts curriculum (Fellows, 1993; O’Callaghan, 1997; Reiman, 1999; Risko et al., 2002; Roskos et al., 2001). When teacher candidates are encouraged to reflect on their coursework and their language arts instructional practices they are able to transform their thinking about how to teach language arts
effectively. The teacher candidates in this study perceived that they did not have time or
opportunity to reflect; a few even denounced the value of reflection. Reflection-on-
practice would be a particularly useful vehicle for these teacher candidates to assimilate
tutor experience with pre-service teaching and with course content.

Teacher education programs are not ideologically structured to support reflective
practice. The skill of reflection requires time to develop, and that time is an uncommon
commodity in most teacher education programs (Hatton & Smith, 1994). Teacher
educators and advisors may pose that teacher candidates need to self-examine and reflect
on their own practice (Manafo, 2000). Teacher candidates need to be provided with this
support to construct meaning through reflection as they struggle with their own
traditionally entrenched beliefs about teaching and attempt to assimilate their new
teaching experiences.

**Implications for Future Research**

It is likely that the experience requirement to enter teacher education programs
will not change. Consequently, entering teacher candidates will continue to commence
their programs with varied pre-training experiences and a plethora of conceptualizations
about teaching pedagogy. Future research could seek to document these different
conceptualizations and compare the conceptual change process of teacher candidates with
these varied pre-training experiences. For example, teacher candidates who have had
direct instructional experience with children could be compared to those teacher
candidates who have had experience with children in residential or recreational settings.
The prior knowledge of these two groups could be described and the conceptual change
process that they each go through could be supported and tracked.
As well, these different groups could be further investigated to explore their beliefs around approaches to literacy instruction. It was subsumed that the volunteer tutors in this study would teach the elementary students in the After-School Literacy Program from a balanced literacy instructional approach (Brophy, 1999). These tutors were trained to deliver direct instruction in phonics and emphasize reading authentic literature. In this way, a balanced literacy approach became their prior knowledge set. Other entering teacher candidates will commence their programs with different beliefs around approaches to literacy instruction, such as whole language (Goodman, 1994) or a basic-skills-and-phonetics approach (Meyer, 2002). Future research could delineate the influence of these different beliefs and explore their impact on teacher candidates’ perceptions of their language arts courses and practica reading instruction.

There is a call for future research that addresses the type of representations and conceptual changes in pre-service teacher candidates such as those in this study (Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). Conceptual change in teacher candidates’ conceptualizations should be thought of in terms of theory revision instead of change (Patrick & Pintrich) because they rely primarily on their personal experiences and values to guide their reflective work (Risko et al., 2002). To extend this body of knowledge, research needs to clearly document the nature of the conceptualizations that teacher candidates hold and authenticate the resistance to change possessed by these theories. Teacher candidates have to become aware that their theories may need revision, and through reflection become inspired by their theories to modify their beliefs. This reflection process could be tracked over the course of their teacher education period and into in-service practice to reflect the challenges that they face as beginning teachers.
Furthermore, existing research indicates that teacher candidates are provided with little guidance with respect to how to reflect (Risko et al., 2002). Once teacher candidates have explicitly identified their prior knowledge and experiences around literacy instruction, then guided instruction should be offered to help teacher candidates learn from each other and advance their own personal critiques. This process needs to be documented and analyzed for its effectiveness in scaffolding teacher candidates through assimilation of their pre-service knowledge and experiences with their preexisting knowledge and experiences in literacy instruction. As well, teacher candidates need to be provided with opportunities to engage in different modes of reflection beyond personal writing such as interpersonal dialogue as a means of developing reflective thought (Risko et al., 2002). Consequently, future research could track teacher candidates’ reflection through a different mode and present their insights and impressions with respect to this genre.

Future investigations could also center on the student and volunteer tutor participants from this research. Elementary students could be included in a study that engages them in a tutoring program over the course of a school year. This is a recommendation made by several researchers (Wasik, 1998a). The impact of the reading and writing strategies could be measured longitudinally and transfer into other curricular areas could be recorded. Future volunteer tutors could be trained in strategy instruction with qualifying information around the unique qualities of the tutoring setting. These tutors would be made explicitly aware of the fact that the strategies and pedagogy that they experience as tutors would be different than that which they would experience in future classroom settings. Similar to the current research, these former tutors could be
followed into teacher education and their impressions and experiences could be tracked and compared to the findings of the present study to determine whether this awareness facilitated their assimilation of pre-service experiences.

