

**THE ROLE OF A PEER TUTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN
AN ACADEMIC LITERACIES MODULE**

by

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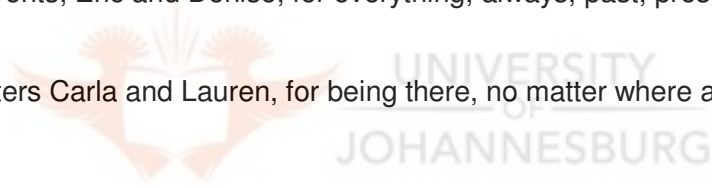
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the following people:

My treasured Russell and our adored and cherished Luke and Kelly.

My beloved parents, Eric and Denise, for everything, always, past, present and future - forever.

My dearest sisters Carla and Lauren, for being there, no matter where and then some.



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The 2006-2007 tutors. Thank you for going on this journey with me with all my heart.

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on a tutor development programme within an academic literacies module called Language for the Economic Sciences (LES). Coordination of the LES module encompasses tutor development as tutors are the primary facilitators of the module. LES forms part of an Extended Degree Programme within the Faculty of Economic Sciences devised to meet the needs of “underprepared” first year students at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). To this end, LES falls within the ambit of academic development at UJ as it is designed and coordinated by an Academic Development practitioner.

Higher Education in South Africa has in the recent past shifted from relatively elitist to a mass system of education with the aim to foster democratic nation building. One of the major changes that has occurred is the merger of a number of institutions of higher learning. As a result of the mergers, a new type of comprehensive institution offering a broad spectrum of academic formative, as well as vocationally oriented programmes, has been established. This study focuses on the UJ, as an example of a merged institution, and will examine how teaching and learning has been effected by the changes at UJ. This research is informed by the notion that the interface between tutor and student is vital for students to attain literacy as well as academic language and skills proficiency in their chosen field.

Thus, the research problem posed in this study is: What is the role of tutor development in an academic literacies module? Much of the literature on tutoring practice discusses the need to train tutors and offers various means through which this can be done. Using an Action Research design and a global analysis of the data collected, the findings of this study suggest that in addition to the appropriate, focused and rigorous training of tutors, they also need to be developed for effective tutoring to occur. Moreover, the sustained support and mentorship of both individual tutors and tutor groups allows for the maximum benefits of tutoring to be realized by all stakeholders.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	i
Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of Contents	v

CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA	1
1.3	CONTEXT: THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG	2
1.4	OPTING FOR A TUTOR SYSTEM	3
	1.4.1 Peers as Tutors	4
1.5	MY ROLE AS MODULE CO-ORDINATOR	5
1.6	FROM ACADEMIC SUPPORT TO ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT	6
1.7	CHALLENGES IN TUTORING LANGUAGE FOR THE ECONOMIC SCIENCES	7
1.8	THEORIES UNDERPINNING LANGUAGE FOR THE ECONOMIC SCIENCES	8
1.9	RESEARCH QUESTION	9
1.10	RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	10
1.11	RESEARCH DESIGN	10
1.12	ETHICAL STATEMENT	13
1.13	STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH REPORT	13
1.14	CONCLUSION	14

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	INTRODUCTION	15
2.2	THE ROLE OF THE PEER TUTORIAL IN STUDENT LEARNING	15
	2.2.1 The Benefits of Peer Tutorials for Students	16
	2.2.2 The Benefits of the Tutorial System for Lecturers	18
	2.2.3 The Benefits of Peer Tutoring for Tutors	19
	2.2.3.1 Tutors as future academics	19
	2.2.3.2 Other long term benefits of peer tutoring for tutors	19
2.3	TRAINING TUTORS – MOTIVATION AND RATIONALE	20
2.4	THE FEATURES OF TUTOR TRAINING	22
	2.4.1 Common Features of Tutor Training	22
	2.4.2 Defining the Functions of a Tutor	22
	2.4.3 Breaking the Mould of Tutor Dominant Practice	23
	2.4.4 Managing Conflict	24
	2.4.5 Giving Students Inclusive Feedback	25
	2.4.6 Summary of Literature on Tutor Training	25
2.5	TRAINING DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC TUTORS	25
	2.5.1 The Theories of Academic Literacies Underpinning Discipline Specific Training	26
	2.5.2 Creating Awareness of Discourse in Postgraduate Tutors	28

	2.5.3 Acquiring Discipline Specific Discourse	29
2.6	FROM INITIAL TRAINING TO MORE HOLISTIC TUTOR DEVELOPMENT	30
	2.6.1 The Role of Classroom Observation	30
	2.6.2 The Role of Critical Reflection	31
	2.6.3 The Role of the Coordinator	32
	2.6.4 The Role of the Weekly Contact Between Tutors	33
2.7	ASSESSING THE EFFECT DEVELOPMENT HAS ON TUTOR EVALUATION FOR EFFECTIVENESS AND TO INFORM	34
2.8	CONCLUSION	38

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	INTRODUCTION	39
3.2	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	40
	3.2.1 The Role of the Researcher	40
3.3	RESEARCH DESIGN	41
	3.3.1 Action Research in Practice	43
	3.3.2 The Research Site	44
	3.3.3 The Participants: Meet the Tutors	45
3.4	DATA COLLECTION: THE TUTOR EXPERIENCE	46
	3.4.1 Observations	47
	3.4.2 Document Analysis	49
	3.4.3 Reflection Questionnaires	50
	3.4.4 Interviews	51
3.5	PROBLEMATIZING THE "ACTION" IN THE ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE	52
	3.5.1 The Initial Training	54
	3.5.2 Mentoring and Developing the Tutor Group	55
	3.5.3 Mentoring and Developing Individual Tutors	56
	3.5.3.1 Classroom visits – a key to mentoring and developing individual tutors	56
3.6	DATA ANALYSIS	57
3.7	TRIANGULATION, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	59
3.8	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS: "DO TUTORS GET A FAIR DEAL?"	60
3.9	CONCLUSION	60

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1	INTRODUCTION	61
4.2	TO EQUIP TUTORS WITH KEY SKILLS TO TUTOR	61
	4.2.1 To Equip Tutors to Develop Academic Writing Skills in Students	63
	4.2.1.1 Summarizing, note-taking and note-making	64
	4.2.2 To Equip Tutors to Utilize Various Tutoring Strategies	64
	4.2.2.1 Collaborative learning	64
	4.2.2.2 Facilitation skills	65

	4.2.2.3 The skill of giving inclusive feedback to students	66
	4.2.2.4 The skill of classroom management	67
	4.2.2.5 Managing diversity	69
4.3	FOSTERING A STUDENT/TUTOR RELATIONSHIP	70
	4.3.1 Providing Support for Students	70
	4.3.2 Fostering Empathy for Students	71
	4.3.3 Creating Rapport with Students	72
	4.3.4 Developing Student Identity	73
4.4	TO PROVIDE ONGOING MENTORSHIP TO TUTORS	74
	4.4.1 Establishing an Individual Relationship with the Coordinator	74
	4.4.2 Developing a Cohesive Tutor Group with the Coordinator	76
	4.4.2.1 The weekly meetings as a forum for group mentorship	76
	4.4.2.2 Ascertaining uniformity in tutoring – collective problem solving	77
	4.4.2.3 Drawing on diverse academic literacies from the tutor group	77
	4.4.2.4 Moderating student work as a tutor group	79
4.5	TO ENABLE SELF-EVALUATION DURING TUTORING	80
	4.5.1 Experimenting with Tutor Strategies as a Result of Self-reflection	81
	4.5.2 Integrating Coordinator’s Comments in Subsequent Tutoring Sessions	82
4.6	TO ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TUTOR IDENTITIES	83
	4.6.1 Contributing to and improving on tutors’ own academic identity	83
	4.6.2 Developing Academic Identity to Enhance Other Roles at University	85
	4.6.3 Developing Workplace and Personal Identity	86
4.7	CONCLUDING REMARKS	86
 CHAPTER FIVE: SYNTHESIS OF EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
5.1	INTRODUCTION	88
5.2	POSITIONING THE FINDINGS IN ACADEMIC LITERACIES THEORIES	88
	5.2.1 To Provide Basic Tutoring Skills and to Develop Interpersonal Skills	89
	5.2.2 Social Constructivism-Collaborative Learning as a Means to Tutor Effectively	91
	5.2.3 To Provide Ongoing Mentorship to Tutors-Collegiality	93
	5.2.4 To Enable Self-evaluation During Tutoring	94
5.3	MY DEVELOPMENT AS A PRACTITIONER	95
5.4	TO ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TUTOR IDENTITY	95
5.5	SUMMING UP AND RECOMMENDATIONS	96
	5.5.1 Offering a Model for Tutor Development at UJ	96
	5.5.2 Tutoring for Academic Credit	97
	5.5.3 Utilizing Tutors Effectively at UJ	97
5.6	CONCLUDING REMARKS	98
	List of references	100

Appendices

Appendix A	Letter of Permission to Conduct Research to Director	105
Appendix B	Letter of Permission to Participant	106
Appendix C	Field Notes	107
Appendix D	Observation Sheet	108
Appendix E	Example of a Tutor Contract	109
Appendix F	Tutor Self-evaluation Outlines with Sample Responses	110
Appendix G	Reports from Classroom Visits (samples)	111
Appendix H	LES Timetable	112
Appendix I	Tutor Reflections (questionnaires)	113
Appendix J	Formal Interviews	114
Appendix K	Tutoring Training Schedule	115
Appendix L	Concept Map	116
Appendix M	Table of Contents (Data Analysis)	117

Figures

Figure 3.1	My Action Research Cycle	47
Figure 3.2	The Mentorship Cycle	56



CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss how student development and support has become a major enterprise in Higher Education in South Africa. To this end, I begin by examining the recent changes that have occurred in the Higher Education landscape. Next, I explain this research in context of the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Following that, I focus on tutoring as one of the most utilized forms of academic support and student development by discussing the employment of tutor systems in Higher Education. Integral to this discussion is the inclusion of peers as tutors and the debates therein. After that, I discuss the tutor development programme that I have been involved in. This tutor development programme formed part of the Language for the Economic Sciences module (LES) at UJ, and I explain my role as module coordinator therein. Linked to this discussion is the notion of how the LES module evolved from a generic, skills based English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course into an academic literacies module. This shift brought challenges for the tutor development programme. As a result, the programme had to shift to accommodate these changes. In my discussion of these subsequent changes, I examine the theories underpinning the LES module and how they served to shape the tutor development programme therein. Throughout my discussion and overview of this research, I suggest that tutors cannot be effective unless they are trained. In fact, I suggest it is more important to embark on a developmental programme for tutors and not one that constitutes training only. Following that, I present my research questions including research aims, objectives and research design. I also present an ethical statement pertaining to this study.

1.2 CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Higher Education in South Africa has in the recent past, shifted from a relatively elitist to a mass system of education with the aim to foster democratic nation building (Taylor, 1998:165). As a result, the concept of how to reach and develop students' needs at an optimum level is most pertinent in South Africa at present. In 1997, the Education Draft White Paper 3 (1997:8) proposed that for the first time in South Africa's history, a government had the mandate to plan the development of the education and training system for the benefit of the country as a whole and all its people. It recognized that the challenge the government faced was to create a system that would fulfill the vision to open the doors of learning and culture to all (Education Draft White Paper 3 1997:8). The Education Draft White Paper 3 (1997:6) states "... equity of access and fair chances of success for all who are seeking to realize their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities." In addition, it stipulates that the purpose of Higher Education is to, "...meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives" (Education Draft White Paper 3, 1997:3). Furthermore, the White Paper stipulates that Higher Education is to "...contribute to the socialisation of enlightened, responsible and constructively

critical citizens” (Education Draft White Paper 3 1997:3). This research report suggests that if tutors are going to be the vehicles for developing students at optimum level, then they will need to be supported, organized and trained so that their role in this quest can be realized. Clark (1998:121) notes that tutors are often identified as the weak link in the university education process but argues that the solution to this is effective training. In addition, I suggest that in fact, it is more important to embark on a sustained developmental programme for tutors and not one that simply trains tutors and then offers no further development. Thus this study examines a tutor development programme in its entirety.

One of the major changes that has occurred in the Higher Education landscape since 1997 in South Africa is the merger of a number of institutions of higher learning. These were formerly segregated by virtue of race and language. As a result of the mergers, a new type of comprehensive institution, offering a broad spectrum of academic formative as well as vocationally oriented programmes, has been established. For the purposes of my research, I focused on the University of Johannesburg (UJ) as one such merged institution. UJ was the result of the merger of the former Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), as well the Technikon Witwatersrand and Vista University Soweto and East Rand campuses. Subsequently, I examined how and why the changes at UJ have influenced and shaped the tutor training and development programme I researched.

1.3 CONTEXT: THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

As a result of the merger at UJ, the first set of demands on the new institution concern accommodating student diversity. Government policy, coupled with the merger, saw pressures for increasing participation in Higher Education from historically underrepresented groups. Hence, student intakes at UJ have become increasingly diverse in terms of cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds as well as the level of preparedness that students have for traditional Higher Education programmes. Consequently, at a time of growing enrolments and changing student demographics, institutions, such as UJ, can no longer assume that they are meeting students’ learning needs effectively and sufficiently (Moore, Paxton, Scott & Thesen 1998:10). Thus, this research suggests that tutor training and development programmes which support tutor systems, need to be developed in order to address evolving and dynamic student needs.

The second set of demands on UJ include meeting and keeping up with global education trends. Universities around the world are under pressure to produce graduates with the kind of knowledge, skills and resilience called for by current social and economic conditions. Graduates need to have flexibility, strongly developed “generic” skills linked to a firm knowledge base, as well as life-long learning skills, if they are to keep up with today’s world of information technology, as well as shrinkage in secure formal sector employment, and enforced career changing (Moore, et al.1998:10). Thus, this research suggests that if tutors are responsible for instilling this type of flexibility and knowledge into students, then they will have to be trained in the same vein, so they can impart these ethics and skills in their dealings with students. Furthermore, if a tutor system is implemented to help meet myriad students’ needs, then, training tutors effectively, who work so closely with students, will help empower tutors to both understand and meet those needs. Clark (1998:21) notes that unless there is a serious and profound

intervention in the development of tutors, they will not be able to determine what their teaching or institutional goals are.

1.4 OPTING FOR A TUTOR SYSTEM

Both internationally and in South Africa, the diverse and evolving student profile at institutes of higher learning has demanded the establishment and maintenance of tutorial systems. Tutoring has proven to be a popular academic development service for students in Higher Education across the globe (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2001; Goodlad & Hirst, 1990; Falchikov, 2001). Institutions of higher learning have consistently employed and developed different types of tutorial services namely, peer tutoring, faculty or professional tutoring, on-line tutoring, one-on-one tutoring and small group tutorials. Typically, the large, single, weekly lecture format on its own is not always an ideal option for maximum learning due to the notion that students may be overwhelmed by information that they cannot readily access nor apply (Bruffee, 1993:94). This is most prevalent in South Africa as a result of the recent changing face of student demographics. As Bruffee (1993:94) observes the tutor system is best utilized when students do not respond to indirect instruction under traditional classroom conditions. This is opposed to the direct, personalized instruction which characterizes tutorials. Thus, the employment of a tutor system ensures that the individual learning needs of students can be addressed.

Research has documented that receiving tutoring can and does make a difference to student success and ultimately throughput (Boud, et al. 2001; Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982; Falchikov, 2001; Goodlad, 1998). For example, Goodlad (1998:2) asserts that tutoring impacts on students as it improves examination results, reduces stress, and generally offers a more satisfying academic experience to students. Furthermore, Bruffee (1993:96) notes that tutors can engage in a conversation with tutees, helping them to decode at the boundary between the knowledge communities that they belong to and those that they aspire to join. Goodlad (1998:2) explains further that tutoring should take place in a framework of mutual, structured exchange between student and tutor as a way of enriching education and achieving goals. However, Goodlad (1998:2) also stresses that it is vital that tutors be trained and developed, so that they may offer effective tutoring practice. In their meta-analysis of sixty-five tutoring programmes, Cohen et al., (1982:246) found that tutoring effectiveness improves when tutors have been trained/developed and/or tutoring is structured. This research report includes the study of one particular tutor training and development programme in an academic literacies module and attempts to examine the effects thereof.

This study focused on a tutor development programme in an academic literacies module called Language for the Economic Sciences (LES). I am the coordinator of the LES module and have been in the position since 2005. LES forms part of a B.Com Extended Degree Programme offered by the Faculty of Economic and Financial Sciences at UJ. As LES is part of the Extended Degree Programme, it is a module designed to assist First Year students in accessing the language of the subject of Economics. Moreover, as LES is part of an access to university programme, it caters for previously disadvantaged students or so called "under-prepared" students. The details of this are discussed below.

For the purposes of this research I examined how a tutor training and development programme attempted to address issues of “under-preparedness” of students for university study in the context of LES. The LES module employs a tutorial system because LES students are Extended Degree First Year students, whose learning needs and “under-preparedness” for university study is apparent. As a result, the lecture format alone is significantly inappropriate for them. Thus, the tutorial system best addresses their learning needs, given the advantages of small group learning. Peer tutors are employed to tutor LES.

1.4.1 Peers as Tutors

The term “peer tutor” has been contested as firstly, tutors are by definition, skilled academic achievers which immediately sets them apart from other students. Secondly, once peer tutors have been trained, the gap between them and other students is widened as they acquire additional skills (Barnett & Blumner, 2001:290). To combat this tension, models of peer tutor training focus on the idea of the tutor’s role as a peer and a co-learner, separate and decidedly different from the role of lecturer (Barnett & Blumner, 2001:292).

Subsequently, peer tutors were deployed to tutor LES and not professional teachers. This is because the effect of LES is far reaching. Postgraduate students, ideally degreed in the appropriate discipline, were employed to undertake the role of peer tutor. Firstly, it was decided that Extended Degree students could readily identify with peers rather than seemingly remote, disconnected authority figures (lecturers). Bruffee (1993:94) defines a peer tutor as “an equal, not a superior” and explains that in peer tutoring, this equality means that all the students involved believe that they both bring ability, expertise and information to the tutoring forum. Extended Degree students tend to need this kind of affirmation more than others as they are often stigmatized because they have not qualified into the mainstream, and thus often require confidence building.

Postgraduate students have also attained what Extended Degree students (mainly from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds) hope to, so they may provide inspiration and motivation. As Clark (1998:124) observes in her study of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) tutors at the University of Cape Town (UCT), many tutors may be from similar backgrounds and can therefore act as role models for the students. Furthermore, the peer tutors that tutor in LES “learn by teaching” (Topping, 1998:50) and in so doing may become better students themselves or may even develop into academics. These peer tutors have a high level of subject content competence and after tutoring in LES, they also have knowledge of academic language and literacies, which is then fed back into the system either by producing better writing at postgraduate level, or by teaching to students’ needs in subjects. Nevertheless, all this cannot be realized unless tutor training and development is provided.

Critics of peer tutors argue that using peer tutors demands more organizational time in designing and effecting appropriate peer selection and matching, and it may also necessitate some adaption to curriculum materials because the mastery of content by a peer tutor is more likely to be less than that of a professional teacher (Topping, 1996:4). Furthermore, it is argued that peer tutors may offer a quality of

tutoring that is inferior to that of a professional teacher therefore, the need for training, monitoring and quality control cannot be overstated (Topping, 1996:4).

However, I suggest that through a development and training programme, tutors are guided and exposed to tutoring processes. Moreover, they are shown how to hone skills and actualize practices. What is more, training and development allows tutors to develop and extend communication, interpersonal and organizational skills. These do not come naturally to most tutors (Goodlad, 1998; Falchikov, 2001) rather they have to be shown how to acquire and broaden skills which was one of the central purposes of my training and development programme.

Additionally, Bruffee (1993:86) argues that when tutors undergo training they are given an opportunity to collaboratively raise and address institutional issues which may impact or emerge from their tutoring. Furthermore, Bruffee (1993:87) asserts that tutors have the potential to act as agents of institutional change as they are working at a grass roots level. Hence, I suggest that providing tutors with a forum for discussion and reflection in training and development thereafter will help draw attention to institutional issues that tutors might report and potentially provide solutions for. To this end, I suggest that involving tutors in a holistic developmental programme creates additional and sustained opportunities above those presented in training only, to allow tutors to engage with, understand and ultimately meet the demands of a Higher Education institution.

In a study conducted by Nel (2006) in the Faculty of Education's Postgraduate Writing Support Centre at UJ, the benefits of using peer tutors in helping student writers to both conceptualize and then write their research was focused on. However Nel's (2006) study found that the benefits of using a peer tutor can be more readily realized if the tutors in question are trained and supported appropriately. My study builds on Nel's (2006) in that it suggests that in order to fully realize the benefits of using peer tutors within an academic literacies module, a tutor development programme, of which a key component is training, should be established, implemented, monitored, evaluated and consistently improved upon.

1.5 MY ROLE AS MODULE COORDINATOR

My tutor community consisted of ten tutors and myself as module coordinator. I developed a deep interest in working with tutors and have invested much time in the past two years in coming to understand, through examining the literature and theories on tutoring and tutor training, what tutor development entails. Thus, my aim in this research was to understand the nature of the tutor development programme in LES and to gauge how the tutors experienced or made sense of it. Accordingly, my research approach was an Interpretive Qualitative Study (Merriam, 2002:6) because I examined and understood how the participants (tutors) of this study made meaning of a situation (the tutor development programme). I was seeking to discover and understand a process/phenomenon (the tutor training/development programme) through the perspectives and world views of the people involved (the tutors) (Merriam, 2002:6). My unit of analysis was the experiences of the tutor development programme in the LES module.

As a module coordinator, I was responsible for how much I wished to develop tutors specifically to operate and facilitate the LES module. As a result, I embarked on rigorous tutor development initiatives to support my tutors in their tutoring practice based on needs analysis. It became obvious from the inception of the module, that its peer tutors needed support in myriad ways in order to tutor the material effectively, so that successful learning could take place. Peer tutors also needed to have a clear understanding of the learning theories which underpinned the work.

Thus my motivation for a tutor development programme was the result of consultation with the literature on tutor training and development. Moreover, it was based on reflection and on needs analysis as mentioned above. Researchers such as Goodlad and Hirst (1990) from the United Kingdom and Bruffee (1993) from the United States, both stress the importance of tutor training and the sustained development of tutors. In other words, once tutors have been trained, their development needs to continue. The literature offered several techniques that are commonly employed to train and develop tutors. By examining the work of and Clark (1998), Falchikov (2001) and Topping (2000) amongst others, I was able to get an overview of what constitutes effective tutor training. With regards to sustained tutor development, I consulted, amongst others, the research collated by Hayes (2004), Goodlad (1990, 1999), Topping (1998, 2000) and Falchikov (2001). Once I had concluded what a tutor training and development programme entailed, I additionally had to consider the institutional context of the LES module.

