

3-12-2018

An Instrumental Case Study on Testing an Integrated Framework for Tutoring Sessions

Alicia L. Holland

iGlobal Educational Services, drhollandj@iglobaleducation.com


Chris Grant

iGlobal Educational Services, cgrant@iglobaleducation.com

Reshma Donthamsetty

The University of Illinois at Chicago, reshma.donthamsetty@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr>

 Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), [Educational Methods Commons](#), [Other Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#), [Other Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#), and the [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#)

This Article has supplementary content. View the full record on NSUWorks here:

<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss3/5>

Recommended APA Citation

Holland, A. L., Grant, C., & Donthamsetty, R. (2018). An Instrumental Case Study on Testing an Integrated Framework for Tutoring Sessions. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(3), 557-580. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss3/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Qualitative Report at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Qualitative Report by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.



Qualitative Research Graduate Certificate
Indulge in Culture
Exclusively Online • 18 Credits

LEARN MORE

NSU
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN

An Instrumental Case Study on Testing an Integrated Framework for Tutoring Sessions

Abstract

The objective for the current qualitative case study was to examine participants' perceptions on the tutor coaching and session review frameworks. The location of the study was at the tutor coach's place of business. At the beginning of the study, both tutor coach and tutors were trained on how to implement the specific frameworks associated with their roles in the tutoring process. Tutors who participated in the study kept weekly reflection journals regarding their tutoring experiences. After 6 weeks, the tutor coach participated in 30-minute open-ended phone interviews related to the tutor-coaching framework. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Tutors completed an online questionnaire about the methods and strategies used to conduct effective tutoring sessions. Themes were extracted related to tutor coaching, session reviews, effective tutoring sessions, and general tutoring from the data: interview transcripts, online surveys, monitoring notes, and weekly journals. There were 12 emerging themes, 7 categories, and 9 sub-categories that were coded and analyzed. The findings revealed that effective tutoring sessions required lesson preparation and the session review framework provided an avenue of viewing and keeping track on what to look for in tutoring sessions. Another finding was that the tutoring coaching framework influenced coaching with tutors.

Keywords

Coaching Tutors, Observing Tutors, Tutoring, Tutoring Frameworks, Session Reviews, Supplemental Education Services, Tutor Training, Tutoring Sessions

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

An Instrumental Case Study on Testing an Integrated Framework for Tutoring Sessions

Alicia L. Holland and Chris Grant
iGlobal Educational Services, Austin, Texas, USA

Reshema Donthamsetty
University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, USA

The objective for the current qualitative case study was to examine participants' perceptions on the tutor coaching and session review frameworks. The location of the study was at the tutor coach's place of business. At the beginning of the study, both tutor coach and tutors were trained on how to implement the specific frameworks associated with their roles in the tutoring process. Tutors who participated in the study kept weekly reflection journals regarding their tutoring experiences. After 6 weeks, the tutor coach participated in 30-minute open-ended phone interviews related to the tutor-coaching framework. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Tutors completed an online questionnaire about the methods and strategies used to conduct effective tutoring sessions. Themes were extracted related to tutor coaching, session reviews, effective tutoring sessions, and general tutoring from the data: interview transcripts, online surveys, monitoring notes, and weekly journals. There were 12 emerging themes, 7 categories, and 9 sub-categories that were coded and analyzed. The findings revealed that effective tutoring sessions required lesson preparation and the session review framework provided an avenue of viewing and keeping track on what to look for in tutoring sessions. Another finding was that the tutoring coaching framework influenced coaching with tutors. Keywords: Coaching Tutors, Observing Tutors, Tutoring, Tutoring Frameworks, Session Reviews, Supplemental Education Services, Tutor Training, Tutoring Sessions

Introduction

Coaching is a relatively new process in professional development; however, coaching has deep theoretical roots that have been around for over a century. Coaching and mentoring are necessary to ensure that professionals learn and grow with support.

Coaching provides a collaborative, less intimidating approach to improving performance than other development options. The Kansas Coaching Project and Instructional Coaching Group Researchers have studied instructional coaching since 1996, focusing the past 6 years on the steps coaches move through to help teachers set and hit goals (Knight et al., 2015).

The general problem is that there is not any research being conducted in the tutoring industry focusing on tutoring coaching and mentoring for tutors resulting in the gap in the literature. Instructional coaching is incongruent with what occurs in an effective tutoring session and there are not any existing studies to support tutoring coaching and helping tutors conduct effective tutoring sessions.

Literature Review

The history of a world-class coach dates back to Greek philosopher Socrates, who lived 469-399 BC. Socrates' approach supported his belief: "I don't teach anything to humans, I just enable them to think" (Pürçek, 2014, p. 3). As coaching relates to professional development, it is a matter of helping professionals capitalize on their strengths to improve their weaknesses. The only true way to do this is to recognize who they really are and embrace the coaching process in improving one's skills. Similarly, in coaching tutors, it is important for the coach to have necessary knowledge and skills to be effective as a coach to mentor tutors. Coaching, as a relation based on trust, development, and performance, consists of communication, feedback, and observation (Pürçek, 2014). As a result, the coach is mainly responsible for managing the coaching process with fidelity.

Peer coaching has its challenges too. One specific challenge with peer coaching is funding. In a study by Semiyu and Folorunso (2013), the findings revealed that peer coaching was perceived as a collaborative effort to improve professional development. Another finding showed that participating tutors would hold sessions informally at any time or anywhere resulting in inconsistency and inadequate documentation. As a result, data revealed that inadequate training and financial problems were to blame and perceived as a major blow to the peer coaching process.

There is a strong need for tutors to go beyond identifying professional development and personal growth opportunities. In a phenomenological case study by DeFeo and Caparas (2014), findings revealed that writing center tutors came with a lack of investment in tutoring yet adopted a constructivist paradigm and deemed that their work was meaningful. However, one interesting finding was that tutors retrospectively identified personal and professional development opportunities but revealed that they did not reflect effectively on their own experiences while tutoring (DeFeo & Caparas, 2014). Therefore, tutors need more reflection and coaching to truly empower their clients and themselves while going through both tutoring and coaching processes for maximum peak performance as a tutor.

A synthesis of the literature review by Gentry, Denton, and Kurz (2008) revealed that formats for technologically-based mentoring in this synthesis fell into three general categories: (a) electronically-based professional development, modeling, and/or self-observation (using videotapes or CD-ROMs) coupled with access to a mentor, either in person, through teleconferencing, or a combination of these; (b) electronic mail (email) or similar communication systems; and (c) online discussion forums. Two studies described a project that initially used email communication and later added online threaded discussions (Babinski, Jones, & DeWert, 2001; DeWert, Babinski, & Jones, 2003). The current study may fall in one or more of these three categories to incorporate technologically-based coaching to tutors. Another study combined these approaches by providing a website and teaching tips that were delivered over email, along with an online discussion forum and an email link to communicate directly with a program trainer (Bishop, Giles, & Bryant, 2005).