Finally, the current teacher candidates that were tracked over the course of their pre-service year could be longitudinally tracked over the course of their first years of in-service teaching. In particular, the chosen literacy teaching practices of these in-service teachers could be observed. The beliefs of these in-service teachers could be compared to their beliefs as teacher candidates and this could inform an understanding about the nature of how practice alters the idealistic beliefs of novice literacy teachers who were former literacy tutors. This observance could also possibly reveal the salience of prior knowledge around the pre-training experience and establish the long-term effect of pre-training experience.

The teacher candidates entered their pre-service education with teaching experience from literacy tutoring: This was their initial cognition set. This cognition was based on a limited and specific teaching context. Upon commencing the pre-service program, the teacher candidates became immersed in the reality of classroom teaching. This teaching context holds a different set of expectations for the educator. Often, the classroom teacher has a diverse group of students and finds it difficult to individualize instruction. These two teaching contexts (literacy tutoring and classroom practica) offer two contradictory situations that need to be recognized by the teacher candidates. However, in the face of these two incompatible contexts, some of the teacher candidates critically denounced their teacher mentors for not consistently employing literacy strategies and individualized pedagogy. This critical perspective could have been a
demonstration of cognitive dissonance. In the end, when the teacher candidates began to look toward the future and how they would manage the demands of an inclusive classroom, they recognized the differences in the contexts. This recognition represents an appreciation for the need for balance between prior and present knowledge:

Life itself consists of phases in which the organism falls out of step with the march of surrounding things and then recovers unison with it – either through effort or by some happy chance. And, in a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through which it has successfully passed... here in germ are balance and harmony attained through rhythm. Equilibrium comes about not mechanically and inertly but out of, and because of, tension... Form is arrived at whenever a stable, even though moving, equilibrium is reached. (Dewey, 1934, p. 12)
References


Bacon, C. S. (1992). *Pre-service teachers and at-risk students.* Unpublished manuscript, Indiana University/Purdue University.


Appendix A: Sample Lesson Plan

PRIMARY - INSTRUCTOR'S MODEL

BEGINNING DECODING

INITIAL CONSONANTS

Through

LETTER-SOUND CORRESPONDANCE, IMAGERY and
INTEGRATED PICTURE MNEMONIC

CONTENT and PROCESS OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- identify the letter and the appropriate sound which corresponds to the letter

-use Jolly Phonics to make an auditory-visual-kinesthetic connection between the LETTER and the SOUND CORRESPONDANCE

-make illustrations using the INTEGRATED PICTURE strategy to reinforce these sounds

-use IMAGERY to anchor the letter's sound in their memory

MATERIALS

1. 1 letter from the student's pre-tested personal list as the featured sounds for the lesson
2. Jolly Phonics lesson pages that match the featured sounds
3. Blank paper
4. Example of Integrated Picture strategy illustrations through modeling
5. Pencils, crayons, markers

EXPLICIT STRATEGY INSTRUCTION PROCEDURES

1. “Today you are going to learn the sounds of a few letters with some fun activities. Learning these sounds is going to help you to read words all by yourself. Everybody who has gone through the process of learning how to read has had to learn about the sounds that letters make. All letters have sounds, and some letters even make more than one sound. We are going to learn a few hints to help us remember the sounds that letters make.”

2. “From now on when you forget what kind of sound a letter makes, you need to think about the hints that we are learning to help you remember the sound. Even when you are working with letters at school or at home you will need to stop and recall these hints to help you sound out words when you are starting to read for yourself.”

3. “Let’s start with the letter ‘f’. The sound that ‘f’ makes is ‘fft’ just like if you had a blown up fish that was deflating. Deflating means air is coming out of something
that has been blown up. Let's look at this page to help us see what actions we can do with our hands and mouth to remember that sound.

4. Using the Jolly Phonics lesson page for "f", model the action associated with the sound as outlined in the pictorial example. This will reinforce LETTER-SOUND CORRESPONDANCE.

5. "Let's practice this action together. Now let's think of some more words that begin with 'f', and here are some examples on this page (read words on the bottom left hand corner of page, modeling the action for the letter 'f' at the beginning of the word or if the letter 'f' is at the end of the word, model the action for the letter 'f' at the end of the word). With your pencil it is time to draw the letter 'f' on the dotted lines. You need to make the sound of 'f' as you are drawing. Watch me make the 'f' starting at the top of the dotted line and make a curve straight down. Now put a stick across the middle. FFFFF, now let's see you do the same."