1.6 FROM ACADEMIC SUPPORT TO ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

The LES module came about as a result of an institutional drive to address student development at UJ. Indeed, not only UJ, but all South African universities have to meet their students' needs on several levels as outlined in the above mentioned Education Draft White Paper 3 (1997). Not only do students need to competitively re-enter the global economy after the isolation experienced as a result of Apartheid but at the same time issues of equity and redress need to be foregrounded (Moore, et al 1998:10). The 1997 Education Draft White Paper 3 recognized that the preparedness for Higher Education among talented Black students, in particular, had been undermined by the effects of a poor school system and a politically volatile, inequitable society (de Klerk, van Deventer & van Schalkwyk 2006:149). The Higher Education system was therefore challenged to respond comprehensively to the articulation gap between students' school attainment and the intellectual demands of Higher Education programmes. This vision was given shape in the form of a number of strategic objectives to open access and improve throughput rates (de Klerk et al. 2006:149). At UJ, one of the interventions was the implementation of Foundation programmes in 2002.

These initial Foundation programmes have subsequently evolved into Extended Degree programmes operational in four faculties at UJ namely the Humanities faculty, the Education faculty, the Economics and Financial Sciences faculty as well as the Science faculty. One of the courses run in the initial Foundation programmes, in all these faculties, was called EAP (English for Academic Purposes). EAP was a generic academic skills based course, which was designed to assist previously disadvantaged students access academic English. The EAP programme focused on reading, writing, listening and speaking skills as well critical

thinking so that students could become enabled to study independently and effectively. EAP was administered and taught by the Academic Development practitioners and tutors based in the Learning Centre at UJ (Auckland Park Campus). Nevertheless, although tutors were employed to teach EAP, their training was generic as well as skills based and included mostly administrative discussion.

Subsequently, EAP evolved from a generic module into several, discipline-specific academic literacies modules by 2006. As a result, each faculty has a module focusing on the discourse as well as the skills required to operate in a specific discipline. Thus, in the Economic and Financial Sciences faculty, the EAP course evolved to Language for the Economic Sciences (LES) as mentioned above. Consequently, LES became more complex than EAP, involving and providing for the inclusion of subject content discussion, as well as that of academic literacies and language development.

The shift that EAP and the EAP tutor training programme has made is significant as it mirrors one that occurred in Academic Development in several South African universities. The EAP module was an initiative of Academic Support. Boughey (2007:1) describes Academic Support as, "...early initiatives intended to provide support for the small number of black students entering historically white institutions in the early 1980s..." However, from the 1990s onwards, the focus shifted from the student to the institution as the Higher Education system began to transform itself in terms of teaching methodologies and curricula in order to accommodate the anticipated black majority in the student body (Boughey, 2007:2). Thus Academic Support evolved into Academic Development.

Similarly, as the generic EAP support module evolved into several, discipline-specific academic literacies modules, so the need for further and more rigorous training and development of tutors in the context of a subject discipline, has become vital. There is a symbiotic relationship between the tutors from the discipline and those of other backgrounds in that there is constant dialogue and exchange of skills and knowledge when engaging with the material. This is discussed further below. Accordingly, the tutor guidance, development and mentoring provided in the LES module allows for this very exchange. In addition, as the collaboration between the lecturers in the Economics faculty and LES increases, so too does the stream of postgraduates, who apply to tutor in LES from those departments based in the faculty. Although this goes some way to improving the subject content of LES, the need to develop discipline tutors' academic skills and language tools is crucial.

1.7 CHALLENGES IN TUTORING LANGUAGE FOR THE ECONOMIC SCIENCES

The challenge that has arisen in the above illustrated scenario is two-fold. On the one hand, peer tutors from a specific discipline do not necessarily have the academic development knowledge/skills to teach the literacies modules. On the other hand, the peer tutors from language backgrounds such as linguistics or literature do not have the subject content knowledge which provides the vehicle for teaching development skills. In addition, if the tutors are to act as discourse experts and apprentice students into discourses, then they have to be apprenticed too

(Gee, 1996). Becoming fully literate within an academic discourse means mastering the discourse, which translates to not only the ways of using language, but also the beliefs, attitudes and values of a group (Gee, 1996). Bruffee (1993:86) notes that the most effective tutoring programmes are themselves collaborative. In addition, they serve to enable tutors to engage their students on substantive issues by fostering the tutor's own active membership in a coherent learning community. In the LES context, the tutors rely on collaboration to learn each other's disciplines and move between each other's discourses. They become both language and discipline resources for one another so that they may create a LES discourse encompassing the primary aims of LES.

Thus, the LES module aims primarily to assist students in the process of apprenticeship into the Economics discipline through the move away from rote learning to acquiring and developing academic literacies of reading, writing and thinking. In Economics 1, students have to organize the information they have learnt and build mini-theories for themselves in order to apply theoretical knowledge. However, may be accustomed to learning by rote, which can become problematic and hamper their success (Paxton, 1998:143). In addition, Paxton (1998:143) explains students need to understand how language in Economics is used. The abstract and condensed nature of Economics discourse means that subtle differences in terminology are easily missed. Paxton (1998:144) notes that authors in Economics use highly abstract language in order to create precision and remove ambiguities. However, when students interact with such texts, they struggle to decode them and/or make meaning from them because writers reduce contextual clues. There are additional features of Economics discourse that need to be brought to students' attention in an explicit way; for example, the way Economics uses intransitive verbs, complex noun-phrases and the passive voice (Paxton, 1998:145). These features add to the difficulties of processing the language particularly for second language speakers. Furthermore, vocabulary in Economics is a problem for students new to the discourse as they need to acquire new "economics" meanings for old familiar terms. To this end, the tutor training programme in LES functioned as a nexus where two discourses, namely Economics and Academic literacies, met. Hence, one of the aims of tutor training was to illustrate how the two discourses operated together to allow tutors to learn what they needed in order to teach the module.

1.8 THEORIES UNDERPINNING LANGUAGE FOR THE ECONOMIC SCIENCES

To this end, one of the theories underpinning the academic literacies modules is that of a social constructivist view of cognitive development. The tutor system provides the scaffolding needed for Extended Degree students to develop both socially and cognitively (Topping, 1998:52). Topping (1998:53) argues that, "... the pedagogical advantages [of tutoring] for the "tutee" include more active, interactive and participative learning, immediate feedback, swift prompting... and greater student ownership of the learning process". Thus under the guidance of a peer tutor, students can reach what is termed by Vygotsky (1978) as the "zone of proximal development". This is the level of potential development that a student cannot reach unless he/she collaborates with others, such as peers and is guided by a specialist. To ensure that this happens tutors need to understand how students can work as collaborative teams, wherein individual learning is essentially related to successful group learning (Vygotsky, 1978). To enable collaborative

learning to successfully take place, tutors need to be trained in giving students a voice and empowering them to actively participate in discussion. In this sense, tutors need to break the mould of tutor dominant practice.

A second theoretical framework for the LES module is based on concepts provided by Lea and Street (2000). Lea and Street argue that student writing in higher education moves between three main models: study skills, academic socialization and academic literacies. The models are not mutually exclusive and at UJ we (the AD practitioners) integrate all three by developing both study skills and academic socialization along with the academic literacies focus. The reason for this is that we believe that at entry level into Extended Degree programmes in a South African context, simultaneous development of all three models is imperative (Lea & Street 2000: 33).

Other theorists have informed the conceptualization of LES and therefore the tutor training and development therein. For an extended understanding on student writing the work of Lillis (2001), Lea and Stierer (2000) and Hewlett (1996) were examined and consistently unpacked in discussion in the tutor development programme. This broadened thought on the tension between the demands of academic writing conventions on students and their primary, more familiar ways of writing. Integral to this, is the notion of identity in writing. The work of Ivanič (1998) and Lillis (2001) was integral in including the notion that students are not homogenous but characterized by a variety of social and cultural experience that shapes their writing at university. Finally, the work of Kress (1989) and Gee (1996) created thought on the characteristics of discourse and influenced the shift to developing academic literacies in tutors.

As a result, the tutor training programme has been conceived of in terms of these theories so that tutors can work with these focus areas and in so doing understand their teaching and development aims. Furthermore, one of the primary purposes of the LES module is to teach academic language and I suggest that central to language development, is interaction and mediation. So it follows that if tutors are the vehicles for this mediation, then it is necessary to induct them into the community of academic language and development practice as a means to attain effective student-centred teaching practice.

In conceptualizing the role of tutor development in the LES module, I had to consistently keep in mind both the developmental needs of the students and those of the tutors. This research attempted to help determine whether the LES module was in fact accomplishing what it set out to do, in relation to tutor development, and what, if necessary, changes needed to be made to the tutor development programme.

1.9 RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the above, the research question can be posed as follows:

- What is the role of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module?

A secondary question also needs to be answered:

- How do tutors experience the tutor development programme?

1.10 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research was to understand the effectiveness of the tutor development and training programme that has been implemented in the LES academic literacies module.

I suggest that there was a need for such research on the role of tutor development in an academic literacies module in order to assess the effect that tutor development and training had on tutoring practice. In other words, I sought to understand the development programme as it functioned to equip tutors to tutor LES. Moreover, the spin-off of the development programme was that the tutors themselves were developed on several levels. The findings of this study attempts to help bridge the gap in the research on the effectiveness and value of embarking on tutor development in an academic literacies module.

1.11 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research design was a form of Action Research. As the module coordinator, I wanted to examine my own programme of tutor development and training. Part of this examination included the rationalization of the programme as well as my understanding of it. This was coupled with the desire to enhance and develop my practice and to possibly make changes as a result of my findings (Smith, 2007:1). Thus, Action Research was appropriate as it "... is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices were carried out" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986:1).

Moreover, Argyris and Schön (1991:85) explain that unlike other traditional social science research, Action Research demands intervention. For the action researcher these interventions constitute a spiral of action cycles which one undertakes. The cycle of activities forms an Action Research spiral in which each cycle increases the researcher's knowledge of the original question or problem. Furthermore it is hoped this knowledge leads to a solution with the focus being on generating knowledge back into the setting of the research, as well as being shared beyond the setting.

According to Whitehead and McNiff (2006:19) the basic steps of an Action Research process constitute an action plan. In an action plan there are two processes at work namely, the systematic actions as one works one's way through the steps (Bassegy, 1998:95) and one's learning. Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:563) further suggest that an action plan may constitute a certain model but acknowledge that practice is non-linear and that people are unpredictable so that their actions often do not follow a straightforward trajectory. Thus an action plan may include (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006:11) as a starting point, a review of current practice with a view to identify an aspect of that practice to investigate. This is followed by a vision of a way forward, which one then tries out. Thereafter, one takes stock of what ensues. Next one sets out to modify one's practice (this

modification is in light of what has been found and then the idea is to continue working in this new way or to try other options if the new way is still not correct). The next step involves monitoring the modified action. Finally one needs to review and evaluate the modified action.

My aim was to assess the interventions that I had with tutors in order to gauge the effect that this training/development had on their tutoring practice. In my study the intervention and action took place over a year with four intervals of reflection. At these intervals the effects of the action were observed in the context in which they occurred (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:564). Changes and modifications were made to the tutor development programme as a result of the tutor feedback/reflection and from my reflection during the year. Between each interval I monitored the action. Constant review of the tutor development programme ensued in that I was constantly devising a plan of action to improve what was happening which is indicative of a developing practice (Coghlan & Brannick, 2008:35).

Relating my own research to the Action Research method, I set up my first intervention strategy (my initial training session) so that I was clear about what I wanted to examine. Before the initial training session, at the beginning of the academic year, I interviewed the tutors informally and observed them. This helped me to ascertain the gaps in their knowledge. Next, the initial training took place. This training encompassed aspects such as skills development, understanding academic literacies and socialization/enculturation into the discourse of tutoring. After this, I attempted to assess how my intervention strategy (training) with the tutors had affected their development via formal interviews and observations. The information that I gleaned from this cycle helped me to determine the effectiveness of the training programme. Furthermore, I was able to establish whether and how the training had developed tutoring via tutor feedback and commentary. Finally, I was able to make recommendations for changes that could be incorporated to improve/alter the training programme. In this way, I completed the cycle of planning, executing, fact finding for the purpose of assessing and preparing the rational basis for the next step. This was with a view to problem-solve in an organizational setting and learn from experience (Smith, M., 2007:2).

The initial training was part of the tutor development programme that I was examining. After the initial training, the development programme ensued. The development programme consisted broadly of the individual and group mentorship of tutors. This mentorship took the form of various features such as group tutor meetings, reflection sessions, moderation sessions, individual classroom observations and individual consultations. Observation during these activities gave me a first hand encounter of the phenomenon and combined with interviewing, formed the fieldwork of my research (Merriam, 2002:13). I also used documents as a source of data. Some of these documents already exist in the context for example: classroom observation forms but I also prepared research generated documents such as reflection questionnaires to be completed at the end of an action cycle (Merriam, 2002:13).

As module coordinator, I was well placed to use Action Research in an attempt to understand the effect of the peer tutor development programme in the LES module. I was able to collect data based on what the participants (tutors) did and said, thus capturing the form and nature of the phenomenon (Ritchie, 1998:2). My

aim was to understand what the tutors had gained from the development programme and what they felt was lacking (Merriam, 2002:5). My close proximity to the tutor programme allowed me to operate in the same discourse as the tutors and identify with their experiences (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit 2004:85). I was close to reality (that is, the real world of the tutors and how they construct their reality) therefore, I was able to act as the instrument of research (Merriam, 2002:25).

My role was that of participant observer in that I engaged in activities appropriate to the situation and I observed the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation (Spradley, 1980:54). As a participant observer, I had ample opportunities to question the tutors (the participants) both formally and informally to gauge their experience of the tutor training and development (Spradley, 1980:123). In order to fully understand the effectiveness of the tutor training programme on the tutors, I conducted in-depth interviews with them. The tutors were perfectly placed to “shed optimal light on the issue” under investigation (Henning, et al. 2004:71). Indeed the tutors were the people who could travel with me on my journey to gain more knowledge about tutor development. Furthermore, as researcher, I “travelled or wandered” with the respondents (tutors) who agreed to “respond” (Henning, et al. 2004:70).

In keeping with a Qualitative approach when conducting Action Research, I analyzed data as I collected it (Merriam, 2002:14). As I analyzed documents, interviews and observations I was able to assess the reactions of the tutors to the development programme. In other words, I kept in mind my research question so that I had a sense of what I was looking for (Flick, 2006:315). In so doing, I used a global analysis to help me have an integrated view of the data by structuring large passages of the analyzed text. As a result of this step, themes emerged, under which I listed ideas, so that I had a “table of contents” from the data (Flick, 2006:316). In this way, I read the data searching for meaningful patterns and themes that connected so that I arrived at a composite picture (Henning, et al. 2004:111). It was the connections between my data that I focused on in order to establish my findings and not on individual entities within the data (Henning, et al. 2004:111). In these connections, I looked for recurring patterns and common themes that cut across the data. I presented a rich, descriptive account of the findings and referred to the literature to develop meaning and understand the phenomenon studied (Merriam, 2002:7).

As the understanding of reality was my (the researcher’s) interpretation of participants’ understanding of the phenomenon of interest, internal validity was important (Merriam, 2002:25). Through triangulation, internal validity of this research was established. As I collected data in the form of interviews, observations and document analysis, I could validate the findings against the combination of these three collection sites. For example, what a tutor told me in an interview could be checked against what I observed during the training or development procedures or what I read in a document (Merriam, 2002:25). In addition, I could use “member checks” to ensure validity as I could ask the tutors to comment on my interpretation of the data. In other words, I took my tentative findings back to the participants/tutors (derived from the raw data through interviews and observations) and asked whether my interpretations “rung true” (Merriam, 2002:26). Tutors used this opportunity to help me better capture their

perspectives by offering some fine-tuning of the findings. (Merriam, 2002:26). This was particularly useful when it came to making recommendations for changing/improving the tutor development programme for maximum effectiveness.

1.12 ETHICAL STATEMENT

I have endeavoured to comply with the ethical standards of the Faculty Academic Ethics Committee (FAEC) at the University of Johannesburg by addressing the following issues:

- € The participants were the ten employed peer tutors in the LES module who underwent the training and mentoring (tutor development) provided by me. These participants were a mixed race and sex group and ranged in age from 20 to 35 years old. They were postgraduate students enrolled at UJ.
- € Permission to embark on this research, that is permission for the observations, questionnaire completion and document analysis, was granted by Dr Deon Van Der Merwe, the Head of Literacies and Learning in the Academic Development Division at UJ (Appendix A)
- € I explained and described my research to the participants face-to-face during the selection phase and initial meetings with tutors.
- € The participants were asked if I could observe them in their classrooms as well as during their mentor and meeting sessions with me both as individuals and as a tutor group. However, if the participants no longer wished to be part of the study, they could have withdrawn (Appendix B)
- € The participants were asked to complete several questionnaires at the end of each term (Appendix I). These could be answered anonymously and in their own time.
- € Participants were asked to read over field notes in an attempt to maintain reliability and thus validity of the study. Interviews were used at a later stage to provide better triangulation and interview participants were asked to read over the transcripts (Appendix J).
- € Anonymity ensured confidentiality and in reporting the findings of the study, the participants were given pseudonyms.
- € There was no harm – physical, psychological, legal or social to those who participated in this study.
- € Ethical clearance number (193/12/05/08) for undertaking this research was given by the Faculty Academic Ethics Committee.

1.13 STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH REPORT

The format of this research report is as follows:

Chapter 1 provides a context for this study, framed by the role of tutor training and development, in that it locates the research on a macro level that is Higher Education in South Africa. It also locates the research on a micro level as it describes and discusses the context and rationale for the LES module and tutor development within it. Finally, it locates the research on a meso level which is the milieu of the University of Johannesburg.

Chapter 2 attempts, through a thorough review of the literature, to develop a conceptual framework for peer tutoring and tutor training. In addition, it seeks to understand sustained tutor development through a review of the literature and the implications as well as effects thereof.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design, describes the research methodology and the data collection methods, as well as the tools used, and illustrates how they were employed to gather relevant data. It also includes data analysis methods.

Chapter 4 renders a detailed analysis of the data with reference to the four main themes that emerged from the data. It also attempts to align, to some extent, the findings with the literature.

Chapter 5 provides an explanation of the data as well as a discussion of the findings to give an understanding of the implications for a continued use of the peer tutor development programme in the context of an academic literacies module. This chapter also offers recommendations and gives an overview of the study.

1.14 CONCLUSION

This first chapter sought to give an overview of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module. The following chapter examines the relevant literature in order to gain an understanding of the role of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module.



CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this review is to examine the literature on the implementation of tutorial systems in student development in a Higher Education context particularly within an academic literacies module. The rationale for this is so that I may explore how the literature stresses the importance of tutorials in student learning and I make use of the literature to make several points pertaining to the benefits of tutorials for lecturers, students and tutors alike. In addition, I draw on the literature to discuss the pedagogy of peer tutoring. From the literature, I seek to understand the rationale for tutor training and development with explicit emphasis on the rationale for tutor training. A further strand of the argument presented with reference to the literature is that of offering continued support and development for tutors after initially training them. Finally, I examine the ways in which the literature examines the necessity of evaluating the effect of development on tutors. Thus, in summary, there are six major themes emerging from the literature on tutor training and development namely: the benefits of tutoring for both students, lecturers and the peer tutors themselves, training tutors-motivation and rationale, the features of tutor training, developing discipline specific tutors, from initial training to more holistic tutor development and assessing the effect training and sustained development has on tutors. This chapter discusses each of these in turn.

2.2 THE ROLE OF THE PEER TUTORIAL IN STUDENT LEARNING

The process of tutoring is considered a seminal educational intervention and the system of small group learning, an old practice traceable as far back as the Ancient Greeks (Goodlad, 1998:2). The peer tutorial system is one in which students help each other to learn and learn by teaching. It is considered one of the most effective methods of promoting student-centered learning (Goodlad, 1998:2). Furthermore, peer tutoring may be described as an academic support programme that involves the utilization of academically successful students, advanced in their understanding of subject matter or in their development of academic skills, to provide learning assistance to less “able” or “advanced” students (Topping, 1998:53).

When seeking a definition of a peer tutor, Bruffee (1993:82) suggests that a peer tutor is a person who has equal standing with another, such as in rank, class or age and he emphasizes that a peer is an equal, not a superior. Once tutor and student believe that they are of equal status, then both parties will trust that they bring equal measures of ability and expertise to an exchange. For Bruffee (1993:83) tutors and students need to think that they are institutional status equals. In other words, tutors need to experience an institution in the same way as their students do, otherwise they will not be able to directly relate to or guide or support them effectively. In essence, tutors need to be close to the student experience of an institution as opposed to lecturers who are more commonly “removed” from the

student experience. This makes students far more open to interaction with a peer than with a lecturer.

However, the term “peer tutor” has been contested as firstly, tutors are by definition skilled academic achievers which immediately sets them apart from other students. Secondly, once peer tutors have been trained, the gap between them and other students is widened as they acquire additional skills (Barnett & Blumner, 2001:290). To combat this tension, models of peer tutor training focus on the idea of the tutor’s role as a peer and a co-learner, separate and decidedly different from the role of lecturer (Barnett & Blumner, 2001:292). My tutor training adopts this approach thereby foregrounding the notion of approachability and accessibility of tutors, for students, in tutors’ minds. In my training, the tutors are also instructed to encourage active student participation and student voice, so that tutors perform a facilitative, “hands-off” role, making the student the “active agent” in the learning process (Barnett & Blumner, 2001:204). Further detailed discussion of these training techniques and concepts takes place below.

Whilst using peers as tutors may be contested, there is consensus in the literature that the typically large, single, weekly lecture format, on its own, is not always an ideal option for maximum student learning (Bruffee, 1993; Falchikov, 2001; Lamberti & Van Rensburg, 2004, Topping, 1998; Whitman, 1988). Bruffee (1993:94) states that this is due to the notion that students may be overwhelmed by information that they cannot readily access nor apply, whilst Whitman (1998: iii) observes that students may fall into passivity and resultant disengagement in the large lecture format of learning. Furthermore, Lamberti and Van Rensburg (2004:72) maintain that learning is not a static process but rather one in which students need to be given opportunities to engage with subject content, which is why the transmission mode of teaching, in which students do not respond to or engage in activities during a lecture, may lead to apathy in students. Hence the pedagogical advantages of tutoring, which is defined as small group learning is interactive, participative learning, immediate feedback, swift prompting, lower anxiety with correspondingly higher self-disclosure, and greater student ownership of the learning process (Topping, 1998:53).

