

(Friday, February 11)

It was my pleasure to hear about such an opportunity, to sign up and later to actually start participating in the process. With the consideration that certain processes of getting to know and understand each-other remain ongoing - for students/mentees, tutors/interns, as well as school staff and faculty officials - I would like to make a short update for the first tutoring or assistance visit last Friday morning on the 11th; it might be a little early to make such an update sharing, while I thought that it might be helpful/useful as a rough sketch for you regarding what took place in my visit specifically and how I perceived the experience.

To begin with, simply put, I was given the instructional material/handout of the topic "Explore Word Families" whose core idea is to look at the formation of a family of words based on one base word such as inform-informed-information- and informative, etc. I personally have a good example for this, which is "item"->itemize->itemization, which is not a super common one but it was something that showed up in some technical documentation environment quite often; so I used this one, along-side with "engage->engagement" and such to guide the conversation for three students assigned to me.

I would, as the conversation went on, ask them to brainstorm any words they could think of in this fashion, while it turned out that not all of them had a clear idea in mind without external examples given. Next, I tried to introduce what it meant to be prefixes and suffixes and roots, for which I think they roughly understood them. I also noticed that in the fill-in-the-boxes section handed out to students, they did not understand the instructions as precisely as perhaps I expected it to be - the instructions might suggest the student write a set of words in each box, whereas multiple students wrote only one word in each box, and such. In addition, there are more materials handed to me, more than what I could take control of to introduce them to all three students, and I might simply let one of them read them (and a picture story book I brought myself) for the remaining amount of time.

At the 11 o'clock mark, two boys in my group actually took off, after telling me that they had other classes, leaving me with only one student to study/sit along-side with me for nearly an hour; for occasions including this I had actually stepped in and outside the room to try to get those two boys settled and sat back to their chairs, trying to let them resume to reading and writing. Plus, I was having an interesting time figuring out what their grade-levels are - one boy, for instance, first said he was in the 7th grade, but later revised that it was 6th grade. I wish I'd made the right inferences or conclusions about that.

There was one other volunteer tutor intern with me the same morning. I commuted by bus and by taxi. This coming Friday 18th, if normal, I would try to come by again on time accordingly. I very much appreciate any comments or short suggestions regarding this above "field experience update" narrative.

(Friday, February 25)

I was visiting and staying at the Cassidy School this morning until about 12:45pm; the first hour or so I had studied with two students on an account on texting communication's pros and cons with the given handout, while after that I was simply in the classroom by myself reviewing that handout and doing other things. I had called the main office to make updates and indicate my interest in speaking with the school officials for a more in-person update, while I guess maybe that will be left for future visits.



Figure: Street near bus station of the neighborhood

(Friday, March 4)

The session today, with two six-graders, was a smoother one as compared to preceding sessions in terms of conversation. The two students were quite comprehensible and they seemed to understand my words better as well; during the process, we chatted about daily routines, what the school schedule was like, cooking, playing sports, and other topics casually. I had a conceptualization that they were very sensible and intelligent students, maybe top of their class, meanwhile my speech was given attention at a higher level of concentration by them, the audience, just as much as those of my preceding meetings.

I brought up the hand-outs from last week. It was about the pros and cons of text-message communication as a "format", I guess that is what the paragraphs are about—there are five major paragraphs, and we read them out loud by taking turns, the three of us. Throughout and after reading the content, I couldn't capture their attention as much as I wanted to in order to add some supplemental comments for the understanding, i.e. any paraphrasing the materials or extensions of the content by exemplifying how text messaging would work in our real life scenarios. I made several fill-in-the-blank questions, about six of them, on the whiteboard to let them solve to examine "conjunction" and text structure illustrated on the hand-out sheet.

The classroom got occupied as it approached the end of the second hour. I wanted to take off and finish the session, while it was suggested by one of my mentees that we could use some other classroom temporarily. We then found a science room and stayed there for quite a while until a formal class started there, when I bade good-bye with them and the incoming instructor. I wrapped up my time at the entrance/main office with some logistical arrangement. It was a good process and I wish the student mentees had learned something out of the experience.