6. "So far, we have learned some actions for our hands and we learned the sound that the letter 'f' makes. Now we are going to learn another way to help us remember the sound that the letter 'f' makes. I am going to draw the lower case letter 'f' nice and big on this page. I will make the 'f' fit into the fish on this page. I can make the letter 'f' look like a fish by making the curved part of the top of the 'f' into the back fin of the fish. Then the stick coming down the 'f' will be made into a gill. The cross through the letter 'f' will be one of the stripes on the fish. I can see the letter 'f' right in the middle of the fish.

7. On the back of the Jolly Phonics page, or on a blank piece of paper, draw 1 or 2 additional pictures that start with the letter 'f' and incorporate the letter into the picture.

8. "I could also make the letter 'f' look like a flower. I can make the letter 'f' look like a flower by using the long stick on the bottom as the stem. The line that crosses the middle can be made into two leaves, like this. The curved part at the top will be one petal of the flower and I'll make more that look just like it. I can still see the 'f' in my flower."

9. Assist children if necessary to make their own integrated letter picture. Ensure that the letter is integrated into the picture and that it is a fair representation of a flower.

10. "I can see the 'f' in the picture of my flower and this helps me to remember that 'f' makes the sound 'ff' as in 'flower'. Using pictures is an effective strategy for remembering what a letter looks like and sounds like. I can shut my eyes and 'see' the picture of my flower in my head, with the big 'f' in the middle of it, making the sound 'ffff' in flower. Now you can colour your picture."

11. If there is time remaining let the students generate their own pictures with the letter 'f', such as 'flag', 'fountain', 'fan'.

REVIEW and CLOSE LESSON

1. "We talked about how important it is to know the sounds that letters make to help you to read well. Now you have a few hints to help you remember the sound of the letter 'f'. You can think of the actions that we do with our hands to show the sound of 'f'. You can think of the letter 'f' we drew inside the picture of the deflating fish. You can think of the letter 'f' that we drew within the picture of the flower. Thinking about these things will help you remember the sound that 'f' makes every time you see the letter 'f' when you are reading."

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Follow the Frog

Dragon Board Game

Skeleton Board Game

Sound Bingo

Ready Set Show (beginning and ending letter-sounds)

Dominos (beginning and ending sounds)

Phonics Activity Cards

Word Building with letter tiles or magnetic letters

Jolly Learning – Letter Sounds Games (Goat, Rook, Donkey, Rooster, Rabbit)

Jolly Phonics Workbooks

Phonemic Awareness by Bennett, L. & Ottley, P.

Launch into Reading Success by Jager-Adams, M., Foorman, B., Lundberg, I., & Beeler, T.
ACTION
Place one hand above the other, lower the top hand as if inflatable fish is deflating, and say "ffftftftftftftf".

fish
flat
fun
soft
stiff

Draw the letters dotted here:

### Appendix C: Benchmark 120 Letter Patterns

Benchmark School Word Identification/Vocabulary Development Program

**KEY PATTERNS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-a</th>
<th>-e</th>
<th>-i</th>
<th>-o</th>
<th>-u</th>
<th>-y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>-a</strong></td>
<td><strong>-e</strong></td>
<td><strong>-i</strong></td>
<td><strong>-o</strong></td>
<td><strong>-u</strong></td>
<td><strong>-y</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grab</td>
<td>he</td>
<td>hi</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>club</td>
<td>my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place</td>
<td>speak</td>
<td>mice</td>
<td>boat</td>
<td>truck</td>
<td>baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>scream</td>
<td>kick</td>
<td>job</td>
<td>glue</td>
<td>gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>did</td>
<td>clock</td>
<td>bug</td>
<td>drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>made</td>
<td>treat</td>
<td>slide</td>
<td>frog</td>
<td>broke</td>
<td>jump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flag</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>knife</td>
<td>old</td>
<td>fun</td>
<td>skunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snail</td>
<td>bleed</td>
<td>right</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rain</td>
<td>make</td>
<td>queen</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talk</td>
<td>sleep</td>
<td>smile</td>
<td>phone</td>
<td>use</td>
<td>but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all</td>
<td>sweet</td>
<td>will</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>zoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am</td>
<td>tell</td>
<td>swim</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>name</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>look</td>
<td>school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>champ</td>
<td>ten</td>
<td>find</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>stop</td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can</td>
<td>end</td>
<td>find</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>tent</td>
<td>vine</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>nose</td>
<td>not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>map</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>king</td>
<td>ship</td>
<td>could</td>
<td>round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>car</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>squirt</td>
<td>scout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shark</td>
<td>nest</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>your</td>
<td>cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smart</td>
<td>let</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>glow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smash</td>
<td>flew</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>five</td>
<td>down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cat</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skate</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brave</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saw</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>day</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>wish</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Is the place(s) or setting(s) for the story described?
Does the setting 'fit' with the beginning story event?
Does the setting 'fit' with the middle story event?
Does the setting 'fit' with the end story event?