2.2.1 The Benefits of Peer Tutorials for Students

Accordingly, peer tutoring for students has several advantages. Bruffee (1993:81) suggests that tutoring is a process of intellectual and social engagement that involves students in one another’s intellectual and social development. Bruffee (1993:81) asserts that this kind of engagement, can tip the scale from superficial or partial knowledge to mature, reliable and creative understanding of information. The purpose of peer tutoring, argues Bruffee (1993:81) is to give students greater meta-cognitive awareness as well as better application of knowledge and skills to new situations.

Moreover, using a peer tutorial system is a means in which to enhance learning and critical thinking in students. Johnston (1998:34) asserts that tutorials are,

The opportunity to interact in a structured way.... [they] compel students to externalize their thoughts and make their ideas explicit. It provides the opportunity to transmit knowledge and

discover inadequacies, to correct misunderstandings and reconcile conflicting views. Enhanced understanding results because students must think about the material...small group learning improves communication skills, increases self confidence and encourages openness to new ideas.

Indeed a significant advantage of peer tutoring for students is that tutorials allow them to become more motivated. Furthermore, research has shown that students demonstrate improved commitment to study as well as increased self-esteem, or self-confidence, with an insight into self-regulation of learning, as a result of peer tutoring (Topping, 1998:53). Thus, the integrated support that tutoring offers students, plays a pivotal role in their academic development. To this end, Topping (1998:52) explains further that tutoring is best understood through the social constructivist view of cognitive development, which is supported or “scaffolded” exploration through social and cognitive interaction, with a more experienced peer.

Similarly, Clark (1998:123) notes that this kind of “scaffolded” cognitive support, social intervention and holistic development of students is of particular importance to First Year students. First Years may experience alienation and intimidation from their institution, especially if they are to only experience the large lecture halls, which traditionally serve to reduce them to a nameless face, exacerbated by the newness of academic discourse.

Consequently, one of the key ways in which self-confidence and self-esteem can be realized as result of peer tutoring, is by using peer tutors to encourage students by acting as role models for them (Bruffee, 1993; Clark, 1988; Goodlad, 1998). This is made possible by the notion that students feel that peer tutors better understand their problems, and are more interested in their lives and personalities than lecturers might be (Topping, 1996:3). Moreover, being less authoritarian, peer tutors manage to delegate work to students in a democratic way, seeking to empower them rather than intimidate them (Topping, 1996:3). This may provide motivation for students to apply themselves more readily so as to follow in the successful footsteps of their peer tutors (Clark, 1998:124).

Stella Clark (1998) researched an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) tutor development programme at the University of Cape Town (UCT) which featured and discussed the notion of postgraduate peer tutors acting as role models for students. My study renders a parallel and an adaptation of Clark’s (1998) because LES tutors are indeed postgraduate students who largely share similar backgrounds to that of Extended Degree students. This is because they too may not have had English as their first language and they, were in some instances, also “access” students. Thus a gap in the literature that my study attempts to fill is that Extended Degree students more overtly need motivation and perceived inspiration as they tend to be stigmatized in the institution. Additionally, they may be marginalized as those students who ‘have not made it’ and need an ‘alternative route’ for entry, which requires ‘special attention’. As a result, in the LES context, the peer tutors play a central role in securing and developing student confidence and self-esteem (Clark, 1998). To this end, one of their central roles is then to encourage and fuel the students by way of explicit example to combat any stigmatization.

In addition, significantly the LES tutorial programme is especially designed, amongst other things, to build student confidence, motivation and esteem as a means to combat the anonymity and isolation which commonly characterizes the First Year experience (Clark, 2008:5). This is made more readily possible by using peer tutors to facilitate the LES module. Moreover, a key role of the peer tutor is to provide a buffer against the initial period of transition and student adjustment to university life (Clark, 2008:5). Thus, I suggest that given that the LES students are First Years and that the newness of the academy is prevalent in their lives (Clark, 1998; Clark, 2008, Hunter, 2006), and given that they are Extended Degree students whose learning needs and apparent 'under-preparedness' for university study have been outlined in Chapter 1, the lecture format of instruction alone is significantly inappropriate for them.

2.2.2 The Benefits of the Tutorial System for Lecturers

To this end one of the key reasons why institutions have turned to employing tutor systems is that, as Goodlad and Hirst (1990:11) explain, lecturers worldwide have been put under increasing pressure, as a result of large classes. This manifests in significant reductions in 'contact' time with individual students. In addition, globally, extra funding has not been provided to reduce the lecturer: student ratio to a level at which students can receive one-to-one instruction (Goodlad & Hirst, 1990:11; Topping, 1996:3).

Furthermore, the loss of individualized attention for students is made worse by the fact that in many instances students are no longer streamed, which means that there are mixed ability groupings of students in cohorts (Goodlad & Hirst, 1990; Falchikov, 2001; Topping, 1996). This mixed ability characteristic is a result of the fact that many higher education institutions have adapted their entry requirements—be it in response to the decline in the 18-22 age cohort, or for more idealistic reasons. Such changes have led to a widening of the spread of achievement of students at entry level (de Klerk, et al. 2006:150; Goodlad & Hirst, 1990:12). In this scenario, individualized instruction for both strong and weak students is vital.

Accordingly the literature illustrates (Falchikov, 2001; Goodlad & Hirst, 1990; Topping, 1996; Whitman, 1988) that the employment of a tutor system addresses students' individual learning needs and in so doing alleviates the pressure on lecturers dealing with large, mixed ability groups. Additionally, tutors can share the responsibility of monitoring students' progress, which allows lecturers to concentrate on the high level skills of curriculum development, assessment procedures and research (Goodlad & Hirst, 1990:11).

I suggest that lecturers at UJ find themselves under increasing pressure to deal with large, mixed ability classes as a direct result of the merger as outlined in Chapter 1. Even in the Extended Degree context student numbers are too high to allow for individualized instruction and careful monitoring of student progress from a lecturer. Thus, given that the intention of the Extended Degree is to "nurture" individual students, the need to assist both students and lecturers via the tutor support is essential. In turn, bearing in mind the extent and myriad demands on tutors means that they need to be trained and supported.

2.2.3 The Benefits of Peer Tutoring for Tutors

Peer tutoring is often promoted on the grounds that for the tutors, it is “learning by teaching”, or “to teach is to learn twice” (Topping, 1996:3, Whitman, 1988). Goodlad and Hirst (1990:16) reiterate this by asserting that tutors learn by reviewing through a process of reformulation enabling them to fill in the gaps in their own knowledge. This is because tutoring encapsulates the meta-cognitive skills of planning, monitoring and evaluating (Topping, 1996:52). Topping (1996:52) further explains that just preparing to be a peer tutor has been proposed to enhance cognitive processes of perceiving, differentiating, selecting, storing, inferring, combining, justifying and responding. Additionally existing knowledge that the peer tutor has is transformed by reorganization, involving new associations and a new integration (Jones, 1998:196; Topping, 1998:52). Moreover, the act of tutoring itself involves further cognitive challenges, with respect to simplification, clarification and exemplification (Topping, 1998:52). In short, Jones (1998:197) argues that a proper, “deep” understanding of a subject comes with the ability to construct valid conceptual maps of the knowledge domain, together with the ability to locate those maps in broader contexts for others.

2.2.3.1 Tutors as future academics

Another motivational factor adding to the rationale for employing peer tutors is that the benefits for the institution in which the tutors work, are far-reaching. Clark (1998:130) maintains that there is a common movement of tutors into lecturing posts, into writing centres and into AD (Academic Development) posts and writes that, “...this represents a steady movement of people with commitment to and adequate preparation for teaching.”

Hence one of the long term and far reaching benefits of tutor training and development is, as Clark (1998:123) notes that tutors may develop into academics or lecturers. This offers a counter argument to the notion that training tutors is not a worthwhile investment. My study, which as mentioned above, is an adaptation of Clark’s (1998), has yielded parallel and positive results from the intensive development offered to tutors. This is because several tutors have moved from tutoring in the LES programme, to teach in other departments as junior lecturers. Additionally, at least two tutors continued to work in the Writing Centre (situated in the AD unit) at UJ. Thus, these tutors have acquired AD discourse, which they have hopefully applied in teaching their disciplines. In other words, they have the training and development to equip them to continue with student centered, interactive learning using an academic literacies approach (Clark, 1998:124).

2.2.3.2. Other long term benefits of peer tutoring for tutors

In addition, should tutors choose not to pursue a career in academia, the far-reaching benefits resulting from tutoring to individuals are also notable. Topping (1998:136) maintains that “...tutoring gives tutors the opportunity to develop many of the professional “transferable” skills increasingly in demand by employers, such as communication, interpersonal and organizational skills.” Furthermore, Goodlad (1998:13) asserts that communication skills are practised in tutoring and mentoring

and argues that skill in communication is “not just a frill” but at the very core of professional practice. As a result, tutoring is excellent preparation for the workplace. Jones (1998:197) adds to these points by noting that given that graduates are expected to have knowledge integrated with professional skills, the argument for allowing peer tutoring arrangements to carry academic credit becomes persuasive. Jones (1998:197) points out further that the level and depth of skill required from tutors to both understand, and then demonstrate, or apply such understanding of a knowledge domain is such that it could lend to the argument for organizing peer tutor arrangements for academic credit. This is because of the intensive exposure to a variety of workplace competencies resulting from the tutoring experience.

Critics of peer tutors argue that using peer tutors demands more organizational time in designing and effecting appropriate peer selection and matching, and it may also necessitate some adaption to curriculum materials because the mastery of content by a peer tutor is more likely to be less than that of a professional teacher (Topping, 1996:4). Furthermore, it is argued that peer tutors may offer a quality of tutoring that is inferior to that of a professional teacher therefore the need for training, monitoring and quality control cannot be overstated (Topping, 1996:4).

However, I suggest that through a development and training programme, tutors are guided and exposed to tutoring processes. Moreover, they are shown how to hone skills and actualize practices. What is more, training and development allows tutors develop and extend communication, interpersonal and organizational skills. These do not come naturally to most tutors (Goodlad, 1998), rather they have to be shown how to acquire and broaden them which is one of the central, developmental purposes of my training programme.

2.3 TRAINING TUTORS – MOTIVATION AND RATIONALE

There is consensus in the literature that tutor training is a necessary component in a successful peer tutoring scheme and that by simply placing two students together, one of whom has demonstrated better academic achievement, does not guarantee that effective tutoring will occur (Arkin, 1981; Bruffee, 1993; Clark, 1998; Cohen, et al.; Falchikov, 2001; Fuchs, Fuchs, Bentz, Norris & Hamlett, 1994; Goodlad, 1998; Maxwell, 1994; Topping, 1998; Whitman, 1988). In their meta-analysis of sixty five tutoring programmes, Cohen, et al. (1982:246) found that tutoring effectiveness improves when tutors have been trained and/or tutoring is structured. Whitman (1988:38) points out that “...peer teaching administrators universally emphasize the need for orientation and training” whilst Maxwell (1994:110) reiterates that, “Directors of developmental educational programmes seem to agree that a well-trained tutor can serve a vital role in helping fellow students attain their academic goals.” Additionally Arkin (1981:25) explains that “...since tutoring has become a recognized and permanent alternative to teaching, tutor training has come under close scrutiny. As a result, whereas a formal tutor training programme was once seen as a luxury it is now considered a necessity.” Thus, it is apparent that there is potentially a strong academic and developmental role in student learning for tutors to play, provided that they are trained (Clark, 1998:121). Moreover, whilst a tutor can offer students greater quantities of individual support, they more than likely cannot provide the same quality as that of a lecturer, particularly if they are not trained (Topping, 2000:7).

The importance of training and developing tutors has been taken up by several South African universities. An example of an evolved developmental programme is at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in Port Elizabeth. NMMU utilizes the Supplemental Instruction (SI) tutoring system. SI is designed to support historically 'difficult' courses that is, courses where many students fail, drop out or obtain low marks. At NMMU high risk courses are identified and are invited to adopt the SI model. The SI tutors are trained at the beginning of the academic year and their progress is strictly monitored by NMMU AD practitioners throughout the year (Smith, L., 2007).

At the University of Cape Town tutor development is done largely by Education Development Units (EDUs) located in faculties. The EDUs consist of both AD practitioners and academic staff who work to integrate subject content and academic development practice. The EDUs are responsible for various AD pursuits within faculties catering for the needs of departments. Tutor development falls within this domain. Thus it is largely individualized and based on many variables such as leadership, position in departments, lecturers buy-in and effort. In short, success in tutor development depends on what lecturers in departments are prepared to invest. There is no uniformity and each faculty/department develops tutors at their discretion (Williams, 2007).

Tutor development at Rhodes University in Grahamstown is done by lecturers in academic departments who are qualified to train tutors because they attend a compulsory formal development course administered by the Faculty of Education. . The initial resistance from lectures to train their own tutors, as opposed to AD practitioners has been removed because lecturers, having qualified, are now confident that they have the tools to train and develop tutors. The fact that the tutor development course is accredited gives academic weight to developing and training tutors at the university (Quinn, 2003).

Although there is little criticism levelled at tutor training in the literature, Falchikov (2001:61) points out that tutor training and development has been critiqued for being too time consuming and lengthy. There is also the argument that tutors are not permanent members of staff at an institution and therefore, investing in their training only to have them leave soon after, is counterproductive (Falchikov, 2001:61; Topping, 1996).

However, significantly there is agreement in the literature (Arkin, 1981; Bruffee, 1993; Falchikov, 2001, Topping, 1998, Whitman, 1988) that it is not a question of whether tutors should be trained or not, but rather how they are trained that matters. For example, Bruffee (1993: 83) maintains that sometimes training can be too prescriptive and as a result, tutors may become too "professionalized". Thus, if the aim of the tutorial programme is to use peers as tutors because of the advantages of that approach, then making them "faculty surrogates" via training (Bruffee, 1993:83) will detract from their purpose of being close to the student experience. Hence, once one has established how one wishes to use tutors, the next step is to decide how to train them to meet that end (Bruffee, 1993:83).

2.4 THE FEATURES OF TUTOR TRAINING

When deciding on tutor training, Whitman (1988:38) explains that there are basically two modes of training that are generally utilized. Those in which peer tutors are trained in a course, sometimes accredited and those in which they are trained in a formal workshop outside a class session. Falchikov (2001:161) explains that workshops may vary in terms of length, timing and content. This training forms part of the orientation of tutors at the beginning of an academic year (Whitman, 1988:38-39) or it may be introduced at certain junctures in the year depending on the needs of the programme it is part of. With regards to what to include in tutor training, the literature indicates that there are certain generic elements that constitute tutor training. Furthermore, these generic elements may be extended to include detailed components such as defining the roles of the tutor, managing conflict and giving students' inclusive feedback.

2.4.1. Common Features of Tutor Training

Most training workshops are characterized by some universal elements which are designed to be readily implemented in actual tutorials given (Taylor, 1998:169). These include tutorial preparation, tutoring strategies, management of attitudinal problems that might be encountered, as well as managing group work (Taylor, 1998; Goodlad, 1999). In addition, general interpersonal skills may be addressed as well as honing communication and presentation skills. Moreover, initial training sessions should comprise of orientation, the programme objectives, tutoring techniques, and tutor responsibilities (Reed, 1973:16).

Additionally, the particulars of training will depend on what the tutors are going to do however; there are several standard elements that need to be addressed in a training scheme (Goodlad, 1999:13). These may include for example, how to start a tutoring session by establishing a friendly atmosphere, what to do when a student gives a correct answer, what to do when the answer is wrong, what to do if the session goes poorly and how to end a tutoring session (Goodlad, 1999:13). Clark (1998:125) refers to these common features of training as a standard "bag of tricks" that tutors need to have at their finger tips. Additional to this "bag of tricks" are practicalities needed for the function of the tutorials, such as the call for punctuality and reliability and the explanation of administrative tasks such as record keeping (Falchikov, 2001:165). Some training programmes also give tutors documents noting policies and administration requirements (Falchikov, 2001:176). However, once these essential and basic features of training have been covered, there are several more select, detailed themes that training may include. These are dealt with below.

2.4.2 Defining the Functions of a Tutor

A first common specific component that comprises many training programmes is to opt for defining the various functions that a tutor may play in the classroom (Falchikov, 2001:164). Falchikov (2001:164) cites Brannon (1982) who has identified four basic tutor functions namely, that of tutor as facilitator, supporter, leader and resister. Falchikov (2001:164) explains that the role of the facilitator is seen as an appropriate one which is most helpful to the student. The role of the supporter is also seen as beneficial to the students (Falchikov, 2001:164) in that

the it enables the tutor to encourage self-discovery in the students as well as affirm, value and praise the efforts of the students (Randall, 2004:163) However, the roles of leader and resister are dysfunctional (Falchikov, 2001:164) as they are viewed as putting pressure on the student and being contrary to the aims of tutorials.

Several training programmes advocate role playing as an exercise to help tutors avoid adopting tutoring styles that lead to tutor dominance (Falchikov, 2001: 165). To this end, the training would include mock sessions in which tutors adopt polar opposite tutoring styles namely that of dominant tutor (leader, resister) and that of tutor as facilitator (supporter) .The aim of this exercise would be to help tutors analyze the amount of “directedness” (tutor dominance) and the amount of “responsiveness” (student participation) present in the mock tutorials (Falchikov, 2001:165).

After the sessions, discussions surrounding the issues of “directedness” and “responsiveness” ensue with a view to diagnose problems in order to understand why the tutor is dominant (Falchikov, 2001:165). From that point, the training would include developing tutoring strategies such as, helping tutors work on questioning techniques to elicit student voice (Falchikov, 2001:165). Hence during training the idea of how to meet the students’ needs will be raised and how to read clues with sensitivity from the students when assessing their understanding will be addressed. Falchikov (2001:165) explains that such mock tutorials characterized by role-playing exercises can serve to transform tutors thinking away from an egocentric perspective, to that of a decentered perspective that recognizes multiple points of view. The advantage of this is that tutors will become reflective about their own tutoring practice and thus more in-tune with the needs of their students.

2.4.3 Breaking the Mould of Tutor Dominant Practice

A key area for training tutors from the literature (Clark, 1988; Goodlad, 1990; Whitman, 1988) and one which serves as a motivation for training the LES tutors, is to break the mould of traditional “chalk and talk”, teacher dominant practice or “tutor as preacher” (Whitman, 1988:39). Goodlad (1990:10) asserts that without intervention, tutors may tutor in the same prescriptive way as they themselves have been taught. In many cases, the reproduction of out-dated models of tutoring practice perpetuates out-dated practices. Ramsden (1992) in Clark (1998:121) typifies the image of an uncompromising ‘old school’ approach to teaching when he describes that many lecturers embody the notion of

...the archetypal arrogant professor, secure in the omnipotent possession of boundless knowledge, represents a tradition that dies hard. Certain lecturers, especially new ones, seem to take delight in trying to imitate him...They are under pressure to show toughness, stringency and inflexibility in the face of student mystification.

I suggest that there is no point in perpetuating “traditional teachers” (Bruffee, 1993:87) if the aim of the tutorial programme is to use peers whose purpose is primarily to access students and help them by explaining things in ways that their lecturers cannot. However, this all adds up to a very complex tutoring situation as

there may be conflict between how tutors have been taught themselves and how students might need them to tutor. Clark (1998:122) writes, "...teaching a tutorial badly or well could be the maintenance of inequities in the system or the beginning of the undoing." Furthermore, Clark (1998:121) notes that despite progress and sensitivity to students' needs, there is still much reliance on Ramsden's (1992) portrait. Hence, there needs to be a profound intervention in the development of tutoring practice in the provision of a new type of role model contrary to that of Ramsden's (Clark 1998:121). This is especially as new student diversity is now a matter of urgency.

I suggest that the tutors are required in LES particularly to depart from their own received teaching experiences to something that would be more useful to their students. I therefore concur with Clark (1998:121) in that if one does not train tutors to move away from the transmission and domination mode of teaching, a result could be that they fall back into known teaching practices despite their best intentions and beliefs. They may even be oppressive to students.

2.4.4 Managing Conflict

From the literature (Falchikov, 2001:170; Goodlad, 1999; Topping, 2000) it is apparent that managing conflict is another common feature of tutor training programmes worldwide. Falchikov (2001:170) explains that tutors need to be given ways of coping and dealing with conflict in tutorials. To this end, training should include ways of helping tutors develop positive confrontation skills (Falchikov, 2001:171). These could include suggestions such as, for tutors to be critical of ideas and not of people, for tutors to give everyone a chance to be heard, and for tutors to make sure there is time for discussion. In addition, tutors should follow the guidelines for creating and generating rational argument as well as ways to encourage students to take the other peoples' perspectives (Falchikov, 2001:171).

In some training instances, mock problem situations are given to tutors so that they may 'practise' resolving them (Topping, 2000:46). This is so that tutors develop empathy with students when resolving conflict. Importantly, Watson-Todd (2004:108) maintains that for good relations and conflict resolution to occur, a strong element of trust in the classroom is essential. In addition, the tutor is expected to take the lead in the process of establishing trust and open-mindedness amongst students and between tutor and students. This is so that students may ideally conduct themselves with acceptance and cooperativeness, thereby dispelling potential conflict situations (Watson-Todd, 2004:108). However, Topping (2000:46) cautions that tutors need to be advised about the dangers of feeling too "sympathetic" towards students, as they may be tempted to offer excessive help, which might foster over-dependence on the tutor to resolve issues.

Closely linked to managing conflict is the notion of managing diversity. A gap in the literature that I have identified is that of how tutors can manage diverse groups of students. Given the diversity of the student body at UJ as described in Chapter 1, managing diversity effectively formed a necessary theme of my initial training in tandem with conflict management. Thus it is such a gap that my research attempts to fill.

