Tutor and Adult Learner Perceptions of the Tutoring Dynamic in a One-to-One Tutorial Model of Adult Literacy Training for Adults with Multiple Barriers

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate learner and tutor perceptions of the tutoring dynamic in a program with adults facing multiple barriers towards learning. Relationships were analyzed, exploring the elements of the tutoring dynamic that commonly underlie success. Individual, face-to-face, audiotaped interviews of six learner-tutor pairs were conducted over a six-month period. Results are reported in the form of six case studies. Four positive relationships presented common patterns. Two contained disjuncture, possibly arising from expectations, goals, and tutor behaviour. It was concluded that the tutoring relationship is important to subsequent learning. Contributing to relationship dynamic were learner identity, expectations, vulnerability, motivation, and persistence, as well as tutor patience, access to strategies, and respect for the learner.

CHAPTER 1

Background and Introduction

I have worked in the field of adult education for the past 13 years. I began as a tutor for students with disabilities at a local community college. The longer I am engaged with adult learners, the more passion I feel. A majority of the population I have worked with represents those on the margins of society who often face multiple barriers. I have, therefore, become more and more convinced of the need for quality instruction and programming. Returning to university to pursue my studies has allowed me to reflect on philosophical stances, theoretical frameworks, a range of instructional and curricular issues, and overlapping areas of interest including second language acquisition, educational psychology, and literacy learning. Being able to apply my studies daily in support of adult learners has made the process intellectually vibrant and fresh even when it has been practically exhausting. Trying to understand the tutoring dynamic has been an informal interest of mine, which through this study has received thoughtful and concerted attention.

Theoretical Base

Although learner success, however it is defined, can be attributed to a combination of factors generally evaluated in literacy programs, it is important to look at each separately to understand the weight of each factor for varied students. Deepening our understanding of these factors and their impact on different learners, taking into account learner attributes and individual learning styles allows practitioners to match instruction to learner needs more effectively.

English as a Second Language

Adult learners face many barriers to learning that often reflect social issues that seem to amass over time. For some, simply the fact that English is not their first language becomes a hurdle. Millar (1997) points out that over one third of participants in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec literacy programs were not born in Canada. Their first language was neither French nor English. Savoye (2001) estimates that 60% of American adult literacy students are recent immigrants. Thus, although English as a second language (ESL) is not a focus or specialty in many literacy programs, often learners have ESL issues.

Social and Emotional Factors

For others, a cycle of correlated factors impedes literacy learning (Hayes, 1996; Quigly, 1997, cited in Demetrion, 1999; Ziegahn & Hinchman, 1999). For example, Smith (1998) describes the participants in her study as having experienced abuse, neglect, and violence as children. Further, their high school experiences included "racism, vocational streaming, lack of appropriate disability services or curriculum, and inattention or abuse by teachers" (p. 1 of abstract). Not surprisingly, lack of confidence and internalized fears about school hampered them from returning to school as adults. Once in a literacy program, these learners encountered more barriers, for example, "personal and poverty-related issues such as divorce and separation, parenting problems, inadequate housing, and health problems" (p.1 of abstract), or no housing (Farmer, 1995). Additional obstacles include substance abuse issues and diagnosed learning disabilities (Farmer, 1995; Savoye, 2001). Some estimate that 40-50% of adults in adult education programs could have learning disabilities (LD) that prevent them from attaining academic

or employment success (National Institute for Literacy, 2001). Conceivably, these problems were present for their parents and contributed to the creation of childhood environments described above.

Adding social and emotional problems to specific learning issues that may have compounded primary, middle, and secondary school difficulties creates an interesting challenge for adult learner and tutor alike. Do some elements of the ensuing literacy experience have more weight than others in affecting success? In a study that examined whether cohort groups for adult learners could increase retention, Millar and So (1998) found that being able to participate in groups helped learners mitigate against some of the deleterious effects of barriers. Personal support, comfort, and encouragement in past and present learning issues reduced feelings of isolation and sustained learner commitment. Similar findings were reported for learners in a Hartford literacy program (Demetrion, 1999) and in an adult literacy and basic education program in Pennsylvania (Parsons & Weldon, 1998). The question is whether or not the benefits that accrued in a collaborative group setting could be achieved in one-to-one tutorial. Millar and So recommended that adult literacy programs provide opportunities for meaningful group interaction that would address specific learning challenges and that the programs focus on learning strategies and study skills. This begs the question, is a one-to-one tutorial setting conducive to providing all the necessary elements of success for adult literacy learners?

Learning Context

One adult literacy volunteer of eight years states that adult beginning readers need one-on-one attention (Korte, as cited in Savoye, 2001). But what makes that attention effective? Palmer, Alexander, and Olson-Dinges, (1999) refer to Belz (1985, cited in

Palmer et al.) who contends that: "...the success of the tutorial is based upon the relationship that develops between the tutor and the student" (p 2). If Belz is correct, the quality of the relationship in addition to the nature of instruction in a one-to-one tutoring situation could make a difference.

Belz (1985, cited in Palmer et al., 1999) developed a four-stage tutoring model consisting of exploration, experimentation, reflection, and working through. In the first stage, assessment allows the pair to understand learning strengths and weaknesses. In the second, tasks are structured and completed in a way that scaffolds learning and ensures mastery. Taking responsibility for learning is key if the learner is to develop self-efficacy beliefs. In the reflection stage, the learner identifies the self as learner and rejects old notions that interfere with that definition. Finally, in the last stage metacognitive processes allow the learner to generalize learning behaviors to domains like family or work. This kind of identity change as the struggling adult moves from "non-reader" to "one who reads" fits with Mezirow's transformational learning (1990, as cited in Palmer et al., 1999).

Reading the literature, it is plain that the decision to offer a one-to-one tutorial model is based on a number of factors. Funding is an obvious factor. For programs that charge user fees, classes are more feasible than costly one-to-one instruction. If volunteer tutors are being used, a common occurrence in both the United States and Canada, training and support as well as tutor and learner resources are still needed. Administrative staff are also required to coordinate the program and monitor effectiveness. Another factor is learner need. Some learners do not seem to benefit from group learning or a resource model offered in group tutoring, community literacy or Adult Basic Education

(ABE) programs. Learners then move from program to program or drop out (Reekie, 1992; Gerwin, & Stone, 1999). If learning needs are high, depending upon individual goals, specialized instructors are recommended to meet needs effectively (Keefe & Meyer, 1994).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate learner and tutor perceptions of the tutoring dynamic. My hunch was that the learners who opt for or are referred for one-to-one tutoring have learning challenges that outweigh the accumulated life experience and literacy development they have as a product of age. Although such learners arguably need the social aspects of learning as much, if not more, than their peers, achieving this in a group setting might be less productive and ultimately less motivating than learning in a dyad. Once a level of skill and confidence is gained, it may be possible to move to group programs. However, if learning hinges on one-to-one attention due to increased opportunities for ongoing diagnostic instruction, immediate feedback and other aspects of scaffolding, plus the provision of a safe, reciprocal relationship, is it possible for volunteer tutors to meet the learning challenges of these individuals? Analyzing existing tutoring relationships in a program that draws adult learners with multiple barriers would help to explore these issues.

To examine the tutoring relationship between adult literacy learners facing multiple barriers and their volunteer tutors, I focused on learner and tutor perceptions of the various elements of a tutoring relationship gleaned through individual, face-to-face, audiotaped interviews. Some additional data were gathered from progress notes, forms, assignments, tutor training materials, and curricula.

Research Questions

To investigate learner and tutor perceptions of the tutoring dynamic required posing a variety of questions. Background information clarified what types of learners are being served in the one-to-one instructional model. They contributed to understanding which elements in a tutoring relationship contribute to success. Specific questions included, what diagnostic screening tool does the program use? What is the relationship between diagnosis, initial assessment and subsequent tutorial interaction and activity? Is there evidence of strategy use matched to learner need? Does the diagnosis or initial intake learning plan inform ensuing instruction? Does the learner have perceived control? What elements of learner individual history, tutor background and training, instructional and learning behaviors, curriculum, and the tutoring dynamic commonly underlie success?

Significance of the Study

It is difficult for an outside observer to study a relationship for a number of reasons. Predictably, the dynamic under investigation will change when a third person joins; it is no longer a dyad and the original two may perform for the researcher. While self reports do not always match actual events, they allow others to gain a good sense of approximately what happens in a relationship, particularly when both parties are interviewed. Knowing what an effective tutor-learner relationship looks like can be a valuable tool for other practitioners, learners, program providers, and interested parties.

Examining tutor and learner perceptions could be perceived as evaluation. Practitioners in adult literacy are sometimes concerned about the effect of program evaluation on funding, yet the evaluation literature shows that funding is often relegated for other reasons, often political, and that evaluation actually often improves programs

(Cummins, 1993; Hambly, 1998). An example of improvement following evaluation is evident in Cummins' paper written two years following the evaluation of a literacy program in Ontario. Another example is Hambly's Master's thesis research that impelled the organization studied to revisit its training and support for tutors.

The focus of this study, understanding the tutoring dynamic, arose through discussions with others in the field, a common activity for those engaged in research in practice. Quigley and Norton (2002) extensively investigated eleven research in practice networks across Canada and the United States. They identify a number of reasons to support research in practice. First, it links research to practice through a two-way communication process between researchers and practitioners, "consulting with practitioners and others involved in literary practice about topics for research" for example (p.6). Formulating the present study included meeting with a consultant for adult literacy at the provincial level and having subsequent discussions with program staff at an exemplary literacy program, an organization to which other programs send referrals for screening and instructional suggestions. "They are the best at this--no one else in the city is doing it" (Wynes, personal communication, 2002). Second, research can transform practice by inducing reflective thinking that leads to improved practice. Third, hearing practitioner and learner voices leads to building knowledge. Fourth, this type of research can inform or challenge policy. Finally, "creating a visible research culture" (Quigley and Norton, 2002, p. 8) increases awareness of new developments in the adult literacy field. A research report of this study will be made available to others in the field either through publication in an adult education journal, or on the Internet (the National Adult Literacy Database or Center for Education and Work websites). In this way, it is hoped that the

findings of this study will inform literacy practitioners, program funders and providers, and interested learners in order to improve services, instruction, and ultimately learning.

Scope of the Study

This study examined data pertaining to participants in one literacy program in urban Manitoba. The context for the local realities examined is broader. Since adult literacy encompasses a wide range of services, it was necessary to limit background research to the present study by excluding workplace programs, those specifically designated as ESL or Family Literacy, those designed to reach adults with developmental or intellectual disabilities, and programs operating out of community colleges or other postsecondary institutions (vocational and technical programs). The literature review includes both group and one-to-one tutoring programs to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the latter model and to explore whether sound adult learning principles apply equally to both models.

Tutor and adult learner perceptions of the tutoring dynamic were studied primarily through audiotaped interview data. Six learners and their tutors were separately interviewed using a questionnaire (See appendixes C & D). Background data was collected to provide context for understanding the interview responses. Collected information was analyzed by seeking patterns (Berg, 2001; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) and interpreted based on the literature review and personal experience.

This study is qualitative, limiting the representative ability of the ensuing descriptions to the specific program. However, though descriptions do not necessarily generalize to other adult learning situations, they add to an increased understanding of the relationships and learning processes present in a tutoring dyad. Further, the study will

deepen insights into how to strengthen the effectiveness of the tutoring dyad (Harris & Wodlinger, 1993).

Definition of Terms

Adult literacy can be conceptualized in many ways and is discussed in the literature review section on theory. As a basic definition, adult literacy in this paper refers to the process of becoming more literate. Adult here is defined by a learner's participation in an adult literacy program, and literate signifies the ability to read and write for purposes defined by the learner, program, or referring party. The process of becoming more literate includes both teaching and learning and assumes action and change. *Tutoring* can refer to small group or one-to-one instruction. For the purposes of this study, henceforth tutoring and derivations of the term will denote only one-to-one interaction unless used in the context of discussing other studies or reports. A *learning plan* is an individual educational plan created at the beginning of an adult learner's path in a particular literacy program. *Learning Disabilities* (LD) have been variously defined since the inception of the term and across geographic and political regions. Unless otherwise noted, the term refers in this research project to the characteristics as identified by the national definition issued by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada in 2002 (Newslines, 2001-2002). However, it should be noted that some learners with the label LD prefer to see themselves as differently abled rather than disabled and favor a focus on how they can learn versus what they are unable to do.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Adult literacy happens in a context of historical tradition influenced by various philosophical approaches. Definitions evolve locally according to larger educational and societal trends. Understanding the bigger picture places this study of a micro topic – the tutoring dynamic – firmly into that tradition. To that end, philosophical approaches, adult literacy theory, and theory regarding adults with LD are addressed before commenting on studies more specifically applicable to the tutoring dynamic.

Theory

Philosophical Approaches

Terry (2001) identifies three philosophical perspectives as dominating current adult literacy education in Canada: liberalism, progressivism, and humanism, viewpoints that were also prevalent in the early to mid 1900s. Liberal educators see adult learners as deficient in knowledge and cognitive skills but eager and able to learn. Teachers transmit prescribed units of knowledge and teach learners how to learn for the sake of learning rather than for a social cause. While adults deemed functionally illiterate do require a set of common skills and are deficient in similar bodies of knowledge, lumping them together to receive the same instruction regardless of entry level or unique experiences has potentially negative implications for learner progress. Progressivists build on adults' experiences, creating problem-solving endeavors in an environment where the learner and teacher are partners. Self-directed learners are motivated by specific needs that lead to personal and social growth. The problem-solving process of learning is as important as the content and often includes working through various emotions. Humanists foster

personal growth by tailoring instruction and evaluation to learner needs for self-actualization. Making meaning, interacting, autonomy, and self-exploration are all important means for personal development. A stronger program will often have more than one of these philosophies informing instruction simultaneously.

Behaviorism and radicalism are two other philosophies that guide adult literacy practice but, according to Terry (2001), are less prominent on the Canadian scene. Behaviorists use competency-based training common in vocational settings and value standardization. They use stimulus-response to guide instruction, employing rewards and punishments to manage behaviors. Radicals take progressivism further and use problem-solving as a means to empower learners. Learners become aware of problems inherent in society and its institutions and learn the skills to challenge or change the oppressive structures. Paulo Freire's work with Brazilian literacy learners is the commonly associated example of radicalism.

As in other areas of education, there appears to be a shift in adult literacy approaches from one that is traditional and predominately teacher-centered to one that is more learner centered, participatory, collaborative, or social. Demetrion (1999) sees one-to-one tutoring as having a psycholinguistic emphasis and has worked with his program staff to foster a paradigmatic shift towards small-group learning in a "more sociolinguistic, collaborative learning climate" (p. 4) with a participatory emphasis. The volunteer tutors in Talarr's (1995) study were moving away from a transmission model towards on that was more learner-centered. The learners and a group of volunteer teachers who took part in a project by Loughlin (1994) were eventually able to design their own mini-lessons for use by other learners. The purpose of Ziegahn and Hinchman's

(1999) tutor training suggests the transformative power of the interaction between college tutor and learner:

> In working together, both have the chance to change their own life circumstances, to cross borders, in the words of Giroux (1992) – college students by experiencing the struggles of adult literacy learners and adult literacy learners by gaining skills and credentials of increased control and access. (Ziegahn & Hinchman, 1999, p. 1).

Operating from a critical literacy (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1993) or radical perspective, Ziegahn and Hinchman (1999), as well as Hayes (1996), question the alleged increased control and access. They note that some literacy programs have a functional literacy approach that promotes the status quo, which fails to foster and signal real improvement or opportunity in the lives of potential learners. Ziegahn and Hinchman believe that their tutors "...however unwittingly, [contributed] to reinforce the dominant culture's educational paradigms" (Grumet, 1988, as cited in Ziegahn & Hinchman, p. 8). Auerbach (1993, as cited in Norton, 2001) suggests that though learner-centered and participatory approaches are similar in their respect for the learner's agency, the former look more at individual growth within the societal status quo, while the latter move into the larger critical domain of societal change. From Hayes' perspective, the more sustained the relationship between tutor and learner, the more likely the tutor will understand the complexity underlying adult literacy learning. The transformation in this case intimates exploring different ways of literacy learning. Ziegahn and Hinchman suggest further that change can happen when tutors think critically about the creation of knowledge and change self-perception in a world with imbalanced power relationships.

A critical approach is common in community-based literacy programs (Norton, 2001). These programs characteristically create alternatives to dominant discourses. Norton proposes that programs create change through discussion and reflection between learners and teachers/tutors. Part of this dynamic challenges discourses of illiteracy which causally link low literacy with "workplace accidents, unemployment, poor health, poverty and crime" (p. 6). A more helpful approach is to explore these issues by looking at experiences of power according to gender, race, or income. When examining the program in which she works, Norton notes that much of the literacy practice is focused on skills, tasks, and practices. It is evident in her discussion and from the other examples above that philosophy and literacy definitions affect each other in a back and forth flow.

Adult Literacy Theory

Norton (2001) develops reader understanding of a critical approach to adult learning in her discussion of literacy. She uses Fingeret and Drennon's (1997) explanation of literacy as falling into four areas: skills, tasks, practices, or critical reflection and action. Skills can be learned independent of context, and once learned are supposedly transferable to other situations. Tasks dictate the focus of learning by the function of the language, for example filling in an application. Practices are social in nature and rely on context for meaning. Finally, critical reflection and action move the learner into action in the world. While Fingeret and Drennon's spiral of change still remains within a progressivist realm (Demetrion, 2001), Norton uses it to push into the arena of radical or critical literacy, involving issues related to power and social justice.

Knoblauch and Brannon (1993) offer another set of categories from which to understand representations of literacy: functional literacy, cultural literacy, expressivism,

and critical literacy. Fingeret and Drennon's (1997) skills and tasks would fall under functional literacy which sees language as a tool with a set of skills that once learned can be used to operate in the world. This is a literacy that is often associated with economic success, allowing those who have it to function according to specific workplace and societal demands. Cultural literacy sees language as preserving and transmitting culture. Culture is prescribed and based on the western tradition of "Great Books" that symbolize and perpetuate civilization. Expressivism is a conglomerate of arguments, models, and approaches that value a unified, living human consciousness. Individual change is possible through literacy acquisition as in liberal and progressive approaches. Critical literacy involves reflection and action; theory and practice are in constant conversation with a view to addressing social justice and power issues.

In educational theory and research, the term literacy has historically referred to the process of learning to read and write (Street, 1999). Examining and explaining these processes has resulted in often polarized debates such as that between a code-based approach to reading and one that emphasizes meaning. In addition, the idea of literacy as standing alone has been perpetuated by authors who describe the distinctiveness of literate versus non-literate religions, institutions, or traditions. Alternatively, literacy is more recently perceived as a social practice. This opens the way to conceptualising literacy from many perspectives. As there are many cultures and cultures within a culture, the term multiple literacies applies. Further, within this context, critical approaches can identify power issues that are at play within literacy practices. Research that views literacy as situated in specific time, place and cultural practice is represented by the New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1990; Street, 1984, 1999).

The concept of multiple literacies has invited criticism. Kress (1997, as cited in Street, 1999) sees no need for separating and fragmenting literacy. "It is neither autonomous nor stable, and nor is it a single integrated phenomenon; it is messy and diverse and not in need of pluralising" (in Street, p. 37). However, for some it is convenient to think of multiple literacies. For one thing, assuming that there is one literacy to which all nations must strive is misleading and hegemonic. For another, literacy can refer to a set of competencies or skills in a particular area such as computer literacy. However, Street points out that even these contexts in which literacy is conceived of as practices, it is possible to observe behaviors and analyze associated concepts and meanings.