A qualitative study by Knight et al. (2015) revealed that the instructional coaching cycle is only one element of effective coaching programs. Knight et al. (2015) also discovered that it is equally important for coaches to understand how to move through the components of an effective coaching cycle that leads to improvements in student learning. The current qualitative case study will focus on using tutoring coaching and session review frameworks as part of the tutor coaching process in six steps rather than three coaching steps.

Veenman, Denessen, Gerrits, and Kenter (2001) suggest that coaching and feedback can help stimulate self-reflection, self-analysis, and aid self-direction. Based upon the review of the literature, there are a plethora of studies that focus on coaching and mentoring for teachers and students, but there are no studies focusing on coaching and mentoring tutors.

Coaching Versus Tutoring

Clarifying the definition of the two developmental interaction constructs—coaching and tutoring—addresses the confusion of both terms' definitions. It is crucial to take note that developmental interaction constructs have different characteristics such as duration of interaction, direction, location, participant matching, and career progression (D'Abate, Eddy, & Tannenbaum, 2003).

Both terms may have overlapping characteristics, but they have very different purposes. Several studies have set a fine line between the two terms. DiGirolamo (2015) defined coaching as a professional development interaction that has a structured nature using modules and regular meetings are established early on by the coach. The coach may not need direct experience of the client's occupational role.

It involves working with clients to assist or prepare them as they take on different work scenarios including getting new assignments, change of environment, and improve specific work habits. The purpose of coaching is to draw out the potential talent and skills of the client. Tutoring, on the other hand, is different from coaching such that it is delivered in a formal and time-tabled session. Unlike coaching, the tutor is knowledgeable about the subject matter and can pass on knowledge and skills to the tutees, thus, the purpose of tutoring is to put in new information. This type of interaction provides support and monitoring of tutees so that they can prepare for their tasks. Alvarez (2005) defined tutoring as a way to guide and advise tutees.

Both coaching and tutoring are new strategies that can be employed in many companies. Riddle and Pothier (2011) noted that if both are embedded within the organization's culture, it can lead to standards and policies being developed after the dialogue with the employees that can benefit the entire organization.

Tutoring Framework for Effective Tutoring Model

Dr. Holland-Johnson's Tutoring Framework for Effective Tutoring Model focuses on four different tutor characteristics that is present in a tutoring session to be deemed effective (Holland-Johnson, 2014). Below is a figure of the Dr. Holland-Johnson's Tutoring Framework for Effective Tutoring Model:

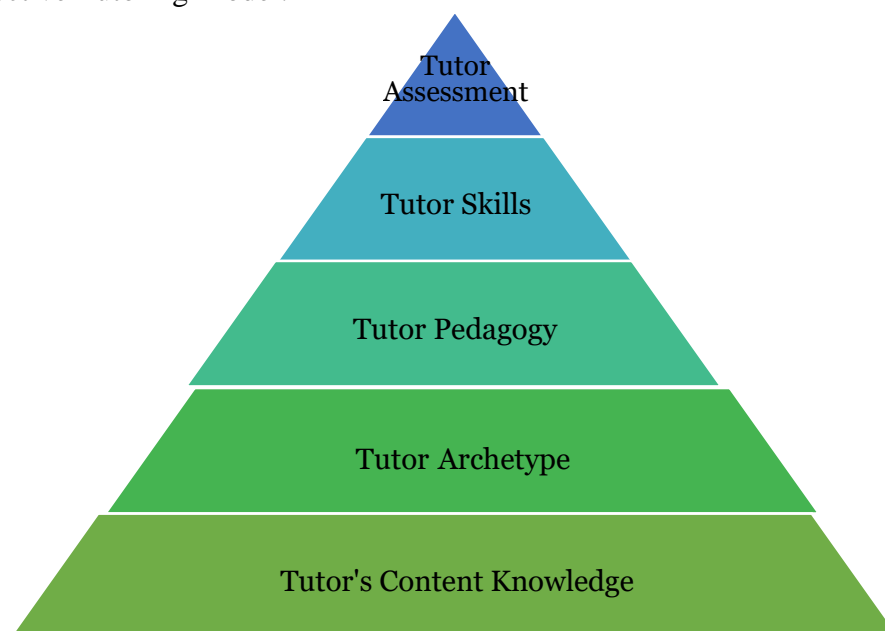


Figure 1. *Dr. Holland-Johnson's Tutoring Framework for Effective Tutoring Model* (Reprinted with Permission from Dr. Holland-Johnson)

The first tutor characteristic is the *Tutor's Content Knowledge*. A tutor's content knowledge is the foundation of the tutoring session because he or she knows the direction of how the tutoring session needs to flow (Holland-Johnson, 2014). In this figure, it is at the bottom layer because it represents the foundation in which the tutoring pyramid needs to be strong. In other words, tutors need to have strong content knowledge to be able to help others learn and grow.

The second tutor characteristic is the *Tutor Archetype*. The tutor archetypes are various types of tutor styles in which tutors will need to determine so that they can help their learners. Holland-Johnson (2010) identifies and describes three types of tutors: homework tutors, instructional tutors, and strategic tutors (p. 74). These tutor types are associated with working with K-12 learners. Harootunian and Quinn (2008) identify and describe three tutor archetypes that work best with High School and Adult Learners. These three tutor archetypes are the following: (a) the pragmatist; (b) the architect; and (c) the surveyor (p. 15).

The third tutor characteristic is the *Tutor Pedagogy*. Once tutors have determined the type of tutor they need for their learners, it is time to focus on "how" they will tutor the learners (Holland-Johnson, 2014). This is where instructional strategies and learning theories are important in planning tutoring sessions for learners. This step goes beyond looking at learning objectives, but really focusing on how to reach learners using best practices.

The fourth tutor characteristic is the *Tutor Skills*. At this point, tutors are ready to deliver the instruction to learners (Holland-Johnson, 2014). It is the job of the tutor to engage learners and deliver instruction using all learning modalities to increase the chances of learners retaining the information. When learners retain the information, they are able to apply it to a new situation or current learning situation.

The last tutor characteristic is the *Tutor Assessment*. Once the tutor and learner have worked together on concepts, the tutor should provide assessments to measure the learner's mastery of skills. These assessments should not be comprehension questions only, but a variety of questions that will enable the learner to truly reflect their knowledge (Holland-Johnson, 2014). Tutors must implement an assessment plan that will capture immediate and future retention of the learners' knowledge. Tutors who have a strong content knowledge will be able to create or provide various types of assessments to meet the learners' needs and depict a true assessment of the learners' knowledge and skills.