Is the main character named?
Is the main character described?
Are the main character's feelings/thoughts described?
Are the other characters named?
Are the other characters described?
Are the other character's feelings/thoughts described?

1. Is the beginning event described?
2. Is the middle event described?
3. Is the end event described?

Is the solution described?
Does the solution fit the problem?
Is the critical event (problem/crisis) described?
Are the setting and characters introduced?
Is it an appropriate problem for the character?

Does the title represent the main idea of the story?
Appendix G: "E" Step with "C & C" House

Does the title represent the main idea of the passage?
Is the title creative and interesting?

Does the passage have a definite conclusion?
Does the conclusion link back to the thesis?
Does the conclusion present a topic for future discussion?

Topic Sentence #1
Is there a thesis statement for subtopic #1?
Are there three supporting details provided?
Is there a conclusion for subtopic #1?

Topic Sentence #2
Is there a thesis statement for subtopic #2?
Are there three supporting details provided?
Is there a conclusion for subtopic #2?

Topic Sentence #3
Is there a thesis statement for subtopic #3?
Are there three supporting details provided?
Is there a conclusion for subtopic #3?

Introduction
Is the topic named or introduced?
Is the introduction creative and interesting?
Appendix H: Table 1

Table 1

Students' Phonograms, Knowledge of Story Elements (oral, silent reading) Mean and Standard Deviation Performance Scores as a Function of Grade Division by Group by Time (ANCOVA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Pretest TIME 1</th>
<th>Posttest TIME 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exper Cont</td>
<td>Exper Cont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Junior</td>
<td>Primary Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonograms (raw score/10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>(1.73) (2.50)</td>
<td>(0.90) (1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Element Knowledge-Oral (Percentages)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>38.71 38.50</td>
<td>38.91 43.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>(15.73) (19.70)</td>
<td>(17.77) (10.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Element Knowledge-Silent (Percentages)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>35.86 28.50</td>
<td>45.00 30.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>(20.00) (17.98)</td>
<td>(12.20) (16.73)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Exper = Experimental Group
      Cont = Control Group
Appendix I: Table 2

Table 2

Students' Vocabulary, Spelling, Composition Thematic Maturity Mean and Standard Deviation Performance Scores as a Function of Grade Division by Group by Time (ANOVA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Pretest TIME 1</th>
<th>Posttest TIME 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exper</td>
<td>Cont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peabody Picture Vocabulary</td>
<td>99.71</td>
<td>103.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Standard Score Equivalent)</td>
<td>(16.28)</td>
<td>(8.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling-Wide Range</td>
<td>93.71</td>
<td>85.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement (Standard Score)</td>
<td>(10.24)</td>
<td>(34.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic Maturity Test of</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Language (Standard</td>
<td>(3.80)</td>
<td>(7.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Exper = Experimental Group
      Cont = Control Group
Appendix J: Volunteer Tutors’ Interview #1