The observation that some conceptualisations of literacy include only reading and writing is lamented by Steele and Steele (2000). They refer to the exclusion of math and computer skills in many literacy programs. They perceive these skills to be equally necessary for adults, particularly those wishing to obtain jobs, keep them, or become more independent and grow in them. Yet such technological aspects of literacy are overlooked (Gal, 1995 as cited in Steele & Steele). Steele and Steele observe that computers can reinforce learning in reading, writing, and math (see also Soifer, Irwin, Crumrine, Honzaki, Simmons, & Young, 1990). In addition, overcoming the fear of computers and developing skills increases learner self-confidence.

Although the varied definitions and conceptualisations of literacy reflect equally diverse philosophical orientations or practical purposes, it would be inaccurate to think of them as clean separate categories. In that sense, Kress' (1997, as cited in Street, 1999) messy and diverse literacy applies to many combinations of literacy in any given context.

Realising how one is using the term in a given situation, however, can be valuable and makes definitions like that of the American National Literacy Act of 1991 (PL 102-73) meaningful. The Act in section 3 defines literacy as: "the ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential" (cited in Vogel, 1998, p.5).

Adults with Learning Disabilities (LD)

Examining the theory regarding adults with learning disabilities is necessary for this study for a few reasons. First, it provides background for evaluating the relationship between diagnostic labels and subsequent instruction, one of the research questions considered. Second, it clarifies the issues related to the term for readers of this report. Much has changed in the area of learning disabilities over the last thirty years and it is important to place the present study into a current understanding of the field.

The label and diagnosis. Learning disabilities is for some a contentious term and for others a liberating label. Misdiagnosis happens with adults as with children (e.g. Meyer, Estes, Harms, & Daniels, 1994). Instructors have widely varying understandings of the term and accompanying instructional applications or implications (Vogel, 1998). In the field of adult education, as in the broader educational arena, LD advocates and specialists hold an opposite view to many literacy practitioners or reading and writing specialists. Those in the LD camp view the definition, identification, and subsequent instruction as key to fulfilling learner potential (National Institute for Literacy, 2001; Ross-Gordon, 1998), whereas literacy practitioners and specialists see the testing as unnecessarily traumatic and the label as potentially damaging because it may become an

end in itself. Such specialists contend that best practices along with assessment are sufficient in bringing learners to success, particularly through ongoing observation within authentic tasks (Anderson-Gill & Associates, 1989, in Ross-Gordon, 1998; Klenk & Kibby, 2000). For adults an obvious benefit associated with a diagnosis of LD is the funding and accommodations that accompany it (Ross-Gordon; Vogel, 1998). As both arguments have value, it would seem prudent to seek a diagnosis only if it were to reap some probable benefit that could in other ways not be gained. At that point, discussing the pros and cons of diagnosis with the learner would allow him/her to make an informed decision.

For some adult learners, a feeling of relief accompanies the diagnosis. Naming something gives a person control over it and dispels the notion of stupidity being the cause of learning difficulty (Vogel, 1998). This is one benefit inherent in the definition of LD (for full definitions of LD see Appendixes A & B): the presence of learning disabilities does not equate with lower intelligence or mental retardation. It is believed to be a neurologically-based phenomenon (MacKinnon, 2001/2002; Vogel, 1998). This takes the blame away from the learner, and instead, through self-awareness, s/he can take control of the learning process in a way that suits her/his learning abilities. Rather than LD being an excuse for failures, it becomes an opportunity to take responsibility and learn more efficiently and effectively. In various longitudinal studies, success for people with LD came with acceptance of the diagnosis and the resulting informed choices made by these individuals (Gerber, Ginsberg, & Reiff, 1992; Raskind, Goldberg, Higgins, & Herman, 1999; Vogel, 1998).

Implications for instruction. That adult learners with persistent difficulties exist in literacy programs is undeniable. In addition to approximate percentages listed earlier, a specific example is helpful in illustrating this point. Reekie (1992) asked instructors of adult basic education programs to list concerns about learners, especially those with LD. Difficulties were identified in the areas of basic skills, cognitive strategies, metacognitive or executive processes, and personal and social concerns. The descriptions of learners under concern fit the definition of LD provided by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (See Appendix B for full definition). Instructors also identified a pattern in the learning experience of such adults: beginning well; experiencing ongoing success; undergoing motivation-reducing crises that compromised success; and ultimately dropping out.

Reekie's (1992) instructional implications include intensive strategy instruction and solution-focused assessment. In his view, instructors should target metacognitive processes for creating, applying, and adapting reading and writing strategies. Initial assessment should ask what a learner wants to change when carrying out a specific task, emphasizing solutions rather than problems. Ross-Gordon (1998) lists four specific program elements that help meet the needs of adult literacy learners with LD: create a positive and supportive climate, ensure minimal distraction, offer appropriate levels of structure and feedback, and tailor instruction to learning style preferences (1998). In addition, Ross-Gordon advocates that specific strategies and metacognitive skills be taught so that learners can transfer skills and knowledge to other settings. Again the question arises, is a distinct instructional approach needed to help students with learning disabilities reach success? The responses are as polarized as those to the question of

identifying LD. Ross-Gordon suggests levels of intervention based on learner need. Professional staff development (also advocated for by National Institute for Literacy, 2001) and support for staff in assessment and effective instructional practices are important for every level. Involving specialized staff is necessary for learners with the most difficulties. Keefe and Meyer (1994) echo this sentiment and advocate specialized staff working with their lowest level learners. Instructional approaches tailored to needs of learners with LD offer a different focus than more socially emancipatory contexts such as those described by Norton (2001). In the latter, literacy happens through questioning power relations inherent in knowledge structures in a life-changing way. In contrast, for those in the strategies-focused, methodically scaffolded environments for students with learning disabilities, becoming independent requires first a psycholinguistic emphasis to help the learner effectively process information.

Adults with reading disabilities. According to Fowler and Scarborough (1999), 80% of individuals who qualify as learning disabled under US Public Law 94-142, 1968 have reading disability concurrent to or separate from other challenges. In practice, the details of diagnosis vary widely depending on definition. Fowler and Scarborough point to recent studies (Stanovich & Siegel, 1994; Shankweiler et al. 1995, as cited in Fowler & Scarborough) that challenge the historical dichotomy between unique reading disability, often called dyslexia, and "garden variety" difficulties. Regardless of intelligence and age, all types of reading disability have common core features. One is poor word recognition, specifically poor decoding skills. A second is oral language difficulty "involving the perception, retention, retrieval, analysis, and production of spoken words" (Kamhi & Catts 1989, as cited in Fowler & Scarborough, p.56). While poor word

identification persists in adulthood, oral language difficulty is less noticeable with adults who have specific reading disabilities, for example dyslexia, versus those who have nonspecific, or "garden variety" reading difficulties.

Program Principles

Gunning (1998) provides basic principles that should be incorporated into any program to help learners who struggle with reading and writing. They fall into three categories: assessment, appropriate curriculum, and effective instruction by trained instructors. In each category, other research supports and elaborates on the principles.

Assessment

Initial, ongoing diagnostic, and summative assessment are all useful in working with adult literacy learners. Continuous assessment is one way to ensure that instruction is relevant and effective (Gunning, 1998). Initial assessment may include an informal reading inventory (Gunning, 1998) in addition to taking an educational history and interviewing clients to identify goals. Learning styles may be explored through inventories. The form of assessment will depend on the philosophies and goals of the program, as well as the instructor and/or the individual. This becomes particularly important when learning obstacles have persisted over time despite good instruction. While too few validated diagnostic tools exist for identifying the presence of learning disabilities in adults, and though controversy still sullies the discussions around particular adult learning challenges, practitioners look for tools to enlighten them on student abilities and inform their instruction (Keefe & Meyer, 1994; National Institute for Literacy, 1998; Reekie, 1992; Ross-Gordon, 1998).

Increasingly, informal tools to assess learning disabilities are becoming available and used by practitioners. For example, the HELP model is an eight step tool that examines thinking, oral communication, reading, and writing (Crux, 1991). Another tool, The Payne Learning Needs Inventory (Payne, 1998), provides a rationale for each question so that the practitioner can use it thoughtfully and flexibly. The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada has created a Screening for Success program which it has recently piloted in various provinces, providing training workshops for practitioners (MacKinnon, 2001-2002). Some programs create their own assessment processes combining elements from a number of questionnaires and tests.

Curriculum

The curriculum used by an adult literacy program should follow an integrated approach (Gunning, 1998). Learners are better able to connect concepts if one theme unites a variety of activities associated with it. Appropriate materials should be provided to match abilities. Specifically, to increase time on task and decrease frustration, readers should know 95-98% of the words in a reading selection. If the level is well matched, wide reading becomes possible. Poor readers need to read more, not less, than their higher achieving peers. More exposure in a variety of contexts will build a knowledge base (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000; Gee, 1994; Gunning, 1998).

Whole language proponents favour language experience and environmental print as part of the curriculum. Both offer opportunities for authentic tasks at learners' levels and arising out of learner contexts (Keefe & Meyer, 1994; Norton, 2001). Language experience includes journal writing in which tutor and learner can discuss a wide variety of topics and build rapport (Palmer, Alexander, & Olson-Dinges, 1999; Purcell-Gates,

1994). Language experience can also include dictated stories, using learner histories or other stories as content. Writing conventions can be addressed as they arise. Environmental print brings real life examples of language into a tutorial situation such as food labels and packaging, prescription information, flyers, words found in ads on billboards or in bus shelters. Thus meaning can be made from examples of literacy that the learner encounters daily (Goodman, Smith, Meredith, & Goodman, 1987, as cited in Meyer et al., 1994). The tasks that fall into functional literacy categories are also commonly used in adult programs: filling in applications, writing cover letters, penning notes to teachers, or creating resumes are all practical activities that promote fuller participation in society.

Loughlin (1994) points out ways in which holistic learning could happen despite the constraints of a prescribed, in this case General Educational Development (GED), curriculum. Using news reports, discussions on problem-posing issues such as job discrimination or AIDS, students and teachers in her case study crossed discourse boundaries and moved between science, social studies, and personal and social issues to integrate learning.

Instruction

Success breeds success. Carefully constructing a program using powerful teaching techniques incorporates a number of principles. First, creating a positive, literacy rich learning environment is key. Learning happens best in a safe setting in which a sense of community is created (Farmer, 1995; Gunning, 1998, Loughlin, 1994; Ross-Gordon, 1998; Soifer, et al., 1990). In addition, providing a full range of literary experiences with authentic tasks develops readers who have a rich understanding of literacy (Gunning,

1998; Hiebert, 1994). Readers who do only low level tasks have an impoverished understanding of reading and writing (Gunning, 1998).

A second instructional principle is Vygotskian: build on the known. Scaffolding begins with what the learner knows and builds on it using direct, systematic instruction (Gunning, 1998). Explicit explanation and modeling of targeted skills will facilitate fluent functioning within a variety of activities (Soifer, et al., 1990). Content, not just skills, should be addressed. For example, Steele and Steele (2000) suggest that math be taught starting with what learners already know and build systematically, offering practical areas with everyday applications.

Research by Sticht (2002) draws out the importance of understanding reading potential as it pertains to adult literacy learners and how this affects both content and skills. For children, listening capacity is measured in addition to reading level in reading assessments as a way of matching instruction to optimal learning levels. Since the listening level is usually higher than reading level, the former is considered the reading potential of the learner. It would seem to follow that because adults have lived longer, they have had ample time and experience to develop competence in oral comprehension and vocabulary. However, based on four separate data sets that assessed over 2000 adult learners, Sticht found that the anticipated higher listening level did not appear. Two implications ensue. First, a "considerable amount of time" (Sticht, 2002, p. 3) may be needed for adult readers to increase their literacy levels. Second, those adults working at levels lower than 4th grade need not only training in phonemic and phonological awareness and other decoding knowledge, but also broad opportunities for vocabulary and content knowledge development. These findings provide one example of the

pervasiveness of reading difficulties in adulthood and point to a need for careful, diagnostic teaching as opposed to the idea that adult literacy learners just need another chance.

Learning content also includes extending knowledge of all kinds and expanding from "the familiar" in terms of culture (Gunning, 1998). Gee (1994) discusses situated cognition as the meaning of language arising from particular communities of practice with distinct knowledge structures and patterns of social participation. His examples of culturally specific metaphors inherent in language are pertinent to those who hope to instruct from a critical or at least culturally sensitive stance.

Through the application of the first two principles, carefully constructing a rich learning environment and building on the known, it is possible to foster independence, a third principle. Self-efficacy beliefs are built through scaffolding and creating safety for risk-taking behaviors (Gunning, 1998; Hock, Deshler, & Schumaker, 1993; Soifer et al., 1990). Overemphasis on isolated skill areas can fragment the learning experience. Skill development is more effective when it is clearly related to a larger literacy task. Work on weak areas when balanced with activities in strong areas can keep motivation high. Feedback is important here as well. Comments on behaviors will help learners to link strategic learning to success and poor choices or lack of practice to failure (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002). Finally, maintaining high expectations while providing the tools to reach them adds to the success of the literacy experience.

The fourth principle undergirds the previous ones (Gunning, 1998; Soifer et al, 1990). Fluent readers, and I would generalize that to learners, are purposeful, active, and flexible. Learners need to be actively involved; instruction must recognise this. At one

training seminar I was told "limit your comments to three statements and then have some form of interaction" (Knight, 1996). This principle is particularly important when working with adults who have diagnosed or suspected learning disabilities (Reekie, 1992). "...individuals with learning disabilities rarely maintain and generalize strategies automatically. Therefore, to be effective, instructors must model and demonstrate the metacognitive processes involved in strategy creation, application and adaptation" (p. 10).

A final principle, although certainly not one that should be considered in a prescribed sequence as last, is personalised instruction. Gunning (1998) advocates this as a way to meet individuals' learning styles and needs. Adult learning principles hold that learners should be self-directed (Griffin, in Brundage, Keane & MacKneson, 1997; Garrison, 1997). Current policy in Manitoba sees learners as central in program planning as well (Manitoba Education & Training, 2001). Participatory approaches value the learner contributing to the learning plan and subsequent instructional and curricular choices (Norton, 2001; Demetrion, 1999). Other learning theory, such as Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences (Quigly & Norton, 2002) and varied learning styles theories, have been useful in working with adults (Rose & Goll, 1992). Griffin (1997) uses a holistic model to address six capabilities and how they interact to strengthen learning. Holistic growth includes emotional, relational, physical, rational/intellectual, metaphoric/intuitive, and spiritual capabilities. These models allow students to become aware of their own learning strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, together with tutors or instructors, learners can create learning activities suited to strengthen weaker areas and capitalise on stronger ones. Activities focussing on or using learning styles can be

especially useful in initial assessment and first sessions, but are just as helpful in ongoing learning.

Applicable Studies

The studies relevant to an investigation on a one-to-one tutoring dynamic in adult literacy were drawn from a number of searches. Using the CBCA Fulltext Education database 1976-9/02, a keyword search using adult literacy and tutor* produced 30 hits. On Ebscohost, using the terms adult and literacy and tutoring combined resulted in 13 hits. Dissertations abstracts yielded no studies using tutor or variants as a keyword. An ERIC database search with adult literacy and tutorial produced 43 results. Abstracts were reviewed to determine their suitability to this research topic. Some searches were conducted beginning with the National Adult Literacy Database. One was of fulltext documents. A second searched The Directory of Canadian Adult Literacy Research in English with the keyword tutoring resulting in 15 entries. A number of studies, for example Hambly (1998), came up repeatedly. None looked directly at, but most included some discussion of, the tutoring dynamic. Most studies described group settings in which tutors might also work one-to-one with learners.

In 1992, the New York City Adult Literacy Initiative Literacy Assistance Center (LAC) (Nwakeze & Seiler, 1993) conducted focus groups to review findings from a survey of 162 adult literacy students. Their findings underscore some of the principles outlined above. For example, students identified a positive learning environment as seminal to success, suggesting that teachers and peers were critical in creating that atmosphere. Self esteem was also important. Students pointed to the debilitating effects of teachers who humiliated students, alienated them, and added to drop-out. They felt that

evaluations of teachers were important; these would allow teachers to learn from their mistakes. In addition, students linked individualised instruction to better retention, underlining a program principle stated earlier. Cultural sensitivity and materials properly matched to learner ability were included here.

Two additional issues were addressed. One considered gender; 71% of participants of this New York program were female (Nwakeze, & Seiler, 1993). Men felt male teachers and more physical activities would attract more male learners. Also, classes of learners often included students with heterogeneous abilities.

Scaffolding was the primary focus of a study by Demetrion (1999) at the Bob Steele Reading Center in Hartford. The subjects in three case studies had common experiences. The centre was developing small groups in which social learning was valued and practised, moving away from the one-to-one model used by the Literacy Volunteers of America. Lack of consistent learner attendance affected the programs, making incremental progress difficult and further impacting on curriculum planning. Stand alone lessons became preferable as learners who missed sessions lost their place in ongoing units. Certain qualities in the tutors, all converging on the ability to scaffold while still respecting learner involvement in creating content goals, were necessary to meet the changing groupings caused by irregular attendance. Demetrion used the phrase "an intriguing blend of improvisation and quest for structure" (p.6) as one way two tutors achieved this.

In addition, some provocative observations regarding the relative benefits of small group versus one-to-one tutoring were made. The tutoring dynamic was described by one student as "highly interactive in that it fostered strong emotional, social, and intellectual

ties among students and tutors" (p. 2). Another student voiced a viewpoint shared by other learners: "When you're in a group, it's different from one-on-one. If you don't know something, somebody else in the group will help you without the teacher. If the person doesn't know something sometime, you help the person out" (p.2). This sense of community and support enhanced self esteem. Another benefit of small groups was the increased opportunity for learning; learners could receive eight versus two hours of instruction per week that was available through the one-to-one model offered by the Literacy Volunteers of America.

Hambly's (1998) study of tutor behaviors and beliefs illustrates the importance of good communication and relations between tutors and literacy organisation staff. That study also underscores the need for quality training for tutors. The tutors in her study distanced themselves from the organisation, operating independently, despite reported concerns such as lack of learner progress. Tutors did not consistently submit monthly evaluation reports of learner progress, infrequently used the organisation's resources, and had low phone contact with coordinators. Reasons for the lack of contact with coordinators varied: some found the feedback less than helpful; others felt that as instructors, they did not require help.

Specific beliefs impelled tutors to detach themselves from the organisation. First, although tutors evidenced a lack of awareness of adult education practices in their province, they believed one-to-one attention to be superior to classroom learning. This was based on general perceived flaws of classroom-based learning. These perceptions stemmed from equating classroom-based experiences with transmission approaches that failed to meet individual needs, insensitive teachers, students being pushed through a

system, and students "falling through the cracks" (Hambly, 1998, p.4). In contrast, in a one-to-one setting, tutors felt that learners could relax, focus on their weaknesses, and gain from networking within the interaction.

A second belief arose from the training these tutors received. While acknowledging that literacy learners have a range of needs, abilities, and styles, tutor training stressed that *common sense and a trusting relationship* [my italics] were more important than training in specific education, learning disabilities, or reading. Therefore, tutors, though feeling underprepared, persisted with working on their own and believed that this commitment was more important than training.

A third belief was fed also by training issues and by the perceived deficits of adult education. Tutors held the belief that motivation was more important than preparation. They based this on their perception that teachers, although more trained, often do not care about their students and are therefore ineffective, whereas volunteers come because they care. As one volunteer put it: "Having a degree doesn't make you a good teacher; it's a personality type" (p. 6).

A fourth belief seems to reflect a "something is better than nothing" attitude. Tutor comments repeatedly stated that their efforts at least would not harm learners and that somebody has to do it. They did recognise that someone more adequately trained could see learners progressing more quickly, but they did not see that as a viable option.

Hambly's (1998) study provokes readers to carefully examine existing practices from tutor training to program structure and communication to ensure effectiveness. However, though she asserts that this distancing of tutors from their organisation is likely prevalent in similar settings, Hambly does not substantiate this in her paper. Therefore at

best, her observations can be used to reflect further on the interactions between training, contact with program coordinators, tutor beliefs, and learner outcomes.