Tutoring Lesson Framework

Dr. Holland-Johnson's Tutoring Lesson Framework focuses on the tutoring lesson components that is present in a tutoring lesson to be deemed effective (Holland-Johnson, 2014). A quality tutoring lesson should have learning objectives that are measurable and specific topics listed or communicated that will be covered in the specific tutoring session. Next, there should be questions readily available for tutors to use, along with sample responses to questions to help spark student engagement (Holland-Johnson, 2015b). There should also be opportunities for learners to be able to make real-world connections.

Another major component of the tutoring lesson framework is lesson vocabulary. Lesson vocabulary can be shared before the actual tutoring lesson or while learners are learning the specific topics associated with the lesson vocabulary (Holland-Johnson, 2015b). The next aspect of a tutoring lesson is to begin the direct instruction, followed by the guided instruction, and lastly the independent instruction. During each of these types of instructions, tutors should be able to ask clarifying and potent questions related to the topic(s) being covered in the tutoring session. Both sample responses to these questions are asking learners to be available as support to the tutor.

The last two components of the tutoring lesson are mini-assessment and lesson reflection. Tutors should administer a mini-assessment to ensure that the learner has grasped the concepts learned in the tutoring session. Before the session ends, the learner should have an opportunity to reflect upon the lesson (Holland-Johnson, 2015b).

Table 1. Session Introduction Review Framework

Please rate the tutoring session according to the following criteria:

Session Introduction	
Statements Regarding Tutor Performance	Scale Score
1. The tutor arrived 5-10 minutes early to set up the virtual classroom and/or arrive on time to the face-to-face tutoring session.	
2. The tutor posted a welcome message or opened the face-to-face session with a warm welcome.	
TOTAL SCORE	
Pre-Session Engagement	
Statements Regarding Tutor Performance	Scale Score
1. The tutor had a warm-up problem or a series of questions to engage the learner.	
2. The tutor listed and communicated the learning objective for the scheduled tutoring session.	
TOTAL SCORE	
Tutoring Lesson Engagement	
Statements Regarding Tutor Performance	Scale Score
1. The tutor used higher level questioning according to Bloom's Taxonomy (Cite at least 4 examples).	
2. The tutor provided wait time for learners to answer the posed question.	
3. The tutor used visuals (i.e. PowerPoints, graphic organizers) to engage learners and enhance tutoring sessions.	
4. The tutor used the chat feature to engage learners and enhance tutoring sessions.	
5. The tutor allowed the learner to participate on the whiteboard and/or chat feature to engage the learner. (Cite at least 2 examples).	
6. The tutor used at least two instructional strategies to tutor the learner on the skill.	
7. The learner was actively engaged in the tutoring lesson (Cite at least 2 examples).	
TOTAL SCORE	

Tutoring Session Review Framework

Dr. Holland-Johnson's Session Review Framework focuses on the seven components that are reviewed during an effective tutoring session. There are a set of questions included in this framework that should be answered while observing tutor behaviors and/or actions during either face-to-face or online tutoring sessions (Holland-Johnson, 2014). The first component, *Session Introduction*, (see Table 1) describes how the tutor should carry out specific behaviors and/or actions during the session introduction to start a warm and inviting tutoring session, while the second component, *Pre-Session Engagement*, focuses on specific tutor behaviors

and/or actions to help students warm up their mental energies and activate prior knowledge for the forthcoming tutoring session (Holland-Johnson, 2015a).

The third component, *Tutoring Lesson Engagement*, describes how the tutor should carry out specific behaviors and/or actions during the actual tutoring lesson engagement, while the fourth component, *Session Closure* (see Table 2), focuses on the specific behaviors and/or actions that should occur during a session closure. The goal of an educationally sound session closure is to help both the tutor and the learner summarize the session's topics (Holland-Johnson, 2013a, p. 6).

Table 2. *Session Closure Review Framework*

Session Closure	
Statements Regarding Tutor Performance	Scale Score
1. The tutor restated the learning objective slated for the scheduled tutoring session.	
2. The tutor communicated the post-session engagement activities.	
TOTAL SCORE	
Post-Session Engagement	
Statements Regarding Tutor Performance	Scale Score
1. The tutor asked the learner 2-3 questions regarding what they learned in the tutoring session.	
2. The tutor invited the learner to ask additional questions beyond the learner session reflection.	
TOTAL SCORE	
Next Steps for the Learner	
Statements Regarding Tutor Performance	Scale Score
1. The tutor provided the learner with their next session date and time.	
2. The tutor provided the next topics that will be covered in the next tutoring session.	
TOTAL SCORE	

The fifth component, *Post-Session Engagement*, describes how the tutor should carry out specific behaviors and/or actions during the post-session engagement to allow the learner to be reflective about his or her learning, while the sixth component, *Next Steps for the Learner*, focuses on the specific tutor behaviors and/or actions to help determine the next steps for the learners beyond the tutoring session (Holland-Johnson, 2015b).

The last component, *Next Steps for the Tutor*, focuses on the specific tutor behaviors and/or actions to help determine the next steps for the tutor to do after he or she completes a tutoring session (Holland-Johnson, 2015b).

Aside from the scale scoring sheet provided in Tables 1 and 2, the learner does not only provide numerical rating for the tutor. Learners can also provide detailed descriptions and cite specific instances or evidences of the tutor's performance for each component or evidence category as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Specific Evidence Review Framework

Use this place to cite specific evidence of the tutor's performance and to provide additional comments.

Evidence Category	Specific Evidence(s)
Session Introduction	
Pre-Session Engagement	
Tutoring Lesson Engagement	
Guided Practice	
Independent Practice	
Session Closure	
Post-Session Engagement	
Next Step(s) for the Learner	

Suggestions for Improvement:

Additional Strengths:

Learners also have the chance to provide specific insights into how the tutor can improve learners' performance as well as insights into other strong areas of the tutor that is not covered by the framework.

Tutoring Coaching Framework

Dr. Holland-Johnson's Tutoring Coaching Framework focuses on the six steps that make up the components that are designed to promote professional practice that results in high levels of tutor performance, along with increased rich tutoring opportunities to help learners meet and exceed their academic goals. Each step consists of a set of questions that relate to coaching tutors that should be occurring during each tutor coaching conference for tutors who conduct tutoring sessions either face-to-face or online. In conjunction with the tutor coaching framework, the Dr. Holland-Johnson's Session Review framework is used to assess tutoring sessions (Holland-Johnson, 2014). Figure 2 shows the tutoring coaching framework as adapted from Dr. Holland-Johnson's framework.