2.4.5 Giving Students Inclusive Feedback

An additional frequently covered area in tutor training is assisting tutors to write good feedback for students. Falchikov (2001:166) refers to training tutors for writing feedback by dividing them into pairs or groups and allowing them to feedback on each other's writing. This way tutors can practice the skills they need for giving effective feedback. In addition, samples of student writing may appear in a tutor handbook or guide book for tutors to refer to throughout their tutoring experience (Falchikov, 2001:166) Falchikov (2001:176) explains that tutors may be supplied with handbooks that allow them to work through self-paced activities such as commenting on students' essays or assignments. Moreover, Watson-Todd (2004:110) maintains that feedback training should include learning how to comment on student work, by understanding what constitutes positive useful feedback, which serves to build a relationship between tutor and student. Furthermore, Watson-Todd (2004:110) asserts that the way to do this is by giving tutors the opportunities to practise the skill of commenting on students' work.

My study draws a parallel with Watson-Todd (2004) and Falchikov (2001) in that I recognized the need to include feedback in my initial training. However, although I gave tutors the theories underpinning feedback; I did not give them the opportunity to practise writing feedback. This was done at other opportunities during the course of the development programme with a view to focusing on the feedback abilities of individual tutors. Having discussed the various components generally constituted in training, the following offers a summary of thoughts on tutor training.

2.4.6 Summary of Literature on Tutor Training

Once a training scheme has addressed the above mentioned themes, they then tend to digress into individualized programmes that are designed to specifically address the needs of the tutors and ultimately the students using them (Bruffee, 1993; Goodlad, 1990; Whitman, 1988). Whitman (1988:41) explains that planners of tutor training programmes must draw upon a review of the literature in conjunction with taking into account their own context and experiences to create an appropriate systematic training model.

In the initial training that I undertook, I included various common features as discussed above. In addition, the precise course of action that I followed is discussed in Chapter 3. It is my unique programme, specific to the LES module at the UJ that attempts to fill the gap in the literature pertaining to a tailored tutor developmental programme. To this end the following section deals with the issue of developing academic literacies in tutors and sustaining their involvement with developing academic literacies in students.

2.5 TRAINING DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC TUTORS

As intimated above, from the literature it is suggested that many tutor development programmes train/develop tutors with regards to the "philosophy" or "approach" or "theoretical framework" underpinning the course which they are responsible for tutoring (Arkin, 1981; Bruffee, 1993; Clark, 1998; Topping, 2000). For example Clark (1998:125) maintains that some training programmes are intended to help tutors understand themselves first and foremost as tutors and to do this they need

to have the philosophical foundations on which to build their tutoring activities. Or, as Arkin (1981:25) in her exploration of issues and approaches to tutor training asserts, training cannot be a mere teaching of techniques and strategies or practicalities, but it is rather the job of the tutor trainer to get the tutors excited about learning techniques and strategies, as well as to give them a unique sense of their role in the students' learning process. Topping additionally (2000:3) writes, "... to be effective... tutors need to know how they can help."

The following describes the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of LES as it presented to tutors in their formative training and then continued through into their ongoing development. Thus it encompasses the theory underpinning my tutor training and development programme. Hence it comprises of the theory underpinning discipline specific training, creating awareness of discourse in postgraduate tutors and acquiring discipline specific discourse.

2.5.1 The Theories of Academic Literacies Underpinning Discipline Specific Training

As a starting point, a central theory underpinning the LES module is that of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1987). Tutors working with LES students need to think of learning as a collaborative process in which they play a vital role. Thus, ideas of social constructivism are discussed in training so that tutors may internalize and reflect on them. Under the guidance of a peer tutor, students can reach what is termed by Vygotsky (1978) as the "zone of proximal development". This is the level of potential development that a student cannot reach unless he/she collaborates with others and is guided. To ensure that this happens tutors need to understand how students can work as collaborative teams, wherein individual learning is essentially related to successful group learning (Vygotsky, 1978). To enable collaborative learning to successfully take place, tutors need to be trained in giving students a voice and empowering them to actively participate in discussion. In this sense, tutors need to break the mould of tutor dominant practice.

A second theory underpinning the LES module is based on Street and Lea's models of student writing in Higher Education (2000). Street and Lea (2000) argue that student writing can move between three models: study skills, academic socialization and academic literacies. The study skills approach assumes that literacy is a set of atomized skills which students have to learn and which are transferable to other contexts. The focus is on attempts "to fix" problems with student learning and writing with emphasis on surface features such as grammar and spelling (Lea & Street, 2000: 34). However, the crudity of this approach led to the refinement of the meaning of "skills" and attention was focused on broader issues of learning and social context which Lea and Street (2000) termed "academic socialization".

The focus of "academic socialization" is on student orientation to learning within the "culture" of the academy in that students need to be inculcated into the academy (Lea & Street, 2000:34). However, "academic socialization" has been criticized on many grounds in that it assumes that the academy is homogeneous and its norms and practices just have to be learnt to provide access to the whole institution (Lea & Street, 2000:35). In this approach writing is treated as a transparent medium of representation which fails to address the deep language, literacy and discourse

issues involved in institutional production and representation of meaning (Lea & Street, 2000:35).

This has led to the third approach which is the “academic literacies” approach. Lea and Street (2000:35) write that this approach, “...views student writing at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialization”. In the academic literacies approach institutions are viewed as sites of discourse and power and the student operating there, needs to switch practices from one setting to another with the ability to handle the linguistic practices and social meaning of each individual one (Lea & Street, 2000:35).

I suggest that in the context of the LES module, tutors who tutor writing need to understand the idea that elements of successful student writing are in essence related to particular ways of constructing the world, and not to a generic set of writing skills as the study skills model suggest. In addition, tutors need to understand that writing is much more than just using the correct terminology or learning to do “academic writing” as the “academic socialization” model suggests. Thus, I reason that Lea and Streets’ (2000) models need to be unpacked for the tutors during training so that they can proceed with an understanding of how this theory shapes the LES module, and manifests in the tutorial material and delivery. Thus, importantly, tutors need to gain an understanding of the students’ writing processes at the levels of epistemology, authority and contestation over knowledge and not only at the levels of technical skill, surface linguistic competence or assimilation into academic culture (Lea & Street, 2000:36). In other words, writing needs to be seen as no longer a generic skill, but as a multi-faceted activity of expression influenced by context, discourse, relationships, identity and institutional values. This understanding is a process that is ongoing and evolutionary as tutors work in LES.

Part of this understanding is thinking about how students have learned to write. Lillis (2001:168) asserts that as the dominant literacy practice in Higher Education is essayist literacy, consideration has to be taken into account of those students from social groups who have been excluded as a result of their so called “inferior” secondary schooling, from knowing the myriad conventions of this practice. Lillis (2001:168) suggests that tutors may play a role in “talking” students into these conventions.

Thus, what tutors additionally need to understand from the training and their sustained development is the tension between the demands of academic writing conventions on students and their primary, more familiar ways of writing (Lea & Stierer, 2000:11). For example, students may be more familiar with rote learning and reproduce this strategy in writing. In this case, students would have to “un-learn” the strategy that promoted their success at school, in order to be successful at university (Hewlett, 1996:92). To this end, tutors need to understand that learning and writing at university involves a new and mostly different way of engaging with knowledge and text. As Invanič (1998:69) explains, students entering into Higher Education are “required to extend their literacy practices, to build and adapt existing ones and engage in new ones.”

Integral to this is the notion of the importance of identity in writing. Tutors need to be aware of the fact that students are not homogenous but are characterized by a

variety of cultural and social experience that shape their writing at university (Lillis 2001:31). As a part of their development, tutors are encouraged to not only consider students' identities but also acknowledge that when students write, they are in a process of constructing their identities (Lillis 2001:48).

These identities are formed in the context of the multiliteracies of academic disciplines. In the case of LES, tutors are made aware of the fact that students are entering into the Economics discourse with a view to functioning there. To this end, tutors need to be made aware of the fact that this specific discourse has its own language to express its individualized values and practices (Kress, 1989). Kress (1989:7) describes discourse as follows.

A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organizes and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about. In that it provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual action.

This reasoning is the motivation for the shift away from generic, skills based modules and generic training of tutors. Generic training cannot include the discussion of the way knowledge is represented in Economics as well as its conceptual demands, specialized vocabulary, grammatical structures, rules, thinking patterns and conventions.

2.5.2 Creating Awareness of Discourse in Postgraduate Tutors

Thus, closely linked to the understanding of the complexity of the writing process, is the notion of creating awareness of discourse in the tutors. Hence, this is central to the training and development of LES tutors. This is especially important as tutors are mainly successful postgraduate students who are used to a high degree of academic success and are single-mindedly devoted to an area of study. Clark (1998:122) describes that postgraduates can be seen as experts in their subjects and that this is often accompanied by blindness to how they "learnt" the discourse of their discipline as it seems so "natural" to them. Additionally Rose (2008:12) notes that experienced readers are not consciously aware of patterns of discourse but rather come to recognize an academic field broadly through readings and lectures. As a result, because students' writing is assessed overtly on its critical presentation of a field, and less overtly on patterns of discourse, those who have more experience in recognizing and appropriating textual structures will be advantaged (Rose, 2008:12).

Additionally, Bruffee (1993:81) explains that what students need is help in translating the terms of the communities they are trying to enter so that they may incorporate all the social practices of that particular group, the way a group thinks, interacts and believes, as well as the way it reads and writes or as Rose, (2008:1) explains, "the ways of being in their disciplines". Therefore, for students to become literate means mastering the "discourses" (Gee, 1990) and/or "ways of being" of the group, including not only the language but also the beliefs, attitudes and values of a group.

Moreover, because it may be a very abstract academic discourse for some students, tutors need to recognize that this awareness is the start of ensuring epistemological access to all students (Paxton, 1998:138). Hence the goal of the conversation between peer tutors and students is to assist students to internalize the conversation of the community they aspire to join (Bruffee, 1993:85). The ultimate aim is that students eventually become self-sufficient members of that community (Bruffee, 1993:85).

I suggest that making these issues overt in tutor training and ongoing development serves to stop tutors from falling into the trap of saying that certain students are simply not good at Economics or good enough for university study. So it follows that without training and sustained discussion with tutors, they probably will not have empathy for their students nor will they be conscious of who their students are that is, that their students have various levels of preparedness for university study with a range of language and educational histories.

2.5.3 Acquiring Discipline Specific Discourse

To this end, integral to making transition possible for students is acquiring an understanding of why students may become alienated from the study of Economic theory. This is a process that tutors encounter once they start tutoring in LES and so has to be constantly explored in tutor development. Paxton (1998:140) explains that the language of Economics is abstract as well as condensed and does not give students the contextual clues they need for decoding the discourse. This is because writers of Economics employ highly abstract language to move towards precision and remove ambiguities however, because writers reduce contextual clues, students cannot make meaning readily from text (Paxton, 1998:141). Furthermore, students struggle to recognize the subtle differences in Economic terminology which means that they misunderstand concepts. Economics vocabulary is challenging for students as they need to acquire new 'economics' meanings for old familiar terms (Paxton, 1998:145).

Paxton (1998:144) notes that another feature of Economics discourse is the use of intransitive verbs, complex noun phrases and the use of the passive voice. These features add difficulties of processing the language, particularly for second language speakers and students who have not had the opportunity to develop adequate reading strategies. Paxton (1998:145) suggests those subtle differences in language and the need for precise use of Economics terms, needs to be brought to the attention of students in an explicit way.

I suggest that if one works from the premise that academic literacies have the power to act as gatekeepers, to maintain the status quo at tertiary institutions by allowing in those who can use relative discourse appropriately (Gee, 1990), then LES tutors need to gain a better understanding of the linguistic difficulties present in Economics discourse. This is because tutors play a key role in assisting students in the process of apprenticeship in a discipline.

However, the initial training of tutors is only one way in which tutors may be apprenticed. The literature (Falchikov, 2001; Goodlad, 1999; Topping, 2000; Whitman, 1988) makes evident that tutors may be supported by sustained development in the form of other interventions. Having discussed the common and

central features that characterize tutor training programmes as well as the specific characteristics of the LES tutor training, the following section now deals with several ways that tutors may be developed in a sustained fashion as a means of continuing support for tutors after the initial training.

2.6 FROM INITIAL TRAINING TO MORE HOLISTIC TUTOR DEVELOPMENT

The notion of training tutors and then providing further development and support for them thereafter is a vital part of tutor development. Goodlad (1999:140) emphasizes that a trainer/teacher cannot train tutors and then “let them loose, hoping for the best”. Whitman (1988:50) explains that after the initial training, tutors may require additional support especially if they find they need help. Additionally, in a survey done by Whitecross and Mills (2003) of university Anthropology departments using tutors in the United Kingdom, it was found that more than 80% of tutors questioned felt that their departments should offer more support. Tutors particularly wanted feedback on their teaching skills from the academic staff. Whitecross and Mills (2003:15) reported lack of ongoing support made tutors feel neglected and under-valued by their relative departments. From the literature it is evident that there are four main ways in which tutors can be offered sustained development namely through classroom observation, critical reflection, the role of the coordinator in tutor mentorship and via weekly meetings.

2.6.1 The Role of Classroom Observation

As a starting point, classroom observation, as a means of tutor development, manifests itself in three ways namely, through working with an experienced tutor and observing them, watching and discussing filmed tutoring practice and finally through having a “trainer” “sit-in” on tutorial sessions.

Firstly, one of the best ways to learn to tutor effectively is to observe or work with experienced tutors (Falchikov, 2000:166). This is in essence the opportunity for new tutors to view how to improve their practice. For example, Falchikov (2000:166) explains in some tutor development programmes, new tutors may observe an experienced tutor during tutorials, or new tutors may be paired with experienced tutors for team tutoring. Randall (2004:157) points out that the actual experience in the classroom or of the classroom is the best way for tutors to “learn” whilst tutoring. Only after new tutors have undertaken these exercises and interpreted or reflected on the data gleaned from the exercises (Randall, 2004:159), may they then go into the classroom or tutor alone.

A second means in which tutoring practice can be reviewed is through filming tutorial sessions (Whitman, 1988:39). Tutors could then meet and discuss tutoring theory, common problem solving blocks and effective learning during and after viewing the films. Whitman (1988:39) cites Southeastern Massachusetts University as an example of a tutor development programme that uses film. In this institution, experienced tutors plan, write and act in a video production to show new tutors situations that may occur in practice.

A third way in which tutors can gain insight into tutoring practice is through classroom visits whereby a trainer will “sit in” on a tutorial session for the purpose of review (Randall, 2004:159). Randall (2004:159) explains that learning about

teaching, although needing to be based on individual reflection, cannot be constructed alone, but it is more effectively gained in a coaching situation where the novice is given the chance to practise or discuss the “art” under the guidance of an “expert”.

Hence central to the classroom visits is the role of de-briefing or feedback sessions after the classroom visit has taken place (Randall, 2004:158). Randall (2004:159) suggests that the aim of the reflection session is to construct connections between the theoretical aspects of tutoring with their practical applications in the classroom. Randall (2004:159) explains further that what essentially is taking place in feedback sessions is the Vygotskian (1978) principal of constructing knowledge through a dialogic process between a more experienced knower and a less experienced knower. In this way, explains Randall (2004:159) the inexperienced tutor is being led to “discover” new knowledge by a process of interacting with another person. Additionally through this process the tutor is led to personalize and internalize both the “lower order” (Randall, 2004:159) behavioural skills of classroom techniques and the “higher order” meta-cognitive skills of understanding the processes involved in tutoring.

I suggest that utilizing classroom visits to help tutors to problematize (Randall, 2004:161) their tutoring practice and arrive at their own solutions through dialogue with a trainer, (Randall, 2004:161) is a highly effective way to develop tutors. However, after reviewing the literature I do concede that there are benefits to involving experienced tutors in mentoring new tutors (Whitman, 1988; Falchikov, 2001). I also concede, after reviewing the literature, that there are other ways in which tutors can engage in reflection (Falchikov, 2001; Watson-Todd, 2004) besides that prompted by classroom visits. However, I suggest that classroom visits are a most effective way to engage tutors given the results this study has generated. Having said that, I concede that I could have done follow-up classroom visits after the initial ones, to track and enhance the development of tutors. This is an amendment I would like to make to the development programme upon reflection. The following describes alternative ways in which tutors can engage in critical reflection of their practice.

2.6.2 The Role of Critical Reflection

Critical reflection is another way of providing ongoing development for tutors. To this end, from the literature, reflection is widely perceived to be a necessary element of the development of effective tutors (Cullen, 2004:142; Falchikov, 2001:168; Jones, 1998:202). Bailey (1997 in Shaw, Stroupe, Clayton & Conley 2004:200) notes that, “reflective teaching is extremely valuable as a state of mind, a healthy questioning attitude towards the practice of our profession.”

However, Cullen (2004:142) points out that so much has been written about reflective practice that the term is in danger of becoming “a slogan for reform in teaching and teacher education all over the world.” Thus what it entails needs to be constantly re-stated so that the term retains useful meaning in the context that it occurs and for the purpose it is designed to fill in that context (Cullen, 2004:142). To this end, for the purposes of tutor development, reflection may take the form of “reflection-in-action” (as we act) and “reflection-on-action” (after the fact). Dialogue after classroom visits is reflection on action however, there are several other ways

in which tutors can reflect “in action” or “on action” with regards to their practice (Cullen, 2004:201).

For example, Falchikov (2001:168) explains that some tutor development schemes include tutoring logs. These logs serve to stimulate reflection as the tutor needs to record thoughts from tutorials around certain prompts such as, what worked in the session?, what did not work?, why?, were the aims and objectives met?, what can I do to address the problem?, what can the student do? Falchikov (2001:170) asserts that tutors could also be encouraged to record their plans for future instruction in their logs. Finally, the logs would be presented to the coordinator and tutor group in a monthly meeting to exchange information and air concerns.

Another way in which tutors may reflect on their training is by writing journals (Watson-Todd, 2004:106). The journals take the form of a diary in which the tutors dialogue with the “trainer” or coordinator and is less structured than a tutor log. Watson-Todd (2004:107) explains that the data that emerges from journals may be analyzed for recurring patterns and salient events that inform tutor development. The main benefit of the journal is when the tutors get feedback on their thoughts, which provokes further reflection on tutoring practice.

Moreover, according to Watson-Todd (2004:111), the goal of the journal is to engender trust between the trainer and the tutors and in so doing both parties must disclose their thoughts and feelings to secure a closer relationship. Once the trainer and the tutor have engaged in such an exchange (Watson-Todd, 2004:111) then there is a reduction of power between them for equal benefit. On the one hand, the tutor’s development is promoted through increased reflection, increased sharing of ideas, and deeper understanding of rationales. On the other hand, the trainer’s own development is also facilitated because of the feedback from the tutors. This is because in the journals, the tutors can and do respond to the trainer’s comments (Watson-Todd, 2004:118).

I suggest that the equitable ongoing dialogue, which creates equivalent gains for both parties, made possible by the journal forum (Watson-Todd, 2004:106), is not the only way in which tutors can develop a relationship of trust and security with their trainer or coordinator. Nor is it the only means in which tutors can share ideas or critically reflect on their practice. Hence a gap identified by my study is that a personal, verbal and informal relationship with the tutors characterized by an “open-door policy” is as effective as one held in written dialogue as suggested in the literature (Watson-Todd, 2004; Falchikov, 2001). However, for this to be realized, the role of the coordinator in the process needs to be established and defined. The next section discusses this.

2.6.3 The Role of the Coordinator

Yet another technique used to develop tutors is through the relationship that they may form with their “trainer” or “coordinator”. Reed (1973:42) maintains that the success of a peer tutoring programme depends on the leadership and initiatives provided by the programme director/coordinator. Reed (1973:42) argues further that one of the characteristics of the director is that he/she should be perceptive and sensitive to tutor needs. Goodlad (1999:14) asserts that providing the

necessary support to tutors is one of the most difficult aspects of running a scheme but also the most rewarding.

To help actualize and realize the effect of good, generative leadership, Watson-Todd (2004:118) suggests that the trainer should act as a role model for the tutors. Using the feedback that s/he gets from the tutors, the coordinator should “practice what he preaches” (Watson-Todd, 2004:118) and make changes based on the tutors’ experience and views of the development programme. I concur with Watson-Todd (2004:118) in that, through the support I gave the individual tutors via an “open-door” policy, I attempted to model the behaviour tutors could mirror with their students. Developing the tutors as individuals however, is not the only way in which tutor teams are formed. The following section discusses how a tutor community can be generated as a means of tutor development over and above that of one-to-one relationships with the coordinator or trainer.

2.6.4 The Role of the Weekly Contact Between Tutors

A final method to offer continued development to tutors is to use weekly meetings. From the literature (Arkin, 1981; Bruffee, 1993; Clark, 1998; Falchikov, 2001; Jones, 1998) it is evident that an essential ingredient for a successful tutor development programme is to make tutors feel like they are part of a team. Clark (1998: 129) explains in discussion of her tutor programme that “...the tutors built up a sense of belonging to a cohort of new, young teachers...” and Arkin (1981:25) reiterates that tutor development should function to make tutors feel like members of a learning community. To this end, Falchikov (2001:165) and Jones (1998:202) assert that one of the common ways in which tutors may be offered sustained support is through regular or weekly meetings.

Regular or weekly meetings may offer a site for collaboration in which tutors work together and depend on one another to work out problems rather than relying solely on an authority figure for guidance (Bruffee, 1993:1). Bruffee (1993:1) refers to this as “the craft of interdependence” and explains that in this type of collaborative team interaction between people, everyone’s opinions are valued and participation is expected and the role (Goodlad, 1999:14) of the “organizer” or “coordinator” or “trainer” is that he/she is part of the group (Watson-Todd, 2004:108). This does not mean that the coordinator does not exercise some control over the tuition. Goodlad (1999:13) argues that not only does careful instruction of tutors ensure that students are given the material in the appropriate sequence, but it also ensures maximum student interaction because the tasks are clearly defined for the tutors. Goodlad (1999:14) writes, “Tutors, in short, do not invent the wheel, rather they use other people’s wheels to travel further and faster.” Thus tutors should be given a mixture of structure and freedom and in so doing, a tutor’s creativity and originality can be built around the content, whose structure is still the prime responsibility of the lecturer.

Accordingly, Clark (1998:128) explains that the weekly meetings she held with her tutors became the site for intensive tutor development (of both lecturer and tutor). For example, issues around materials could be worked through in these meetings such as, how to make learning more meaningful and salient to students - based on the needs of students, what is the organized sequence of planned tasks, how to involve maximum participation and how to incorporate appropriate reinforcement

(Clark, 1998:128). Thus (Clark, 1998:128) describes her meetings as being characterized by questions such as: How would group work help us today? Would it be better to have students write this or talk about it? Do we need to provide more contextual information in this exercise? What are we actually asking students to do here? How can we rephrase this question to best suit its purposes? Hence Clark (1998:129) captures the essence of the weekly tutor meetings when she comments that, "...these meetings were more than just planning times - they were a live demonstration of how teachers have to consider their wider contexts, which may affect even those classroom activities which worked well before."