The Role of the Tutor

One of the students in Demetrion's study (1999) provided the following description of a tutor when evaluating his/her adult literacy program.

> I define a good tutor as being interested in the people they're working with, the students. I find that when she's [sic] serious and puts all her might into her teaching from her own heart, because she wants you to get ahead no matter who you are or what color you are, she's there for you... . I could look into their eyes and see they really want us to know how to read because they want to feel they made a difference to us, too... .I like the strength they put into us and try to make us know how to read... . That's a good tutor. (A student in Demetrion, 1999, pp. 2-3)

It is clear from this learner's perspective that sincerity, integrity, and tolerance are seminal features of a tutor. Demetrion follows the quote with an explanation of the skilful bridging the tutor carries out in that context by creating an environment that leads the learners to the next learning experience. Perhaps not just caring, as the volunteer tutors in Hambly's (1998) study believed, but also teaching skill and knowledge encourage learning success. These qualities can emerge in a relationship that develops between learner and tutor. Hayes (1996) identifies rapport as key to tutor understanding of learner's goals and life situations that impinge on learning.

Devins' (1992) study on perceptions of the roles of literacy tutors, based on interviews with tutors and learners in 32 pairs, identified "being able to express

themselves clearly, being patient, and being understanding" (p.198) as important tutor characteristics. Furthermore, both tutors and learners indicated that tutors were responsible for "planning, helping learners relax, and giving praise" (p. 198).

The role of a tutor in a collaborative learning environment is to plan a curriculum and lead sessions with a flexibility that allows learner direction and negotiation of learning (Demetrion, 1999). Tutor qualities that contribute to success in this context include the ability to be vivacious, engaging, and stimulating.

Teacher/Tutor Training

Many literacy programs mainly use volunteer tutors to work with adult learners. Ontario Community Literacy (OCL) programs manage volunteer tutors who work with individual learners. These tutors "need considerable familiarization and training before they can be expected to tutor individual learners" (Ministry of Skills ED p. 10, p. v). Keefe and Meyer (1994) in a report on their project supporting volunteer tutors and adult basic education (ABE) instructors suggested that volunteer tutors should not work with their group O (lowest reading ability group) learners; these learners needed more specialised help. For working with learners at other levels, they had specific instructional recommendations that imply the need for training.

Talarr (1995), a Literacy Volunteers of New York City director/trainer, found that even facilitating a paradigm shift in her volunteer tutors from a traditional transmission approach to a learner-centred approach proved daunting. An effective training approach involved active listening. The training began with pairs of tutors interviewing each other and simply listening and paraphrasing. She describes how tutors went from dyad interaction to group observation, through to learner observation.

> The active listening exchange differs from what most people have experienced in traditional school: learning becomes a dynamic relationship rather than transmission of a predetermined body of knowledge or a static position between knower and learner in which the learner is subordinate (Talarr, 1995, p. 385).

This active listening exercise developed a propensity for trainees to monitor their exchanges with learners and other tutors. Once the tutors in training were acquainted with the shift in paradigm and accompanying vocabulary, they could observe a videotaped group and identify learners' attempts and mistakes as "risk-taking" first steps, rather than errors. They then observed live groups and recorded actions with each other and tutors. This experience generated reflection about learning styles, the dynamics of learning in groups, and the role of the tutor.

Effectively, Talarr's (1995) approach involved participants in experiential learning by incorporating elements that the tutors would later seek to encourage in their learners. Specific aspects included "writing process, language experience, varieties of reading strategies and activities, lesson planning and assessment" (p. 385). In addition to engaging in these elements, tutors made explicit their internalised practices, for example articulating their text processing thoughts as they worked through a selection, and finally created portfolios documenting and assessing their training process. Out of these reflections, previously highlighted principles emerged: safe atmosphere, self awareness regarding patterns of learning, and the importance of asking questions in becoming problem solvers.

Nurturing a paradigm shift or encouraging the connection between theory and practice was important for Hayes (1996) and Ziegahn and Hinchman (1999). Both studies examined students in a college or university adult literacy class who volunteered in adult literacy programs. Both studies identified the need for an understanding of the difficult lives typical adult literacy learners lead, the range of approaches and instructional techniques employed in programs, and the challenges associated with them.

The tutors in Hayes' (1996) study expressed indignation at what they perceived as the condescending attitude of program teachers. The tutors felt they were not taken seriously. Furthermore, they felt that literacy program staff should treat volunteer tutors as peers and professionals. The tutors related these feelings to the alienation that program learners might feel. This points to a need to establish a collaborative environment with mutual respect for various knowledges.

Case Studies of One-to-One Scenarios

Palmer et al. (1999) report on a case study that employed journal writing as a vehicle for learning. The journal documented and achieved the learning process by both teacher and learner. Jane and Alexander met once a week for two years with Alexander using remedial reading instruction combined with journal writing to meet Jane's request for reading instruction. Standardized assessment results revealed specific skills levels, but the journal entries uncovered other layers of need, the most obvious to improve Jane's self esteem. Jane's reading problems and their manifestations fed her lack of self esteem affecting her job, family, and social life. Alexander addressed these in tutorials by matching reading materials to interests, both personal and career, and by teaching strategies that resulted in successful learning and a developing metacognitive awareness.

The ability to reflect, problem solve, and take risks brought her to a place where Jane could read independently. Along the way, she followed a similar process to that of the tutors in training in Talarr's study (1995).

Two case studies (Meyer et al., 1994; Purcell-Gates, 1994) used a whole language approach in a one-to-one setting. Norman, (Meyer, et al.) at the age of 44, joined a class of ten in an adult education program. Misdiagnosed with a learning disability due to a speech difficulty in grade one, Norman remained illiterate throughout his schooling. Because Norman participated in classroom activities as well as in one-to-one tutorial sessions, it is difficult to ascertain the impact of the tutorial. However, the factors that appeared to contribute to his progress included listening to the instructor read, engaging in environmental print activities (Goodman et al., 1987, as cited in Meyer et al.), building his sight vocabulary, creating language experience stories (Van Allen, 1976, as cited in Meyer et al.), writing daily journals, copying the teacher's writing, and using invented spelling. Norman also received specific help with writing from his wife. He worked with a literacy tutor on reading. The tutor was trained in whole language and equipped with a wealth of reading strategies.

Although Norman's determination was key to his success, a variety of program components and instructional qualities based on the whole language theories as outlined by various educators were also instrumental (Cambourne 1988, Smith 1985, & Goodman et al. 1987, in Meyer et al., 1991). Meyer et al. link them to specific activities and behaviors contributing to Norman's achievement.

Jenny's growth as a reader and writer in a holistic environment is documented by Purcell-Gates (1994). Unlike Norman, Jenny had schooling in reading and writing up to

grade 7 and had participated in various adult education programs. Due to a variety of factors, the instruction had not met Jenny's learning needs. For example, the teaching of formal grammar, the use of isolated worksheets, and a glaring lack of self-authored writing on Jenny's part perpetuated her nonliterate status. Her case illustrates the importance of a learner's culture, knowledge, and experience. Jenny and her instructor were able to co-create relevant learning experiences by working out of Jenny's context and using her words.

As with Jane (Palmer et al., 1999) Jenny began with writing in a journal. She progressed from disbelief in her ability to write, to building confidence. Her instructor typed the journals using standard English for future discussion with her. Increasingly, Jenny could read her entries and the responses her instructor began to write. Despite health and other intervening problems, Jenny went from nonreader to functional reader in two years. Her writing also improved. Jenny moved from listing the days' events to "compos[ing] a representation of an event, complete with tone and voice" (Purcell-Gates, 1994, p. 242). Continuity between entries, spelling, and correct use of periods all improved. As she became more literate, Jenny also changed her self-perception. She no longer limited herself to the life associated with being a hillbilly and considered options open to educated people.

Conclusion

Taken together, the cited studies provide a picture of what elements are common in effective tutorial situations, whether they are group or one-to-one. First, a positive learning environment based on mutual respect is mandatory. The emotional and social ties developed in group tutoring are especially significant, enhancing learner self esteem

at the same time as literacy skills develop. Diagnostic assessment to inform individualised instruction is also essential for the tutor. A highly interactive tutoring dynamic with strong rapport between tutor and learner bodes well for success. Finally, good teacher training is key.

Characteristics of an effective tutor can also be pieced together from these studies. Tutors who are caring and skilled (Demetrion, 1999; Hambly, 1998), as well as vivacious and engaging (Demetrion) are desirable. Able to assume a listening posture, these tutors can diagnose learning needs, match instruction with learning styles, provide relevant learning tasks, and scaffold the instruction to maximize safety for risk-taking (Palmer, et al. 1999; Talarr, 1995). Tutors also desire the support and respect of program staff (Hayes, 1996). Tutors who are able to reflect on their practices, connecting theory to practice and seeking to understand learners' lives will also have more impact (Talarr; Ziegahn & Hinchman, 1999).

Investigating the perceptions of the tutoring process of learners *and* their tutors will help to provide more depth and breadth to the picture developed by the studies reviewed. A better understanding of the tutoring dynamic can inform decisions in areas associated with matching learners to tutors, choosing one-to-one versus group tutoring models, providing tutor training, and encouraging self reflection in tutor practice. In addition, for the participants of the study and those learners who may read the final reports, increased understanding of the elements that contribute to the learning experience in one-to-one tutorials can provide an opportunity for learners to become more aware of their own learning processes as well as that of their tutors.

In summary, for a successful tutoring scenario the following need to be established:

- Mutual respect
- Emotional and social relationships
- Enhanced self-esteem
- Assessment to inform instruction
- An interactive learning environment
- Skilled instructors who are caring, vivacious, engaging, and good at listening

Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study, Chapter 4 the results, and Chapter 5 the analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate issues associated with the process of tutoring adult learners by collecting interviews with learners and their tutors to identify their perceptions of the tutoring dynamic. The following procedures formed the framework for exploring the research questions. Questions included: what diagnostic screening tool does the program use? What is the relationship between diagnosis, initial assessment and subsequent tutorial interaction and activity? Is there evidence of strategy use matched to learner need? Does the diagnosis or initial intake learning plan inform ensuing instruction? Does the learner have perceived control? What elements of learner individual history, tutor background and training, instructional and learning behaviors, curriculum, and the tutoring dynamic commonly underlie success?

Time and Location

The data for this study were collected over the fall of 2003 and during the winter/spring of 2004. All participants were selected from one program in Winnipeg. I made an invitation to solicit volunteer pairs for participation in the study, which was passed on by the volunteer coordinator. The coordinator then provided me with contact information for the tutors as well as the first names of the paired learners. From January to June of 2004, I arranged appointments with tutors and learners and met them separately for face-to-face, audiotaped interviews.

The participants were given the choice of where to meet as some learners and tutors do not meet at the center and found it more convenient meeting for the interviews elsewhere. In some cases, a public space was mutually chosen for safety reasons. Every

effort was made to make times agreeable to all parties. Background information was attained from the program at its offices or via personal communication. Documents for the study were securely stored while not in use.

Program Description

Located in downtown Winnipeg, the program was started 25 years ago under a different name. It is funded through a variety of sources including government grants, foundation support, and individual donations (Newsletter). This year, four paid staff members fill administrative and training needs: a program manager, two program coordinators, and an administrative assistant. As reported in the annual spring newsletter, 24 new tutors joined the organization in 2004, and three left. In 2003, 11 tutors joined, and in 2002, 8 joined (Newsletter). In 1991, the program received the Mayor's Award for Volunteer Service in Education (Informational Brochure, 2001). A pioneer in the field, this program has at times had the highest number of volunteer participants compared to similar programs in Winnipeg.

According to the Manitoba government website description (Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, 2004), this program offers Stages 1-3 literacy teaching and one-to-one tutoring, but does not offer Stage 4, family literacy or ESL services. In addition, the program is reputedly qualified in learning disabilities assessment. Stated goals of the organization are found in its informational brochure (2001) and are reproduced verbatim:

- To recruit undereducated adults and youth for tutoring in reading, writing and communication of basic English
- To provide one-on-one literacy training for our students, accessible to all regardless of finances

- To recruit and train volunteer tutors from the community
- To provide ongoing tutor training, materials, supervision and support
- To provide an enjoyable learning experience, recognizing that any learning program must be based on understanding, support and increasing the self-esteem of its students
- To increase public awareness of illiteracy and provide advocacy for Winnipeg's adult non-readers. (Brochure)

Program involvement is strengthened in a number of ways. For example, fundraising activities are carried out by volunteers and include events like bingo, Scrabble tournaments, and used book sales (Newsletter). Furthermore, the organization puts out a newsletter for tutors, learners, and interested others that includes new initiatives, updates on events, learner contributions such as book reviews or poems, and announcements about tutor and learner resources. The newsletter is compiled and edited by a volunteer.

According to the program manager (personal communication, October 2002), the program has changed significantly since its earlier days. At one time the program had 100 pairs working and the contact between program staff and tutors/learners was strong. Increasingly, greater accountability towards funding bodies has resulted in increased paperwork that consumes more of staff time. The monies remain stable, thus less time for staff to devote to tutor/learner support and other non bureaucratic activities cannot be addressed by hiring new personnel to complete the paperwork or fulfill other duties now neglected.

Assessment Process / Diagnostic Screening Tool

Learners upon being accepted into the program undergo an intake assessment lasting approximately one and a half hours (personal communication, December 2003). The intake assessment is a substantially modified version of a questionnaire developed by Robin Millar, then of the Manitoba Literacy Office. It includes an adaptation by program staff of a Laubach intake assessment and one produced by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. The assessment includes reading, possibly identifying consonant blends, comprehension, spelling (through dictation only, no copying), and writing a paragraph on the topic of why the learner needs help. As part of the testing, learning style preferences may be tested using resources from *Unscrambling Spelling* by Klein and Millar and the Barsch Learning Style Preference Form developed by Barsch as found in the *Laubach ATT(E) Workshop Handbook* (Learner Intake Interview). Other resources used in testing include the San Diego Word Lists; two shapes tests from the Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration © Berry and Buktenica, as well as a test from *Smart but Feeling Dumb* by Levinson; digit span test and strengths and learning style questions from *Taking the Mystique out of Learning Disabilities* by Goldstein. If intake assessment findings suggest that the learner may have a learning disability, an additional hour is used for screening.

After the initial intake, the director creates a learner profile containing a suggested learning plan that addresses areas noted from the assessment. The learner also makes his/her own plan and/or identifies goals. Tutors are also given a brief questionnaire (Questionnaire for students) that they can administer to learners. Designed to pinpoint learner goals and provide focus in terms of type of reading/writing materials, tasks and

topics of interest, the 18-item questionnaire provides a potentially useful starting point for the tutorial session. Tutors file hours once a month and maintain telephone contact with program staff.

Learners leaving the program undergo a reassessment interview (personal communication, date). It consists of 37 questions (Reassessment interview) with headings introduction, reading, writing, and learning styles and metacognition. In the introduction, learners are asked questions regarding the frequency of sessions, the nature of the tutorial relationship, and questions related to learning. Questions in the remaining areas solicit information on both what has been learned as well as learning processes and strategies used.

Tutor Training

Volunteer tutors receive 12 hours of training that uses the CD Rom *STAPLE I & II* (Brokopp & Campbell, 1998). Tutors in training work in pairs on the computer and then head back to tables for group discussions (personal communication, December 2003). The training offers background on adult literacy theory and definitions and then presents various scenarios and strategies encountered and used in adult literacy work (T1). Subsequent to initial training, tutors are encouraged to meet as a group informally to share teaching strategies, stories, and support. In addition, they are welcome to contact program staff regarding questions, ideas, or concerns on either teaching or relational issues.

Participants

A total of six learners and their tutors were interviewed. They ranged in age from 18 to 65, with one between 18-25 years of age, four between 26-35, one between 36-45,

four between the ages of 46-55 and two between 56-65. Four learners were Caucasian, one was Filipina and one was Portuguese. All tutors were Caucasian, but one hailed from Ireland and the other from the USA. Learners were comprised of four males and two females; all tutors were female.

Learners' last grade completed or highest level of education ranged from none to grade 12. One completed no grades, two completed grade 12, one grade 3, one grade 6 and one grade 7.

All volunteer tutors had taken university courses although one tutor did not complete high school but did have her GED. One tutor had a bachelor's degree in social work in addition to being a dental assistant. Another had completed two years of anthropology as well as courses in journalism and computers at a community college. Another tutor had completed two masters' degrees, one in sociology and one in journalism. One had completed a year of a master's program in linguistics, having an undergraduate degree in law; one was almost finished her Master of Social Work degree.

Learners and tutors were asked whether or not they were employed. Four of the learners responded yes, and two responded no. The employed learners worked in construction, as a clerk at a wholesale retail outlet, as "jack of all trades" including baker, brick layer, painter and driver, and one learner was self employed in her own business as hairdresser and aesthetician. Tutors were all employed. One identified herself as a radio producer. Another, with her husband, owns a small business in publishing and promotion. The other four tutors work in coordinator positions: one at a university, two at a literacy program, and one at a non-profit special interest advocacy group.

Learners were asked their reasons for taking part in the literacy program and tutors were asked their reasons for tutoring. Four learners specified learning to read as their reason. One wanted to learn to speak English properly and the other wanted upgrading. Tutors had varied reasons for engaging in the tutoring process, but a common attitude was a commitment to giving back to the community in the form of volunteering. For two tutors, their own struggles with reading and learning contributed to their desire to help others learn. Three identified literacy tutoring as a way of helping learners gain skills to participate more fully in society.

When asked whether or not they faced barriers towards learning and work, learners responded that they had difficulties with money, math, silent letters, reading on the job, reading, writing, and spelling words. When tutors were asked whether their learners faced barriers towards learning and work, four responded yes. Three identified lack of education; two adding lack of confidence and prejudice from background. An additional tutor named learning and auditory processing difficulties as barriers, specifying dyslexic tendencies such as letter reversals and difficulty remembering shorter words.

Learners were also asked whether they had been diagnosed with a learning disability. Two learners responded that they had been diagnosed with a learning disability; one indicated that this diagnosis happened in childhood and specified dyslexia. Four others responded negatively.

Tutors and learners were asked about their previous school experience. Four tutors relayed positive experiences, whereas two indicated difficulty due to dyslexia. Those who had positive educational experiences expressed enjoyment, love of learning,

and high expectations. On the other hand, the tutors whose educational histories were characterized by frustration bluntly described learning as "a struggle" (T3) and stated that the early years "sucked" (T6). The tutors who had positive experiences wanted to infect their learners with the same enthusiasm for reading; those with negative experiences were interested in sharing the strengths they had gained from their own journeys.

All learners who had attended school reported negative experiences with the expected descriptions of being labeled and then not being helped, being put into a separate but ineffective program, and feeling humiliated, frustrated, and shamed. Three learners dropped out of school as a result of the negative experiences.

Participant Observer

In my 13 years in the field of adult education, I have worked both as a one-to-one tutor and an instructor in small classes. Content has varied from basic literacy to General Educational Development (GED), English 300, study skills, and university support. The learners I have worked with range widely in age from 19-55. They represented diverse ethnic, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds. My primary professional roles have been serving as a learning strategies instructor and a resource to staff in a private business offering services in academic upgrading and employment preparation. Working one-to-one with learners and acting as a resource to staff have provided me with a background to understand the dynamics in tutoring relationships.