1. Tell me about you.

2. Why did you volunteer for this After-School Literacy Program?

3. What do you anticipate to learn from this experience?

4. What are your impressions about your assigned students?

5. What do you anticipate that the students will learn from this program?

6. What are your impressions of explicit strategy instruction?

7. How do you feel about the training that you have been provided?

8. Could you offer any suggestions to enhance this training?
Appendix K: Volunteer Tutors' Interview #2

1. Tell me about your experiences as an instructor. What are you learning from this experience?

2. What have you come to learn about your assigned students?

3. What are the students learning from this program?

4. What are your impressions about the strategies for teaching writing?

5. How do you feel about the training that you have been provided?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes/Objectives of the session</th>
<th>Activities and Materials Used</th>
<th>How did it go?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter-Sound/Learning New Words/Using New Words:</strong></td>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson:</td>
<td>Low High</td>
<td>Effort Throughout:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Comprehension of Lesson:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extension Activities: (Computer links, Games etc.)</th>
<th>Low High</th>
<th>Effort Throughout:</th>
<th>Low High</th>
<th>Effort Throughout:</th>
<th>Low High</th>
<th>Effort Throughout:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Comprehension of Lesson:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Comprehension of Lesson:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Comprehension of Lesson:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learning New Words/Using New Words:</strong></th>
<th>Low High</th>
<th>Effort Throughout:</th>
<th>Low High</th>
<th>Effort Throughout:</th>
<th>Low High</th>
<th>Effort Throughout:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Comprehension of Lesson:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Comprehension of Lesson:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Comprehension of Lesson:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes/Objectives of the session</td>
<td>Activities and Materials Used</td>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>How did it go?</td>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Comprehension/ Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Effort Throughout: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Comprehension of Lesson: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Effort Throughout: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Effort Throughout: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Comprehension of Lesson: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Effort Throughout: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Independence: 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson Plans or Thoughts for the Next Day...**

Student's Name: ____________  Student's Name: ____________  Student's Name: ____________
Appendix M: Teacher Candidates’ Interview #1

1 Why are you becoming a teacher? Have you always felt this way? What do you suspect will be most rewarding to you as a teacher?

2 In general, what do you think makes an elementary teacher a good educator? Do you feel that you possess any of these qualities?

3 Thinking back to your months as a volunteer tutor in the After-School Literacy Program, how would you describe what you did when you went to the school to work with your students? What is most memorable about this experience? Do you feel that you were successful in teaching your students? Please cite examples.

4 Was volunteering a valuable experience for you? Please explain how. Specifically, what kind of experience did you gain?

5 Did you gain any new knowledge or information from this volunteering opportunity? Please elaborate. Do you see yourself using any of the lessons, materials, or strategies from the program in your teaching practica? Describe how you see this happening.

6 In general, what skills and strategies should be taught in language arts?

7 How do you think children should be taught to read? Do you know of any methods for teaching reading? If so, what do you think of them?

8 How confident do you feel about teaching reading to primary level students? What do you suspect will be difficult about this task? How do you feel about teaching reading to junior level students? What is important to address with these students in reading instruction?

9 How should the process of writing be taught? Do you know of any effective strategies or ways for teaching writing skills? If so, please describe them.

10 How should students with learning difficulties be taught reading and writing? Do you believe in resource teaching for these individuals? Ideally, how should their needs be provided for?

11 How do you intend to deal with children in your placements that are exhibiting literacy difficulties? How will you attempt to program for these students? How will you assess them?
Appendix N: Teacher Candidates’ Interview #2

1 Do you feel any differently about becoming a teacher? Explain what you have experienced in your coursework and teaching block that influences your feelings.

2 Have you witnessed ‘good teaching’ during your practicum? Describe what you observed. Do you aspire to be this sort of educator or do you desire to avoid these methods?

3 Thinking back to your volunteer tutoring in the After-School Literacy Program, did that experience help you to feel more comfortable working with students?

4 Did you use any of the knowledge or information from the volunteering opportunity in your practicum? Please elaborate. Did you draw on any of the lessons, materials or strategies from the program in your teaching practicum? Again, please explain.

5 What types of skills and strategies was the associate teacher using in language arts?

6 How were the children being taught to read? What is your opinion about this?

7 What is your opinion of your associate teacher? Was your teaching philosophy compatible with his/hers?

8 Describe your reading lessons. How effective do you feel these lessons were? What was difficult about teaching reading?

9 Describe your writing lessons. Do you perceive that these lessons were successful? What was challenging about teaching writing to the students?

10 How did you deal with students in your class who had literacy difficulties? How did your associate/mentor teacher deal with them? Did you perceive this to be effective? How did you program for these students? How did you grade them?

11 Given this experience, how do you believe students with learning difficulties be taught reading and writing? Were these students in resource? If so, was resource teaching assisting them?
Appendix O: Ethical Review Documents for Study #1 & #2

Brock University

Senate Research Ethics Board

FROM: David Butz, Chair
      Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Dr. Vera E. Woloshyn, Education
    Tiffany Levay-Gallagher, Education

FILE: 00-117, Levay-Gallagher

DATE: December 14, 2000

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the revised research proposal:

"After-School Literacy and Social Skills Program"

The Research Ethics Board finds that your revised proposal conforms to the Brock University guidelines set out for ethical research.