Figure 2. *Tutoring Coaching Framework*



(Reprinted with Permission from Dr. Holland-Johnson)

The first step, *Review Tutoring Session*, is the determination that the tutor coach will be conducting either a live observation or dropping into an online tutoring session (Holland-Johnson, 2015a). Coaching sessions are often done in the tutor's place of business wherein he or she should handle a limited number of tutees and everyone should consent to the session. It is crucial to get ethical approval via the IntegReview Institutional Review Board. Anonymity of the participants is important for every tutoring session.

The second step, *Goal-Setting Coaching Session*, is when the observer and tutor conduct their first coaching session together (Holland-Johnson, 2015a). In this session, tutors are in the beginning stages of setting both short and long-term goals. This also examines the perception of participants on the tutor coaching framework. During the initial stages, tutor coaches are trained on how to implement the framework.

In the third step, *In-Between Support*, the tutor coaches are able to provide support in a variety of ways such as in the virtual classroom, conference calls, and/or virtual or internet-

based calls (Holland-Johnson, 2013a, p. 36). Tutoring sessions are often carried out with different time durations from 30 minutes to 90 minutes depending on the goal identified during the second step. During this phase, it is crucial for the tutor coaches to keep a journal regarding the training. All interviews should also be recorded and transcribed as well as online questionnaires should be filled by the client. After the third step, tutors will have their formal session review.

In the fourth step, *Formal Session Review*, the tutor coach will conduct the session review using the Dr. Holland-Johnson's Session Review framework. (Holland-Johnson, 2015a). The formal session review will take place for either face-to-face or online tutoring sessions.

The fifth step, *Tutor Reflective Coaching Sessions*, is when the tutor coach will use a set of questions during this type of coaching session (Holland-Johnson, 2013a, p. 37). These questions are designed for tutors to reflect upon their performance and get engaged in the coaching process. Tutor coaches can use different data to create a formal session review and these include interview transcripts, online surveys, training surveys, and weekly journals. Results of the study may provide additional guidelines and recommendations for both tutor coaches and tutors.

The last step, *Follow-Up Support*, is when both the tutor coach and tutor follow up with each other. In order for the follow-up support to be deemed effective, it is important to include information about resources, discuss the professional growth plan, provide or suggest acceptable professional development activities, and provide strategies for outreach and engage tutors to make contact with the tutor coach (Holland-Johnson, 2013a, p. 42).

The method for the current study is qualitative, and the design is an instrumental case study (Yin, 2013). This particular qualitative research design is deemed appropriate because the focus of the study is known in advance and designed around established theory or methods. In this case, the tutoring coaching frameworks and session review frameworks have been field-tested with tutors and tutor coaches (Holland-Johnson, 2013a).

Researchers' Context

Spending over 15 years in the tutoring industry, resources have been limited and there has been a need to provide support to improve tutor's strategies and tutoring sessions. As a tutor practitioner, Alicia Howard has written several tutoring books and developed tutoring frameworks to contribute to the tutoring industry in both private tutoring and learning organizational settings as a supplement to regular classroom education. My intentions with this project is to disseminate the knowledge to benefit the tutoring industry and provide frameworks to conduct effective tutoring and coaching sessions to improve student achievement.

Chris Grant served as the Research Project Manager for the Tutor Coaching Research Study. He has earned Bachelor and Master's degrees from Prairie View A & M University in Computer and Electrical Engineering. He is an avid track and field athlete with three world titles in the 400 meter hurdles at the master's level.

Reshema Donthamsetty served as the Research Assistant for the Tutor Coaching Study. She has earned BS in Molecular and Cellular Biology with a minor in Business and English. Reshema just earned a MS in Biomedical Engineering and has several academic research publications.

Research Methodology

Design

The current study was guided by the following central research question, “How do tutor coaches’ and tutors’ experiences, beliefs, and perceptions regarding the tutor coaching and session review frameworks in a tutoring context play a role?” According to Yin (2013), a case study design should be used when the study answers “how” and “why” questions. This study focused on coaching tutors, so it was important to gain insight into the “how” so two secondary questions were used to support the central research question. These secondary research questions include,

- How do tutor coaches describe their experiences in using the session review framework to evaluate tutoring sessions?
- From the tutor’s perspective, how do the tutor coaching and session review frameworks improve their tutoring skills to conduct effective tutoring sessions?

The last secondary question focused on identifying methods and strategies that tutors might use to better understand their experiences, perspectives, and perceptions. Therefore, the following secondary research question was included: What methods and strategies might tutors use to effectively conduct tutoring sessions?

Participants

This qualitative case study involved a total of five participants—one tutor coach and four tutors and lasted for 6 weeks. The tutor coach participant implemented the tutor coaching framework at his place of business with the tutors who had elected to participate in the research study and kept a weekly reflection journal regarding the tutor coaching experiences.

Participants were solicited on the online social media professional website, LinkedIn. Specifically, the primary investigator's LinkedIn Page. Since the Primary Investigator planned to post an invitation to participation from her LinkedIn Page, then the primary investigator did not need to obtain permission. Assent forms were not applicable to this study.

This study was given ethical approval by the IntegReview Institutional Review Board (IRB) which is based in Austin, Texas.

Geographic Location

The study took place in New York and tutors conducted either face to face and/or online tutoring sessions in a secured classroom platform. Their computers were located at the tutor business-owner's place of business.

Implementation Procedure

At the beginning of the study, tutor coaches were trained on how to implement the tutoring coaching framework with their tutors, while tutors were trained on how to use the session review framework to ensure that they were conducting effective tutoring sessions in separate 90-minute online training sessions. Tutors who are elected to participate in the study kept a weekly reflection journal regarding their tutoring and tutor coaching experiences. Tutors answered three reflection questions each week, which were the following:

1. Describe your experiences as you prepared for your tutoring sessions this week. How many tutoring sessions did you have this week?
2. What are some specific needs that you have identified in this week to help you conduct an effective tutoring session?
3. What role did the session review framework have to support you in preparing and/or providing either face-to-face or online tutoring sessions this week?

In the same manner, the tutor coach kept a weekly reflection journal for the duration of the study that captured tutoring and tutor coaching experiences. The tutor coach answered three reflection questions each week, which were the following:

4. Describe your experiences as you prepared to evaluate tutoring sessions this week. How many tutoring sessions did you have to evaluate this week?
5. As you observed tutoring either face-to-face or online tutoring sessions, what are some specific needs that you have identified in this week that can be addressed to help you coach tutors using the tutoring coaching framework?
6. What role did the session review framework have to support you in observing and/or evaluating either face-to-face or online tutoring sessions this week?