My professional development also contributes to my perspective as researcher. I have taken part in a brain-based learning seminar (based on the work of Rose & Goll, 1992). In addition, I am a certified learning strategies professional developer. This designation is offered by the University of Kansas Centre for Research on Learning

which has developed the Strategic Instructional Model (SIM) (Ellis, Deshler, Lenz, Schumaker, & Clark, 1991). As a developer, I participate in biannual update training conferences. I have also completed most of my Post Baccalaureate Certificate in Education, taking courses that capitalized on my interest in adult learners, especially those with additional challenges, for example learners of additional languages and with learning disabilities or difficulties. My studies at the graduate level have offered me opportunity to explore in more depth the areas of language and literacy especially in the areas of second language acquisition, writing, reading, and adult literacy.

The Strategic Instructional Model (SIM) was designed as an intervention for students at risk of school failure. It embodies an approach to learning that addresses three strands of information processing: acquisition, storage, and expression. Over a 20-year period, strategies have been developed, tested and revised to assist learners with difficulties in the efficient and effective processing of information. In addition, content enhancement routines can be used to make classroom or content instruction more strategic. The SIM model offers many of the factors listed as present in a quality tutoring situation. Instructors are skilled in identifying strategies to appropriately match student learning needs. In order to describe and model the strategies, instructors are engaging and energetic, keeping in mind the many learning styles and individual personalities of learners. They are encouraged in training to create environments in which learners feel safe, motivated and ready to take risks. Further, instructors emphasize metacognitive processes and generalization. As the SIM model is explicit in its stages but flexible in its applications, it provides a framework from which to understand varied learning contexts for struggling learners and can be useful in analyzing the data of the present study.

In sum, a combination of experiential factors contributed to my role as researcher in the present study. I brought to the research my personal experience with the affective dynamics in tutoring dyads and knowledge of the instructional dilemmas and choices needed to work one-to-one with adult learners. I also used my perspective as a learning strategies resource person with specific training in SIM as well as having heard other tutors' questions and engaged in problem solving with them. Finally, readings in educational theory, discussions with classmates and professors, and written reflection throughout my graduate studies stimulated the research process.

Materials and Data Sources

The main source of data for this study was personal interviews with learners and tutors. I audiotaped individual interviews, which included questions addressing the following areas: Program, Tutors, Instruction/Curriculum/Assessment, and Learners. Subsections exploring relevant topics included philosophy, experience, education, professional development, approaches, materials used, assessment, duration of tutorial, content, organization. The interview questions delved deeper in pertinent areas (See Appendix C for tutor interview, Appendix D for learner interview).

Data were collected from additional sources. Tutor training manual, newsletters, and program brochures were used to provide background understanding. In addition, I recorded brief field notes and reflections in an ongoing log.

Procedures

Individual History of Learners

Background information about learners was obtained primarily from oral interviews with learners and additional information offered by tutors.

Tutor Background

Information regarding the education and training of the tutors and specific training they received for the program they were currently offering was collected by informal conversation with program staff and individual interviews. In addition, the personal interviews explored tutor beliefs and ideas regarding their preparation, effectiveness, and needs.

Instruction

In order to describe the instructional program, the following information was gathered: tutor and learner views on intake assessment and goals made by learner and tutor. Through tutor and learner interviews, perceptions of instructional and learner behaviors and curriculum resources were also gathered. Examples of ongoing assessment were considered.

Learner, Tutor, and Program Evaluation

The program only conducts an exit evaluation. In the interviews, tutors mentioned the potential usefulness of external [to the tutorial] evaluations of learner progress. To my knowledge, there is no evaluation mechanism currently in place outside of the tests that go along with the Stages program or within various curricula. The idea of learner success was discussed in the interviews, but no formal questions were posed to allow learners or tutors to define success.

I transcribed the taped interviews during the same period of time in which they were conducted. The recordings were clear, and I replayed sections in order to ensure the accuracy of the translation. It was interesting to note how the interpretation of the words on the page changed in absence of tone of voice, laughter, and gestures or facial

expression. While listening to the tapes, interpreting comments was easier, especially in catching nuances of language. This appeared to be particularly important when interpreting learner perceptions that were more likely to be expressed with a limited vocabulary. In a study on the tutoring dynamic, it seems a shame to have a two-dimensional report that relies so heavily on the researcher's writing ability to convey the quality of the relationship as perceived by the interviewed individuals.

Method of Data Analysis

Hard copies of the transcribed interviews were made and analyzed for emerging patterns. Learner transcripts ranged from 12 to 27 double-spaced pages in length. Taking roughly the same amount of time to conduct the interviews, resulting tutor transcripts were 21 to 32 pages long, averaging 26. Analysis was a recursive process that happened both cumulatively whereby comments were made in the ongoing log or trends were mentally noted, as well as by using focused, intense chunks of time accompanied by short breaks to allow ideas to brew.

Data were analyzed by seeking patterns (Berg, 2001; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Themes emerging from the data in areas related to learner background, affect, tutoring relationships, tutor qualifications were coded and reflected upon. Guided by the research questions, effort was expended to pursue the "why" behind the relative success of learners (Harris & Wodlinger, 1993) especially in light of the tutoring dynamic. In addition, when reflecting on reported interactions between tutor and learner, the idea of Literacy Practices (Street, 1999) was considered, along with social and cultural values inherent in the program, tutor, and learner.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Case Studies

The purpose of the study was to investigate learner and tutor perceptions of the tutoring dynamic. Specific questions were explored: what diagnostic screening tool does the program use? What is the relationship between diagnosis, initial assessment and subsequent tutorial interaction and activity? Is there evidence of strategy use matched to learner need? Does the diagnosis or initial intake learning plan inform ensuing instruction? Does the learner have perceived control? What elements of learner individual history, tutor background and training, instructional and learning behaviors, curriculum, and the tutoring dynamic commonly underlie success? This chapter summarizes the method of data analysis used, identifies common themes examined, and reports results in the form of six case studies representing the six learner-tutor pairs separately interviewed. Each case uses pseudonyms and includes recurring themes.

Interviews with study participants yielded rich data. Due to the breadth of the information provided, the report of results in this chapter is limited to themes closely related to the tutoring dynamic. Therefore, although questions involving diagnosis and assessment were predicted to be essential to the tutoring process, in the light of the tutoring dynamics as reported by participants, they appeared secondary and thus are only tangentially included. Furthermore, although it was evident that tutors to a greater or lesser degree used instructional and learning strategies that met identified learner needs, the motive behind and effect of their use is the focus of this paper, rather than the strategies themselves. Perceived control on the part of the learner as well as common

ingredients to success were the most directly useful questions bridging the reported results and the analysis.

When analyzing the interviews, a number of recurring themes became readily apparent. These could be divided into codes as outlined by Bogdan and Biklen (2003). The codes included in this study focus on elements of the tutoring relationship. For the most part, data related to instruction and curriculum is not included unless it very obviously pointed to relational behaviors or influence on the tutoring relationship. The seven categories at times overlapped and therefore are not reported discreetly but generally adhere to the following order: *reasons for learning/tutoring; learning environment; participants' ways of thinking about people and objects; perspective; activities; strategies; and hints about relationship from narrative codes.*

Some categories were divided further. The learning environment included physical and affective. Participants' ways of thinking about people and objects included learner perceptions of good/bad tutor; learner perceptions of own tutor; tutor perceptions about adult learner, e.g. vulnerable, motivated; tutor perceptions about own learner; and learner and tutor perceptions about learning plan including motivation and goal setting. Perspective explored the notion of perceived sense of control, which was also linked to a sense of respect and equality. Activities were comprised of learner frustration, teacher feedback, reading, laughing, and chatting. Strategies included teaching for independence; scaffolding; taking care regarding frustration level; and taking cues from learners regarding chatting, pace, and content. Finally, in some cases, hints about the relationship from narrative codes became a useful way of exploring the relationship dynamic. For example, examining difference in vocabulary suggested the possibility of a power

imbalance. Furthermore, different viewpoints and lifestyles became a starting point to scrutinize the possibility of ensuing learning, growth, or friction.

Pair 1 - Darren and Anne

Darren's reasons for becoming involved with the literacy program were rooted in his desire for a better future for his children and "to be able to do what anybody else does when a piece of paper is thrown in front of them" (L3). He wanted to be able to read to his children and read notes from the teacher. He also connected his inability to read with limited choices in terms of work; backbreaking labor seemed to be his only option. On the one hand, he appeared to be reconciled to his limited reading ability, "I'm already set in my ways that I've dealt with it my whole life. I can deal with it for the rest of my life" (L3). In the same response, he indicated an impassioned desire to change, a thread that ran throughout the interview.

> But, I don't wanna. I don't want to have to deal with it [illiteracy]. Don't wanna half to, I dunno, feel dumb when I'm trying to find a grocery list, the things that are on the list. It's not worth it man. It's not worth it for anybody to have to live a life like that. I mean not to be able to read or write, I think it's very very shitty. In any which way. (L3 & 4)

Darren reported having difficulty learning as a child. He had hearing problems that eventually were detected and he indicated that "they" [school personnel] may have thought he had a learning disability too, although Darren stated that he felt they had the disability as they did not offer him the instruction and support he needed to learn. He felt that he had been passed through the system and left in his early teens because "we weren't doing anything" (L2).

Anne's interest in tutoring stemmed from a keen interest in working with people. Specifically, she thought her ability to be patient and to listen to the learner's suggestions regarding a potentially effective way of learning would contribute to a tutorial situation. The experience of assisting her children with their learning throughout their school years gave her confidence in her patience and in her ability to identify multiple strategies given new content or situations. Anne described education as providing opportunities for people. For learners she saw the greater the grasp of literacy, the more it would help them in their jobs, family life, and other areas (T19). She hoped that tutorial literacy activities would have direct relevance to learners' community involvement.

The positive tutoring relationship between Darren and Anne was apparent both in their forthright confirming statements and through subsequent descriptions in both interviews. The strong match between Darren's descriptions of Anne and vice versa stood out strongly. What the learner values in a tutor coincides with characteristics the tutor values in a tutor. For example, Darren described his tutor and later a hypothetical good tutor as being patient, not pushing but knowing when to push (L6), and through talk and other reinforcing behaviors treating the learner as a person on the same level (L7). Anne described characteristics that make her suitable for tutoring as having patience, an attitude of openness, and the ability to notice the learner's expressions of those ways of learning that are more successful for him/her than others. In addition, according to Darren, both expertise and caring are important in a tutor. In discussing the impact of the tutoring relationship on learner progress, Anne expressed the hope that a positive learning experience with her would allow Darren to move into the future and away from his [painful] past, merely one of other indications of her caring. Furthermore, according to

Darren, a good tutor will compliment the learner and really needs to want to help the learner learn. In parallel, Anne maintained that tutors need to reinforce successful learner behaviors, as learners may not always realize how they are improving and tend to be self-critical. Both were concerned with self-esteem. Furthermore, Anne valued feedback, and Darren felt he could freely offer it.

Darren's appreciation for his tutor was evident in direct comments thanking her and praising her as well as in his heated expression of protection: "If I hear or see something happen to her, I would flip man, I mean I would literally flip" (L22). He intimated that her nice nature may make her open to being hurt by others. This sense of looking out for the other was evident also in Anne, who used the word *vulnerable* to describe many of the learners at the program and her feeling of protectiveness towards them in terms of what they would be able to handle.

Darren stated openly that he has a good relationship with Anne within the learner-tutor context but was clear in explaining that outside of that he was unsure of what the relationship might be like. Anne expressed regard for Darren as well. She could think of nothing she disliked about him and found him interesting, seeing his difference in background and experiences as an opportunity for her to widen her understanding of what makes a good person.

Both began the first tutorial feeling nervous; however, Darren (L6) identified the first meeting with his tutor as being pivotal in setting a tone. Instead of announcing the agenda, Anne asked him what he wanted out of the tutoring and where he wanted to start:

> You know, I think that's what I needed. I needed someone to help me [figure out what I] wanted instead of what they want from me. And she doesn't expect me to

> do things unless I can--I feel comfortable with doing it, and I think that's what makes Anne such a good person as a tutor. (L6)

Anne described tutoring as shifting control; initially she directed the process through a variety of questions but increasingly she took direction from the learner (T10).

Darren recalled the program intake procedure but felt it wasn't thorough enough and did not realize a plan had come out of it. His understanding of the goals and plan was general: to read by going through a series of leveled books. His tutor used the book series as a guideline, making lesson plans for each session, and she reviewed their progress weekly but maintained flexibility so that Darren would not get bored (T12,13). The initial learning plan appeared less important to this pair as the ongoing monitoring of progress by both. Anne provided examples of ongoing and careful review of both instructional activities and learner progress/frustration level:

> ...as you get to know them better, I think you can tell when they're frustrated, how you might have to [word] something better or, you know give them more time to think about the word so they can sound it out for you. (T6)

She illustrated how she took cues from the learner:

> I remember one time I went to the computer and we were going to do this story, like he would dictate to me, and he got a little thrown off and we ended up just discussing something because I couldn't write because he was on a tangent about something. (Laughs.) So, I was like "Ok, let's just forget that and go back to the book." Change plans. But ya, it seems to throw him sometimes when something new is introduced. He kind of likes a little more structured approach I think.

Talk appeared to be an important component in creating the kind of learning environment important to both Darren and Anne. It took the form of intermittent informal chatting that served to create a comfort level and build the relationship. Talk also created opportunities for both to give each other feedback, for Darren to ask questions while learning and for Anne to build knowledge with him, and most importantly for each to develop respect for each other. "She listens. She talks to me. She makes me feel like a person. And that's what a tutor, that's what makes a tutor" (L24).

Darren evaluated a tutorial session to be effective if he could go home with the knowledge that he learned. He would be able to tell his girlfriend what he had learned as contrasted with other depressed days where he would not be able to tell what he had learned. Notably, his feelings were considered a way of gauging success. Seeing his binder full of completed work gave him a sense of accomplishment. He knew he was making progress because of his increasing ability to read, the ultimate gauge of success. In addition, he stated that he understood more of people's conversations as a result of tutoring. In reflecting on his progress, Darren emphatically stated the need for more programs such as this one to prevent others from experiencing depression, addictions, suicidal thoughts, and problems with money. Anne observed that the tutoring process has made her more aware of the number of people that have problems with literacy. She had taken for granted her own literacy skills and was less aware of the impact of illiteracy on people's lives prior to this experience. Perhaps Darren's impassioned views assisted her in this learning process.

Pair 2 - Tony and Elinor

Tony's report of his school experience contained contradictions. The overall impression he gave is of not having attended school at all: "I work all my life to help my parents and sometimes I go by the school. I go to school; I just, I walk by the school. I never go in. I play with birds or help people in the farms" (L2). He explained that he didn't attend because he did not like school. His parents tried to enforce attendance, but he ran away from them. Later he mentioned clearly remembering his teacher. He talked about being slow because he was not able to read or write but doing well in math. So, he probably went to school sporadically without completing a grade but long enough to form impressions. When relating the story of his school experience, Tony expressed a combination of resilience and regret. On the one hand, he explained that had thought he would not miss the schooling; he was smart enough to get work without a problem and make enough money to live comfortably. In the same breath, he expressed the downsides, "In all these years, I have people making fun of me because I don't know how to read. And it's very hard actually" (L2). He went on to list a multitude of jobs he had performed over the years "as a slave basically" (L3). Although he could not read or write, he said he would not let other people "walk all over him" and worked to maintain his dignity. Now, he mused, he regretted not having the ability to read all those years. Despite having stated that he could make enough money without the ability to read and write English, later in the interview he repeatedly connected his lack of or poor employment opportunities with his literacy level.

Like some other adult learners, Tony attended various literacy programs to address his desire to learn. While attending one program, he regularly visited the public

library to look for one-to-one opportunities to learn because he had a hearing problem and felt that one-to-one would better suit him. In addition, he felt that the tutors at that program were not well trained in contrast to his current tutor.

Elinor found that literacy tutoring matched skills and qualities that co-workers and fellow students in various settings had noted in her. Comments from others included affirmation of her teaching ability, her knowledge of varied strategies, and her patience. Her own love of reading and inability to "imagine anybody's world being devoid of that skills and that joy" (T 4) brought her to apply for a volunteer position at the program.

Elinor and Tony appeared to have a positive relationship. Tony had high praise for his tutor, repeatedly mentioning that she was nice and providing the example of her tutoring him in her home despite his being a stranger and it being the holidays (L5). He expressed his respect for her and indicated that this respect was mutual. He quite openly explained that if he spoke [inappropriately] without thinking, she would good humoredly cue him, "Don't go there Tony" (L8). His respect for her was further indicated by his stated view that the learner should also be patient with the tutor, be grateful and understanding that the tutor is trying to help (L10). In his words the tutoring relationship was a "team" (L19).

Tony's positive attitude towards his tutor was further evident in his characterization of her. He depicted her as well trained, kind, and positive (L11), a hard worker, wanting to help people (L22), and professional (as contrasted by the workers at another program) (L8). What he liked best about his tutor was her ease in talking with people in a polite manner, her caring nature, and her ability to make him feel as though he was the teacher (L22). These descriptions fit with his opinions of good and poor

tutors. Good tutors are patient, set goals, and believe in the learner who has goals (L9). They help the learner to persist. In contrast, bad tutors are aggressive and impatient. Not surprisingly, Elinor's ideas of a good tutor were reflected in her tutoring as described by Tony. She named resourcefulness, patience, insightfulness, and a "certain intuitiveness about what's kind of derailing and what isn't in the student's process" (T16).

The learning environment as described by both also sounded healthy. From Tony's comments, it was clear that he felt that both contribute to this environment: "I create a good learning environment," he explained (L11) by listening to his tutor and being patient with her and himself. He understood that learning is a slow process: "...because if I'm not learning, you know, if I'm not learning the first couple of weeks, does not mean that I could not learn. Can not build a church in one day. That's basically what I say; takes time. I have to be patient" (L12). But he felt supported by his tutor: "She will help you if you want to learn" (L11).

When describing how she created a relaxed learning environment, Elinor specified relational behaviors: "Warm and friendly body language, tone, and facial expressions and reasonably accepting of Tony's stories and stuff; he's extremely verbal. So, I do have to set some limits on things, appropriateness limits" (T8). Although she did not consciously think of creating a safe environment, she reported using behaviors that ensure safety: "Appropriateness boundaries sometimes have to be set in the case of Tony because he has a vivid imagination and he needs to learn a bit of social appropriateness. For the most part he is a gentleman, but oversteps things slightly, and so that's when I change body language and so on" (T8).

Elinor identified that she considered Tony not only her student but also her friend and acknowledged that this changed the dynamic. Chatting could sometimes take up to half the lesson, and it was evident that a level of comfort and laughter were the norm. The sense of safety perhaps rested in part on the tutor's ability to keep boundaries and recognize the learner's needs. Elinor discerned that Tony required quiet, keeping the door shut to minimize distraction (T7). But she described the learning environment as relaxed and informal (T8). She worked to create a space that encouraged risk taking. She observed that learners "have had all the risk-taking knocked out of them" and that rather than using the word *no*, tutors could give alternative places where the response would be correct or offer the correct response. In addition, tutors should offer a lot of positive reinforcement, something with which learners are unacquainted.

That Tony considered the tutor as a professional was borne out in her obvious knowledge of and experience in the literacy field as well as trends and curriculum within it. For example, she acknowledged that literacy was in its infancy when she started tutoring and pointed out that a lot of information had been published and materials collected since then (T5).

Tony did not think that his tutor had a learning plan; he said *he* hadn't written one because he did not know how to write yet. His tutor did acknowledge its existence. She explained that she kept it in the back of her mind constantly, but the pair did not actually refer to the piece of paper (T10). She added that it was important to remain flexible when considering her mental plans in order to incorporate materials he brought to the tutorial or to accommodate changes in his personal life that affected the tutoring schedule and focus. Elinor reported working towards the goal of preparing Tony for classroom instruction as

she understood him to want further schooling. She pointed out that, for literacy learners, goals are often long-term and it is necessary to look at small steps in the interim. Low levels of reading skill require foundational work so that the learner is able to have more choice in reading material.