* Accepted as clarified

Please note: Any Changes or Modifications to this approved research must be reviewed and approved by the committee. If so, please complete form #5 - Request for Ethics Clearance of a Revision or Modification to an Ongoing application for Ethics Review of Research with Human Participants and submit it to the Chair of the Research Ethics Board. You can download this form from the Office of Research Services or visit the web site:


DB/ll
After-School Literacy Program

September 2001

Dear Parents:

Through a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, The Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara, the District School Board of Niagara and Brock University have formed a partnership to provide an After-School Literacy Program in your school. This program will be addressing the areas of reading, writing and spelling for students ranging from Grades 1 through 8. Beginning October 2001, the instruction will be offered twice a week for 90 minute sessions. Sessions will run from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Each student will work with a qualified instructor from the Child and Youth Studies Department at Brock University. Each instructor will work with no more than three students. The first session will wrap up in early December, 2001.

My name is Tiffany Levay-Gallagher and I am a doctoral candidate at Brock University in the Faculty of Education. The intent of this letter is to introduce myself and express my pleasure at being involved in this program. Specifically, I will be assisting in the delivery of the program. I will also be monitoring the program’s effectiveness through the collection of data. For the purposes of research, these data will be used as documentation for my Ph.D. dissertation. The information generated from this research on the Literacy program will be shared through publications in journals and/or at conferences.

I am inviting your child to participate in this program. The instructors are trained to teach the students specific reading and writing strategies and encourage them to apply what they have learned in their classrooms. The program’s activities will include word riddles, constructing stories, oral and silent reading, educational games, and computer software applications. Communication will be maintained between the Literacy program representatives and your child’s principal and teacher(s). Your child’s participation in this program is voluntary and you may withdraw him/her at any time without penalty. The students will be brought to the program by their instructors, however, you must agree to provide, or make arrangements for the transportation of your child following each session.

In order to monitor the program, we will be recording the students’ experiences. We are asking your permission to take measures of your son/daughter’s reading and writing performance before and after the program. These measures are consistent with measures used from the classrooms and will include measures of word knowledge, letter-sound correspondence and word analysis, listening and reading comprehension, and written expression. In particular we will ask that each student be removed from their classroom for approximately 60 minutes to collect these measures in September 2001 and December 2001. Additionally, we will periodically review students’ work, sharing information about especially effective reading and writing strategies with your child’s classroom teacher(s) and Learning Resource Teacher (if applicable). Your child’s participation will be maintained in strict confidence. All data will be coded so that your child’s name will not be associated with any assessment or performance information and total anonymity will be assured. After this information has been analysed, all paper documents will be shredded. Individual’s test scores and performance will not be revealed, rather only group experiences will be reported. A general report about the effectiveness of this program will be made available to you, your school and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you can contact myself at 563-1578 or my advisor, Dr. Vera Woloshyn at Brock University at 688-5550 extension 3340 or 4302.

Thank you for your participation,

Tiffany Levay-Gallagher, M.Ed., B.Ed.
September 2001

After-School Literacy Program

Program Co-ordinator:
Tiffany Levay-Gallagher, M.Ed., B.Ed.

Advisor:
Dr. Vera E. Woloshyn

I, __________________________ (parent’s name), agree to allow my son/daughter, __________________________ (student’s name) to participate in the After-School Literacy Program provided by The Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara, the District School Board of Niagara and Brock University.

I understand that my child will be attending up to two 90 minute sessions each week for instruction. The program will focus on reading, writing and spelling instruction. Instruction will be provided by an undergraduate student from the Child and Youth Studies Department at Brock University. There will be supervision of both the instructors and the students throughout the literacy program. The instructors are trained to teach the students specific learning strategies and encourage them to apply what they have learned in their classrooms.

I understand that Tiffany Levay-Gallagher will be conducting interviews with the students and instructors. As well, reading and writing measures that are consistent with those used in the classroom will be taken before and after the program. In particular, each student will be removed from their classroom for approximately 60 minutes to collect these measures in September and December 2001. For the purposes of research, the collection of these data will provide documentation for Tiffany Levay-Gallagher’s Ph.D. dissertation. The information generated from this research on the Literacy program will be shared through publications in journals and/or at conferences. I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw my child from this program or any part of this program, at any time without penalty.