In this way, Clark (1998:126) demonstrates that the tutors' involvement in the weekly meetings typifies what is meant by "experiential education" which is a mix of doing and reflection, followed by modified action influenced by reflection. My study draws a parallel with Clark (1998) in that my weekly tutor meetings were characterized by an experiential mix of doing, reflection, modifying action and then reflecting again with promising results. This section has outlined several features of programmes in the form of sustained, ongoing support for the purposes of developing tutors as is evident from the literature. Having discussed the various reasons why training and development for the LES tutors is comprised of certain components, the next section deals with evaluating tutor development in order to gauge the effect it has had on tutoring practice.

2.7 ASSESSING THE EFFECT DEVELOPMENT HAS ON TUTORS – EVALUATION FOR EFFECTIVENESS AND TO INFORM

A prominent strand in the literature on tutor development is indeed evaluation. Evaluation of a programme is very important as most academics will want to know if peer tutoring has achieved what it set out to achieve (Jones, 1998:202; Falchikov 2001:179). Falchikov (2001:181) cites Soven (1993) who reviewed twenty six curriculum based peer tutoring programmes across the United States which found that all programmes included an evaluation component, usually in the form of surveys of views of students, tutors and faculty sponsors. The general and traditional purpose of evaluation is to provide immediate feedback to tutors, or to boost tutor confidence and to provide evidence of the success of the tutor system (Falchikov, 2001:181). Reed (1973: 42) explains that future support for programmes will be based on rigorous evaluations. Moreover, Topping (1998: 93) asserts that programme coordinators need to know how successful they have been so that they can improve on effectiveness in the future. Inadequate evaluation or absence of evaluation may not affect the initial outcomes of peer tutoring but lack of knowledge of what did and did not work and the reasons for this are likely to impede future developments (Falchikov, 2001:281). In addition, Topping (1998:93) suggests that evaluating allows a coordinator to tell tutors how they have done – "so you had better have something concrete to tell them!"

Additionally, Goodlad (1999:17) argues that if a tutoring scheme is evaluated then one's perception of suitable objectives for a scheme will be sharpened if one tries to determine how those objectives will be achieved. Secondly, self-contained evaluation reports can be very useful instruments for telling other people about an idea or as Topping (1998:94) argues, evaluation evidence may convince colleagues of the value of tutoring and encourage them to emulate their good work.

Another reason for evaluating a project is, as Topping (1998:95) maintains, reinforcement for the programme director/coordinator. Topping (1998:95) notes that a vague feeling that the project went “OK” is unlikely to give the coordinator the confidence and reassurance he/she needs to carry on. Topping (1998:95) suggests further to the coordinator that,

If you have concrete data about the success of a project, which is independent of your own views, you will feel like you are working from a solid foundation so even if things evolve you will be able to change with them. You need to be able to see whether the objectives that you set out with are being met. They have to be evident in precise, observable terms.

However, Goodlad (1999:2) cautions that tutoring and mentoring schemes should be “never knowingly oversold” as one may run the risk of claiming too much for tutoring and mentoring. Goodlad (1999:2) writes, “In short, we need to be aware of over selling and thereby discrediting exciting and eminently useful ideas.” Goodlad (1999:2) asserts that there are still many things that are not known about tutoring and mentoring and that much research still needs to be conducted in the area.

A gap in the literature and research on tutoring that I have identified is the evaluation of tutor training programmes. Falchikov (2001:176) acknowledges that not all training schemes are evaluated and that few tutor training programme evaluations are reported in the literature. Falchikov (2001:176) also points out that sometimes training evaluation may be used for personal use only by tutors. For example, they may form part of tutor reflective learning logs. Falchikov (2001:176) cites the evaluation of two training programmes by Mann (1994) and Sobral (1997, 1998). In both these reports, the evaluation of training procedures, conclude that training is beneficial to tutors in that tutors were better equipped to manage their classrooms.

Additional to better classroom management is the notion that tutors benefit personally from the tutoring experience. Osguthorpe and Scruggs (1990:177) maintain that many research studies have focused on tutors’ personal growth as a result of tutoring and that from their inception, tutoring programmes have been multifaceted experiments in socialization for example, the social benefits of tutoring include improved self-confidence, responsibility and attitude towards studying and academic benefits. My study augments and extends this as I suggest that firstly, developing tutors effectively allows them to more readily attain social benefits and secondly, evaluating the training/development to gauge the effect of it on tutor performance is vital, as without rigorous and effective training of tutors, the overall constructive effect of the tutor programme can be compromised.

Thus, my study attempts to make a contribution to the literature in that it documents developments at UJ and advocates the effective training of tutors, even though it refers only to an Extended Degree programme. In this way my study resonates with Clark (1998:130) who explains that although her EAP (English for Academic Purposes) tutor development programme at The University of Cape Town (UCT) was too small to fully answer the capacity-building or staff development needs of a large institution, it, like mine, was based on theory, and it

seemed to work. Thus, like mine, it sought or attempted to offer a model for tutor development in other departments.

Clark's (1998) EAP tutor development programme at UCT has been criticized in that colleagues have suggested that EAP lecturers and tutors do not live in the real world. Her critics believe her tutor training programme could only succeed within the sheltered confines of an EAP course. However, Clark (1998: 132) argues that she does not want other university teachers to duplicate her programme but rather to take elements from it and implement them, making it their own. Clark (1998:132) acknowledges that there are elements that made her programme successful.

The first is, making the philosophical frameworks of the course explicit as well as the approach to tutoring. In Clark's (1998) programme, the philosophical frameworks included providing tutors with a specific theoretical approach to language teaching. This was characterized by providing access to academic discourse and literacy practices in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Clark, 1998:125). To help her tutors think about and apply this framework, she gave her tutors Gee's (1990) book entitled *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideologies in discourses*. This was then unpacked and discussed around the "language problems" students might have so the theoretical reading could be complimented by practical, "real" possibilities. Tutors were also encouraged to think about their own language acquisition and learning (Clark, 1998:126). Like Clark (1998), I also provided my tutors with a theoretical framework so that they could understand the premise on which LES was structured. For example, as mentioned above, Lea and Street's models of student writing were examined and unpacked.

The second element to Clark's (1998) programme was that the initial training should focus on tutor's development as tutors. This included the common, generic elements of tutor training. Finally, the third component of Clark's (1998) programme was the notion of stressing the daily contact between the lecturer and tutor to allow for personalized interaction, feedback and reflection (Clark, 1998:132).

The daily contact and rigorous interest that a tutor coordinator or a lecturer should arguably have in tutors can result in tutors having a significant effect on both the courses they tutor, as well as the institution they work in. Bruffee (1993:82) argues that peer tutors have the potential to act as agents of institutional change. This change includes the notion that lecturers may change their courses or change the ways in which they teach the courses, as a result of suggestions made by tutors. Clark (1998:132) extends this view when she notes that perhaps the most fundamental precondition for success when working with tutors is being able to view tutors as developing academics, who can make significant contributions, even at curriculum level, rather than as cheap and inferior substitutes, who are relegated to the most arduous tasks of university teaching, such as marking. I suggest that my training/development programme can be utilized at UJ in the same way as Clark's could at UCT in that my development programme draws a parallel with the successful components of the programme as noted by Clark (1988). However, I suggest that if I adapt her central ideas, and add certain additional features such as classroom visits, I will yield more useful results. Thus, whilst I am not advocating that departments duplicate my development programme, I concur with Clark (1998) that successful and applicable elements of it can be implemented elsewhere.

Lecturers may argue that working with tutors so intensely is far too time consuming (Falchikov, 2001). However, I concur with Clark (1998:132) as she argues that it would certainly be possible in other situations to work with tutors to help build a meta-knowledge and language for teaching and reflection on teaching. In addition, many other contexts could also readily offer the opportunity for tutors to develop sensitivity to issues of multilingualism and to English as a Second or Additional language. A final point that needs to be made about tutor evaluations is the ways in which they may be carried out.

As there are so many aspects of peer tutoring that one can research, the methodologies used to explore them may differ (Falchikov, 2001:181). Quantitative techniques are particularly useful when providing “hard evidence” on the effectiveness of a particular kind of peer learning whilst qualitative techniques provide more on the experience of peer tutoring and why things work or do not work (Falchikov, 2001:181). Moreover, Topping (1998:95) writes that there are two types of evaluation namely formative or summative. In my study I used formative evaluation as I looked at the process of the project and how each aspect of the programme contributed to achieving the outcomes. This is opposed to summative evaluation in which the evaluation looks solely at the end-product. The focus of formative evaluation is to use as the data collected to enable the re-formation of a better project next time or to adjust the project in process (Topping, 1988:95).

In order to examine and evaluate my development programme I opted for a Qualitative formative study as I was looking to improve the programme in process and for the future. Falchikov (2001:180) points out that in the tutoring context, Qualitative research often relies on self-reports, introspection and reflection. To realize this one needs to engage in “participant evaluation” (Falchikov, 2001:182). The purpose of this is to aid participant reflection, personal development and future planning. One way in which tutors can do “participant evaluation” is to evaluate every session they conduct in a guidebook. The guidebook should contain a short tutoring progress report designed to elicit information on tutoring practice and any challenges experienced in the classroom (Falchikov, 2001:182).

Another way in which researchers may evaluate tutor development and training programmes is through informal feedback. Falchikov (2001:181) cites Metheny and Metheny (1997) who evaluated their scheme with anecdotal evidence from participants. They even cited the unexpected support from their Dean as indicative of their scheme’s success. Falchikov (2001:182) writes, “They concluded their account of evaluation with the comment that ‘our courses have developed a good reputation and the students look forward to them (Metheny & Metheny, 1997 in Falchikov, 2001:182).”

However, Topping (1996:50) suggests that more formal feedback questionnaires may be designed to evaluate process issues such as the usefulness of training, the nature of support and difficulties encountered. Falchikov (2001:186) cites Goldberg (1987) and Goldberg and Williams (1988) who state questions which measure self-concept, self-esteem, stress and other factors may be used to explore, in formal feedback, reflective questionnaires to gauge the effects of peer tutoring.

In my study I used reflective questionnaires as one means of data collection given to tutors to conduct my evaluation. In addition, these questionnaires included open-ended statements or questions so that respondents could respond in any way they chose. Falchikov (2001:185) explains that self-report questionnaires consist of a number of open-ended questions relevant to the topic under investigation. In my study the tutor development programme became the focus of the questions and the questions were designed to allow the tutors to think about and justify their responses with why/ why not? The additional ways in which I collected data for the purposes of evaluation, reflection and finally to implement change will be discussed in Chapter 3. I also describe my research design and the research methodology that I embarked upon for this purpose.

2.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have attempted to review the literature with regards to the importance of tutor training and development with specific reference to the rationale for training and developing tutors in the LES context. I have also explored how the literature informs the ways that tutors may be trained and developed.

After my intensive examination of the literature, I have attempted to construct a conceptual framework for peer tutoring development. This includes, firstly, the understanding of social constructivism and the benefits of collaborative learning as a premise for good tutoring practice. Secondly, it includes the development of an understanding of academic literacies theory in student learning. The next element includes the notion of tutors functioning as a collaborative group themselves, and working with a coordinator to mentor and develop them. Finally, inclusive to my tutor development programme is the development of interpersonal, professional and academic skills of the tutors so that may tutor LES effectively.

In addition to this, I have examined the ways in which tutor training and development programmes may be evaluated. In the creation of a tutor development programme including its evaluation, a thorough review of the literature is needed to allow a programme designer to select those features which are most appropriate for the context in which their tutors are operating. It is the uniqueness of context that attempts to allow for gaps in the literature to be filled by this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research approach is described and discussed. As the purpose of this study is to understand the role of the peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module, I suggest that this research fits into a broad Qualitative Interpretivist Research approach (Merriam, 2002:6) where the knowledge constructed from this study was made from depictions of peoples' intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding (Henning, et al. 2004:20) and a description thereof is given (Maykut & Morehouse, 1997:123). Meaning is mediated through the researcher as instrument (Merriam, 2002:6) who seeks to understand the worldviews and perspectives of the "participating practitioners" (Henning, et al. 2004:20) operating in their social contexts. The data collected through interviews, observations, documents and questionnaires, is analyzed to identify the recurring patterns or themes that cut across the data so that a rich descriptive account of findings is presented and discussed (Merriam, 2002:7).

According to Merriam (2002:37) a central characteristic of Qualitative Interpretivist Research is that individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds. Inextricable from this is the notion that meaning is not discovered, rather it is made by people as they engage with the world. From a phenomenological point of view comes the idea that people interpret experiences from their own perspectives, therefore experience is subjective (Merriam, 2002:37). An interpretivist paradigm is also influenced by symbolic interaction which also focuses on interpretation but within the context of an individual reacting to people and the society around him/her (Merriam 2002:37). Merriam (2002:37) suggests that from a research perspective, the emphasis of an interpretivist approach is viewing things from the perspective of others. Thus, an interpretive study involves consideration of how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they give to their experiences. To this end, the overall purpose of an interpretivist approach is to understand how people make sense and meaning of their lives (Merriam, 2002:38).

This research is located within a Qualitative Interpretivist Research approach and makes use of an Action Research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2008; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) design. The design process is ongoing, emerging, iterative (Henning, et al. 2004:127) and devised to allow the researcher to constantly check to ensure that the data gathered is compatible with the research question (Henning, et al. 2004:143). A discussion of both Qualitative Research and Action Research is presented below.

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This study takes the form of Qualitative Research (Merriam, 2002:4) because I was interested in understanding a particular world at a particular time. I wanted to learn how the individuals in a particular context experienced and interacted in their social world and the meaning it had for them (Merriam, 2002:4). Thus I wanted to understand how the participants (tutors) made sense of their experience in the setting that they found themselves. My aim was to examine the participants' words and actions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1997:2) in ways that closely represented the situation as experienced by them. In addition, I wanted to explore the nature of the setting and what their experience of this setting was (Merriam, 2002:5; Maykut & Morehouse, 1997:45).

Furthermore, this research was an inductive process in that I was able to build concepts and theorize from the data collected (Merriam, 2002:5). The product of the inquiry was richly descriptive in that words rather than numbers were used to convey what I have learned about the context and the participants involved (Merriam, 2002:5). Thus the data collection was of narrative-type which conveys information about human experiences to form my "quest for understanding" (Henning, et al. 2004:3). Accordingly, within Qualitative Research the role of the researcher is of utmost importance.

3.2.1 The Role of the Researcher

Merriam (2002:5) explains that a key characteristic of Qualitative Research is that the researcher is the primary instrument and responsible for (Maykut & Morehouse, 1997:46) data collection and data analysis. My role was that of participant observer. I was simultaneously inside and outside the situation (Spradley, 1980:56). I participated in that I was an integral part of the tutor development programme as module coordinator and I observed in that I used a "wide-angle lens" to look beyond my immediate focus of activity (Spradley, 1980:58) so as to understand the tutors' experiences. As Spradley (1980:54) describes, I had a dual purpose as I engaged in activities appropriate to the situation but at the same time I observed the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation.

I suggest that I was also a reflective practitioner as I sought to "learn to learn" about my practice for the purpose of becoming a better practitioner (Kemmis, 1982:34). Furthermore, as the design of this research is Action Research the "emic" or insider perspective was pivotal (Kemmis, 1982:35) as Action Research enables "thick description" of local reality with the primary purpose of improving practice rather than producing knowledge (Elliot, 1992:49). The following section describes the Action Research design of the study.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of this research project took the form of Action Research in the context of the tutor development programme in the Language for the Economic Sciences module, in the B.Com Extended Degree programme, at the University of Johannesburg. Whitehead and McNiff (2006:3) describe Action Research as a way of looking at one's own work to check that it is as one would like it to be. It is research done by the practitioner and is often referred to as Practitioner Based Research because it involves the practitioner thinking about and reflecting on his/her own work and is thus a self-reflective practice. Coghlan and Brannick (2006:3) explain further that Action Research is research in action, rather than research about action. To this end, the central idea of Action Research is that it aims to study the resolution of important social or organizational issues with those or by those who experience these issues directly (Coghlan & Brannick 2006:3). In addition, Whitehead and McNiff (2006:28) assert that the aim of Action Research is to get the practitioner/s to ask as many critical questions as possible about their own practice and to find the answers for themselves such as, "why are we concerned?" and/or "what are we concerned about?". In this way, Action Research is underpinned by values and life-attitudes in that it allows one to take responsibility for their actions.

In Action Research, researchers do research on themselves, so whereas empirical researchers enquire into other peoples' lives, action researchers enquire into their own thus, it is an enquiry by the self into the self. The end result is a better understanding of the self so that the practitioner can continue to develop oneself and one's work (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006:5). Sagor (1992:10) describes Action Research as the disciplined enquiry into the process of dealing with everyday problems and educators particularly focus on doing Action Research in order to make their particular educational activities more productive.

In Action Research, the research process is a developmental one of following through an idea, seeing how it goes and continually checking to see whether it is in line with what ones wishes to see happen. Therefore, it is a form of self-directed self-evaluation (Jarvis, 1999:93). Hence the idea is to identify a problematic issue, imagine a solution, try it out and then evaluate it with the idea that practice can be changed in the light of the evaluation (Whitehead & McNiff 2006:4). In my study the problem that I wanted to examine was to understand and assess the tutor training programme I had implemented in terms of whether it was providing the tutors with the necessary means to tutor effectively. Thus it was a "felt need" (Elliot, 1992:53) on my behalf to initiate change and to innovate, which are necessary conditions for Action Research. I realized or I "had the feeling" (Elliot, 1992:53) that some aspects of the tutor development programme had to be changed if its aims and values were to be more fully realized (Elliot, 1992:53). Thus, I was motivated to questioning and reflection. I was committed to taking action (Mills, 2003:3) and effecting positive educational change based on my findings.

Accordingly, Basse (1998:93) points out that educational Action Research is a systematic, reflective enquiry which is carried out in order to understand, evaluate, change and improve educational practice. As a point of departure, Whitehead and

McNiff (2006:89) suggest that Action Research begins with the question, “How do I improve my work?” or “What is my concern?” These questions have social intent. The intention is that one person improves their work for the benefit of others so the entire working situation is improved (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006:5). Or as Coghlan and Brannick (2008:3) describe, the intent of action research is the “flourishing of the individual person and their communities.” In my case it was the improvement of the tutor development programme that could benefit the tutors as Action Research has a practical problem solving emphasis (Bassegy, 1998:93). Additionally, a major goal of Action Research is the ability to generate local knowledge that is fed back into the setting (Anderson & Herr, 2005:1).

Critics of Action Research argue that when one is so close to one’s practice and an expert in that practice, one may not be consciously aware of precisely what one does therefore, one may not be able to detail it correctly (Jarvis, 1999:97). The problem then is that an expert’s tacit knowledge may be such that they find it difficult to articulate what they know. Consequently, what is recorded might actually omit some of the most significant aspects of individual practice (Jarvis, 1999:97). In addition, critics state that the role of the participant observer and the reflective practitioner in Action Research tends to be “subjective” and is deemed too selective based on human perception (Jarvis, 1999:98; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Merriam, 2000) but there is consensus in the literature (Anderson & Herr, 2005; Bassegy, 1998; Jarvis, 1999; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005) that “insider” practitioners are the best and most reliable source of their own learning, reflecting and acting.

To this end, Jarvis (1999:99) points out that the more traditional research methods cannot reach a great deal of the personal and transitory facets of practice that Action Research can record about the nature of the practice, and the practitioners, particularly when they are undertaking to solve problems. Indeed Action Research is an enquiry that is done by or with insiders of an organization or community but never to or on them (Anderson & Herr, 2005:3). It involves “reaching-out” from the specifics of a situation as understood from the people within them to explore the potential of new approaches and it involves “reaching-in” because practitioners grasp issues critically in local situations (Jarvis, 1999:96; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:568). Additionally, Agris and Schön (1991:86) write,

Action Research takes its clues-its questions, puzzles and problems-from the perceptions of the practitioners within the particular local practice context. It bounds episodes of research according to the boundaries of the local context. It builds descriptions and theories within the practice context itself and tests them there through interventions or experiments - that is, through experiments that bear the double burden of testing hypotheses and effecting some (putatively) desired change in the situation.

Similarly, according to Coghlan and Brannick (2008:65), the traditional distinction between the researcher and the researched diminishes in Action Research as its aim is to improve practice through intervention of the action researcher. Furthermore, Coghlan and Brannick (2008:5) suggest that Action Research is reflexive. It is designed to help collaborating groups of people to transform their world so as to learn more about the nature of recursive relationships. Thus, as

Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:567) point out, people learn more about their practice (the work), their knowledge of their practices (the workers) and the social structures that shape and constrain the practices (the workplace).

Moreover, Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:567) assert that Action Research explores the relationship between the realms of the individual and the social. This is particular to education development, when people individually and collectively try to understand how they are formed and reformed as individuals in relation to each other to improve practice (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:567). Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:567) further explain that people may explore their practices of communication, production and social organization and try to explore how to improve their interactions by changing the acts that constitute them. In the above I discussed the nature and characteristics of Action Research. I also mentioned certain criticisms that have been levelled against Action Research. In the following section, I discuss how Action Research was realized in practice.

3.3.1 Action Research in Practice

According to Argyris and Schön (1991:85), Action Research is unlike other traditional social science research as it demands intervention. For the action researcher these interventions constitute a spiral of action cycles which one undertakes. The cycle of activities forms an Action Research spiral in which each cycle increases the researcher's knowledge of the original question or problem. In so doing, it is hoped that a solution may be reached, with the focus being on generating knowledge back into the setting of the research, as well as beyond the setting. Moreover, Whitehead and McNiff (2006:12) explain that the basic steps of an action research process constitute an action plan. In an action plan there are two processes at work namely, the systematic actions as one works one's way through the steps (Basse, 1998:95), as well as one's own learning. Whitehead and McNiff (2006:12) and Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:563) suggest that an action plan may constitute a certain model, but acknowledge that practice is non-linear, and that people are unpredictable, so their actions often do not follow a straightforward trajectory.