Elinor reported being able to offer Tony helpful feedback and provide appropriate support when he became frustrated through her understanding of learning styles and information processing differences, access to a wealth of learning strategies, and interpersonal skills. She indicated that she constantly monitored progress and through Tony's behaviors became immediately aware of ineffectiveness in a session. She reported consciously working at trying to increase Tony's independence, as his natural inclination was to look to her for approval or interpretation.

Elinor observed two ways in which the tutoring process had changed her. First, it sensitized her to the literacy realities of others in the community, how public ignorance results in individual humiliation. Second, she became more aware of her own learning processes through needing to be explicit with learners. She related that her confidence in her knowledge of learning disabilities and strategies made it easier for her to have confidence in the relationship, in her ability to understand and respect the learner rather than becoming frustrated with the individual's difficulties in learning.

Tony said he was the same person, but he was one more step ahead as a result of the tutoring. He now knew how to read a little bit. Although he said he did not think a person should be judged on ability to read, he acknowledged that learning to read would affect his choices in employment and therefore was determined to keep learning, no matter how long it took. He was clear that the tutoring relationship was important to

learning: "She makes me feel at home…I'm confident being there and I feel comfortable" (L23).

Pair 3 - Stacy and Laura

Stacy had been to a number of other adult literacy programs before deciding to join this program. She was specifically looking for a one-to-one setting (L2), having had repeatedly discouraging experiences in the other group settings. Her school history was "not very good" (L1). This learner described herself as having been removed from Kindergarten into a special ed class and then not being allowed out. "Like, I uh, didn't do grade one, and grade three for a few days, and they could see me getting ahead. They didn't like that. So they pushed me back." She did not find the special ed programs helpful: "No, they give you, well I call it baby stuff. Like 1-2-3, ABCs like that baby stuff." She quit school when she was 16. The adult programs were either discouraging due to more baby stuff or the group setting. At the current program she wanted upgrading.

Laura's interest in tutoring arose from her own difficulty in school, specifically with reading. Knowing that "there are a lot of people out there that even the education system now is failing them" (T4) she felt she could offer her experience to help one person. Her own learning journey brought her from inefficient reading to acquired skills to a love of reading. She felt she could bring both sympathy and optimism to a learner.

With a positive tone, Stacy was straightforward in pronouncing the tutoring relationship to be good. She said she liked coming to tutorial and attributed this to the tutoring relationship. She described her tutor, Laura, as being nice, a good listener, and having patience. Furthermore, she appreciated a sense of commonality: they both had

problems in school. Their chatting made her feel more relaxed. In addition, she felt her tutor was well trained. The tutor described the relationship less glowingly: "I would say it's getting better. Um, not terrific, and not bad. I think each time it's improving, you know" (T28). She too noted the connection they both have with phrases like "the dumb room" (T13) and empathized with Stacy. She expressed enjoying the youthful perspective Stacy brought to discussions, yet she wished Stacy would share feelings in addition to her thoughts.

The pair had been meeting for a year at the time of the tutor interview. Perhaps it was the timing of the interview that colored some of the tutor's perceptions about their relationship. Laura stated towards the end of the interview that her negative feelings could be related to the fact that the learner did not show up for tutorial earlier that day; given how busy Laura's life was, the absenteeism seemed to be an affront. Perhaps also the tutor's reflection of her goals in the tutorial process was allowing her to see a mismatch; the interview may have made some questions surface. For example, she perceived Stacy to have less commitment to the tutorial than she had. Laura related that lack of investment as a deterrent to learning. She noted that she felt the tutorial was successful if Stacy was interested in learning rather than chatting with program staff or making tea. On the other hand, she felt that their tutoring relationship has had some positive impact on Stacy in that she appeared to be progressing when considering activities they engage in and even with the idea of time and respecting being on time. Along with negative, skeptical, or pessimistic comments, the tutor made positive observations about the learner and shared attributes she appreciated in the learner.

The possible mismatch between the learner and tutor regarding ideas about what was expected out of tutorial sessions showed up in the learner's comments. Stacy said she loves learning and loves school [coming to the program] (L12). She perceived herself as a good learner (L7) and equated her ability to read difficult text with her level of interest in the material. I suggested the ease of reading might be with her familiarity with words and how common they were to which she responded that she thought she could read text at grade levels beyond the level at which the tutor reported the learner could read. I had the sense Stacy and I were using the same language to talk about different things. I was feeling a disparity that the tutoring pair might more regularly experience. The notion of disparity was hinted at in the interview with Laura. It was almost as though Laura and Stacy had two versions of what learning was supposed to happen and for which purposes. On the one hand, Stacy told me of her love of learning and desire to learn, on the other Laura indicated that she was not sure what motivated Stacy to engage in tutorial, whether she had an interest beyond an interest in socializing (T20). The chosen activities did not appear to disappoint Stacy who felt that she was learning, but the sense of tension expressed by Laura may have arisen from differing perspectives on what was or should be happening in that tutorial session and relationship.

The learner described their meeting space as being "nice, quiet, and cosy" (L5). She found the learning environment to be open and comfortable and saw herself as contributing to this by listening and sharing knowledge. That both tutor and learner participated in discussion was evident also in the tutor's remarks about her interest in Stacy's views on varied topics. Further indication of a respectful environment came through Stacy's comments appreciating Laura's feedback on written assignments, which

included asking her to correct punctuation and other errors. Although she found the corrections difficult to make, Stacy valued the expectation, as it was not baby stuff (L9). Laura reported providing feedback in ways that encouraged Stacy to use resources independently. This indication of scaffolding instruction may have contributed to a learning environment conducive to risk-taking. Laura explained that she reminded Stacy to be self critical, prompted her with editing, and helped her to organize thoughts while brainstorming.

From Stacy's comments it is clear that she feels as though she is in charge of what goes on in a tutorial session despite her tutor's feeling that Stacy relies on her for much in setting the agenda and in self-correcting. Stacy's observations that they contributed to discussions equally, that they mutually arranged tutorial times, that she brought materials to be worked on all indicated her perceived control or involvement in what happened in the sessions. Stacy felt that she was active in these areas; Laura seemed to be looking for more instances and types of these behaviors. Laura described how she evaluated tutorial effectiveness by the learner's level of engagement, by Stacy's ability to pick out her own difficulties and initiate activities, and by comparing current work with previous examples. She noted that Stacy has made significant improvement. (Tutor gives the learner an example of why this is important in the real world. T18). Stacy also reported that she had improved, particularly in the areas of handwriting and reading. In addition, she indicated that the learning process had made her more confident, able to "speak out more. And to stand up for myself more" (L12). She credited the tutoring relationship with making her like attending tutorials, which in turn impacted on her learning.

Pair - Sam and Lynne

Sam came to the program with a desire to learn to read, ultimately hoping to achieve his GED or at least a grade 9 or 10 reading level. As a child, he began school not speaking English, as his family had just immigrated to Canada. He found school difficult and perceived that the teachers considered him stupid. He was diagnosed with dyslexia, put into an ungraded class, and subsequently moved from school to school, program to program. These moves were initiated not because of the family moving but based on teacher recommendations. He left school and home in his early teens, completely frustrated with problems in both locations. His father was alcoholic, and many things, including his son's school difficulties, caused friction.

The street became Sam's school. In his journeys across Canada, he taught himself to read street signs and visited libraries attempting to teach himself to read. As an adult settled in Manitoba, Sam sought assistance from the literacy program, which he located in the phone book. After a negative experience with another tutor whom he perceived to be pushy, impatient, and rude (L2), Sam left and enrolled in another literacy program. He did not like it there and called the program a joke: in an open room, 15 learners were served by one teacher who was unable to assist every learner. Sam found this frustrating and returned to the present program where he was matched with Lynne.

Lynne had been volunteering as tutor since being in her 20s. Her reasons for tutoring stemmed from both a commitment to volunteering as a way of giving back to others out of a sense of social responsibility and the idea that her academic ability might enable her to help others with learning. She felt that helping a person develop literacy skills would enable that individual to participate more fully in his/her environment: "You

know, this idea of trying to get people to where they want to go" (T3). Her own learning path allowed her think about language in ways that would allow her to explain it to others thus tutoring seemed to be a natural extension of her own thinking and beliefs.

Reflecting on the idea of volunteer tutoring as contrasted with paid tutoring, Lynne pointed out that volunteering can change the dynamic. Although some volunteer tutoring arrangements are treated as business arrangements by both parties, she acknowledged that with volunteer tutors, learners may question why the tutors are freely giving of their time; what is in it for them. She noted that Sam's humility and gratefulness for the tutoring made her feel a little odd. (T5).

That Lynne and Sam have a positive tutoring dynamic was evident in the consistently complimentary ways they talked about each other. Sam described Lynne as well trained, very good, very patient, friendly and outgoing (L3 & 11). He said that Lynn created a comfortable and open learning environment. He thought because she was comfortable and outgoing, easy to talk to and be with, she was an effective tutor. It is possible that Lynne exhibits such positive traits because of her ideas of what make a good tutor: perseverance, patience, realistic expectations, belief in the learner, and an ability to express this belief to the learner (T23). She acknowledged that learning "is a long arc, not a short run…something that will take a long time" (T23) and she was committed to supporting Sam in this process. It was also clear that Lynne has regard for Sam. She described him as being persistent, open, friendly, as well as having a sense of humor and a good heart.

For Sam, the importance of the relationship was evident when talking about a previous tutoring experience. A "pushy" tutor (T2) appeared to have little patience for

him; he found her behavior rude, became frustrated, and left. In another literacy program, convened in an open room with approximately 15 learners to one tutor, he would ask for help, but the tutor would not be able to offer assistance. So Sam appeared to value both the personal characteristics of the tutor that affected the dynamic, particularly patience, as well as the tutor's instructional abilities. When addressing one-to-one tutoring, Sam indicated that the relationship was important to how he learned. "If you don't have a good relationship, then you may as well not do it. You won't be able to learn" (L11). For Lynne, the relationship also seemed central. Developing trust and safety were fundamental to learning (T10).

Sam described the learning environment in which this pair met as "comfortable and open" and safe (L4), a contrast from his feelings about the physical space in which they met. He found the individual rooms of the centre claustrophobic, yet although he appreciated the openness of public spaces like the library and university, he quickly pointed out that there he disliked having people around. He felt that people would easily ascertain that he could not read and marvel at the sight of this. "Like, I feel really dumb, like 'Why's this guy, like look at the size of this guy'" (L4). Lynne also expressed discomfort with tutoring in an open environment where someone might critique her technique. (T10). It seemed the awkwardness of the physical spaces was offset by the tone Lynne set with Sam. Her contribution according to Sam was friendliness and acceptance. In her own interview, she stressed trying to create a setting where Sam felt safe, where he could make mistakes, and where humor was used to lighten the mood and building trust and acceptance was the norm. Sam said he brought a willingness to learn,

offering an example of his motivation in his desire to publish some of his writing, a desire that his tutor was helping to realize.

Lynne reported being deliberate in certain aspects of creating the environment. On the one hand, she showed Sam the same respect she would show others. On the other, she acknowledged that they came from quite disparate backgrounds, that Sam had "a pretty hard life" (T12), and that certain of her behaviors were thus more thoughtful in response. For example, she took care in the questions she asked, respected his privacy in a mutually established boundary, abstained from judgment, and avoided "having an agenda" (T12).

> Certainly with some people I might ask more follow-up questions and try to find out more, but with him I think we've kind of established a certain level of where we want to, how much we want to know about each other's lives and stick to that. (T12)

Lynne also noted the importance of the program in creating a safe and welcoming environment. She described herself as an extension of the acceptance the program staff offered the learners. In addition, she felt the match the program made between learner and tutor was important.

Sam was unaware of a learning plan. He remarked that he knew he had a long way to go, but he would just keep working at it. Lynne's interview substantiated his impression; she was flexible with goals and how they would meet them, using a book series as an overarching structure (T15). Sam acknowledged that Lynne chose materials for him to read, but he stated that he had never found any of her choices uninteresting, and she tried to choose materials that matched his goals or interests. For example, he had wanted to pass a food handling course and was trying to get his license; in both cases

Lynne came up with appropriate materials to achieve those goals. Lynne also reported examples of incorporating written assignments that would engage him or work at a skill he needed to develop. She indicated supporting his motivation by piquing his interest.

According to Sam, Lynne provided him with good feedback. For example, when he was having difficulty decoding while reading aloud, she would help. She would wait for him to cut the word in half and then prompt him to read each part, giving him a feeling of control over the word. She would cue him by reminding him that that was how the dictionary divided words too. Her response to his frustration was to do nothing, just wait until he figured it out, "She's very patient about that" (L8). Sam gave a further example of the support Lynne offered when he berated himself "I should know this word." She would reassure him that he would get it eventually. Lynne detailed a number of additional strategies she used to help Sam when he experienced learning difficulties and indicated that she monitored what kinds of interruptions were necessary and when they were unwarranted. She said she often took her cue from him, assisting when he stopped or stumbled. Even there, depending on whether his frustration was based on a pattern that was straightforward to address or whether it arose out of fatigue such as at the end of the session, Lynne indicated that she took her cue from Sam and either reassured him, changed focus, worked at the pattern, or ended the session (T14, 21).

Sam could report that he had achieved something through these tutorials by the fact that he could now read the newspaper on his own when looking for a place to live or for work. He showed enthusiasm in his recent ability to read an entire passage with unfamiliar words that he decoded himself and explained exactly what strategy he used. As reading something was his measure of success, he felt good about his progress, "I've

been doing pretty good with my reading. It's getting a lot better" (L9). For measuring a tutorial session's effectiveness, Sam relied on his feelings: "Just the way it went. If I'm happy when we're done" (L10). He added that the feeling of satisfaction or accomplishment at the end indicated that session's worth. Lynne echoed that: "I guess just attitude by the end. You know, if it's something we both feel like we got to the end and oh ya we got some good work today, we got through a lot today, or learned some...Gosh, I mean it's very, it's nebulous" (T23). She further mused, "And something was accomplished even if you can't necessarily measure it, right this minute. That we are one step closer."

Pair 5 - Sylvia and Cathy

Sylvia and Cathy were meeting largely through Sylvia's persistence. Sylvia's learning goal to speak English better differed from the literacy requests relating to written text more common to the program. Sylvia's self-advocacy regarding her need for one-to-one attention and the lack of other opportunities to receive it resulted in the program responding with the current match. Sylvia had been in Canada for over a decade and had her high school diploma as well as postsecondary training. Both these factors differentiated her from many program participants having lower literacy levels and experiencing persistent learning difficulties as opposed to having language barriers that affected reading and writing.

Cathy had volunteered in literacy contexts in other parts of Canada as well as at the present program. She had found these experiences to be rewarding and desired to "give back to the communities I live in" (T2). She felt that her life experience, her sense

of the possibility of change, and her commitment to accompanying a learner through this process were assets she could bring to a tutoring situation.

Sylvia appeared to be voracious learner, very eager and persistent. She said she loved learning and saw herself as a lifelong learner. Her determination to achieve her goals was evident in her approach: if she failed, she would keep trying until she succeeded. In addition, at least twice in the interview, she mentioned that it was her responsibility to motivate herself, to push and be strict with herself in learning in order to achieve her dream. (e.g. L20). In many instances she identified the direction the tutor took in creating the agenda for the session, yet Sylvia also indicated that she felt completely at ease asking questions, and requesting certain activities or focus in a lesson. "I think the student have to tell the teacher too" (L20).

That Sylvia was continuously engaged in varied learning activities whether formal courses or tutoring were further indications of her voraciousness. All of these traits and behaviors were also identified by Cathy. Yet, whereas Sylvia saw herself as having no difficulty learning, "If I'm doing study, it's not difficult. You have to do your assignment. And if you don't, then you have difficulty"(L4), Cathy saw Sylvia's learning as a slow process. She noted that Sylvia was only beginning to understand why English grammar, correct pronunciation, and understanding of idioms and colloquialisms was so important in terms of how others perceived her. Both equated school with opportunity and education as essential in reaching Sylvia's long term goal, but they had different ideas about how realistic that goal was.

Cathy and Sylvia had been meeting for seven months. Although both would concur that their relationship was a good one and many of their comments indicated

respect (from the learner's perspective) and admiration (from the tutor's), other comments and inflections in tone qualified that goodness. Two issues on which they differed appeared most evident: the impact of "yelling," a term both used to describe Cathy's occasional behaviors, and the difference in their perception of Sylvia's goals and how to achieve them. Both tutor and learner mentioned the yelling; in Cathy's case it was an admission of a characteristic that accompanied an attitude of high expectations and working towards a goal. As for goals, Sylvia believed that by persisting she would realize her goals, regardless of the skepticism of others. Cathy, on the other hand, felt a number of factors rendered the long term goals difficult to reach.

Overall, however, Cathy and Sylvia appeared to have rapport. They both talked about laughing together and both gave examples of how they look out for each other. For instance, Sylvia talked about how Cathy must be tired after working all day and therefore they would meet for two rather than three hours (although that could be transference of her own fatigue). In addition, Cathy recognized that at times she adapts to the bursting schedule of Sylvia's life, "playing into her hands" (T7) when arranging meeting places and times in order to accommodate the various demands and pressures Sylvia faces.

Cathy's admiration of Sylvia came through in the adjectives she used to describe her. Cathy perceived her to be a nice combination of happy-go-lucky, energetic, and ambitious, smart and sparky, and interested in a lot of things (T13 & 16). Cathy stated respect and admiration for Sylvia; her eyes twinkled when she spoke of her. Cathy's further depiction of the learner and her circumstances underlined this positive view: Sylvia is incredible, energetic, hardworking ("She has her own business in this tiny little

space in a little shop that would drive me to drink and works ten hours a day" T26), and amazing. Cathy most liked Sylvia's energy and hopefulness.

By consciously attempting to create a "relaxed, trusting, but *serious* environment" (T8), Cathy was likely responding to Sylvia's insatiable learning needs and ambition. Cathy used words like "contract" and "deliverable result" to underline the seriousness of the arrangement. Furthermore, she said she relied heavily on the learner for suggestions to direct the learning and saw herself as important in creating an environment in which the learner can accomplish this (T10). Cathy considered confidence when deciding what materials to use in a session; she was cognizant of the need to balance ease of task with learner frustration (T15). She also reported monitoring learner level of difficulty and fatigue or responsiveness. Moreover, she responded to requests, for example focusing on certain vocabulary words Sylvia had listed (T17).

That Sylvia respected Cathy was clear. She described her tutor as being well trained with an expert knowledge of the English language, better in fact than that of her university course instructor (L15, 18 & 24). However, throughout the interview with Sylvia, a tension existed between her description of an ideal tutor, her own tutor, and her interpretation of their dynamic. For example, she explained that in addition to experience working with international students (L8), a tutor should be calm and should not yell. The need to be calm and not yell were repeatedly mentioned in the interview. She indicated that a tutor should be patient and caring, reaching out to the learner. Later in the interview in the same moment that she described Cathy as calm, she explained how Cathy sometimes lost patience with her when Sylvia interrupted, did not listen, or did not use what she had been taught. Although as an ideal she expressly stated that a tutor should

not yell, she excused this behavior in Cathy, attributing it to Cathy's nature. While Sylvia described characteristics as being alterable in herself, giving the example of the morals her parents taught her; she excused Cathy. Rather than express disappointment or judge Cathy's behavior, she responded to Cathy based on the moral not to hurt anyone's feelings.

Cathy was quite aware that she yelled and assumed that Sylvia knew this was not meant as a personal affront but rather an adherence to standards and a way of exhorting her to concentrate and excel. She also stated that the tutoring experience has changed her by increasing her patience. Cathy appeared somewhat disappointed in two aspects of the learner's behavior: Sylvia's lack of review and her propensity to interrupt. Sylvia's eager responses indicated to Cathy that Sylvia was not listening or paying attention but rather trying to please by immediately (prematurely) supplying an appropriate response. But she also wondered whether Sylvia wanted her to be as demanding as she was regarding standards (T11). Interestingly, in her interview, Sylvia reported that while Cathy was a good listener, Sylvia was not and tended to interrupt her tutor, which she knew frustrated Cathy.

