Reflecting on Interactions that Support Learning

Read through the following scenarios and respond to the questions below. Think about the unique ways interactions are helping school-age children learn. Think about how you might respond.

You were recently hired and will begin working in the school-age program. As part of your orientation, your director asks that you spend time observing throughout the program and getting to know the other staff, families, children, and youth. You feel quite excited about the opportunity and begin right away. The list below highlights some of your observations:

- *Two girls quiz each other on their spelling words. As one girl tries to spell "vacation," the other claps after each correct letter. When the speller gets stuck on the "t," her friend says, "It ends like station. Remember that?"*
- *A staff member plays a trivia game with a group of 5th graders. Before they get started, the youth agree on rules about how long teams have to answer questions, how many guesses teams get, and how to break ties.*
- *A parent volunteer has been invited to help the pre-teens build miniature boats for a local community event. The mini-boats will compete in a race, so they must be able to float and move quickly. The volunteer asks children to list everything they know about boats. He asks, "Why do you think boats float?" "What does a sail do?" "Why do some boats have sails and others don't?" He points out the characteristics of the building materials he has brought and talks to the youth about their ideas. He has a bin of water nearby to test their constructions.*

1. What thinking skills do you think each child is developing or showing?

2. How is each child's cognitive development being acknowledged and responded to by the adult or peers?

3. Would you do anything differently? What experiences might you offer?

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