I understand that my child’s participation will be maintained in strict confidence. All of the data collected will be coded so that your child’s name will not be associated with any assessment or performance information, and total anonymity will be assured. Individual’s test scores and performance will not be revealed, rather only group experiences will be reported. A report on the effectiveness of this program will be made available to me, the school and the Ontario Trillium Foundation at the end of the program.

I understand that my child will need to be available to attend the sessions on a regular basis on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Due to the lateness of our program (3:30-5:00 p.m.), we would appreciate specific transportation arrangements being made. These are the arrangements that I am responsible for

________________________________________  ______________________________________
Signature of Parent                        Date

________________________________________
Signature of Student (optional)
After-School Literacy Program

September 2001

Dear Volunteer Instructors:

Through a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara, the District School Board of Niagara and Brock University have formed a partnership to provide an After-School Literacy Program. This program will be addressing the areas of reading, writing and spelling for students ranging from Grades 1 through 8. Beginning October 2001, the instruction will be offered twice a week for 90 minute sessions from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. Each volunteer instructor will work with no more than three students. The program will wrap up in the middle of April, 2002.

My name is Tiffany Levay-Gallagher and I am a doctoral candidate at Brock University in the Faculty of Education. The intent of this letter is to introduce myself and express my pleasure at being involved in this program. Specifically, I will be assisting in the delivery of the program and supervision the students. I will also be monitoring the program’s effectiveness through the collection of data. For the purposes of research, these data will be used as documentation for my Ph.D. dissertation. Interview excerpts generated from this research on the Literacy program will be shared through publications in journal and/or at conferences.

I am pleased that you have offered to participate in this program. You will learn how to teach the students some effective reading and writing strategies and encourage them to apply what they have learned in their classrooms. The After-School Literacy program’s activities will be consistent with those the children complete in the classroom. As well, communication will be maintained between the Literacy program representatives and the regular school principal and teachers. Your participation in this program is voluntary and you may withdraw from the program, or any part of the program, without penalty.

In order to monitor the program, we will be recording the experiences of both the students and instructors. We will be asking you to maintain daily records of the students’ performance and progress. This procedure should take 10 minutes at the end of each program session. Additionally, we will be asking you to participate in open-ended interviews at the beginning, in the middle and at the completion of the program. These interviews, which will each take approximately 20 minutes, will focus on your experiences and those of your students. The interviews will be privately audio-taped, transcribed and then shared with you, the participant. Your participation will be maintained in strict confidence. All data collected will be coded so that your name will not be associated with any assessment or performance information, and total anonymity will be assured. After this information has been analysed, all paper documents will be shredded and audiotapes destroyed. A general report about the effectiveness of this program will be made available to you, the families, the school and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you can contact myself at 563-1578 or my advisor, Dr. Vera Woloshyn at Brock University at 688-5550 extension 3340 or 4302.

Thank you for your participation,

Tiffany Levay-Gallagher, M.Ed., B.Ed.
September 2001

After-School Literacy Program

Program Co-ordinator:
Tiffany Levay-Gallagher, M.Ed., B.Ed.

Advisor:
Dr. Vera E. Woloshyn

I, ______________________ (instructor’s name), agree to participate in the After-School Literacy Program provided by The Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara, the District School Board of Niagara and Brock University.

I understand that I will be instructing up to 3 students during a 90 minute session each week. The program will focus on reading, writing and spelling instruction. As an instructor, I will be trained to teach the students some effective reading and writing strategies and encourage them to apply what they have learned in their classrooms.

I understand that Tiffany Levay-Gallagher will be conducting interviews with the students and instructors. These interviews, which will each take approximately 20 minutes, will focus on the your experiences of those your students. The interviews will be privately audio-taped, transcribed and then shared with you, the participant. As well, I will be required to evaluate the students at the end of each session and that these evaluations will be used to examine the efficacy of this program. This procedure should take approximately 10 minutes at the end of each program session. For the purposes of research, the collection of these data will provide documentation for Tiffany Levay-Gallagher’s Ph.D. dissertation. Interview excerpts generated from this research on the Literacy program will be shared through publications in journals and/or at conferences. I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this program at any time without penalty.

I understand that my participation will be maintained in strict confidence. All data collected will be coded so that your name will not be associated with any information and total anonymity will be assured. After this information has been analysed, all paper documents will be shredded and audio-tapes will be destroyed. Additionally, I understand that the participation and performance of the students involved in the program is confidential. A report on the effectiveness of this program will be made available to me at the end of the program.