Both Sylvia and Cathy felt that the role of the relationship in tutoring was important. Sylvia expressed that a level of mutual comfort was important, and for the most part, she appeared to have this with her tutor despite spending little time chatting. Reportedly all their conversation was limited to discussing what they read. However, Sylvia felt that she was learning and saw evidence of this through praise she received from the tutor (L 22 & 23). Cathy spoke of a need to develop a trusting relationship (T7) in order to be able to recognize opportunities in the sessions, to explore goals and

"broaden consciousness." Furthermore, she pegged the relationship as being the critical factor in whether or not a tutoring match works: "I mean, the ones that work and the ones that don't work I would say the single biggest difference is the nature of that relationship. Because there are ambition differences and there are skill differences, but if the person is really ready to learn and you and that person get along, I think you're half way there" (T28). Cathy emphasized that the tutor-learner match was important with a "give and take and a mutual respect and mutual energy and mutual [motivation] to make it work well" (T28). She noted that the tutoring relationship affected learner progress and gave the example of witnessing a learner "close right up" when she expressed her unhappiness with the learner.

Cathy was not sure how to assess her own effectiveness as a tutor nor the learner's progress. Regarding her own effectiveness, Cathy noted that learners have diverse reasons for engaging in tutorials, some of which appear to have little to do with literacy (T22), so it is difficult to measure success beyond whether or not the learner continues showing up. Assessing the learner's progress was equally challenging; she indicated that she tried to keep track of progress in every lesson but in the end, "I take the fact that they show up and the fact that they call and the fact that they're friendly and all that stuff as an indication that they're okay to proceed from where we were" (T22). Sylvia, on the other hand, felt she was improving as illustrated both in her reports of Cathy's praise and encouragement and in her self assessment in which she felt she was speaking better, feeling more confident, and making fewer mistakes (L18, 19, 23).

Pair 6 - Chad and Rae

Chad and Rae were in a unique tutoring relationship for this program in three ways. First, Chad was somewhat younger than most of the learners served by this program. Second, the tutoring could be augmented by resources available through Rae's job. Third, Chad's diagnosed learning disabilities could be addressed by Rae's expertise through her Masters' research and professional experience in a way that might not happen if he had been matched with a volunteer lacking that background.

Chad sought tutoring assistance because he was frustrated with the lack of reading instruction at his high school. As an adult, he was in a high school program that allowed students to work part time and attend classes part time. At his father's urging, Chad questioned the resource teacher about his options for reading assistance. The teacher recommended that he contact the program, which he did. It was outside of the program's funding guidelines to work with learners enrolled in high school, but Rae, associated with the program in a capacity other than volunteer tutoring, saw working with Chad as a great opportunity to help take down barriers for one person facing learning disabilities, something Rae suspected Chad had but which had not been recently diagnosed. Rae's goals for Chad included most importantly raising his self esteem, and then developing strategies to function in the community, to read, and to write.

Rae and Chad appeared to have a good relationship and comments from both indicated that rapport had been established between them. In addition, both perceived that the dynamic was good (L18; T14). At the time of the interview, they had been meeting for eight months. According to Chad when giving advice to an incoming tutor, "being funny can help a scared kid." Clarifying this, Chad explained that this meant "chill,

relax." According to Chad, (L16 & 17), they chatted, and that talk contributed to the relaxed environment (L8-9; T8). When Rae and Chad described the learning environment, they both used the word relaxed; Chad noted it was comfortable and Rae added private. She shared that she joked around with Chad and he trusts her, but that it has taken a while to develop that trust. According to both their descriptions, their relationship did not seem restricted to a "professional" relationship within tutor-learner roles. Rae said: "He's kind of like...my other kid" (T16). Chad observed: "Tutor's not really the word I see, but more like a friend. Sort of like an aunt type thing, you know...I don't really find her a teacher type. 'Cause, she teaches me, but it seems like she cares a little bit more than the teaching type" (L17, also L9).

Chad's high regard for Rae as a tutor matched his description of important characteristics in a tutor. First he stated that a tutor needs to know how to read and then stressed the importance of a tutor as a friend, caring, relaxed, able to have fun and to be a good listener. Likewise, characteristics Rae found important in a learner, such as motivation and the ability to self-correct, were at least partially evident in her depiction of Chad. She saw him as highly motivated and confident with high expectations for himself (T19). She provided the example of how when they were reading *The Hobbit*, Chad bought an audiotape of the book--his only purchase on his school trip (T4). To Rae, this showed initiative. She also saw Chad as positive, kind, and honest. She most valued his motivation and honesty.

Rae talked about the importance of the tutoring relationship to tutoring. A relationship of trust takes the barriers out of the learning experience (T6) and creates in the learner a willingness to learn and feel comfortable about making mistakes. The

learners' progress, she stated, hinges on the relationship; they may talk all session, but this is important because the talk may change a thinking pattern or broaden the learner's perspective. For example, they might discuss world issues, something Rae indicated in which Chad was interested. The talk also contributes to the development of trust. Interestingly, Chad was hesitant to admit that they actually chatted in a session and maintained that they simply read the whole time. When I explained that in my tutoring sessions, I found that some days it was only too easy to chat away half a session, and that it seemed necessary before learning could happen, Chad confirmed that they did indeed talk!

Notably, though, Rae stressed both instructional and relational characteristics when discussing characteristics important in a tutor. First, a tutor should not assume that providing appropriate material would teach learners to read--too many teachers have already done that and failed. Rather, material should be matched to learner interest, purpose, and reading level. Also, tutors should exert patience, eliminate learner negative self-talk, and build learner self esteem.

Rae's reported activities appeared consistent with being learner centered in the sense of enabling Chad to be independent. Through diagnostic teaching, she described looking for ways to help him achieve a level of reading and writing that matched his intellectual ability. She expressed a wish for him to be able to self-correct (T14) and develop confidence in his abilities to find supports. She noted that they did not have a formal learning plan, but both were aware of Chad's goals and she worked towards achieving them by first developing his confidence. Her reported activities and relational

behaviors appeared to fit her approach towards education that included having fun and meeting individual needs.

Chad's perception of his role in the learning varied. He expressed the thought that Rae created the learning plan, but that he had a say in the types of activities they engaged in and in their meeting times. He felt the reading activities they engaged in were appropriate. However, he had conflicting views on one computer program that he did as part of his phonological awareness training. On the one hand he said it was for kids and explained, "I'm not really into it because it's like pictures and shit like that. When I'm supposed to do it, I'll do it, but other than that..." (L5). On the other hand, he explained that the program was likely helping him to "blend [his] words or something like that" (L12), and he wished they could use other words besides "car, duck, glass" but he put up with it. It seemed that his willingness to comply even with activities that he disliked had to do with his trust in Rae's ability to choose tasks that would develop his reading skills.

Chad did not feel he had a way of assessing his own progress. He found it difficult to explain what made him attend tutorial sessions despite a very busy work and school schedule. Yet, his description of himself as a learner and what he liked best about his tutor came close to expressing his thoughts about the effectiveness of the tutorial. He saw himself as a good learner, which he based primarily on his interest and persistence (L15), which could be termed motivation. He recounted how Rae had noted his progress:

> She says I have [progressed] because when we do read, and uh, when I first started, I did a page in like 15 minutes. Now, I did like 5 pages in 15 minutes. The next time it was we did like three chapters and I said, "Holy shit, are you sure I did this? It's like, I'm just flippin' the pages." So I could see, obvious I could see

> it, but in my head it doesn't click. Like, I still can't, I go home later at night; I pick up a book I want to read; I still can't do it by myself. What the f--k, is this word right?

Yet he persisted, in part out of a desire to prove others wrong and to develop a sense of self respect: "Getting put down too much…So don't push me, you know. Be cool. Don't be an enemy against everybody 'cause then you're just gonna hate yourself. Or, not hate yourself, but then you're just gonna go over the edge and that's it. Just gotta control it" (L11). As for the role of his tutor in the persistence, Chad was clear in how important the relationship was:

> Ya, it's not just one thing she does is great. It's like, the way she is. She's helping me to learn how to read, and it's the way she's doing it. Learning what I want to read, or when someone's tryin' to teach me to read, I don't want to do it at all. But when I go there, I actually want to drive there and then read, and then "Okay, we did it, see you next week." I never did that with any other reading teacher before. (L18)

In contrast to earlier teachers who, he felt, did not give him enough support and instruction, Chad had described how Rae was able to address his learning needs.

Rae was able to note Chad's progress. She described his success as in the area of self concept, "his whole attitude towards himself and how he approaches the world, or how he views himself" (T13) and suggested that along with this increased confidence, improved reading skills would follow. "But his frustration level at least is lower; he's more accepting. And he understands better that it's okay to have a learning disability because he's smart." She reported assessing him through his interaction with text in terms

of comprehension, level of confusion, ability to self-correct, and his decreasing reliance on her.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate learner and tutor perceptions of the tutoring dynamic. It was my hypothesis that learners who choose one-to-one tutoring programs have learning difficulties that surpass the life experience and accrued literacy skill they have as adults. I proposed that a certain level of skill and confidence is necessary for these learners to gain from group learning situations. The literature review suggested that in order for one-to-one instruction to be effective, creating a safe, reciprocal relationship that offered opportunities for diagnostic teaching, scaffolded instruction, and risk-taking was required. I wondered if volunteer tutors were able to meet the magnitude of this challenge. I hoped that investigating the existing tutoring relationships in a program that attracted adult learners with multiple barriers to learning and work would help to explore these issues.

From this study it is glaringly apparent that the tutoring relationship is important in the learning that takes place in one-to-one sessions with adult learners and their tutors. The learners in this study did appear to have difficulties that necessitated a one-to-one learning situation, and even in the one instance where this was not as obviously the case, the learner had a clear desire for one-to-one interaction. Moreover, all learners at some point in the interview indicated low self confidence in some area of literacy, and many mentioned self-esteem issues related to low literacy skills. In the one-to-one tutoring that occurred in this program, learners and tutors developed a relationship that encouraged trust, risk-taking, and learning. Although not all tutors would have been aware of or used the terms diagnostic teaching or scaffolding, many talked about behaviors that indicated

they did both to some degree. Furthermore, the volunteer tutors that were interviewed demonstrated their ability to meet the challenges of balancing the many components of an effective tutoring match. Not only did they have higher levels of education than I had earlier anticipated, their reasons for tutoring were less egotistic and more altruistic or generous than I had suspected would be the case. The tutors either volunteered for the program because of a desire to contribute to their communities or society, or more specifically because they keenly wanted others to share their joy of reading, opportunities in life as a result of literacy, or sense of optimism to overcome barriers that came from their own experiences of frustration as learners.

Elements of the Tutoring Relationship that Contribute to Success

This study sought to explore elements of the tutoring relationship, learner individual history, tutor background and training, instructional and learning behaviors, curriculum and tutoring dynamic that contributed to success. The results reported in Chapter 4 focuses on these areas as they inform the tutoring relationship. In this chapter, the interaction between elements within the relationship is further explored to ponder the contribution of each element to learning. Learning is seen not only in terms of testable literacy skills, but the broader learning that contextualizes these skills. Learning occurred on the part of both members of the pair. For tutors, the transformation had to do with perceptions of how literacy affects members of society in terms of practicalities and identity. Learning also related to self: tutors were better able to understand their own and others' learning processes and were able to identify characteristics and behaviors that were developing or consciously used in the tutoring process (such as patience, setting boundaries, extending acceptance, experiencing humility, also feeling at a loss in terms of

wondering whether or not they were doing the right thing). For learners, aside from testable literacy skills, learning included broadening world views through discussion, expanding vocabulary, and building knowledge structures. The transformation included a changing sense of self that reflected more confidence and sense of control.

Learner Individual History and One-to-One Tutorial

In examining the tutoring relationships in this study, it became apparent that one-to-one was important to learners based on their learning histories and needs. Most learners stated a desire for one-to-one learning. Tony sought one-to-one tutorial to better accommodate his hearing difficulties and to address his distrust of tutors found in group settings that he had developed from bad experiences (p.62). Stacy had similar negative experiences in group settings and was tired of feeling degraded (p.67). Likewise, Sam, having had only frustration in a group tutoring situation, returned to one-to-one for what he perceived would be more effective help (p.71). His expectation of one-to-one tutoring was a climate of respect and a good relationship, both which he identified as fundamental to learning (p.72). For Sylvia, the individual attention was predicted to meet needs not fulfilled in group programs and classroom contexts in which she was already quite active (p.76).

Chad's choice of this literacy program also arose from a frustration with his classroom experience but was not overtly connected to the one-to-one aspect of the tutoring. Nonetheless, from his interview it was apparent that his history of difficulty and frustration included a sense of not having his needs properly acknowledged or addressed, and from that perspective, he fit Keefe and Meyer's (1994) description of the kind of learner requiring specialized assistance. In his comments, Darren, although he did not

express a preference for one-to-one learning, also displayed many of the characteristics of learners who seek individual attention. He had had difficulties with school as a child and linked subsequent life problems to lack of literacy. He was clear about this link and made generalizations to others in a similar situation who might as a result of lack of literacy "experience depression, addictions, suicidal thoughts, and problems with money" (L7). He knew that being able to change this scenario required more than just skills and content learning.

One-to-one seems not only justifiable but necessary for these learners. The unique tutoring dynamic that develops in one-to-one settings appears to provide an inextricable part of the positive learning experience. Tutors who exhibit patience, listening ability, caring, acceptance, humor, expert teaching, and who make the learner feel valued create an environment in which trust can be established. Importantly, most tutors in this study started their tutoring relationships with an attitude of openness, allowed it to unfold with patience, and in doing so could appreciate the affective components preventing learner access to learning (shame, anxiety, fear of further failure, frustration). On the learners' part, a willingness to learn and persistence appeared to be key. Developing trust in the tutoring relationship allowed learners to move ahead slowly to meet their learning goals.

Tutor and Learner Qualities

Other studies have added to an understanding of desirable tutor characteristics that contribute to effective tutoring. In addition to desirable tutor characteristics, this study looked also at the learners' contribution to the tutoring relationship and its potential impact on learning. As summarized in chapter two, effective tutors are caring and skilled (Demetrion, 1999; Hambly, 1998). For example, effective tutors are able to listen,

diagnose learning needs, match instruction to learning style, offer appropriate tasks and scaffold instruction in a climate conducive to risk taking (Palmer, et al., 1999; Talarr, 1995). They are vivacious and engaging (Demetrion, 1999) and reflect on their own practice, seeking to better understand learners' lives (Talarr; Ziegahn & Hinchman, 1999).

The interviewed learners uniformly identified their tutors as having expertise, something the learners seemed to expect of their tutors. More at stake was the whether or not a connection would develop between tutor and learner. The qualities specifically named by the learners as generally important in tutors included being patient (across the board), caring, relaxed, able to have fun, and being good listeners. In addition, throughout their interviews, learners in this study described attitudes they saw effective tutors as exhibiting: commitment to the learner, belief in the learner, respect for the learner as an equal, and a desire to help the learner. Moreover, behaviors learners generally valued in tutors included offering compliments, setting goals for the learner, and pushing at the right times. Notably, the data in this study revealed that learners identified many of the same qualities, attitudes, and behaviors in their own tutors, describing them as: patient, nice, kind, caring, outgoing, professional/polite, hard working, showing respect for the other as an equal, having a desire to help the learner, and being a good listener.

Qualities tutors identified in themselves as contributing to their worth as tutors matched many of those listed by the learners. Again, patience was the commonly identified trait. Following that, attributes and behaviors that contribute to two-way communication were delineated: life experience, listening skills, sense of sympathy and optimism, insightfulness, the ability to identify multiple strategies, teaching ability,

building self esteem, reinforcing positive behavior, and reading learner cues. The findings on attributes of a good tutor as described in this study support components of an effective tutoring scenario found in the literature (see p. 42): "mutual respect, emotional and social relationships, enhanced self esteem, and skilled instructors who are caring, vivacious, engaging and good at listening." As already noted, although helpful in its exploration of tutor qualities, the reviewed literature revealed a lack of studies describing learners' input into the tutoring dynamic.

In addition to tutor attributes, learners and tutors in this study identified learner qualities that contributed to the tutoring dynamic. Notably, the interviewed learners saw themselves as offering a willingness to learn or a love of learning. They expressed a belief in their ability to listen, share their knowledge, and persist.

Again, these same attributes were noted by tutors as present in their learners. Valued learner characteristics included openness and honesty, friendliness, interest, motivation, persistence, energy, hopefulness, and ambition. Clearly, these characteristics relate to committing to the learning process, communicating openly, and demonstrating tenacity. It seems that for learners to feel good about their contribution to the tutoring process, these traits are important. At the same time, the tutors appeared to value an expression of motivation on the learner's part such as interest, engagement, and persistence. These characteristics seemed to fuel tutors' commitment to the relationship or learning process.

Learner self concept contributed directly to the development of the tutoring dynamic. All learners expressed a need to become better readers, writers, or speakers, and all linked improved literacy to better jobs or employment opportunities. Some further

connected improved literacy to a sense of belonging in society. Some learners had internalized feelings of shame related to their first school experiences and the accumulated negative life experiences that arose directly from them. Fingaret and Drennon (1997) talk about this in their analysis of adult literacy programs in New York:

> Socially constructed shame can become internalized until it becomes part of one's vision of self. When shame becomes internalized, negative self-esteem is generalized beyond its connection to specific images, such as literacy abilities. The result is a painful way of being in the world. (p. 70)

Similar deeply rooted apprehension in learners was noted in studies by Bingman and Eber (2000) and Millar (1999) studies. In Millar's study, the group dynamic, the feeling of shared experiences among peers normalizing the struggles of adult learners, and the unique encouragement peers could offer each other served to address the old feelings of shame or fear. Likewise, in this study, the relationship between tutor and learner helped to slowly transform learner self image.

Learner self image and the tutor's response, relational behaviors such as paying attention to frustration and making sure to point out strengths, contributed to the relative effectiveness of the tutorial relationship. For all, the motivation to learn was strong, but the starting point in terms of self concept was one of vulnerability due to histories of difficulty and ridicule. Thus building trust and respect was a necessity and essential in order for further learning to take place.

Darren wanted to change. On the one hand he had learned to live with his low level of literacy; on the other, he desired a life in which he would not feel dumb not being able to read ordinary things others took for granted. His identity was linked to his low literacy

level as well as how he perceived others' opinions of him and his opportunities in the workforce (p.57).

Tony's literacy level was also linked to self concept. His words showed resistance to others' judgment of him as dumb due to his inability to read. He expressed a sense of pride in himself in his wide range of work-related skills at the same time as he indicated the need for reading/writing skills in order to make money (p.62).

With Stacy, the connection between her low literacy and others' low opinions of her was clear. She repeatedly indicated that she had been babied, both in her childhood schooling and as an adult (p.67). However, she appeared positive in her self image as a learner and expressed a joy for learning in her present program. She seemed to see her learning problems as relating more to others' approaches to her than as an inherent difficulty.

Sam could also indicate strengths in himself as a learner. He similarly perceived that teachers had found him dumb. He did not see the intended benefits of their decisions to have him change schools repeatedly, but he found a new school--the street--and taught himself to read there (p.71). Clearly he experienced himself as resourceful, but equally clearly, his negative past experiences resulted in a vulnerability that showed itself in "humility and gratefulness" for tutoring (p.72).

Chad, like Tony, saw himself as capable and able to learn but perceived himself as being able to find work easily. As with other learners, he had experienced frustration with the instruction he received in school and related his poor ability to read to others' low opinions of him (p.82). His desire to prove others wrong and his wish to enter a specific career path at a vocational college fuelled a strong motivation to learn.