Thus an action plan may include as a starting point, a review of current practice with a view to identify an aspect of that practice to investigate. This is followed by a vision of a way forward, which one then tries out. After that one takes stock of what ensues. Next, one sets out to modify one's practice (this modification is in light of what has been found and then the idea is to continue working in this new way or to try other options if the new way is still not correct). The next step involves monitoring the modified action. Finally, one needs to review and evaluate the modified action (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006:13). Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:563) and Argyris and Schön (1991:86) offer a similar approach in that they perceive that an action plan/spiral includes: firstly, planning a change or developing a plan of action to improve what is already happening. This is followed by acting which is then followed by reflecting. After reflection, one enters the re-planning phase which is subsequently followed by acting again which is in turn followed by further reflection.

Additionally, Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:563) explain that the action spiral of self-reflection is not rigid but in reality more fluid and responsive. The criterion for

success is not whether participants have followed the steps faithfully but rather whether they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution of their practices and their understandings of their practices and the situations in which they practice (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:563). In my study the intervention and action took pace over a year with four intervals of reflection. At these intervals the effects of the action were observed in the context in which they occurred (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:564). Changes and modifications were made to the tutor development programme as a result of the tutor feedback/reflection and from my reflection during the year. Between each interval I monitored the action. I was in a state of constant review of the tutor development programme in that I was devising a plan of action to improve what was happening which is indicative of a developing practice (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006:6). Or as Coghlan and Brannick (2008:30) put it, I was making sense of the process whilst in the process, in that the action research cycle was helping to “shape the story”.

Thus, I was for the most part, engaged in the action of the research (Jarvis, 1999:91), in that my primary focus was to be prepared to improve my practice through change (Jarvis, 1999:91). This was a result of firstly, a reflection of my practice and secondly, of encouraging the tutors to be aware of their own practice (Jarvis, 1999:91). My reflection was made up of observation, informal and formal interviews as well as discussion with the tutors. As Coghlan and Brannick (2008:33) explain, I was an active intervener making and helping things happen in the process. I had to ask myself what was the result of my reflection and what actions was I going to take (Coghlan & Brannick, 2008:34).

My action cycle of problematizing, planning, acting and reflecting began with my identification of the need to examine, understand and assess the tutor development programme in order to gauge whether it was indeed equipping the tutors with the necessary means to tutor effectively. As mentioned above, I responded to a “felt need” (Elliot, 1992:53) validated by observation and informal interviews and discussions with tutors who expressed and identified gaps in their knowledge and experience in tutoring. It was this that constituted the problem/question that formed the basis of my Action Research. This problem/question was located in a particular context and I will now discuss the research site and the participants.

3.3.2 The Research Site

As the first step of the action cycle, I chose the site of the research. This was the Academic Development Division (ADD) on the Auckland Park, Kingsway Campus of UJ. The initial training of the tutors took place in the ADD on the Auckland Park Kingsway Campus. The weekly meetings, reflection and moderation sessions, which were integral features of the tutor development programme, were also held at the ADD at UJ whilst the individual meetings with me were held in my office in D-Ring 3 on the Auckland Park, Kingsway Campus.

3.3.3 The Participants: Meet the Tutors

Next, the problematizing of the action cycle included choosing the participants and as mentioned above, engaging with them through informal interviews and observations. The tutor development programme began with the careful recruitment of tutors. LES employs six tutors (to tutor two groups of approximately twenty students each) on the Auckland Park Campus and four on the Soweto Campus of UJ. It is these tutors that were purposively sampled as it was through them that I could learn the most about the tutor development programme (Merriam, 1998:61-62).

The first step in the programme was to interview and select appropriate tutors who were post-graduate students, mostly doing their Honours, with two doing Masters and one PhD student. Criteria for selection included candidates with good grade point averages indicating proficiency in their majors. In addition, the candidates had to demonstrate good interpersonal skills with an additional sensitivity to students from diverse backgrounds. Adverts went out on campus to attract interested students. Finally, I requested the Economics department to “offer” the tutoring opportunity to successful post-graduate students as I wanted to draw on the discourse that Economics students could bring to the programme. However, the tutors in this study also came from the Linguistics and English departments as well.

Three of the tutors from the previous year elected to tutor again. The advantages of this were profound in that they could offer their experience to the group. They had already been apprenticed into the LES discourse but further development of this was beneficial for both them and the programme. This also lent to the justification of investing in tutor development (Clark, 1998). The tutors were employed for fourteen hours per week because they were responsible for two classes each. Six hours were for the tutorials, two for the weekly lecture which they had to attend, two for the weekly meeting and the remaining four for preparation and marking. The payment was R75-00 per hour.

The profile of the tutor group changed along with the generic nature of the initial English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses. Initially, when the Foundation programmes began in 2002, tutorials were taught by permanent staff only. As the numbers of students increased, so did the need to employ tutors. At the outset the tutors were predominately white who spoke English as a first language or indeed Afrikaans as a first language. The tutors worked across the faculties. The tutors who were part of this study were however, from a diverse group of varied cultural communities and backgrounds.

The significant shift from a generic EAP course to tailored academic literacies modules has also influenced tutor selection. As mentioned above, in 2006, I approached the Economics department asking them for postgraduate Economics students who could possibly teach in LES. They recommended one Honours student. Her effect on the module was considerable. She and I were able to share

ideas regarding the content of the tutorial material I was developing. As the Economics 1A course is the vehicle through which LES is taught I was able to gain significant insights from the tutor regarding subject content. Thus collaborative effort began informing development of the module as well as the tutor development programme.

Having five tutors in the group of ten LES tutors from the Economics and Business Management departments in 2007, impacted greatly on tutor development and the improvement of the module material. As the module grew in its disciplinary focus, the need to draw on the expertise of tutors from faculty was greater. This is discussed in Chapter 2. However, it was the original reflecting and trying out by employing an Economics tutor initially, and then modifying further by employing several tutors from the faculty, that significantly mapped the action cycles in the development of the tutor programme. This action, reflection and moderation constituted the ongoing life of the module.

In the previous sections I have outlined the site in which this research was conducted. In addition, I have discussed the participants in this research. Having established this context, I now discuss the data collection tools that were used at each juncture in the action research cycle.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION: THE TUTOR EXPERIENCE

As was mentioned above Action Research consists of a number of phases namely problematizing, planning, acting and reflecting. Each phase in the cycle provides numerous opportunities to elicit data by means of certain tools. Within the problematizing phase of the research I made use of informal interviews and observations. Some of these observations were based on my experience of operating as module coordinator. I had engaged with the programme as it was and realized the need for changes to occur. Thus with these tools, I was able to identify the research problem that is, the inadequacies within the tutor development programme.

In the planning phase I used document analysis from my field notes and from that of the informal interviews with the tutors as well as informal observation of the tutors, which enabled me to structure and chart the course of action to be taken to address the gaps identified in the problematizing phase. During the action phase, I used observation to enable me to gain ideas of how the action implemented was fairing. Finally, in the reflection phase I used questionnaires and formal interviews to gauge the effect of the action (See Figure 3.1).

Collection of data arose from my close and ongoing interaction with the participants/tutors (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:126). Whitehead and McNiff (2006:89) suggest that the data collected in Action Research becomes the evidence in terms of whether one felt one was "living" in the direction of what one hoped to achieve in the first place. The following diagram illustrates the phases of my Action Research cycle. A detailed account of data collection tools follows thereafter.

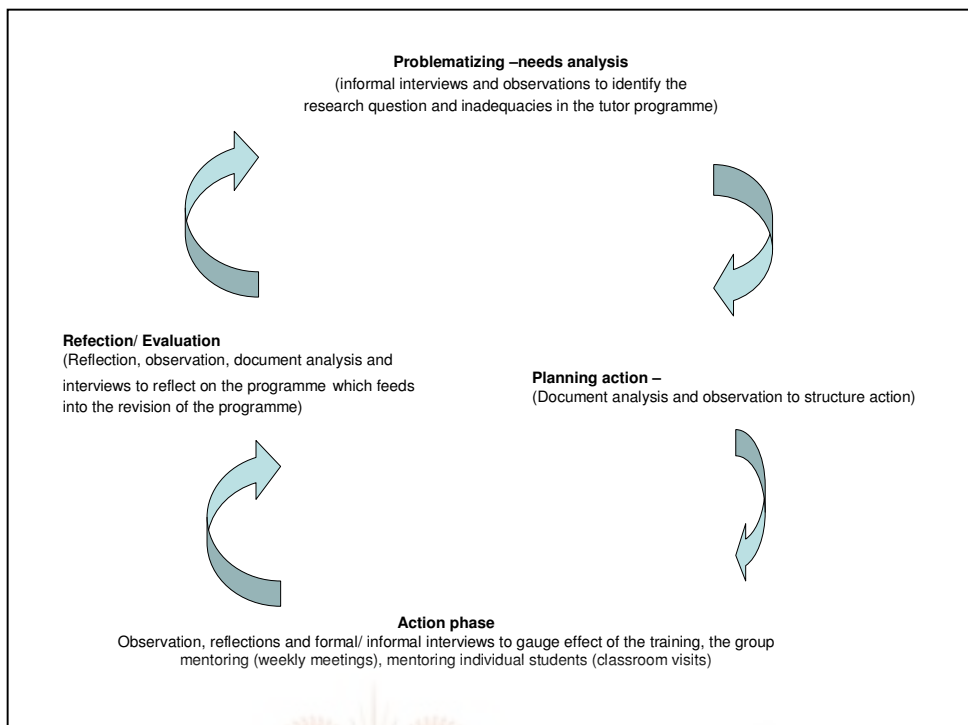


Figure 3.1 My Action Research Cycle

3.4.1. Observations

Observational data represents a firsthand encounter with the phenomena of interest (Merriam, 2002:13; Henning, et al. 2004:81). A form of observation that is used frequently in Qualitative Research is participant observation (Flick, 2006:219). Denzin (1989:157-158) writes, “Participant observation will be defined as a field strategy that simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection”. Thus, the task of the participant researcher is one of listening hard and keenly observing what is going on among people in a given situation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:69).

Participant observation has several distinguishing features (Flick, 2006:220). Flick (2006:220) describes that as a participant observer, one “dives headlong into the field”, observing from an insider’s perspective, but also influencing what one observes as a result of one’s participation. The participant observer is located in the here and now of everyday life situations and has a special interest in human meaning and interaction. This is viewed from the perspective of people who are insiders or members of a particular setting (Flick, 2006:220).

In the role of participant observer I observed what was “there”. Guided by the purpose of my study, I focused on certain aspects of the “mise en scene”- the prepared stage for “acting” (Henning, et al. 2004:81) as a framework for my

enquiry. I then embarked on the ongoing process of observing and participating in the setting, as well as recording, and then analyzing the data, to build on initial discoveries (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:69). Field notes (containing my reflections) and informal observations (Appendix C) reflected my focus on understanding the role of tutor development (Henning, et al. 2004:81) as I noted the physical setting, the participants, the activities, the interactions and conversations as well as the researcher's behaviour and how it affected the scene (Merriam, 1998:97-98). Flick (2006:221) describes the use of field notes as "descriptive observation" which allows the observer access to "new" information as it is free flowing. This is opposed to more structured observation which can take the form of observation sheets or schemes. I also used "structured observation" and observation sheets (Appendix D) as I observed tutors in their classrooms. These were central to the research question as one way in which to examine the effect of training and development on the tutors, was to examine how they applied it in their classrooms. Flick (2006:221) terms this type of observation as "selective observation" and deems it as helpful for grasping, defining and clarifying descriptive observation.

The people observed in my research were the research participants (tutors) who formed the "sample" (Henning, et al. 2004:71) of my study. They are those who "wander with" the researcher on the journey towards more knowledge about the topic (Henning, et al. 2004:71). I made use of observation in the problematizing, planning and action phase of the research cycle.

My goal in each of the research cycle phases was to render a "thick description" (Flick, 2006:221) piecing the fieldwork together with the theoretical knowledge as well as all other relevant empirical information to invoke a whole or larger picture of meaning (Henning, et al. 2004:85). I was involved in concurrent actions such as making memos for myself to remain alert for what might be needed later (Henning, et al. 2004:86) as well as making detailed notes on the environment, whilst all the while remaining open to new, unexpected information and unusual happenings (Henning, et al. 2004:86). To ensure this, I had to "take up residence" (Henning, et al. 2004:85) in the participating community or attempt to enter the lives of others. Flick (2006:223) describes this process as "going native". To really understand what one is observing, one has to adopt the viewpoints of those experiencing the field (Flick, 2006:223).

In each phase of the action research cycle, I wanted to understand the tutors' experiences of the development programme so I involved them as "collaborators" in a sense (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:71) in the research. This was significant as I wanted to emphasize the importance of reducing the power between the researcher and the research participants. In other words, I sought to "level the playing fields" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:71). There is the criticism that researchers who view the participants as partners compromise the study in that the purpose of the study will be revealed and may influenced the validity of the results. However, I suggest and agree with Maykut and Morehouse (1994:71) who note that adoption of a collaborative approach helps to establish a relationship and rapport of trust and honest exchange. This transparency is essential to "indwelling" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:71) and also means that the researcher has access to key individuals of the setting.

Furthermore, the closeness to the participants can mean that they can respond to preliminary patterns and themes that have developed out of the data and can even be called upon to review the outcomes of a study to determine whether the researcher has captured their experience (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:71). In this research the participants were called upon to both respond to and determine whether the study had captured their experience.

I also participated directly in the everyday life actions of the participants in the research setting (Henning, et al. 2004:82). I performed some of the everyday actions on site and also observed what the participants did and said (Henning, et al. 2004:85). For example, I held both group and individual meetings with the tutors, I visited the tutors in their classrooms and I even tutored classes for them in their absence. As Henning et al. (2004:85) describe, this kind of participation was extremely valuable because the knowledge that I was in the process of constructing was experienced in a similar way to which the site participants were experiencing it. My on-site involvement afforded me the role of practitioner researcher so that I was observing whilst participating fully (Henning, et al. 2004:85).

Critics however state that participant research is subjective and anecdotal (Jarvis, 1999:98-98) with little control of the environment and the conditions of action but it is precisely because this kind of research is trying to understand the uniqueness and “naturalness” of a setting, as well as the individuals in a context, that “indwelling” is so valid (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:71; Jarvis 1999:99). In this sense, only the practitioner can pick up on nuances or capture the flavour of the context as situations are unique and not replicable (Jarvis, 1999:24). Additionally, only through in-depth involvement in the practice can the richness of problematic situations be recorded (Jarvis, 1999:24). In short, practitioner researchers can report on aspects of practice in depth precisely because they are practitioners (Jarvis, 1999:24).

3.4.2 Document Analysis

The lived experience of the tutor development programme in LES was subject to documentation and recording (Flick, 2006:245). Flick (2006:245) explains that the documentation collected here can be analyzed in a qualitative way, especially when used in conjunction with other data collection methods. Henning, et al. (2004:98) concur that when documents are used in conjunction with other methods of data collection, they are valuable entities of data and should be included in the design. In addition, whether they include informal documents such as handwritten notes or more formal documents such as formal reports made about the practice, they are useful for the researcher to understand the practice more fully (Jarvis, 1999:112).

In my study, analysis of documents within the planning phase of the Action Research cycle, led to a deeper understanding of the role of the tutor in the LES programme as well as their experiences there, for example, tutors periodically wrote reports about significant dealings with students and they kept records of student attendance and performance. Jarvis (1999:115) explains that it is essential to understand the purposes underlying a document and to recognize that documents about practice should not be swallowed whole if the procedures around

the practice are not understood. Documents are to be examined in their context and not used as a whole resource (Jarvis, 1999:115). Indeed, Flick (2006:249) suggests that documents are all linked with other documents in the way that they represent and construct social realities. Thus in the analysis of documents, creativity, intuition and skill is needed to link them to the research problem, as well as to emerging ideas and insights (Merriam, 1998:152-155).

In deciding which documents to include for analysis, I thought about who produced the documents and for what purpose (Flick, 2006:250). For example, there are documents included in my analysis that describe certain parameters of the programme and generalized practice (Jarvis, 1999:114) such as tutor contracts (Appendix E). The tutorial material in the form of class worksheets also constituted the documents for examination. Finally, tutors submitted tutor self-evaluation outlines (Appendix F) prior to classroom visits stating what they deemed were their areas of strengths and weaknesses. I responded in turn with detailed reports (Appendix G) for each tutor on the session that I observed. This was done once in the academic year in February/March. Scheduling for the classroom visits was dependent on the LES timetable (Appendix H). The self evaluation outline from each tutor allowed for me to get closer to the participants/practitioners because it was material that the practitioners themselves had engaged in, thereby allowing me to “get closer” to their experiences and their practice (Jarvis, 1999:112). Thus, the reports served to enhance my understanding of the tutor experience and to gauge where the gaps in their practice were. This documentation was thus dialogic as well as reused for practical purposes, as the information they generated was feedback into tutoring practice (Flick, 2006:254).

3.4.3 Reflection Questionnaires

Questionnaires are of most value when they are used in tandem with other methods of data collection (Gillham, 2000:1). In this study, questionnaires were made use of in the reflective phase of the action research cycle. The motivation for the questionnaires was made explicit to the respondents as they were handed out with a verbal explanation (Gillham, 2000:38). In addition, each questionnaire had a title and there was careful thought given to the nature and organization of the questions (Gillham, 2000:38) so that their purpose should be obvious. Gillham (2000:38) argues that if respondents are clear about what one is trying to find out, then they are more likely to respond helpfully and appropriately.

In the questionnaires, restricted amount of space was given for where tutors could write (Gillham, 2000:39) and there was conscious effort to present an uncluttered and neat questionnaire. Tutors were also asked to complete reflection questionnaires at the end of each term (Appendix I). These questionnaires pertained to their tutoring experience for that term and included elements of the tutor development programme in its entirety such as the initial training or individual mentorship to comment on. The tutors could answer the questionnaires anonymously. In addition, they could answer in their own time (Gillham 2000: 7) and the questionnaires were administered by another module coordinator.

I attempted to create semi-structured questionnaires with open ended questions (Gillham, 2000:7). Open ended questions can be motivating for the respondent (Gillham, 2000:34) as they require more free-ranging and unpredictable responses.

Open ended questions allow for the expression of opinion allowing the respondents to see that their responses do not need to fit a straightjacket of prescribed answers (Gillham, 2000:34). Furthermore, open questions indicate what one wants to know but they do not provide a predetermined choice of answers (Gillham, 2000:63). As I wanted to engage the tutors in productive reflection, I created questions which had personal relevance for people for example, *“Describe how tutoring LES has impacted on your confidence as a tutor?”*, *“In what ways has tutoring LES impacted on your academic identity and personal sense of self?”* This is in accordance with Gillham (2000:12) who states that people are motivated by questionnaires that they can see have personalized, individualized meaning.

I used the reflection questionnaires to analyze the tutor experience of the development programme including its main features namely, the initial training and group/individualized mentorship. Coghlan and Brannick (2008:35) describe reflection as the process of stepping back from an experience to process what the experience means. In addition, it is the critical link between the concrete experience, the interpretation and taking new action. Thus, for me, using the tutor reflections enabled me to develop an ability to uncover and make explicit to myself what I had planned, discovered and achieved in practice (Coghlan & Brannick 2008:36). I had to, as Coghlan and Brannick (2008:36) suggest, go beyond my privately held, take-for-granted assumptions and consider how my knowledge was constructed. The reflections helped me to integrate action and research (Coghlan & Brannick 2008:36).

3.4.4 Interviews

As was the case with the questionnaires, formal interviews (Appendix J) were used to reflect on the implementation of the action in this research. Henning, et al. (2004:52) describe an interview as a way to bring to our attention what individuals think, feel and do and what they have to say about it in an interview giving us their subjective reality in a “formatted” discussion which is guided and managed by the interviewer.

Even though I was constantly engaged in informal interviews or conversations with the tutors on an ongoing basis, in my role as participant observer (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:79), I interviewed five tutors, those who could shed “optimal light” on issues (Henning, et al. 2004:71) formally, in order to gain in-depth knowledge and thus understanding from the participant’s perspective. These tutors were the most invested in LES indicated by their general enthusiasm and interest in the students as well as the tutor programme.

The interviews were scheduled and conducted individually, with the interview being recorded on tape. As with the questionnaires, the intent of the interview was discussed with the interviewees. This included a personal introduction, a statement of purpose and a description of what would be done with the results of the study, as well as a statement ensuring the confidentiality of the participant/interviewee (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:94).

I asked open questions in order to ensure that a “conversation of purpose” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:88) took place between myself (researcher) and the interviewee. The open questions were designed to be inviting (Maykut &

Morehouse, 1994:88) to the interviewees so as to encourage participation as well as to provoke participant perspectives. My aim was to “move beyond surface talk to a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:80). I wanted the tutors who I interviewed to regard themselves as collaborators in the research process so I set out to communicate this through my words and behaviours (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:98). In other words, I set out to empower the interviewees so that they could freely construct coherent, reasonable worlds of meaning in order to make sense of their experiences and tell their stories (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:98).

The semi-structured interview (Merriam, 1998:72-74) was chosen so that an interview schedule consisting of open-ended questions for each category of inquiry was prepared before the interview took place (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:83). The detailed questions contained in the interview schedule were helpful in developing an initial framework for the interview (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:83) yet there was enough flexibility included to broaden boundaries and pursue new discoveries during the interviews (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:83; Merriam, 1998:80). Patton (1990 cited in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:90) has formulated a question typology which could be used in an interview to stimulate responses from the participant. Patton (1990) names six types of questions (in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:90-91) that may be used in an interview namely, experience/behaviour questions, opinion questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions and background questions. I mostly used this framework to build my interview questions in conjunction with the notion of probing for elaboration or clarification (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:96).

Additionally, my interview schedule was also developed using some element of data analysis into the data collection process itself for example by using some pre-coded questions in the interview schedule. For example, *“Describe how tutoring LES has impacted on your confidence as a tutor.” “How has your relationship with your students shifted from the beginning of the year to the present?” “In what ways has tutoring LES impacted on your academic identity and personal sense of self?”* I also included questions that emerged through the collection of data at earlier intervals in the research process from questionnaires and observations such as, *“What aspects of tutor training that you received this year would you recommend for new tutors?”* Finally, I included questions that arose from my own reflection in my role as module coordinator and facilitator of the development programme such as, *“Describe how you experienced the weekly tutor meetings” “What was your experience of the classroom visits?” “What are your feelings about the moderation of your work?”*

In this section I have discussed the data collection tools used at each phase of the Action Research cycle. Having done this, the following section outlines the interventions implemented in the action phase of this research.