__________________________________________  ______________________________________
Signature of Instructor                     Date
Appendix P: Ethical Review Documents for Study #3

Brock University
Senate Research Ethics Board

FROM: Joe Engemann, Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Vera E. Woloshyn, Education
Tiffany Lynn Levay-Gallagher

FILE: 00-117 Levay-Gallagher

DATE: October 25, 2002

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the research proposal:

*After-school literacy and social skills program*

The Research Ethics Board finds that your *modification request* to an ongoing project involving human participants conforms to the Brock University guidelines set out for ethical research.

*Modification approved.*

JE/dvo
The Volunteer Tutors as Teacher Candidates

September 2002

Dear Teacher Candidates:

My name is Tiffany Levay-Gallagher and I am a doctoral candidate at Brock University in the Faculty of Education. The intent of this letter is to explain my new research role. I will be investigating the experience of former volunteer tutors from the After-School Literacy Program throughout their pre-service teacher education. I wish to examine your approach to teaching language arts and track your development as an educator. I am pleased that you have offered to participate in this study. It is my hope that knowledge generated from this research will offer suggestions for future preparation of teacher educators prior to pre-service education programs.

In order to track the teacher candidates, I will be recording the experiences of them throughout their pre-service education year. I will be asking you to participate in interviews which will focus on your past experiences as a volunteer tutor and current experiences as a teacher candidate. These interviews, which will each take approximately 60 minutes, will be done at your convenience. Interviewing will be done before you begin pre-service courses and then after each of your teaching practicums. The interviews will be privately audiotaped, transcribed and then shared with you, the participant. As well, you will be communicating with me throughout your teaching practicum through electronic mail. This procedure will be done on a periodic basis and will allow us to share comments and concerns as they arise during the teaching block. This will take just a few minutes for each exchange of communication. In addition to this, I would like permission to retain a copy of your language arts lesson plans. For the purposes of research, the collection of these data will provide documentation for my Ph.D. dissertation. Interview excerpts generated from this research will be shared through publications in journals and/or at conferences.

Your participation will be maintained in strict confidence. All data collected will be coded so that your name will not be associated with any information, and total anonymity will be assured. After this information has been analyzed, all paper documents will be shredded and audiotapes destroyed. A general report about the outcomes of this research will be made available to you. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study, or any part of the study, without penalty.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you can contact myself at 563-1578 or my advisor, Dr. Vera Woloshyn at Brock University at 688-5550 extension 3340 or 4302.

Thank you for your participation,

Tiffany Levay-Gallagher, M.Ed., B.Ed.
ThVolunteer Tutors as Teacher Candidates

Researcher:
Tiffany Levay-Gallagher, M.Ed., B.Ed.

Advisor:
Dr. Vera E. Woloshyn

I, ____________________________ (teacher candidate’s name), agree to participate in a study that will investigate the experience of former volunteer tutors throughout their pre-service education year.

I understand that Tiffany Levay-Gallagher will be conducting interviews with eight teacher candidates. These interviews, which will each take approximately 60 minutes, will focus on my past experiences as a volunteer tutor and my current experiences as a teacher candidate. The interviews will be privately audiotaped, transcribed and then shared with me, the participant. As well, I will be communicating with Tiffany Levay-Gallagher throughout my teaching practicum through electronic mail. This procedure will be done on a periodic basis and will allow us to share comments and concerns as they arise during the teaching block. This will take just a few minutes for each exchange of communication. Finally, I understand that Tiffany Levay-Gallagher will be observing my teaching during one of my practicums. Specifically, a lesson in language arts will be viewed. In addition to this, I grant Tiffany Levay-Gallagher permission to retain a copy of my language arts lesson plans. For the purposes of research, the collection of these data will provide documentation for Tiffany Levay-Gallagher’s Ph.D. dissertation. Interview excerpts generated from this research will be shared through publications in journals and/or at conferences. I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

I understand that my participation will be maintained in strict confidence. All data collected will be coded so that my name will not be associated with any information and total anonymity will be assured. After this information has been analyzed, all paper documents will be shredded and audiotapes will be destroyed. A report on the outcomes of this study will be made available to me at the conclusion of the research.

______________________________  ____________________________
Signature of Teacher Candidate   Date