Sylvia was another learner who saw herself as a good learner (p. 76) and who linked literacy learning to success in her vocational goal. In her case, her self perception as affected by her literacy levels had more to do with her spoken English. Although Darren and Stacy also experienced lack of confidence when conversing with what they felt were more literate people, for Sylvia, the second language related issues such as pronunciation and use of idioms had more visible potential for stigmatization. Despite the similarities to other learners, Sylvia had a higher education level, owned a business, and saw failure as part of success. These differences must have had an impact on how she experienced the tutorial sessions.

Putting the above impressions together it seems evident that although tutoring expertise is assumed as important in the tutoring dynamic, it appears that the ability to create a respectful and caring connection with the learner is equally important due to the vulnerability connected to learning. Although these learners' identities were not completely defined by a generalized lack of self esteem, their difficulties with literacy pervaded their everyday lives and affected their way of being in the world. Career choices, participation in their children's literacy practices, and interaction with others were all riddled with barriers for the learners.

Program Staff

This study found that the program staff also contributed to the learner's sense of being respected and accepted. Although questions in the learner interview protocol did not solicit information about the program, learners thought highly of the program, noted its reputation in the community, and expressed appreciation for the warmth of the staff. A number of students found it easy to visit with staff. In her description of herself as an

extension of the acceptance demonstrated by program staff, the tutor, Lynne, illustrated the positive feeling generated. She also acknowledged the importance of the program's role in matching tutors and learners (p.74).

Within the context of the larger program, the tutors consciously and subconsciously created safety and trust in their relationships. This in turn established an environment for risk-taking and enjoyment rather than producing defensiveness, frustration, or the urge to giving up entirely. As Darren said, "A lot of people I don't feel very comfortable with, but that's one thing about me, you know, if I can't do it, it's not happening, then you're going to put a wall and you're not going to get down that wall" (L1,6). He identified the relationship as essential to learning from initiating motivation to sustaining it in a way that puts the learner in control. Listening, being able to talk with the learner, helping the learner figure out what s/he needs to do, and making the learner feel like a person, for Darren, equals a good tutor (L23,24).

Tutoring Dynamic

Four overlapping areas became apparent as strongly affecting the tutoring dynamic. Talk, an attitude of equal respect or acceptance, a shared purpose/philosophy, and affect plus strategies influenced the nature of the relationship. Talk contributed to the dynamic by establishing an environment of safe learning, connecting with each other, providing a means to back off of difficult or frustrating learning engagement, deepening knowledge structures, and coordinating or clarifying visions. Respect was established initially with acceptance, patience, and shared vision, then grew through behaviors such as talk, and matching strategies to learner need.

Talk

In a one-to-one tutoring situation, the kind of talk that happens is qualitatively different from that in a group setting. A responsiveness to subtler cues and to immediate needs develops a connection less possible in a group. Because the learners who enter one-to-one tutoring are often more vulnerable than those who have experienced more frequent successes (whether academic or the resulting spill-offs), this individualized relationship-building in the moment becomes critical. Hayes (1996) (p.35 lit review) calls this *rapport* and identifies it as pivotal in tutor understanding of learner goals as well as those factors from learners' life experiences that obstruct learning. In addition, the kind of talk indicated by participants in this study exemplified the kind of learning that can happen in active exchanges as indicated by Talarr (1995). Through talk, learners shifted from subordinate to equal position in the exchange of knowledge that is possible in a discussion versus a transmission approach to instruction. The immediacy of the exchanges and the ensuing respect contribute to the emotional and social ties that developed between tutors and learners that in the literature review were identified as developing in group tutoring scenarios (Millar & So, 1998).

For Darren and Anne, talk consisted of informal chatting but also mutual feedback including clarifying questions. In all forms, their talk added to their mutual respect (p.61). Likewise, talk for Tony and Elinor was used for conversation, such as Tony sharing stories, and task related feedback. In addition, they used talk to test and create boundaries appropriate to social situations, adding to the sense of safety they created (p.64). With talk came laughter. Talk for Sam and Lynne related directly to the learning tasks and associated feedback (p.75); informal conversations were short and limited to the

beginning of the session, a conscious choice on Lynne's part, specific to their relationship. In fact, Lynne pointed out that Sam appeared to have more of a personal relationship with one of the program staff than with her. Yet the lack of informal chatting did not appear to impact on their relationship, whereas I thought it might have for Sylvia and Cathy. In both cases tutors seemed to be responding to the learners' need to have a business-like get-something-done learning approach.

Stacy and Laura's shared conversations on a variety of topics stimulated the interest both had in the tutoring sessions thus developing rapport (p.67, 69). The same was true for Chad and Rae who discussed world issues and other topics of interest. This talk both helped to develop trust and contributed to building knowledge or broadening perspectives (p.83). Both valued the talk, but Rae stated its importance to the learning process, whereas Chad seemed to think because chatting was not formally linked to lessons that it was not part of learning and therefore he should not admit to chatting with his tutor. Thus, though Chad saw chatting as contributing to his friendship with Rae, he did not overtly connect this to the resulting learning. Rae also used talk to offer feedback and challenge Chad's negative self talk. Through talk, the tutor Laura also provided learner Stacy with feedback on her learning, and Stacy gave Laura input on learning topics (p.69). In this dyad, it was the tutor who questioned the learning value of informal conversation. At times, Laura felt Stacy's chatting with other program staff or with her might be an indication of Stacy's disinterest in learning tasks at hand (p.67, 68). In addition, Laura wished Stacy would contribute more of her feelings to the conversation. It seemed she thought this might deepen Stacy's level of engagement. In this case,

Stacy's level of talk seemed to be construed by Laura as a lack of investment in the learning task.

Sylvia and Cathy used talk for asking questions, both soliciting responses and for clarification; offering input to direct learning (p.79); broadening consciousness (p.81); and discussing issues arising from the reading material. These opportunities promoted a sense of equality; for example, Sylvia could share with Cathy her expertise in matters of nutrition and body products. Informal chatting, however, was rarely part of a tutorial session, a reflection perhaps of both the serious attitude Cathy took towards their shared time and expectations for making progress and of Sylvia's busy lifestyle which underscored the need to use the available time wisely. In addition, it is possible that Sylvia's ambitious career goal necessitated a more driven approach, as the education involved could potentially take years.

Underlying the talk and permitting the learning to take place was the sense of mutual respect that characterized all the relationships in the study. Two of the learners and tutors viewed themselves as in something beyond a professional relationship. For example, Elinor expressly indicated that Tony was her student *and* friend (p.65). Rae saw Chad as one of her children and Chad described Rae as a friend or an aunt (p.83). A deeper connection such as these would suggest that the learning environment would subsequently be different. When a friendship exists, it is reasonable to assume that the level of accountability, patience, willingness to work out differences, and motivation to persist will rise.

The other four pairs did not describe their relationships as going beyond professional, but all pairs acknowledged the importance of the tutoring relationship. Both

Darren and Anne emphasized the role of caring within the tutoring relationship as being pivotal to Darren moving ahead in his learning (p.58). The learner Stacy indicated that her good tutoring relationship with her tutor Laura made her enjoy tutorial sessions (p.67). Laura felt that their developing relationship had already had a positive impact on Stacy's growth both in terms of literacy skills and in those behaviors Laura expressed as important such as being punctual (p.68). Lynne and Sam as well as Cathy and Sylvia expressed the importance of the relationship in establishing the trust and safety essential to learning (p.73, 79). Both Cathy (tutor) and Sam (learner) emphasized its centrality to the success of learning. Cathy's statements illustrate the connection: "I mean, the ones that work and the ones that don't work I would say the single biggest difference is the nature of that relationship" (p. 81). She expands on the nature of the match as having a "give and take and a mutual respect and mutual energy and mutual [motivation] to make it work well" (p.81).

Equal Respect & Learner Perceived Sense of Control

One way that the dynamics of the relationship can be empowering is through a perceived sense of control on the part of the learner. Millar (1999) explored the importance perceived control (citing experts such as Bandura, 1977, Taylor, 1990, and Perry, 1991) in the context of attribution theory, whereby learners can then link academic success with their efforts, seeing themselves as agents of change rather than assigning success or failure to external sources. She identified gaining control as happening in the course of defining self in a departure from relying on others' definitions. In addition, she suggested that through their behaviors and learning strategies instruction, instructors could help learners boost control of their learning.

Bingman and Ebert (2000) in their longitudinal study of learning outcomes for ten adults described a similar concept in discussing self efficacy: "Self-efficacy is commonly defined as people's belief in their ability to achieve and to have control over their actions" (p.95). They further cited Mager (1992) as noting five behavioral areas affected by self efficacy: "choice behavior, motivation, perseverance, facilitative thought patterns and decreased vulnerability to stress and depression" (p. 96). In a learning context, choosing activities that will result in success, initiating and persisting in new ventures, using what sounds like positive self talk to propel forward movement in potentially tricky spots in learning, and staying in the learning program despite ongoing challenges, are examples of the five areas.

A sense of perceived control for learners in this study appeared to arise out of the feeling of being respected and having a contributing role in the tutoring dynamic. Darren (p. 59) identified the first meeting with his tutor as being critical. Instead of setting the agenda, his tutor asked him what he wanted out of the tutoring and where he wanted to start.

> You know, I think that's what I needed. I needed someone to help me [figure out what I] wanted instead of what they want from me. And she doesn't expect me to do things unless I can--I feel comfortable with doing it, and I think that's what makes Anne such a good person as a tutor. (L6)

The tutor was cognizant of the power of control and consciously worked in the tutorial sessions to shift from her directing the process to increasingly taking cues from the learner (p.60). Despite the tutor Laura's sense of Stacy's reliance on her for direction

both in choosing learning activities and in correcting errors, Stacy's comments reflected her feeling of being in control of the direction of a tutorial session (p.70).

Related to learner perceived sense of control is the sense of respect from or equal worth to their tutors that learners feel, a sense that is supported by tutors' comments about their learners. Learner comments contrasted the behaviors of tutors with the negative behaviors of teachers in school or instructors/tutors in other adult literacy environments. For example, Stacy derided the "baby stuff" she was confronted with both as a child and an adult. Sam repeatedly expressed appreciation for his tutor, the patience she had for him, and the way they made joint decisions. Chad dismissed previous teachers' efforts at remediating his reading and made the disparity between the teaching role/behaviors obvious when describing Rae as more like an aunt or a friend who was helping him to learn. Tony pointed out that his tutor was exceptionally gracious and tolerant with his behavior and responsive to his learning needs. Even in the relationship between Cathy and Sylvia in which the occasional "yelling" might have negatively impacted learning, it was clear that Sylvia felt respected by her tutor Cathy. This was evident in many ways such as Cathy matching learning activities with Sylvia's stated need, providing helpful and trustworthy feedback, being accommodating in arranging meeting times, and sharing articles related to Sylvia's interests. In all cases, the sense of being respected appears to be an important base on which to place all the other learning variables.

Because the yelling was one of the few instances of possible discord in the tutoring relationships, I revisited both transcripts repeatedly to try to determine whether or not the yelling impeded learner progress or damaged the positive tutoring dynamic thought to be

essential to learning. Although I could not rule out the possible negative impacts of this behavior, I concluded that Sylvia's responses indicated her way of understanding the behavior and revealed a strong sense of responsibility for her learning that ultimately did not depend on affective behaviors. By the end of the interview (p. 80), Sylvia was ready to state that her tutor sometimes screamed, but by now she had also given multiple examples of how the tutor gave her exactly what she needed in terms of instruction, verbal feedback, written correction, and overall plan. She ended up putting tutor yelling into perspective by establishing her control of the situation. She explained that regardless of tutor mannerisms, the drive, the direction should come from the learner:

> …some teacher[s] are a little bit strict that way because if you're too soft, the student won't learn. Is says no, if you mess up, don't take that one because you are learning, you have to be strong yourself to learn. You have to be strict yourself. Even the teacher is calm, you have to be yourself, you say, 'Oh she is so easy, I won't even study this one.' No, you have to be strict with yourself to learn. That way you learn more. (L18)

So, although Sylvia strongly disapproved of impatience and yelling on the part of the tutor or teacher elsewhere in the interview, she came to terms with it in her own relationship; there were plentiful positive factors in the relationship to make Sylvia want to persist and learn within the tutoring dynamic.

Equal respect seems intrinsic to a sense of reciprocal trust that is developed between learner and tutor. Where there are chinks in respect, there are possible repercussions for the continued effectiveness of the tutoring relationship. Part of establishing respect from both learner and tutor perspectives included negotiating

curriculum and meeting times. For most pairs, the harmonious negotiations added to the developing rapport, but for Laura establishing meeting routines became a problem. Her perception seemed to indicate a lack of learner commitment or seriousness conveyed by the learner's tardiness or last minute cancellations. Similarly, Cathy wondered whether Sylvia did her homework and speculated that not doing the homework indicated a decreased level of commitment to the learning process as initiated in the tutorial session. At the same time, the basic and overarching attitude of respect was clearly felt by learners and tutors and perhaps explains the relative success of even those learners in relationships in which some doubt/questions lay. For example, Laura expressed delight in being referred to as 'teacher' by Stacy, and Cathy was confident that Sylvia valued her academic ability. On the learner's part, Stacy felt she contributed to the tutorial and did not engage in demeaning tasks and Sylvia was confident her expressed learning goals were being met by her tutor.

Philosophy/Shared Expectations

The more compatible or synchronized learner and tutor understandings or expectations of the tutorial relationship were, the more likely a fruitful tutorial relationship would develop. The learners' need to be accepted as they were and to engage in learning activities based on their specific abilities appeared critical both to counteract previous negative experiences in other adult learning situations and to develop a sense of possibility. In most of the tutoring pairs interviewed, this synchronicity was evident. For one pair, expectations were less evenly matched or clear or harmonious; thus, the sense of getting ahead was less clear and the question of commitment arose.

Cathy saw her learner as motivated, ambitious, and committed. Furthermore, she viewed education as a tool for learners to achieve a different place in society and used "class" language to express this. Sylvia shared these views, both in described characteristics and in her faith in education to achieve her dreams. She very clearly articulated how education is important in preventing others from taking advantage of you (L9 when relating the story of the woman who bought her father's land when he thought he was only signing a temporary sort of thing in the same manner as pawn shop deals). When discussing her learning, Sylvia presented as clear an end goal as that perceived by Cathy. However, it appears that she might find satisfaction with meeting the goal behind it in a different way, that is, to help people in her home country. "Because I like to help poor people. Because lots of poor people, they can't afford to go to the doctor because they have no money and they're very poor. That's my dream" (L6). To that end, Cathy's hunch to work together with Sylvia to explore an achievable goal seemed possible and reasonable.

In the case of Cathy and Sylvia, a possible disjuncture occurred. However, when exploring tutor and learner perspectives, it appeared that Cathy was able to adjust her approach to tutorial in such a way as to accommodate Sylvia's goals, self perception, and behaviors and try to address what Cathy felt could be obstacles to success in a way that Sylvia might understand or accept. Potential problems Cathy identified as affecting Sylvia's progress related to Sylvia's inaccurate self perception (seeing no problems where they do exist), inattention (lack of engagement in the moment during tutorial), and Cathy's demanding approach and perceived lack of ESL expertise. Sylvia acknowledged that others had seen problems in her progress. She cited age as one (L9), but countered

that one is never too old to learn. Sylvia expressed that she knows English and stated her goals as "I want to improve more and I want to write like really no mistakes. I don't be afraid to talk or speak, that I'm telling you the right way, you know? I need some correction." It seemed those goals were being addressed in the tutorial. It did not seem that Cathy's demanding approach was a problem. It could be that more knowledge in ESL related issues would be helpful in this tutoring scenario. But the tutoring dynamic, despite lacking the kind of patience described by other tutoring pairs, did not seem to negatively impact on Sylvia's learning.

Affect Plus Strategies

Finally, an understanding on the part of the tutors that affect plus strategies were required to encourage learning appears pivotal in creating a healthy tutoring dynamic that yields results. As noted in the literature review (p.27), "Learning happens best in a safe setting in which a sense of community is created" (Farmer, 1995; Gunning, 1998, Loughlin, 1994; Ross-Gordon, 1998; Soifer, et al., 1990). The tutors and learners in this study, for the most part, illustrated the truth of that statement. Tutors further demonstrated best practices by striving to use authentic tasks (Gunning, 1998; Hiebert, 1994) to provide relevant learning opportunities for learners. Furthermore, tutors encouraged independence and the development of self efficacy through "scaffolding and creating safety for risk-taking behaviors" (p.27). The tutors in this study matched strategy use to learner need. For this paper, looking at the motive behind strategy use and its effect illuminated the hand-in-hand nature of using strategies and creating a positive affective environment. Strategies such as teaching for independence, scaffolding, taking care

regarding frustration level, and taking cues from the learner all contributed to the tutoring dynamic.

Anne took cues from Darren to monitor what he could handle, wherein his frustration lay. She pushed gently, but backed off at the right times. The ability to know timing came along with a better understanding of the learner and provided more opportunities for scaffolded instruction. Anne also listened when Darren was having difficulties in order to determine exactly where and how to step in. In addition, rather than dictating an agenda, she questioned Darren to discover what he wanted. Her teaching behaviors and choice of strategies reflected a learner centered approach that sought to discover his starting point and build from there. The behaviors reflected a commitment to providing safety for risk-taking actions, encouragement in frustrating moments, and patience in unraveling sticky spots. Anne modeled the kinds of behaviors and strategies that worked towards promoting learner independence in a respectful way.

Elinor was confident she had a broad range of strategies to draw from. This, along with her willingness to accept the learner where he was at, created a learning environment conducive to growth. She deliberately used alternatives to "no" when correcting Tony, recognizing that learners often "have all the risk-taking knocked out of them" (p.65) and made a conscious effort to point out areas where the incorrect response could be correct. In addition to learning strategies, she worked at social strategies. Both were communicated in respectful ways such as clear verbal messages without a derogatory tone, and shifting body language to indicate disapproval without shaming the learner. These behaviors were couched in a context of warmth, laughter, and acceptance which made it more likely that the suggested strategies were received well by the learner.

Lynne consciously created a safe environment for Sam. Using humor, patience, and building trust, Lynne addressed Sam's frustration and gave him opportunities to move through it. She took care in the kinds of questions she asked, respectful of his difficult background. In addition, Lynne provided scaffolding in her response to Sam's difficulties with decoding while reading, waiting for him to figure out a strategy and then offering cues to available strategies if he was stuck. She would then remind him of additional resources available when she was not there to prompt him. Furthermore, Lynne was flexible with her approach to the same problems, noting whether Sam's difficulty was due to fatigue or distraction, and knowing when frustration was too high. She then "either reassured him, changed focus, worked at the pattern, or ended the session" (p.75).

Laura employed a variety of strategies with Stacy. For Laura, an underlying goal was to make Stacy more independent. So on written assignments, while both valued the task, they emphasized the purpose somewhat differently. Stacy viewed correct writing as a product that belonged in the repertoire of any student; completing the task may have given her a feeling of dignity. Laura viewed correct writing as a skill that would enable Stacy to participate more fully in society, particularly in the area of writing letters of application for jobs or being able to express herself to others in writing. In her attempts to encourage independence, Laura used many scaffolding behaviors: offering feedback, prompting Stacy to note her own errors, helping her to organize thoughts, and reminding her of other resources. These strategic behaviors delivered in a respectful manner allowed Stacy to feel dignified by doing what she perceived were real learning tasks. Furthermore, Stacy clearly felt safe enough to contribute her thoughts and take risks. So, the impact of this type of teaching was positive, as shown both by Stacy's willingness to

engage in learning and by learning outcomes, despite tutor and learner possibly having differing agendas.