3.5 PROBLEMATIZING THE “ACTION” IN THE ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE

The following section deals with the various problems posed by the LES tutoring scenario. For example, the tutors had to ensure that the individual learning needs of students were successfully met through several means such as inclusive

feedback. Given this, my action plan included: the initial training of tutors, the mentoring of the tutor group, the mentoring of individual tutors and classroom observations. These will be discussed below in turn. When I implemented (acted out) the training and development plan, various things occurred which I will reflect on in the findings section in Chapter 5.

As mentioned above, Action Research demands some sort of intervention. Anderson and Herr (2005:3) describe the intervention as the steps taken to address a particular problematic situation. This section discusses the problem that led to the intervention or plan that was to be researched as well as the interventions themselves. The Language for the Economic Sciences module (LES) has a total of two hundred and eighty students who were enrolled in the Foundation Phase of the B.Com Extended Degree programme in the Faculty of Economic and Financial Sciences. As discussed in Chapter 1 this is an alternative route of access into the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

The problem that faced the coordinators of the academic literacies modules at UJ was, as outlined in Chapter 1, was how to ensure that the relative modules were tutored effectively. In LES the students are given a weekly lecture but the application and practice of the theory is applied in the tutorials that follow each lecture. The student profile has demanded the establishment and maintenance of a tutorial system as the large, single, weekly lecture format on its own is not an option due to the notion that students may be overwhelmed by information that they cannot readily access nor apply (Bruffee, 1993; Falchikov, 2001; Goodlad & Hirst, 1990). Thus as discussed in Chapter 2 the tutor system was implemented to ensure that the individual learning needs of the students could be addressed.

There are three fifty minute tutorials per week in which students are taken through structured tutorial worksheets with several tasks included to be completed per week. At least one of these tasks is handed in for marks each week and is included in a portfolio of work per term. Tutors give students feedback on the tasks which are part of the formative assessment of the module. A LES tutor is responsible for two groups of twenty students. The successful facilitation of these tasks and interpretation of the module material lies entirely with the tutor.

Therefore it was the desire to improve student learning via improved tutoring that motivated a substantial emphasis on tutor development. It became obvious that tutors needed support in myriad ways in order to tutor the LES module well so that successful learning took place. As described in Chapter 2 able, hard working tutors needed to have a clear understanding of the theory which underpinned the work they were employed to do. Hence it became clear that it was necessary to induct tutors into the community of academic literacies as well as discourse practice (Gee, 1996) which meant unpacking the pedagogic approach to academic literacies for the new tutors as the basis for a more effective student-centered tutoring practice.

As a result of this realization, rigorous tutor development and training was set up for LES tutors. Thus the tutor development programme was the intervention or plan and it was this intervention that I opted to research as I wanted to assess what effect the tutor development programme had on tutoring practice and tutor

experience. The following sections discuss the features that make up the tutor development programme.

3.5.1 The Initial Training

The tutor development programme began with initial tutor training, the benefits of which, with support from the literature, are discussed in Chapter 2. The initial training served as an orientation to tutoring and then specifically to tutoring in an academic literacies module. Part of the agreement between myself and appointed tutors as well as experienced tutors was that they participate in compulsory initial training. The initial training took place for three days, before the tutorials commenced in the first term (Appendix K for schedule).

In the generic orientation part of the training, themes such as time management, tutoring strategies, management of group work, managing diversity, classroom management and student welfare (Goodlad, 1999; Falchikov, 2001; Taylor, 1998) were addressed. For example, the tutors were given guidelines for managing diversity in the student body which included the notion of setting ground rules in the tutorials for good communication, open-mindedness and respect for each other. One of the most successful aspects of this was that tutors were asked to encourage students to brainstorm their own “class contract”. This could be formulated at the beginning of the year and referred to throughout the year should anyone be in violation of the contract. The terms of the contract could include statements such as, “ask for clarification if you do not understand someone” or “avoid ridicule and respect the beliefs of others even if they are different from yours” or “everyone has both the right and the obligation to participate in discussions and if called upon should try to respond.”

Following that, the “philosophy”, “approach” and theoretical frameworks of the module were discussed (Clark, 1998; Whitman, 1988) with the tutors, so as to establish their consciousness of the design and aim of an academic literacies module. In order to realize this I gave the tutors readings from Gee (1990), Lea and Street (2000) and Kress (1989). We also discussed the work of Lillis (2001) and the general ideas offered by Ivanič (1998) and Hewlett (1996). Furthermore, to augment this, I also selected some questions to help steer thinking and discussion about literacies and learning. I asked the tutors, “*What does academic literacy mean for you?*” “*Did you ever experience a clash of discourses/uneven transition into university? Try to describe this.*” “*Do you think our LES students are experiencing a similar thing?*” “*Thinking back over your own experience of getting this far in academia, which played a stronger role - learning or acquisition?*”

These questions were adapted from Clark (1998:126) and not only served to introduce the theoretical approaches to language teaching but also stressed the module aim of providing access to the students to an academic discourse (Economics) in addition to literacy practices. Framed by this, the tutors could orientate themselves as tutors and understand their tutoring activities and purpose as well as their role. To expand this, we also discussed social constructivism and the benefits of collaborative learning. Finally more specific training was done which was particular to the context of the LES programme such as the role of feedback and reflection in tutoring and in turn student learning.

As mentioned above tutors were asked in questionnaires to evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of the initial training. From their feedback I was able to identify gaps in their knowledge and then knew how to address these problems in other areas of the development programme during the year such as in individual consultations with myself or in group discussions. In this way, I was responding to the intervention (initial training) by adjusting my practice through my mentorship of the tutors (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

In addition, the information gleaned from the intervention would be used to make adjustments to the actual training programme for the following year. Thus the action spiral has a broader reach which allowed for further monitoring, reflection and improvement (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

3.5.2 Mentoring and Developing the Tutor Group

Mentorship and development of the tutor group was formalized into components such as weekly meetings, reflection sessions and moderation sessions at the end of each term. The weekly meetings took place on a Monday at 2:00pm after the weekly morning lecture. As a group we would discuss the theme for the week for example, reading strategies/academic texts or academic communication: language, texts and contexts. Next the tutorial material for the week was distributed, accompanied by a written tutor guide. Tutors were given time to read through the material and then I gave suggestions as to how to present and manage the material. For example: I would suggest which tasks were very important to cover and which could be used as extra material should a group work quickly. I would explain the sequencing for tasks and activities giving the rationale for it. I would explain why certain tasks were included and what our outcomes were for each task. The dialogue between myself and tutors was open and fluid. Tutors would openly engage with my suggestions adding their own thoughts and ideas as to how we could work with the material. The tutors with Economics backgrounds also helped to animate the subject material if it needed unpacking or warranted discussion.

Furthermore, if there was a task to be handed in, I would give tutors the assessment criteria and discuss the task in detail, starting with how to present the task to students. I would also distribute any other tutoring aids such as , transparencies. The group would use the weekly meeting forum to reflect on the tutorials and the student responses to the tasks from the previous week. We would also discuss any problem students or challenges that might have occurred and then the group would advise one another.

At the end of each term, the tutors would use the meeting times to have a general reflection session of the term. This was followed by the moderation sessions which included marking student work as a group. To start off this process the group would mark at least three pieces of work and compare the results in relation to the assessment criteria. This way a standard was set for tutors to use as a guideline. I used the reflection questionnaires at the end of each term together with ongoing observation, informal conversation as well as analysis of documents to assess how the tutors were experiencing group mentorship as an aspect of the development programme. I could then respond to the intervention and make the necessary changes to my approaches and design.

3.5.3 Mentoring and Developing Individual Tutors

Mentorship and development of individual tutors was achieved through an “open-door” policy in that tutors were encouraged to interact with me on an almost daily basis (Clark, 1998). From the initial days of the programme I made it clear that my role was to support and guide the tutors. I wanted to create an atmosphere of safety for the tutors where they could readily approach me with queries, thoughts, difficulties or observations as well as suggestions. This forum was also used to help individual tutors with areas of tutoring with which they might be struggling such as, giving appropriate, effective feedback or time management or dealing with individual students’ needs or problems. I wanted to impress on the tutors that I was interested in them as individuals and that their tutoring experiences mattered to me. My motivation was to illustrate to tutors how they might perform the role as mentor to their students.

This diagram illustrates the idea of the “human face” that tutors experienced in that they were encouraged to “mirror” the mentorship that they received in their dealings with the students.

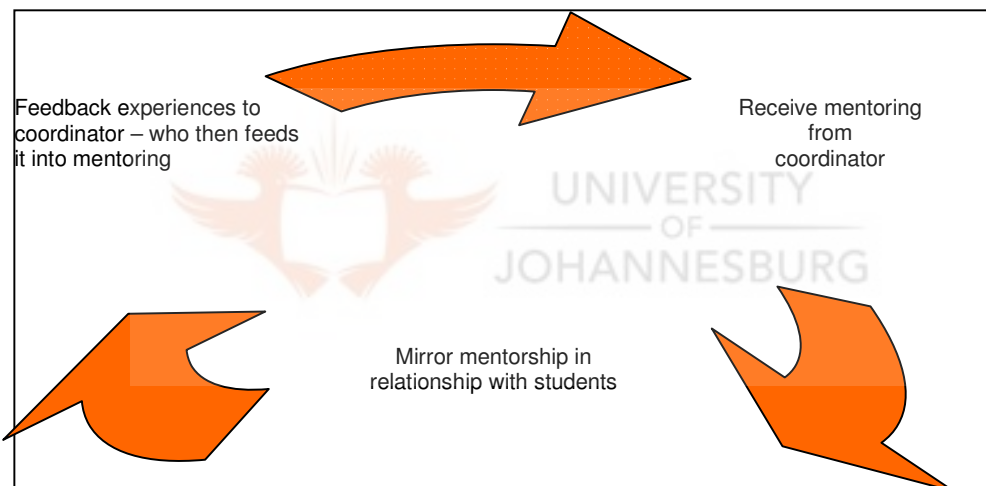


Figure 3.2 The Mentorship Cycle

In turn, the dialogue (both verbal, informal and ongoing as well as that communicated through formal reflection and interviews) that I established with the individual tutors, allowed me to constantly “take stock” (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006:3) of the effect of individual mentorship as an aspect of the development programme. Thus, I could reflect and amend constantly as well as improve my dealings with the tutors.

3.5.3.1 Classroom visits – a key to mentoring and developing individual tutors

As an additional method of mentoring and developing the tutors, I established a “classroom visit” system. This involved me “sitting in” on a tutorial with the intent of dialoguing with the respective tutor thereafter about the tutorial and tutoring practice. The tutors were made aware of this procedure from the time of the interview for the job. The classroom visits were explained as part of the tutor

development programme and presented as opportunities for tutors to discuss and reflect on their tutoring. Before the visit, tutors were asked to fill out a self evaluation outline (Appendix F) in which they documented in what areas of tutoring they felt successful in and in what areas they felt they might need assistance.

I used this outline as a guide for my feedback when reflecting with the tutor after the visit. After the visit I would write a report (Appendix G) for each tutor and offer my comments on the strengths that I saw as well as any possible suggestions or ideas for improving tutoring practice. The language of this report was always suggestive, inviting the tutor to consider other approaches or ideas in the classroom. Thus it was never threatening or overtly critical.

This intervention lends itself to that described by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:563) in which they discuss collaborative efforts as a way to allow practitioners to gain knowledge of their practice and then transform practice together. The classroom visits informed both my practice and those of the tutors as we were able to simultaneously help each other to develop through dialogue. As I learned I could both identify strengths and weaknesses in tutoring practice more readily and communicate solutions more effectively to the tutors. The tutors in turn could use the feedback to improve their tutoring. In addition what was begun in the forum of the classroom visits could be continued in individual mentorship or even in the group mentorship forum via discussion. Thus the intervention as described by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005:563) was not linear but rather reflexive and fluid allowing for an authentic sense of development as a result of the action and reflection thereof.

In this section I have discussed the action phase of the research cycle and described the features of the tutor development programme as they were implemented. The following section outlines the analytical lenses that I used to view the data.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

It is the aim of the qualitative researcher to understand the situation constructed by the participants in a certain setting, in that one attempts to capture what people say and do and how they interpret the world (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:18). Words are the way that most people come to understand their situations and the task of the qualitative researcher is to find patterns in words (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:18) and make sense of the data by presenting those patterns for inspection (Merriam, 1998:178). This starts with the first reading of the first piece of literature, the field notes from the first observation or the first document studied (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:121).

However, before starting to work with the data, Maykut and Morehouse (1994:123) suggest that the researcher becomes “especially in-tune” with themselves. Katz (cited in Maykut and Morehouse 1994:123) defines this process as *epoche* and explains that it is the process wherein the researcher approaches the research with a fresh view, free from all prejudices or presumptions pertaining to the study so that the researcher’s personal viewpoint is set aside in order to see the experience itself. However, in terms of my study and action research, my personal involvement as I have argued above enhances the understanding of the phenomena.

Working to organize my data, I conducted a global analysis which gave me a holistic reading of the data in that I was able to identify main themes by making notes and drawing a concept map (Appendix L) but not breaking the data up into bits (Henning, et al. 2004:109). This involved a network type of thinking rather than specific coding and categories to uncover the findings (Henning, et al. 2004:107). I was looking for an overall patterning in the interviews, the observations, the questionnaires and the documents with the idea that patterns connect as a result of my organization and interpretation of the data (Henning, et al. 2004:110).

Using this mechanism I was able to create a design logic in that I was tasked with noticing emergent signs and symbols that warranted connection (Henning, et al. 2004:110). Even though the data was not “broken” or put into “codeable” pieces, it does not mean that I was not close to the data nor that I was not rationalizing or systematizing it. It simply means that I was engaged with looking for patterns and connections in it (Henning, et al. 2004:110). In other words, when reading through the texts to be analyzed, I noted keywords alongside the manuscripts. Whilst doing this, I kept in mind my background knowledge and the research question so that I had a sense of what I was looking for (Flick, 2006:315). In this way, a structuring of large passages of the text was produced (Flick, 2006:316). Next, I refined the overall structure that I produced by marking central concepts and statements. As a result of this step, themes emerged, under which I listed ideas, so that I had a “table of contents” (Appendix M) from the data (Flick, 2006:316). From this, I was able to decide what to include in my actual interpretation.

It is in the connections that the data takes on meaning thus not in the single entities or units of meaning as such (Henning, et al. 2004:111). This way of analyzing data is not as linear as content analysis tends to be (Henning, et al. 2004:111) but also serves to achieve thematic organization. Furthermore, once themes have been extracted from the data as representative of “researched reality”, they may then form the basis of the argument and discussion of the research problem (Henning, et al. 2004:107). The connections between the data tell the story in that data. Initially some data may seem insignificant, but then takes on a different meaning when seen in conjunction with other data that creates a whole picture or “landscape” (Henning, et al. 2004:112).

Indeed, Flick (2006:316) notes that global analysis gives one an overview of thematic range of the text. Additionally, Henning, et al. (2004:114) explain that when making patterns of meaning or collages, there is going to be “left-over” data that does not fit into the picture one is creating. However, this information is useful in that understanding the reasons why it does not lend to meaning making and understanding can improve the study (Henning, et al. 2004:114). Moreover, the interpretive nature of this analysis was made manageable and enhanced by the fact that I am so close to the context of the research (Henning, et al. 2004:106) and that I knew the whole set of data well from working so closely with it to shape the development programme.

In this section, I have discussed global analysis as the way in which my data was organized and analyzed. The next section deals with the means by which the research was made valid and reliable.

3.7 TRIANGULATION, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The internal validity of this study is supported and delineated by triangulation using a combination of multiple methods of data collection. In this case interviews, observations, questionnaires and document analysis confirm emerging findings (Merriam, 2002:25). Using triangulation enabled me to check the data, for example, what was said in an interview could be checked against what was observed in the field or what was read in a document (Merriam, 2002:25). The purpose of this ensured that the flaws of one method could be compensated in the strengths of another and that by combining methods, one can get the best in each whilst overcoming deficiencies (Merriam, 1988:68).

Internal validity refers to establishing the trustworthiness of inferences that were drawn from the data (Merriam, 1998:199) so I asked participants to comment on my interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2002:26) thereby establishing “member checks” (Merriam, 2002:26). Since the raw data was derived from participants’ interviews, reflection questionnaires and my observations, I asked them to review my tentative findings and establish whether my interpretation “rings true” (Merriam, 2002:26) or if the results were “plausible” (Merriam, 1988:204).

External validity traditionally refers to the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations (Merriam, 2002:28). Merriam (2002:29) explains that one effective way to ensure external validity is to provide a “rich, thick description” and enough information about the setting and the participants, so that external readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match and whether the findings can be transferred. The account of the action earlier in this chapter, which includes the features of the development programme, beginning with the initial training, followed by the ways of mentoring the individual tutors as well as mentoring the tutor group, should provide this “rich, thick description”. This should enable readers to determine whether or not the findings match their tutor development programmes at other Higher Education institutions or in other departments at UJ as well as making it possible for outsiders to understand the context and experience (Merriam, 1998:211).

Reliability also refers to the extent to which the research findings can be replicated in another setting and whether or not the results are consistent and dependable (Merriam, 2002:27). The problem with reliability in qualitative research is that it involves humans and seeking to understand as well as describe the world as they view it (Merriam, 2002:27). As a result human behaviour is never static thus replication of a qualitative study will not yield the same results (Merriam, 2002:27). Merriam (2002:27) explains that the way to overcome this is to ensure “consistency” and “dependability” in the research, whereby the results are consistent with the data collected. Several strategies can be used to ensure the dependability of the results such as triangulation, member checks, peer review, the researcher’s position, adequate engagement in data collection, an audit trail and thick description (1998:206; Merriam, 2002:31).

For the purposes of this research I employed numerous methods of data collection over the period of twelve months which should strengthen reliability and validity. As mentioned above, I have attempted to create an “audit trail” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:146; Merriam 1988:207; Merriam 2002:21) consisting of

questionnaires and the original transcripts of interviews and the use of observations recorded. I have also described in detail how the data was analyzed using a global analysis. The account of the action of the tutor development programme should lead to a thick, rich description. However, I acknowledge my position as the developer of the programme. I constantly engaged in discussions with my peers, that is, the other coordinators of Extended Degree programmes based in other faculties, about the tutor development programme. The emerging findings and interpretations were read over by the participant tutors and discussed. In addition, as researcher I have read extensively on the subject of peer tutoring and tutor development and training. I have tutored and have observed tutors which has led me to reflect on the practice.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS – DO TUTORS GET A FAIR DEAL?

In keeping with Action Research, the aim of this study was to establish the effectiveness of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module. As module coordinator my role could be perceived as coercive but every precaution was taken not to intimidate the tutors. I positioned myself as a full participant, as a colleague of the tutors not as a supervisor. In this sense, the tutors could share information with me and rather than feel it was extracted from them. When the research was explained to the tutors, they were willing to participate in the study. I informed the tutors of the purpose of the study as well as how the data would be gathered by means of informal conversation at the start of the development programme and then through reflection questionnaires and formal interviews during the year as well as through my ongoing observation and formal classroom visits. I gained their consent framed by the notion that individuals have the right to safety and privacy. Tutors were given the option of answering reflection questionnaires in their own time and anonymously. I asked the tutors if they were willing to be interviewed and I assured the participants of anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were given pseudonyms in the writing up of the research and were also given the right to withdraw from the study without reprisal if so desired.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In order to understand the role of the tutor development programme, I used Action Research to investigate the programme, which consisted of initial tutor training, mentorship of individual tutors and the tutor group, as well as tutor review in the form of classroom visits. The tools used for collecting data included observation, participant observation, the completion of questionnaires, interviewing of selected participants and analysis of certain documents.

The data gathered through the data collection tools was analyzed using a global analysis technique and the findings are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the method for data analysis, namely global analysis was discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of this global analysis. The purpose of analyzing the data was to examine the role of the peer tutor development programme in the Language for Economic Sciences (LES) module. With regards to my research question – what is the role of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module? – an overall answer is provided. The role of the peer tutor development programme is to empower and enable the tutor to meet or even exceed the demands and the goals of the module they are required to tutor. Following this, the data provides the answer that, the role of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module is to 1) provide initial tutor training, 2) to provide ongoing mentorship to tutors, 3) to enable self-evaluation during tutoring and 4) to enable the development of tutor identity. These four major themes will be discussed below in turn.

Based on my examination of the data, I would suggest that the themes of providing tutors with initial training thus effectively equipping them to tutor, is extrinsic (concrete, seen) development of tutors. Additionally, providing ongoing mentorship to tutors in the form of creating a relationship between coordinator and the tutors, and providing the forum for weekly meetings, with collective problem solving, is also extrinsic development of tutors. Other features of ongoing mentorship include working with the tutors to moderate student work and undertaking classroom visits of the tutorials with follow-up feedback. The themes of enabling self-evaluation during tutoring and developing tutor identity are integral to the intrinsic (abstract, unseen) development of tutors.

Accordingly, the findings emerging from the data have been described in this chapter and have been categorized into themes as mentioned above. However, another vitally important element in the analytical process is making sense by interpretation of findings to inform the practice of tutor development and training. The findings should highlight the practice of developing tutors and their experience of the training and development programme by discussing how they resonate with the literature or by addressing any gaps that occur. Moreover they should provide understanding of any changes that need to be introduced into the practice of training and developing tutors as well as any deficits or shortcomings which may need to be addressed. The discussion of the findings in this sense and entirety will be dealt with in Chapter 5.

4.2 To Equip Tutors with Key Skills to Tutor

As a starting point, this first theme consists of the response from the tutors to the initial training sessions in that it explores the key areas that the tutors identified as being most significant. In other words, the central elements that equipped them to tutor effectively. These key areas broadly were: developing discrete writing skills in students, developing tutoring strategies for tutors to utilize and helping tutors to foster a student/tutor relationship. From the data it emerges that the tutors saw the

benefit of the initial tutor training as residing in the development of skills they could use in their tutoring practice. These skills, more specifically, as perceived by the tutors include: the skill to develop discrete writing skills in students such as summarizing, note-taking and note-making, the skill to explore various tutoring strategies, the skill of feedback, the skill to manage diversity as well as classroom management. Thus, the tutors valued these skills as a means of equipping them to tutor LES effectively.

Before I discuss each one of these in turn, it is significant to note that it emerges from the data that the effect of the initial tutor training was predominately positive and valued by the tutors. The tutors seemed to additionally find the training rewarding and useful. Significantly, the training served as a point of reference for the tutors throughout the year and functioned to “shape” the tutors. I suggest that this is largely because an overall theme of the training was to describe to tutors what was expected of them. Additionally, training the tutors appears to have given them a sense of value and empowerment. Elvin for example, maintained that

I think that the most rewarding aspect of the job is the training. Although you come to the programme with some prior knowledge, you are however exposed to new ideas and challenges that help broaden your thinking. Also you are sculpted into a productive and constructive tutor.

