

WHAT DO PRESERVICE TEACHERS LEARN FROM TUTORING AS AN  
EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCE?

A Dissertation

by

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EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCE?

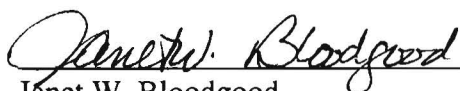
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## ABSTRACT

### WHAT DO PRESERVICE TEACHERS LEARN FROM TUTORING AS AN EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCE?

ED.D., Appalachian State University

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Given the central role of early field experience in the Reich College of Education Conceptual Framework, in this qualitative study how tutoring as an early field experience affects preservice teachers was examined. A selective literature review was used to explore several issues. First, research related to students' preconceived knowledge regarding teachers, schools, and learners is highlighted. Second, transmission and constructivist models of preparing teachers is examined, followed by research on early field experiences in teacher education programs. The final section explores tutoring as an experience to help students make connections between theory and practice while building students' abilities as reflective practitioners.

The preservice teachers participating in this study were enrolled in CI/SPE 2800 Teachers, Schools, and Learners, an introductory education course, and tutored in one of two programs: Learning Partners after school tutoring or Title I Second Steps reading tutoring. Both programs are efforts to connect coursework based on the constructivist theory with the students' field experience in their first education course. The program begins with introductory workshops and supervised tutoring sessions. Preservice teachers are then placed in an after-school or an in-school program with assigned children for tutoring. In addition, aspects of elementary school-college

relationships and student-tutor interactions are developed. Student viewpoints of the field experience and their growth as both learners and teachers are examined.

In this study, 35 students were selected. Twenty-five students were placed in the Learning Partners Program (after school) and 10 students were assigned to the Second Steps Program (in school). All students were placed in the same elementary school. The three students who agreed to be case study participants tutored in Learning Partners. For this study a number of data sources were used: (1) student biographies, (2) teacher beliefs surveys, (3) observations, (4) student fieldnotes and reflections, and (5) pre- and post-tutoring surveys. In addition, case studies were examined for in-depth views of preservice teachers placed in Learning Partners Program.

Analysis revealed that students entered tutoring with preconceived ideas regarding teaching and learning. The preconceived ideas about teachers, schools, and learners indicated a transmission model -- I teach-you learn -- a traditional view that reflected how they were taught. The survey showed stereotypical and generalized ideas. Coursework introduced the constructivist model of teaching and learning. Tutoring was selected as a field experience to help students examine their beliefs and construct new meaning to teaching, schools, and learners.

Results found in early surveys established preconceived ideas about teaching, schools, and learners. The fieldnotes/reflections indicated students learned about themselves, teaching, and learners over the course of their tutoring experience. The reflections broke down into eight categories: relationships, learning about teaching, learning about children, motivation, discipline, patience, learning about self, and self

rewards. However, the tutoring programs exhibited different strengths and weaknesses as an early field experience. More research is called for in the area of strengthening the field experience through connections between course and course instructors.