Cathy's strategies with Sylvia were most evident in her responses to Sylvia's learning needs, frustration levels, and fatigue. Cathy regularly evaluated which learning activities would best suit Sylvia's stated objectives, specifically with grammar and pronunciation. In choosing materials, she kept in mind impact on confidence as well as skill building. After emphasizing grammar and parsing sentences for a few months, she realized that changing tack by using magazine articles rather than workbook exercises might reach Sylvia in a different, possibly more encouraging way. In reflecting on her effectiveness, Cathy suggested that a greater knowledge of ESL issues in instruction might have benefited her. Perhaps other strategies would have helped Sylvia to internalize the grammar more effectively.

Similar to Cathy, Rae was sensitive to ease of material as related to the learner's processing issues and frustration level. She sought to raise Chad's self esteem, his strategies to function in the community and then to read and write. Eliminating negative self talk, increasing Chad's awareness of his ability to find supports in his learning, providing him with strategies and skills that would allow him to learn independently all fit into her plan, based on Chad's stated goals and his learning behaviors. Maintaining a relaxed attitude that welcomed humor and conversation as much as hard work, Rae's commitment to both affective and strategic components of tutoring must have contributed to the positive dynamic and ongoing learning in that tutorial relationship.

All tutors illustrated the use of strategies in a caring manner attuned to learner ability and frustration levels. Using varied strategies to meet the needs inherent in a given

context contributed to the feeling of safety experienced by learners and a tutoring dynamic conducive to learning. Learners benefited from the patience and in the caring of their tutors and in the manner in which strategies were chosen and used. Although strategy use thus contributed only positively to the tutoring dynamic, it did offer an area of self doubt for some tutors. The number of strategies known to tutors seemed to relate to how assured they were that they were able to meet learner needs effectively. Anne, Elinor and Rae expressed confidence in the strategies at their disposal, whereas Lynne, Laura, and Cathy, while not insecure with using the strategies they knew, all stated a desire to know more.

Success of Tutorial

The final research question examined common elements of learner individual history, tutor background and training, instructional and learning behaviors, curriculum, and the tutoring dynamic that commonly underlie success. After discussing the component parts, the synthesis is probably the most problematic because I did not explicitly ask any of the study participants to define success. The program's goals relate to meeting learner goals and usually involve the kind of education that is a precursor to and should help to form a foundation for learning in formal programs such as adult education classes or technical/vocational programs. Thus it is not surprising that success for these learners is not equal to a certificate of achievement or diploma but instead is tied to some form of literacy learning.

Maybe the difficulty with defining success contributes to the challenges associated with assessment, as the two should be related. In the context of the present study, success appears to be defined according to the terms on which a learner stops the program or at

various junctures along the way. Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, and Soler (2000) have equated success with attendance or persistence:

> Since adult students do not persist in programs where they feel unsuccessful, and we only included those students who were currently attending classes, it is fair to say that all of the participants in this study were experiencing academic success at the time we were involved with them. (p. 27)

That feeling of success was also described by learners in this study.

When talking to learners about how they evaluated whether or not a tutorial session was successful, a number stated that how they felt about the learning, their ability to read something, or some kind of physical evidence of progress, such as a written story indicated success. For Darren (L7) success accompanied a feeling of confidence and the ability to explain what he had learned. He experienced satisfaction seeing his completed work in the binder and recognized his progress when he could more easily understand and participate in conversations outside the literacy program. Tony did not describe success, but he thought he was one step ahead as a result of the tutoring. The fact that he knew how to read a little bit and that he had found a comfortable environment in which he could feel confident were important to him (L12). Stacy observed her progress in the areas of handwriting, reading, and confidence (L16). Sam gauged tutorial success through his feelings of happiness and satisfaction. He felt he had improved at his reading. His tutor Lynne described tutorial success similarly: a positive attitude at the end of a session and a sense of being "one step closer" indicated success (T21).

The fact that participants mentioned feelings as well as products or skills supports what Alkenbrack (2004) found in her examination of assessment practices:

> All [studies] found that, for learners' [sic] to make progress in their learning, the non-academic outcomes need to be in place. In her introduction, Battell lists examples of non-academic outcomes that include increased confidence, community involvement, reading to children, interest in studies and ability to reflect....Battell makes the important point that the time taken to nurture these outcomes accounts for the long period of time learners' [sic] often spend at the fundamental levels, a fact which is unrecognized and unappreciated by people who do not work in literacy. (paragraphs 9 and 10)

The Transforming Nature of Engaging in Tutorial

Both tutors and learners were asked about how the process of tutoring/learning has changed them. The tutoring relationship, built on the developing sense of mutual respect, resulted in personal growth. For tutors, the process seemed to be sensitizing. Working one-to-one with learners made them understand the difficulties faced by adults with high literacy needs and society's response to them. For example, Anne realized she had taken her literacy skills for granted and now had a heightened awareness of the problems these adults faced (p.61). Elinor likewise became sensitized to the literacy realities of others in the community, noticed the effects of public humiliation on adults with literacy needs, and became more aware of her own learning processes in order to be able to help the learners (p.66). Lynne and Rae also increased their knowledge of the varied ways of processing information and were able to generalize this to individuals outside of the literacy program. Cathy pointed out that the reasons that literacy learners take part in learning programs are sometimes unrelated to literacy (p.81). In this observation she illustrated how for adult learners, approaching literacy learning has to do with a complex

myriad of needs. Two tutors identified themselves as having become more patient, a characteristic that hinges on the relationship. "Because you don't get through if you're too uptight. And that's been very good for me" (T26). Only one tutor saw her participation in the process as one part of her broader community involvement and as such did not think it had changed her.

Learners (Darren p.61, Tony p.66, Stacy p.70, Sam p.75, Sylvia p.81) overwhelmingly gained a sense of confidence, for some expressed as greater participation in society. The kind of changes learners experienced provided one step on the path towards greater self efficacy similar to those experienced by learners in Bingman and Ebert's (2000) study:

> When we asked people to reflect on the differences their participation in adult basic education had made, they talked about changes in their sense of themselves as much as about using new skills or knowledge. People talked about pride and satisfaction in their accomplishments that made them "feel better" about themselves. They talked about getting over shame. People also talked about new ease in social situations and about being able to "speak out" more. (p.105)

The link between learner self concept, perceived control, and motivation that became apparent in this study has been identified elsewhere. For example, Assarsson & Sipos-Zackrisson (2001 as cited in Ens, 2004) found that true learning experiences caused a shift in learner identities and that this change was possible when learners felt control over learning situations. Learners in the 2001 study identified interactions with teachers and comprehensible requirements as affecting their changes in self perception and their motivation.

Conclusions

Examining the tutoring dynamic from the perceptions of both learners and tutors has engendered a more complete understanding of the tutorial process in one-to-one learning for adult literacy learners and their tutors. Previous studies focused on the viewpoints of tutors. Those that considered learners' opinions indicated the potential for the tutoring relationship to have a great impact on learning. This study illustrated how the tutoring dynamic is fundamental to the learning process. Examining tutor training background, individual learner history, tutoring activities, and perceptions of the tutoring dynamic, made it possible to explore the relationship between these components and their contribution to the learning process. Combined elements of the tutoring dynamic, including learner motivation, tutor expertise, mutual respect, shared vision, and attention to identity (feelings included) as part of the learning process appear to be key in the relative success of one-to-one tutoring.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

Practical implications of this study include looking for attributes that evidence those listed in the literature and confirmed by this study when interviewing volunteer tutors or matching them with learners. These include patience, caring, openness to diversity, ability to relinquish control to the learner, and a sense of humor. Instructional behaviors that relate to building the tutoring relationship include providing feedback in a timely and sensitive fashion. In addition, paying attention to learners' cues regarding frustration levels, and having at one's disposal an array of strategies to assist the learner (both in terms of easing the frustration and in developing problem-solving strategies or an understanding of scaffolded learning) could prove helpful. These behaviors could be

taught in initial or ongoing training. Role play, videotaped tutor sessions, or other means of experiential learning that put tutors into the role of their learners with attendant barriers could help tutors feel the impact of target instructional behaviors.

In addition to instructional strategies, relational skills could be identified and addressed in pre-tutorial and ongoing training. A greater understanding on the tutor's part of the vulnerability of learners was developed by the tutors in this study as they gained experience and grew in their relationships with their learners. However, this notion could be introduced in initial training so that early in their practice, tutors are able to reflect on their behaviors and how they might be interpreted by learners. Particularly, tutors could think about how they create an environment in which risk-taking is possible. Furthermore, knowing in advance the importance of humor and a comfortable environment might allow tutors to be less concerned with sticking to a lesson plan and could encourage them to be flexible in their approach to teaching. Moreover, they might welcome the opportunities talk provides in building knowledge, vocabulary, (Nagy & Scott, 2000; Sticht, 2002) world view and so forth. While all these components were found to be important in a one-to-one tutoring scenario, in group tutoring it may be even more important for tutors to be alert to the individual needs of those in the group and to respond in a timely and effective way to requests for help.

It is clear that an attitude of respect and an easy environment of talk and laughter are important in the tutorial relationship, thus the same could be cultivated in the program. For adults entering one-to-one tutoring sessions, at least for those in this study, a program that creates a welcoming and accepting environment provides some of the safety that is further developed in the tutoring dyad. Programs could consciously promote

creating a relaxed environment in which people and work (or productivity) are valued. In a climate of competition for funds, literacy programs feel the weight of poverty. Proving the success of programming to funding bodies may become more pressing to program providers than serving the needs of its learners. Remembering the importance of emphasizing relationships within the organization can maintain the energy of the organization and contribute to a sense of purpose or relevance.

From a theoretical standpoint, this organization did not purport to be furthering a critical literacy agenda. From tutors' perspectives, promoting literacy learning in learners was for the purpose of giving learners the opportunity to have more choices in society. Tutors saw reading as a gift and could acknowledge practical ways in which literacy learning helped learners to achieve their goals vocationally and personally. In this sense, although none were overtly teaching about power structures within society or helping learners to gain an independent voice, tutors were sharing a tool (literacy) that they took for granted, but the lack of which they saw as clearly negatively impacting learner choices in society. If a tutoring relationship is built on respect, it is likely that regardless of the learners' philosophical approaches, tutors will take their cue from the learners and help them attain their goals. Furthermore, if talk is a regular part of the tutorial, differences in philosophy may be explored and can contribute to the building of knowledge for both tutor and learner.

Addressing another theoretical consideration, it appears clear that there is a place for one-to-one tutoring. Low literacy levels accompanied by negative past school experiences, work and personal ramifications, and resulting low self esteem especially regarding failure and ability make a safe, caring relationship with an expert tutor

appropriate. Quite possibly a group tutoring situation would be the next logical step for some of these learners, but from the experience of the learners in this study, group situations did not seem able to meet learning needs. Because literacy learning for adults in this context is so time consuming (Sticht, 2002; and noted by Tony, Cathy, Lynne), it is important to allow learners the benefit of immediate constructive feedback and individualized support that become possible within the kind of one-to-one tutorial dynamics described in this study.

Implications for Further Research

The findings from this study support the importance of the tutorial relationship between adult learners and their tutors in the learning that takes place in one-to-one tutoring. Implications for further research include focus on tutor training and examining the role of one-to-one instruction.

The tutors in this study demonstrated the kinds of behaviors involved in active listening and an attitude towards learners that prepares tutors for the acceptance necessary to allow for shared control of the tutorial. Future studies could explore the possibilities of including necessary communication skills in tutor training in addition to the theory, skills, and strategies to which tutors are currently exposed. Studying the relative effectiveness of preservice versus ongoing training as tutors gain experience could also be valuable. In a different vein, the relationship between tutor level of education and learner success could be studied. The tutors in this study were more educated than I had anticipated. Are tutors in most literacy programs equally well-educated or is there more of a range? Is there a relationship between level of tutor education and the relative effectiveness of this literacy

program? Is level of tutor education related to the ability to demonstrate strong relational behaviors?

In addition, comparative studies could examine one-to-one versus group tutoring for adult learners facing multiple barriers to learning. Comparing programs that serve similar learners with different approaches could help to identify more clearly whether or not it is the one-to-one relationship that contributes to success or other tutor/learner qualities, instructional or curricular variables. Comparing tutor-learner relationships in group versus one-to-one settings would further illuminate the impact of the relationship on learning.

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Appendix A

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

Definition of Learning Disabilities

"A Learning Disability refer [sic] to a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from global intellectual deficiency.

"Learning disabilities result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning. These include, but are not limited to: language processing; phonological processing; visual spatial processing; processing speed; memory and attention; and executive functions (e.g. planning and decision-making).

"Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following:

- Oral language (e.g. listening, speaking, understanding);
- Reading (e.g. decoding , phonetic knowledge, word recognition, comprehension);
- Written language (e.g. spelling and written expression); and
- Mathematics (e.g. computation, problem solving).

"Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills, social perception, social interaction and perspective taking.

"Learning disabilities are lifelong. The way in which they are expressed may vary over an individual's lifetime, depending on the interaction between the demands of the

environment and the individual's strengths and needs. Learning disabilities are suggested by unexpected academic under-achievement or achievement which is maintained only by unusually high levels of effort and support.

"Learning disabilities are due to genetic and/or neurobiological factors or injury that alters brain functioning in a manner which affects one or more processes related to learning. These disorders are not due primarily to hearing and/or vision problems, socio-economic factors, cultural or linguistic differences, lack of motivation or ineffective teaching, although these factors may further complicate the challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities. Learning disabilities may co-exist with various conditions including attentional, behavioral and emotional disorders, sensory impairments or other medical conditions.

"For success, individuals with learning disabilities require early identification and timely specialized assessments and interventions involving home, school, community and workplace settings. The interventions need to be appropriate for each individual's learning disability subtype and, at a minimum, include the provision of:

- Specific skill instruction;
- Accommodations;
- Compensatory strategies; and
- Self-advocacy skills"

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada in 2002: (MacKinnon, 2001-2002, pp 8-9.)

Appendix B

National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities

Definition of Learning Disabilities

(Developed in 1981 and revised in 1988)

"Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorder [sic] are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (for example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, social and emotional disturbance) or with environmental influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction, psychogenic factors), it is not the result of those conditions or influences" (1994, pp. 65-66 as cited in Vogel, 1998, pp. 7-8).

Appendix C

Tutor Questionnaire

Background

Tell me about your school experience.

What was the highest grade level or degree you attained?

What made you choose the educational path you took?

What made you interested in tutoring?

What did you think you could bring to a learner?

Did you have any ideas about how this would happen?

Could you picture a tutoring situation?

What was it like?

Training

What training did you receive to tutor?

What were the best parts of the training?

What were the most difficult aspects?

What was confusing?

Did you receive any training on learning strategies?

Can you describe this part of the training?

Did you have enough support going through training?

Did you work collaboratively (with others) or was it more solitary learning?

What advice would you give to an incoming tutor?

What would you add to a training program for tutors?

What would you leave out of a training program for tutors?

Instruction

Environment

Physical

Where do you meet?

Can you describe the physical space?

Learning

What kind of learning environment would you say you create when you are tutoring?

What kinds of activities or behaviors do you employ in creating this?

Do you consciously think about creating a safe environment for your student?

What role does tolerance play in the tutoring dynamic?

Is the learner tolerant?

(For example, do you encounter racism or sexism? Does the learner make derogatory statements about people whose views or backgrounds are different from his/her own?)

How often do you meet?

Who determines this?

Learning Plan

What role do you play in creating the learning plan?

Do you feel the learning plan is helpful to preparing instruction?

How often do you refer to it?

Do you feel the learner understands his/her learning plan?

Do you go over the plan with the learner?

How often does s/he refer to it? Does s/he have a copy?

What are the expected learning outcomes?

Curriculum

How do you choose materials?

Do you consider topic according to learner needs or interests?

Are your choices based on what is available in the library at a learner's level?

Is it easy to match learner level with materials?

How do you decide what is appropriate and what isn't.

Is it difficult to find appropriate materials?

What kinds of activities do you engage in?

How do you teach reading?

Can you describe the steps you take when you are teaching writing?

When the learner has difficulties, what do you do?

What role does technology play in the tutorial?

What role do learning styles play in the tutorial?

How do you keep track of instructional goals?

Assessment

What do you think makes you an effective tutor?

How do you evaluate tutorial effectiveness?

What kind of feedback does program staff give you?

Do you feel you get enough support in your tutoring?

How do you assess how the learner is doing?

Do you do ongoing assessment?

Do you use portfolios? If so, can you describe them?

What kind of information do you gain forming the portfolio?

What role does the learner play in putting together portfolios?

What kinds of tools do you use to assess progress? E.g. rubrics

Does the learner self-assess?

Does the learner have an opportunity to offer you feedback?

Approach

What is your approach towards education?

What are your most important reasons for tutoring?

How has the tutoring process changed you?

Relationship Dynamic

Describe your learner.

What do you like best about the learner?

What do you like least about the learner?

Would you say you have a good relationship?

How is the tutoring relationship important in your teaching?

How does the tutoring relationship affect the learners' progress?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

(Herman, 1997; Soifer et al. 1990).

Appendix D

Learner Questionnaire

Background

Tell me about your school experience.

What was the highest grade level or degree you attained?

What made you choose the path you took?

How did you get involved with this program?

What did you hope you could get out of it?

Did you have any ideas about how this would happen?

Could you picture a tutoring situation?

Subsequent training

What other types of educational programs have you attended since school?

What were your best experiences?

What were the most difficult ones?

Was there anything confusing about the system?

Did you have enough support going through training?

(Can offer specific prompts)

Opinion of Tutor training

Do you feel your tutor is well trained?

What advice would you give an incoming tutor?

What would you add to a training program for tutors?

What would you leave out of a training program for tutors?

Instruction

<u>Environment</u>

Physical

Where do you meet?

Can you describe the physical space?

Learning

What kind of learning environment would you say you create with your tutor?

How do you contribute to this?

Do you find the tutoring environment safe?

What role does tolerance play in the tutoring dynamic?

Is your tutor tolerant?

How often do you meet?

Who determines this?

Do you feel you are in control of your learning?

Learning Plan

What role do you play in creating the learning plan?

Do you feel it is helpful to your learning process?

How often do you refer to it?

When do you refer to it?

Do you feel the tutor understands the learning plan?

How often does s/he refer to it? Does s/he have a copy?

What are expected learning outcomes?

Do you feel you have a good understanding of what your learning processes are?

Curriculum

How do you choose materials?

Do your needs or interests contribute to the choice?

Are your choices based on what is available in the library at your level?

Is it easy to find materials at your level? (or does the tutor find adequate materials at your level?)

How do you decide what is appropriate and what isn't?

Is it difficult to find appropriate materials?

What kinds of activities do you engage in?

What you do before you read?

What do you do while you are reading?

What do you do after you are reading?

Can you describe the steps you take when you are writing something?

What kind of feedback does your tutor give you?

Do you feel you get enough support in your learning?

When you have difficulties, what does the tutor do?

What do you do when you have difficulties reading?

What do you do when you have difficulties writing?

What role does technology play in the tutorial?

How do you keep track of learning goals?

Assessment

What do you think makes you an effective learner?

What do you think makes the tutor effective? (or not)

How do you evaluate tutorial effectiveness?

How does the tutor assess how you are doing?

Do you assess your own progress?

Do you have an opportunity to offer the tutor feedback on how you think things are going?

Approach/Identity

What are your most important reasons for literacy learning?

Has the learning process changed you at all?

How?

Is the learning process changing the way you function in the world?

Could you give me some examples?

Relationship Dynamic

Describe your tutor.

What do you like best about your tutor?

What do you like least about your tutor?

Would you say you have a good relationship?

Do you think the tutoring relationship is important to how you learn?

Is your tutor a good listener?

How much time do you spend chatting in a tutorial?

Do these conversations contribute positively to your learning?

Is there anything else you want to add?

(Herman, 1997; Soifer et al. 1990).