After the 6 weeks, tutor coaches participated in 30-minute open-ended phone interviews related to the tutor coaching framework. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Figure 3. *Tutor Coach Interview Questions*

Interview Questions

The following are the open-ended-interview questions the researcher used to guide the interview with the research participant for this qualitative case study.

1. How would you describe your experience using the Tutoring Coaching Framework?
2. How would you describe your experience using the Session Review Framework?
3. How helpful was the Tutoring Coaching Framework?
4. How helpful was the Session Review Framework?
5. In what ways do you think the Tutoring Coaching Framework influenced your coaching with tutors?
6. In what ways do you think the Session Review Framework influenced your coaching with tutors?
7. Describe what makes an effective tutoring session.
8. Describe your questioning and discussion techniques during your tutor coaching sessions with tutors.
9. Describe your professional goals for tutors within your professional setting.
10. How do you feel about providing in-between support to tutors as part of the tutoring coaching framework?
11. How do you feel about using the tutoring coaching framework in a virtual learning environment?
12. How do you feel about using the session review framework in a virtual learning environment?
13. Describe how you provide professional development opportunities for tutors.
14. Describe in as much detail as possible how you explain coaching and session reviews to your tutors.

Tutors completed an online questionnaire about the methods and strategies used to conduct effective tutoring sessions.

Figure 4. *Online Questionnaire for Tutors*

- I. Background**
1. Gender: Male or Female
 2. Years of tutoring experience in mathematics: _____
 3. Years of tutoring experience in a face-to-face learning environment: _____
 4. Years of tutoring experience in an online learning environment: _____
 5. What teacher and/or tutor certifications do you have? If none, please write "N/A" _____
 6. What is your current tutoring assignment and tutoring location?

- II. Tutoring Methods and Instructional Strategies used in Mathematics Tutoring Sessions**
7. Which instructional strategies do you use the most in your mathematics tutoring sessions in either face-to-face or online learning environments?
 8. How often do you use the lesson plan framework in your mathematics tutoring sessions in either face-to-face or online learning environments?
 9. In what ways have you used the *In-Class Tutoring Method* to increase student achievement in your mathematics tutoring sessions in either face-to-face or online learning environments?
 10. In what ways have you used traditional instructional strategies (i.e. warm-ups, worksheets, drill-and-skill activities) to increase student achievement in your mathematics tutoring sessions in either face-to-face or online learning environments?
 11. In what ways have you used direct instructional strategies (i.e. small group instruction, one-on-one instruction, and guided instruction) to increase student achievement in your mathematics tutoring sessions in either face-to-face or online learning environments?
 12. Do you use any other instructional strategies to increase student achievement in your mathematics tutoring sessions in either face-to-face or online learning environments? If so, briefly explain in what ways you have used these instructional strategies in your mathematics classroom.
 13. Which tutoring methods have you used to increase student achievement in your mathematics tutoring sessions in either face-to-face or online learning environments?

Project Management Plan

The case study proposes to use the management plan as indicated in Figure 3 wherein the project manager is involved in overseeing the other stakeholders. Moreover, Table 4 also indicates the responsibilities of the different stake holders.

Figure 5. *Project Management Plan Used for this Case Study*



Table 4. Roles and Responsibilities of Different Project Positions

Project Position	Project Responsibility
Primary Investigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manages all aspects of research, project management, program development, data analysis, training, and report writing operations. Individuals employed at this level supervise research projects, implement programs, and manage staff. Implementing research and system design initiatives.
Research Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviews methodology, statistics, qualitative and quantitative analysis, process evaluation, and conducts literature reviews. ○ Serves as a 2nd observer with Research Field Associates and will keep a research journal to record one's own reflections, concerns, and uncertainties during the study and refer to them when examining the data collected <u>to enhance validity and reduce bias.</u> ○ Allow Research Field Associates to review and critique field notes from observations and monitoring notes <u>only at the end of the entire data collection period to enhance validity and reduce bias.</u> ○ Responsible for data analysis and report writing for IRB reviews, Evaluation summaries and evaluation reports, developing the oral presentations and/or manuscripts for publication.
Project Manager and Statisticians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manages aspects of research including project management. ○ Work with Primary Investigator and independently compare data collected from participants <u>to enhance validity and reduce bias.</u>
Research Field Associate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performs general data collection such as conducting face-to-face or online tutoring sessions and writing monitoring notes after each tutoring session. ○ Review and critique field notes from observations and monitoring notes <u>only at the end of the entire data collection period to enhance validity and reduce bias.</u>
Research Field Associate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performs general data collection such as observing both face-to-face and/or online tutoring sessions. ○ Review and critique field notes from observations and monitoring notes <u>only at the end of the entire data collection period to enhance validity and reduce bias.</u>
Trainer for Tutoring Frameworks	Performs either face-to-face training at an assigned office site or online training in the frameworks will be used in the tutoring research study.
Transcriptionist	*Transcribes data.

Measures and Analysis

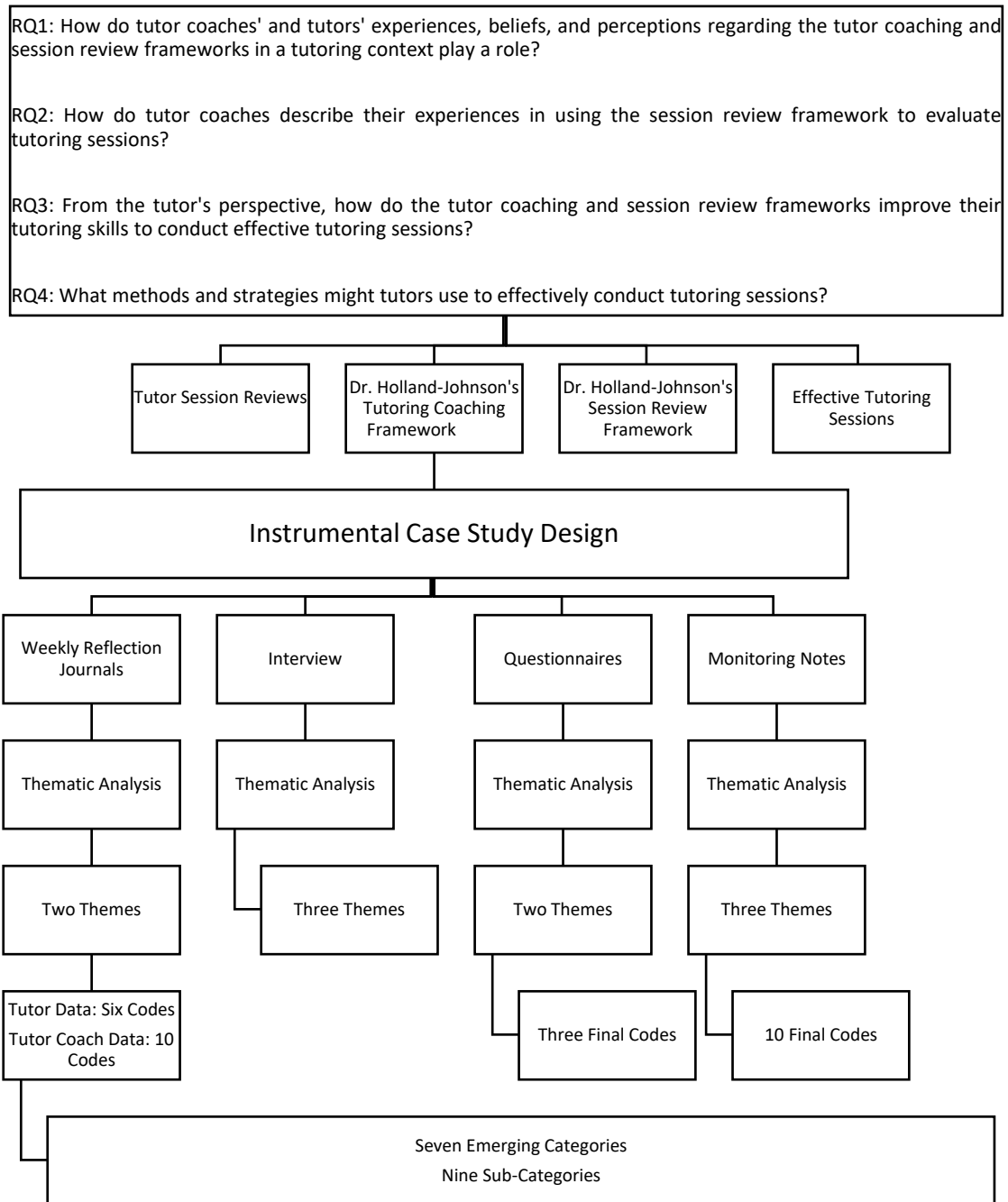
One of the benefits of thematic analysis is flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result, thematic analysis was used as a basis for the data analysis. Specifically, a three-stage

process was used. In stage one, the line-by-line coding was used to identify the initial codes, while the next stage focused on developing descriptive themes. These codes were structured as free codes without a hierarchical structure. After the initial codes were identified, they were compared for similarities and differences between the codes and then compared across researchers who were performing the analyses. Javadi and Zarea (2016) point out that in the semantic approach, themes are detected at “the surface or semantic appearance” and the researcher is not after something beyond what the participant has said or what is written in the text. In our study, this was pivotal to capture the participants’ beliefs, experiences, and perceptions since our research questions focused on these aspects. Themes related to tutor coaching, session reviews, effective tutoring sessions, and general tutoring were extracted from the data specifically interview transcripts, online surveys, monitoring notes, and weekly reflection journals. After finding each theme, both thematic coding and categorizing were used to capture the passages of text that were linked to themes so that the researchers could code them into both categories and sub-categories. All themes, categories, sub-categories, and codes were transposed into one document and the connection between them were evaluated.

Data Analysis and Findings

The researchers used a schematic to help show the progression and culmination of the analyses. However, it is important to showcase specific raw data from the participants since the study is focusing on experiences, beliefs, and perceptions regarding the tutor coaching and session review frameworks.

Figure 6. Case Study Schematic



Initially, there were 27 themes, 18 categories, and 20 subcategories that emerged through data analysis. After further analysis and looking for any overlapping or similar themes, categories, and subcategories, the final coding was identified. The final emerging themes, codes, categories, and subcategories from each type of data collected have been discussed in the subsequent sections.

After analyzing the themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the tutor coach’s interview after the period of six weeks, there were three themes that emerged. Below are the three themes and specific statements in which the tutor coach stated in the interview:

Figure 7. *Emerging Themes and Codes from Tutor Coach's Interview*

Themes	The tutor coach stated in the interview the following:
1. Session Review Framework provides an avenue of viewing and keeping track on what to look for in tutoring sessions.	<p><i>"Helps tutor coaches focus on what they are looking in a tutoring session"</i></p> <p><i>"Prompt to ask questions afterwards."</i></p> <p><i>"Focused Observations of tutor sessions"</i></p> <p><i>"Reviewing a session before coaching"</i></p>
2. Tutoring Coaching Framework influenced coaching with tutors.	<p><i>"Tutoring Coaching Framework influenced coaching with tutors"</i></p> <p><i>"Overall, positive experience."</i></p> <p><i>"Things should be doing"</i></p> <p><i>"Focused on goal-Setting and assessment"</i></p> <p><i>"Highlighted tutor strengths and weaknesses"</i></p>
3. In-Between Support to tutors as part of the tutoring coaching framework.	<p><i>"Tutors have difficulties with questions and need to be able to support them"</i></p> <p><i>"Motivation strategies for clients and communicating with parents."</i></p> <p><i>"Making sure that tutor coaches are available and flexible"</i></p> <p><i>"Providing support for tutoring methods, instructional strategies, and tutoring discourse"</i></p>

The interview demonstrated that both tutoring frameworks provided an avenue of viewing and keeping track of what to look for in tutoring sessions.

Emerging Themes and Codes from Tutor Monitoring Notes

After analyzing the themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the tutor's monitoring notes over the period of 6 weeks, there were three themes that were dominant. These themes and codes are described as the following:

1. Connecting what students have learned to real-life situations or examples are fundamental to student learning.
2. Frequency and duration of tutoring sessions are important.
3. Effective tutoring sessions require lesson preparation.

The monitoring notes that the tutor recorded for each session documented the learning objective(s), student's attitude, learner's progress, key milestones accomplished during the sessions, tutor observations and recommendations, and the tutor's rating of the tutoring session. The final coding for the data from the monitoring notes are the following:

1. Helps students reinforce the information to go into long-term memory instead of short-term memory.
2. Interactive lesson plans help the students learn and focus more on what was being taught.
3. Mutual trust between tutor and student are developed or established.
4. As tutoring sessions progressed, Week 1 vs. Week 6, students seemed to have a lot more energy and focus.
5. They were more willing to fix their mistakes without being asked or not repetitive with their mistakes.

6. Working around the students' schedule and times that are convenient for them allows greater sense of independence.
7. Student motivation is also positive impacted.
8. More tutor prep allowed the tutor to put more time into detailed lesson plans for their students.
9. More practice problems and assessments are planned.
10. The students were able to apply what they learned into actual practice.

Emerging Themes and Codes from Tutor Online Questionnaire

After analyzing the themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the tutor's online questionnaire after conducting tutoring sessions over the period of 6 weeks, there were two themes that emerged. These themes and codes are described as follows.

1. Various instructional strategies are used in tutoring sessions.
2. Monitoring notes are used to increase student achievement in tutoring sessions.

The final coding for the data from the online tutor's online questionnaire are the following:

1. Helps monitor student's progress.
2. Used to help students build on their levels of proficiency.
3. Used during lesson planning for individualized instruction.

Emerging Themes and Codes from Tutor's Weekly Reflection Journals

After analyzing the themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the tutor's weekly reflection journals over the period of 6 weeks, there were two themes that emerged. These themes and codes are described as follows.

1. Various needs identified to help conduct effective tutoring sessions.
2. Preparing for tutoring sessions is important.

After analyzing the themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the tutor's weekly reflection journals over the period of 6 weeks, there were several codes that emerged. These codes are described as follows.

1. More challenging additional resources for subjects tutored.
2. Use current materials effectively until students grasp the concepts.
3. Organized planning of learning activities.
4. Provide effective worksheets to help students' progression from previous tutoring session.
5. Both frameworks support tutors in preparing and conducting tutoring sessions.
6. Strategies on how to focus on problem areas and tailor instruction.

Emerging Themes and Codes from Tutor Coach's Weekly Reflection Journals

After analyzing the themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the tutor coach's weekly reflection journals over the period of 6 weeks, there were two themes that emerged. These themes and codes are described as follows.

1. Evaluating tutor sessions with the session review framework identified various coaching needs.
2. Both the session review framework and tutoring coaching framework are part of coaching tutors.

After analyzing the themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the tutor coach's weekly reflection journals over the period of 6 weeks, there were several codes that emerged. These codes are described as the following:

1. Need to model better questioning and session flow.
2. Provide strategies to motivate students.
3. Discuss assessment strategies.
4. Develop pre-and post-assessments and ongoing assessments.
5. Provide opportunity for reflections.
6. Evaluated on average one to three sessions per week.
7. Helps both tutor and tutor coach be on the same page (i.e., tutoring expectations).
8. Provide clarity.
9. Future use to develop tutor skills in instruction, assessment, and overall professional development.
10. Provide guidance and structure to tutor session observations and evaluations.

Emerging Categories and Subcategories

After analyzing all data that were collected for the study, both categories and subcategories were synthesized. Therefore, there are seven categories and nine sub-categories that represent all data collected. The seven categories that were identified were the following: (a) Tutoring Coaching Framework; (b) Session Review Framework; (c) Tutor Coach Beliefs and Perceptions; (d) Tutor Perceptions; (e) Effective Tutoring Sessions; (f) Professional Goal Setting; (g) Lesson Engagement; and (h) Tutoring. The nine sub-categories that were identified were the following: (a) In-Between Support; (b) Evaluating Tutor Sessions; (c) Professional Development; (d) Tutoring Needs; (e) Monitoring Notes; (f) Student Motivation; (g) Lesson Planning for Sessions; (h) Tutoring Methods; and (i) Incentives and Rewards.

Discussion and Conclusion

As far as we know, this is the first research study examining and testing an integrated framework for effective tutoring sessions from the perspectives and experiences of both tutor coaches and tutors.

These research questions drove the following study: (1) How do tutor coaches' and tutors' experiences, beliefs, and perceptions regarding the tutoring coaching and session review frameworks in a tutoring context play a role? (2) How do tutor coaches describe their experiences in using the session review framework to evaluate tutoring sessions? (3) From the tutor's perspective, how do the tutoring coaching and session review frameworks improve their tutoring skills to conduct effective tutoring sessions? (4) What methods and strategies might tutors use to effectively conduct tutoring sessions?

Key findings from the study answered the research questions as the following: (1) Both tutors and tutoring coach had positive experiences with both the tutoring coaching framework and session review framework. Three themes about the frameworks indicated that the tutoring coaching framework influenced coaching with tutors and the session review framework

provided an avenue of viewing and keeping track on what to look for in tutoring sessions. Another key finding addressed was (2) final codes from the tutors' perspective indicated that both frameworks support tutors in preparing and conducting tutoring sessions. The last key finding addressed the research question related to the methods and strategies used in tutoring sessions during the duration of the study.

A myriad of instructional strategies and tutoring techniques were discovered. One interesting finding was how the tutor placed significant value on establishing mutual trust between the tutor and student during the engagement aspect that was evaluated using the session review framework.

Literature reviewed has supported the findings of our study. McFarlane (2016) suggests that tutors lack training in tutoring and may lack clarity as to the purpose and boundaries of the role. A key theme—strategies to move forward—include sub-themes related to training, dialogue with colleagues, and other suggestion in her study on personal tutoring in higher education can help in clarifying a tutor's boundaries and role. Likewise, by having both the tutoring coaching framework and session review framework, tutors have a better grasp in preparing and conducting their tutoring sessions, thereby, seeing to it that their purpose as tutors is met and that they do not go beyond their role as tutors. Tutors reported training and suggested that the trainings might include guidelines, specific mentoring, and peer observations (McFarlane, 2016, p. 84). This finding is important to our study because tutors have already identified the need to have focused trainings, coaching, and mentoring opportunities. Thus, in our study, this is where both the tutoring coaching and session review framework really support tutors and tutor coaches because it can be used to provide specific mentoring opportunities and afford opportunities for peer observations.

There were several limitations for this study. There was a lack of prior research studies on coaching tutoring framework and session review frameworks. Therefore, that was the purpose of using an instrumental case study design. Instrumental case studies are deemed appropriate for this study because the frameworks are established theories or methods and have been field-tested (Yin, 2013). Another limitation was that the researcher had to establish a research team and project manager to conduct the research and engage with participants. As a result, the researchers kept a reflectional journal and completed separate data analyses and was later shared with the rest of the research team and with participants as a form of member-checking for both validity and reliability purposes. A third limitation was that there were four tutors who initially consented, but later withdrew from the study. As a result, the study consisted of a tutor coach and one tutor. Lastly, in week 4 of the research study, there were no tutoring sessions conducted due to a school break impacting the learners' tutoring schedule.

The findings and limitations of this study indicate potential avenues for future research. It would be valuable to conduct further study with a larger sample size, comparing the experiences and perceptions of both tutor coaches and tutors in a learning organization, including a K-12 and higher education setting using the tutoring framework in both virtual and face-to-face tutoring sessions.

Implications for Tutor Coaches

The findings can be used to provide additional guidelines and recommendations for tutoring professional groups such as tutor coaches. Based upon the tutor coach's perspective, the tutoring coaching framework was deemed appropriate for providing a structure and specific guidelines on how to coach tutors. Therefore, the session review framework was used to evaluate tutoring sessions and cited specific examples that would be captured to use in coaching sessions with tutors.

Implications for Tutors

Another professional group that these findings can be used to provide additional guidelines and recommendations is for tutors. These findings can be used to help tutors structure their tutoring sessions so that they are able to provide effective tutoring based upon the lesson framework. Another way that these findings can be used to provide additional guidelines for tutors is to prepare for their coaching sessions and evaluate their own tutoring sessions using both the session review and tutoring coaching frameworks as a reflective tool in their tutoring practice.

Most importantly, this research focused on testing an integrated framework for effective tutoring sessions and the findings support that these frameworks are effective in both coaching tutors and evaluating tutoring sessions. Lastly, since there is limited research conducted on tutoring frameworks, specifically, tutoring frameworks related to coaching tutors and using a session review framework for conducting effective tutoring sessions; thus, this is our significant contribution to the tutoring industry.

References

- Alvarez, P. (2005). Peer tutoring and university orientation. *Educar*, 36, 107-128.
- Babinski, L. M., Jones, B. D., & DeWert, M. H. (2001). The roles of facilitators and peers in an online support community for first-year teachers. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation*, 12(2), 151-169.
- Bishop, D. C., Giles, S. M., & Bryant, K. S. (2005). Teacher receptiveness toward web based training and support. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(1), 3-14.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- D'Abate, C. P., Eddy, E. R., & Tannenbaum, S. I. (2003). What's in a name? A literature-based approach to understanding mentoring, coaching, and other constructs that describe developmental interactions. *Human Resource Development Review*, 2(4), 360-384.
- DeFeo, D. J., & Caparas, F. (2014). Tutoring as transformative work: A phenomenological case study of tutors' experiences. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 44(2), 141-163.
- DeWert, M. H., Babinski, L. M., & Jones, B. D. (2003). Safe passages: Providing online support to beginning teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54(4), 311-320.
- DiGirolamo, J. (2015). *Coaching for professional development*. Alexandria, VA: Society for Human Resource Management.
- Gentry, L. B., Denton, C. A., & Kurz, T. (2008). Technologically-based mentoring provided to teachers: A synthesis of the literature. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 16(3), 339-373.
- Harootunian, J., & Quinn, R. (2008). Identifying and describing tutor archetypes: The pragmatist, the architect, and the surveyor. *The Clearing House*, 82(1), 15-19.
- Holland-Johnson, A. (2010). *Becoming a better tutor: A data-driven approach to tutoring* (1st ed.). Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.
- Holland-Johnson, A. (2013a). *Expanding your tutoring business: The blueprint for evaluating tutors and implementing professional development for your learning organization* (Vol. 4). Round Rock, TX: iGlobal Educational Services.
- Holland-Johnson, A. (2013b). *Starting and operating an online tutoring business: The blueprint for running an online learning organization*. Round Rock, TX: iGlobal Educational Services.

- Holland-Johnson, A. (2014). *Becoming a better tutor: A data-driven approach to tutoring* (2nd ed.). Round Rock, TX: iGlobal Educational Services.
- Holland-Johnson, A. (2015a). *Dr. Holland-Johnson's tutoring coaching framework: Workbook series*. Round Rock, TX: iGlobal Educational Services.
- Holland-Johnson, A. (2015b). *Dr. Holland-Johnson's session review framework: Workbook series*. Round Rock, TX: iGlobal Educational Services.
- Javadi, M., & Zarea, K. (2016). Understanding thematic analysis and its pitfall. *Journal of Client Care, 1*(1), 33-39.
- Knight, J., Elford, M., Hock, M., Dunekack, D., Bradley, B., Deshler, D. D., & Knight, D. (2015). Three steps to great coaching. *Journal of Staff Development, 36*(1), 10-18.
- McFarlane, K. (2016). Tutoring the tutors: Supporting effective personal tutoring. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 17*(1), 77-88.
- Pürçek, K. I. (2014). Coach and coaching in education. *Journal of Education and Future, 6*, 1-14.
- Riddle, D., & Pothier, N. (2011). What clients want: Coaching in organizational context. In G. Hernez-Broome & L. A. Boyce (Ed.), *Advancing executive coaching: Setting the course for successful leadership coaching* (pp. 401-430). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sandoval-Lucero, E., Maes, J. B., & Pappas, G. (2013). Action research in a non-profit agency school setting: Analyzing the adoption of an innovation after initial training and coaching. *Journal of Education and Learning, 2*(1), 262-277.
- Semiyu, A. A., & Folorunso, A. A. (2013). Peer coaching as an institutionalised tool for professional development. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 25*(2), 125-140.
- Tami, C. A., & Gupta, A. (2006). Reading tutor checklist: A guide for supplemental reading support for volunteer tutors. *Preventing School Failure, 50*(4), 15-22.
- Veenman, S., Denessen, E., Gerrits, J., & Kenter, J. (2001). Evaluation of a coaching programme for cooperating teachers. *Educational Studies, 27*(3), 317-340.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Author Note

Dr. Alicia Holland is an educational researcher, life coach, and prominent authority on tutoring, spirituality, meditation, mindfulness, and intuition. She may be contacted at iGlobal Educational Services, 13785 Research Blvd., Suite 125, Austin, Texas, Phone: 512-761-5898, Fax: (512)233-5389; Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: drhollandj@iglobaleducation.com.

Chris Grant is an engineer, motivational speaker, and served as the Project Manager for the Tutor Coaching Research Study. He has earned Bachelor and Master's degrees from Prairie View A & M University in Computer and Electrical Engineering. He is an avid track and field athlete with three world titles in the 400 meter hurdles at the master's level. He may be contacted at iGlobal Educational Services, 13785 Research Blvd., Suite 125, Austin, Texas, Phone: 512-761-5898, Fax: (512)233-5389; Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: cgrant@iglobaleducation.com.

Reshema Donthamsetty served as the Research Assistant for the Tutor Coaching Study and is affiliated with The University of Illinois at Chicago. She has earned BS in Molecular and Cellular Biology with a minor in Business and English. Reshema just earned a MS in Biomedical Engineering and has several academic research publications. She may be contacted at iGlobal Educational Services, 13785 Research Blvd., Suite 125, Austin, Texas, Phone: 512-761-5898, Fax: (512)233-5389; Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: Reshma.donthamsetty@gmail.com.

Copyright 2018: Alicia L. Holland, Chris Grant, Reshema Donthamsetty, and Nova Southeastern University.

Article Citation

Holland, A. L., Grant, C., & Donthamsetty, R. (2018). An instrumental case study on testing an integrated framework for tutoring sessions. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(3), 557-580. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss3/5>