Additionally, Melissa said

The training at the beginning of the year had a big impact on my work as a tutor this term because it served as a refresher course. ...one at times forgets things and even worse forgets why things are done, the way that they are done and this serves to remind one how and why the programme is run as it is...Having been trained my understanding of the work that I tutor is deeper.

Furthermore, Matthew responded in reflection,

The training that I received at the beginning of the year was very helpful. I kept referring to the information that I received at the training. Whenever I was not sure of what to do, I would go back to the notes I took (at the training) or try to remember what was said.

However the data also presented some negative observations. Beth noted the following,

To a large extent I felt personally that the tutor training was geared more specifically to new tutors...so much was a little repetitive for me.

In addition, Trevor stated,

I simply think there should be more sharing of experiences than theory.

Thus from the data gleaned from reflection questionnaires and formal interviews regarding the initial training, it is clear that the majority of the tutors found the initial training to be useful and productive whilst two tutors felt the training could have had a different, more inclusive approach, in that it could have considered the needs of experienced tutors more and also been more interactive. Upon reflection, I realized that the initial training needed to offer the experienced tutors some additional challenges. I concluded that I have been under utilizing the expertise of experienced tutors and should visit ways of enabling them to act as mentors for new tutors (Falchikov 2001:166). However, the overall effect that the initial training had on the tutors was positive, providing them with a foundation of support and a point of reference (Topping, 1988).

4.2.1 To Equip Tutors to Develop Academic Writing Skills in Students

Over and above the initial training as a whole, analysis of the data made evident that the tutors identified three particular areas in which the training particularly equipped them with ability to develop students' academic writing, summarizing, note-taking and note-making skills. Hence it is apparent the tutors developed an understanding of the importance of incorporating and developing academic skills into their tutoring and were able to explicitly teach the appropriate skills as the need arose with the desired effect. Firstly, the data confirmed that tutors obtained the skills that they needed from the initial training to develop students' writing competence. This included a better use of academic language and employing academic writing conventions such as utilizing paragraphs and linking devices. Lee verifies,

They [the students] were also very appreciative of lessons designed to improve their writing. According to students exercises on linking devices, paragraphing and register were very helpful.

Moreover, Trevor explained,

I think that they [the students] benefit from me constantly repeating the importance of skills/formats etc of writing/essays. The students told me they learn from me when I constantly remind them/ask them the skills.

This quote illustrates a notion raised in the initial training that LES is designed to, among other things, develop essayist literacy. Discussion in the initial training of Lea and Street's (2000) models of student writing as well as the ideas of Lillis (2001) made tutors aware of the myriad issues comprising student writing. Importantly, tutors came away from the initial training expecting that if students struggled with writing, the reasons for this might be complex. As a result, tutors were instructed on what kind of assistance students might need to develop writing skills. These included academic writing structures and conventions in general. These were also linked to the Economics discourse albeit roughly in the initial training and then more specifically in tutor development meetings throughout the academic year. For example, as the module progressed, conventions of writing in Economics were unpacked and described to the students via assigned writing tasks.

4.2.1.1. Summarizing, note-taking and note-making

A second academic skill that the tutors felt better able to develop in students was that of summarizing. Benjamin explained,

I found the work on summaries effective and successful because the students could identify it as a skill needed in ALL subjects and a skill that would benefit them.

Additionally, Lee asserted,

....the students seem to enjoy the summary and summarizing skills above all as they recognize the applicability of it.

Consequently, tutors were able to teach the skill of summarizing with a view to helping students use it effectively in other subjects thereby confirming the transferability of the skill. In the same vein, a third academic writing competence that tutors felt more equipped to develop in students was note-making and note taking. With reference to working with notes Melissa remarked,

The students enjoyed most of their lessons which were especially geared towards improving all their university subjects, such as note-taking and note-making.

I suggest that given that LES forms part of a foundation year for university study, these transferable skills played an important role in student development. Tutors had to be equipped to tutor these basic skills and not assume that their students “knew” them. Additionally, tutors needed to think about students’ academic histories and their exposure to writing. Thus how to tutor these skills was made overt to tutors. As Rose (2008:12) notes, tutors are postgraduates and therefore are not consciously aware of patterns of academic discourse. Clark (1998:122) additionally asserts that postgraduate tutors may have a certain “blindness” as to how they “learnt” to function academically at university. Enabling tutors to develop such skills in students ensured their consciousness of student needs both in LES and in other subjects.

4.2.2 To Equip Tutors to Utilize Various Tutoring Strategies

It is evident from the data that the tutors used the tutoring strategies learned in initial training in their classrooms to good effect in most instances. Such tutoring strategies included collaborative learning, facilitation skills, giving students inclusive feedback, classroom management and managing diversity. The data suggests that these learnt strategies equipped the tutors to tutor effectively.

4.2.2.1 Collaborative learning

The data affirms that tutors employed the principals of collaborative learning as a tutoring strategy in their classrooms effectively. When asked in tutor feedback at the end of the first semester to describe what aspects of the module appeared to be successful in their groups, the following responses were given:

Anything which required collaboration seems to work better in my LES group. I have a mixture of very strong with very weak students, so it helps when I can get the stronger ones to link up and help the weaker ones. (Elvin)

The group discussion aspects were the most successful because, it allowed students to freely express themselves knowing that no answer is necessarily wrong, and therefore there was no fear of judgment. (Beth)

I enjoy tutorials because the classes are small and therefore I am able to interact with the students well. It is easy to give attention to each student, particularly with the smaller class of 15. I find that the better the relationship that I have with a student, the better the feedback I provide for the student. (Kate)

Significantly key features from the training emerged from these responses. These were: how to give students individual voice by creating an atmosphere of trust and safety so that students feel comfortable expressing themselves, how to build relationships with students in a small group set up and finally, how to address a group of mixed level abilities. I suggest that the training of LES tutors enabled them to break the mould of traditional “chalk and talk” teacher dominant practice or “tutor as preacher” (Whitman 1988:39). In so doing, they were able to attempt to create collaborative learning teams in their classrooms (Vygotsky, 1978) wherein students participated actively and were given voice. This was a process and tutors developed over the year. A typical comment that I wrote in one tutor’s report, to go some way in helping him, after a classroom visit was,

You could also think about getting the students to discuss in small groups or pairs. You could put weak and strong students together and encourage the weaker ones to report back to the class or act as scribes.

4.2.2.2 Facilitation skills

The initial training made tutors aware of the difference between the transmission mode of teaching as opposed to the role of a facilitator of learning. This was framed in the training by explicitly explaining to the tutors what the theories underpinning LES were as well its intended outcomes so that the tutors could understand why facilitating learning was so important. As with collaborative learning, tutors worked on this throughout the year. The importance of facilitation was reiterated in the reports (Appendix G) generated after the classroom visits. A comment that I frequently wrote in tutor reports was,

Remember that the students can serve as a resource for themselves and for each other. You need to successfully inspire them to talk to each other and learn from each other. They need to get into the culture of listening to each other. If you invite students to talk, you are giving them a voice and letting them agree or disagree

with each other...the direction of the discussion needs to come from you with carefully planned questions.

Thus tutors were reminded of the benefits of collaborative learning, as good tutoring practice, after the classroom visits, as a follow up to what was mentioned in training. For example, Trevor wrote

When I assumed the position as tutor, I thought my role would be to re-teach all work covered during lectures. The training at the beginning of the year suggested that my role as a tutor is to facilitate. As a result my approach in delivering material to be completed in tutorials is getting students to discuss and recall work covered in their lecture, whilst guiding them as much as possible.

I suggest that the LES tutors were also able to apply collaborative learning to their classrooms effectively because they experienced the benefits of collaboration first hand in their weekly tutors meetings. Regular or weekly meetings may offer a site for collaboration in which tutors work together and depend on one another to work out problems rather than relying solely on an authority figure for guidance (Bruffee, 1993:1). Bruffee (1993:1) refers to this as “the craft of interdependence” and explains that in this type of collaborative team interaction between people, everyone’s opinions are valued. Moreover active participation is expected and the role (Goodlad, 1999:14) of the “organizer” or “coordinator” or “trainer” is that he/she is part of the group (Watson-Todd, 2004:108).

4.2.2.3 The skill of giving inclusive feedback to students

In the role of facilitator of learning, an important part of the work of LES tutors is to provide written feedback to students. Thus, their initial training comprises of a segment on writing feedback. Tutors in LES are expected to concentrate on feedback as a means of dialoging with students about their work. This, in essence, is an extension of the classroom and a way of building a tutoring relationship with individual students. By and large, this type of detailed, structured, personalized feedback would be different from that which the students and tutors might have experienced elsewhere in their university studies. It manifest from the data that some tutors responded favourably to the initial training on writing feedback. For example,

Beth explained

The training on how to write feedback is an essential part of the training that every tutor needs to participate in. This training provides immense insight into the role of the tutor as the marking in the LES course focuses more on engagement than content. I was shown how to respond to the students’ work effectively in order to help them improve their writing.

Furthermore, Danica said

Training on how to give feedback to the students is the most important training that a tutor can receive, because it ensures that students are able to benefit from the tutorials and see where they are doing well and where they are lacking. I have learned how to give sufficient and competent feedback for my students to rework. I have found that improved feedback has improved my students' drafts.

However, the data presents that some tutors did not think that the initial training on giving feedback was in depth enough. For example, Henrique articulated,

The training did not prepare me for feedback. The sessions I had with my coordinator made me aware of the importance of good feedback and also equipped me with the ability to give good feedback.

In addition, Matthew expressed that,

The instruction on feedback is key and needs to be extended. This often dictates a tutor's future efficiency as this is the most useful and effective mode of instruction.

Melissa concurred with Matthew by explaining that

Giving feedback on various pieces of work that differ is always difficult, thus I believe training on feedback whether formal or informal needs to be a continuous process, because one can always improve.

Finally Elvin recognized the difficulty of personalizing feedback which indicates that more guidance is needed with this aspect. He wrote,

I think that giving feedback is the most challenging aspect of this course to me because sometimes it requires you to actually get into the mind of the learner in order to understand why he/she is struggling with a particular component of the course. Also, the fact that you have to constantly personalize your feedback tends to be a daunting process at times.

Thus although some tutors felt that the training equipped them to give feedback successfully, others felt that it is a complicated process which needed to be expanded on in the initial training. Upon reflection, I realized that my training did not include enough practical exercises to engage the tutors with feedback. I could have offered tutors samples of student writing or instructed tutors to comment on each other's feedback (Falchikov, 2001:166). I also realized that I would have to spend more time with individual tutors discussing their feedback. Furthermore, additional workshops on giving feedback should take place throughout the academic year. In these, tutors could perhaps bring examples of their own feedback for peer review.

4.2.2.4 The skill of classroom management

Another element common to tutor training which is integral to equipping tutors to tutor effectively, and one which I included, was classroom management. It is

apparent from the data that the initial training on classroom management could have presented differently and more practically. In addition, once I had visited the tutors in their classrooms, I realized that practical application would have benefitted them more as I identified gaps in the way that some tutors managed their classrooms. For example, one comment that I gave on a report was,

Be careful of focusing on one group as soon as you have set a task. Make sure that everyone is settled into a task and then move on to work with a group. It is frustrating for the other students if you are busy with a group and they are not sure what to do.

Additionally, in the following responses, it is evident that tutors realized a different approach to classroom management would have been useful.

A class must be modeled to the tutors with new tutors visiting the experienced tutors. (Lee)

We should try make it more practical by presenting practical scenarios to the tutors. (Trevor)

It might be useful to role-play a few situations which might arise in a tutorial – this could provide first time tutors (in particular) with the chance to “practice” tutoring and provide feedback to each other. (Ernest)

Training should be more “didactic” in terms of content in order to equip tutors with “practical skills” they can use in class. Time management is critical for the successful completion of each tutorial session or period. (Henrique)

Nevertheless, one tutor did acknowledge that

My attention was drawn to the fact that I need to affirm myself in the classroom. I have become more strict and do not allow disruptive behaviour. (Lee)

Hence it is apparent, as with feedback that tutors saw a gap in the initial training in that they wanted something more practical to work through in order to “experience” classroom management. Upon reflection, mock tutorials (Falchikov, 2001:165) would have allowed tutors learn what to expect in a more tangible, memorable and creative way. I could have given tutors “real” scenarios or problems to work through rather than simply discuss possibilities with them. Significantly, the tutors, in their feedback, noted that experienced tutors could be called upon to demonstrate their tutoring skills so that tutors could “see them in action” (Falchikov, 2001:166). Thus, in this instance, I under-utilized the resource that experienced tutors are. Upon reflection, I consider the idea of appointing an experienced tutor to mentor a new tutor very practical and generative (Randall, 2004: 159).

4.2.2.5 Managing diversity

Closely linked to classroom management is managing diversity which is another tutoring strategy that the tutors took up due to its relevance to tutoring in LES. Analysis of the data presents that the initial training on diversity management did assist the tutors. Trevor described his experience of his group,

I have a class of black students; I have had unpleasant experiences because I am white. They would make remarks in class, however I have responded in a professional way and these occurrences have subsided.

Additionally Benjamin reflected,

Tutoring LES has made me view the academic community in a different light, in the sense that it has opened up the view of diversity which is part of the student body and further made me aware of the different and definite levels that exist within that student body.

Kate also explained,

The aspects of tutor training that I recommend for new tutors....is the awareness about the trickiness of both multilingualism and the coexistence of different social/educational backgrounds in the same group...the awareness of the difference in backgrounds helps prevent the alienation of the so-called weak students.

However, it is also evident from the data that more time and detail was needed on the topic of diversity management. This is evident in the following responses:

We could spend a bit more time on how to deal with difficult students.
(Lee)

Discussing possible problem situations was very helpful. It is a pity we did not have more time to look at these in detail as a group. (Elvin)

Consequently, it is evident that the tutors consistently drew on their training as it enabled them to manage diversity with professionalism and sensitivity in the classroom. However, as diversity management is such a multifaceted and challenging aspect of tutoring, it seems as if there needs to be more input in that area of training. Upon reflection, I suggest that it might prove beneficial to provide tutors with "scenarios" that have presented themselves as challenging and allow tutors to work through them in role-play exercises (Falchikov, 2001: 166). These "scenarios" could be taken from real instances that have occurred in LES at UJ. Alternatively, I could make use of recordings and film tutorials (Whitman, 1988:39) which tutors can then unpack and discuss as a collective training exercise.

4.3 FOSTERING A STUDENT/TUTOR RELATIONSHIP

Examination of the data establishes that another role of the initial tutor training was to equip tutors with awareness as well as the means to provide a myriad of support for the students and in so doing to create and manage a student/tutor relationship. This is done through providing support for students, fostering empathy, creating rapport and developing student identity.

4.3.1 Providing Support for Students

A first common feature of fostering a student/tutor relationship that the tutors identified as being important was providing holistic support for students. In LES, tutors need to adopt a holistic approach to tutoring in that attention had to be given to both knowledge acquisition as well as the students' well-being. This is in keeping with the ethos of LES which includes creating an environment for students which is notably different from others in that students are regarded as individuals and not as a mass group.

Elvin illustrates this by stating that,

My personal goal was to make sure that the students receive the kind of support that they don't normally receive in academic situations, as well as drawing out their potential as students by empowering them with the kind of skills that will benefit them for their university career and further on.

In the same vein, Danica reflected that,

The training I found to be not only sufficient but also extremely helpful. This was because it not only covered the academic side of the work but also the other side of the tutor, student interactions and the possible problems that could arise and how to handle them.

Moreover, Melissa confirmed this by saying,

My personal goals for my work...to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and provide them with appropriate support where necessary/possible.

Similarly, Henrique explained that,

I seldom sit down in the tutorials because I am always around since my students like asking me material-based one-to-one questions. I have succeeded in giving them feedback that helps them improve on their weaknesses while maintaining their sense of worth and interest in the course.

However, the data also shows that more input is needed in training with regards to enabling tutors to provide support.

Benjamin reflected that he would recommend more on,

How to motivate and encourage the students to perform better and how to support students that are experiences (sic) personal challenges.

The notion of dealing with students as individuals comes from some of the theories underpinning LES. For example, Lillis (2001) suggests that awareness needs to be given to the academic past that a student may have experienced. For example, a student might have had schooling that did not equip them to write well academically. In other words, the initial training in LES aimed to allow tutors to understand that their worldviews and their schooling experiences were not necessarily those of their students. Consequently tutors had to put concentrated and deliberate effort into individual students in order to support them. The tutor reflections acknowledged the implications of this for the tutors and one tutor noted that more guidance was necessary to enable them to cope with this demand. An idea that I had to go some way in helping tutors cope with this aspect of tutoring LES would be to invite experienced tutors to discuss ideas on how to motivate and encourage LES students with new tutors.

4.3.2 Fostering Empathy for Students

Inextricable from providing support for students is the notion that in order to really assist students, tutors needed to have a good sense of their home life and backgrounds as well as an awareness of any present difficulties affecting their performances. In this vein, the data verifies that a second role of the initial training regarding student support was to provide tutors with the consciousness to empathize with students.

Benjamin recognized that initial training functioned by,

Helping tutors to understand the expectations of students who have been identified as “underprepared” for academic demands in terms of language.

Lee explained further,

...some students are very receptive and it's easy to see them blossom and grow, whilst other students are at a disadvantage because of their previous education that they need a lot more help...

I suggest that these observations made by tutors are the result of tutors internalizing the theories presented to them at the initial training. For example, manifest in these types of statements is the understanding that there is tension for students between the demands of academic writing conventions and more primary, familiar ways of writing (Lea & Stierer, 2000:11). Tutors recognize that students have a gap between their schooling and the academy. They realize that their role is to “talk” or guide students into academic conventions that are new (Lillis, 2001:168). However, this cannot be done without conscious empathy (Clark, 1998).

4.3.3 Creating Rapport with Students

Analysis of the data demonstrates that the initial training, in relation to providing student support, functioned to instruct tutors to build appropriate rapport with their students. As intimated above, the consciousness that tutors start to have about who their students are begins in the discussions held in the initial training. In training, tutors are encouraged view LES as a module designed to focus on individual students given the theories that underpin it and the amount of contact time, in small groups, that tutors have with students. Additionally, the forum of giving students individualized feedback and encouraging students to dialogue with tutors in that feedback, allows for further rapport to develop between tutor and student. Moreover, the example given by the coordinator that is, an “open-door policy”, is expected to be “mirrored” by the tutors in their relationships with their students. It was stressed to tutors in the initial training that they should attempt to create an atmosphere of safety and trust in the classroom by demonstrating and proceeding with an attitude of open-mindedness and tolerance. However, it was also stressed that the student/tutor relationship needed to be a professionally bounded one. As I met with tutors throughout the year, I noted how fondly they spoke of their students as they progressed as a tutor group together.

Melissa affirmed,

My relationship with my students has shifted from an exclusively functional/work relationship to both a work-based and socially interactive one as we have come to know each other on a human level.

Elvin reiterated,

At the beginning of the year it was vital to establish a formal tutor /student relationship which would set the tone for the rest of the year. Having established that relationship it became easier for the students to approach and relate to me knowing exactly what the boundaries of behaviour are. The majority of my students were able to establish a good formal and somewhat informal relationship.

Matthew equally observed that

Each term brings with it the opportunity to improve on the errors that one made in the previous term, for me it has especially being (sic) on my interactions with the students, always keeping in mind that professional distance that it required to make the tutorials successful. Otherwise students tend to view the tutor as a friend and their engagement and performances start to wane because they do not have that constant reminder that they are here to learn and they have to do what is expected of them.

The last two quotes reflect how tutors managed to form the appropriate relationship with students with definite boundaries of professional interaction. As my relationship with the tutors developed over the academic year, so too did those

between tutors and students. The idea of supporting tutors and being sensitive to tutors' needs are foremostly expressed in the literature by Watson-Todd (2004) and Goodlad (1999). These ideas served as a basis for my approach to the tutors. By acting as a role model for tutors (Watson-Todd, 2004:118), I could demonstrate to tutors how to build a rapport with students. By providing the support that tutors needed (Goodlad, 1999:14), I could illustrate how effective that individualized, holistic approach could be. In this way, tutors could gain from its positive effect and act that out in their relationships with students.

4.3.4 Developing Student Identity

Finally, the data establishes that tutors were equipped as a result of tutor development to transform student identity. Hence the tutors recognized their instrumental role in helping students enter into the academy by building their confidence and by developing the skills and language that they needed to function in the academy. The idea here is that students evolved to adopt the role of university student from high school student. This could not have been done without being fuelled by the empathy, understanding and rapport which shaped most tutor/student relationships in LES.

Lee explained,

My students have gained great confidence in themselves. My students have gained confidence to think out of the box, and consider the bigger picture through applying critical thinking. My students have broadened their goals of where they want to be in life and I can see how they have matured from high-school mentality to the mentality of higher learning.

Likewise Trevor described,

The impact that LES has had on students' learning has been tremendous, especially for those weak students who really see and value the course. The skills that we try and instill in them benefit them long after they have left their tutorial classes. This can be seen in their reflection about how they have developed as writers and readers this semester and an overwhelming majority said they have made the transition from being a high school student to being a university student. As well as applying these skills to their other subjects, skills such as summarizing.

I suggest that tutors could not have had such observations if they had not understood the theories underpinning LES. For example, Ivanič (1998:69) explains that students entering into Higher Education are "required to extend their literacy practices, to build and adapt existing ones and engage in new ones." I suggest that LES tutors, driven by their consciousness of student needs, were able to explicitly facilitate in a way that enabled students to see the long term value of the skills and strategies tutored. As a result, student confidence was engendered. Simultaneously, student identity was somewhat transformed to meet the demands of the academy.

4.4 TO PROVIDE ONGOING MENTORSHIP TO TUTORS

This next theme addresses the response from the tutors to the ongoing mentorship that they were provided with as a feature of the tutor development programme. It explores the key areas of mentorship that the tutors identified as being most significant. These features of mentorship functioned to equip tutors to tutor effectively. These key areas were establishing individual relationships with the coordinator, drawing on the support they received from the coordinator as individuals and drawing on the support they received from the coordinator as a tutor group.

4.4.1 Establishing an Individual Relationship with the Coordinator

As described in Chapter 2, ongoing and sustained intervention with tutors offers for effective tutor development after the initial training of tutors. Thus mentoring tutors is discussed as a means of developing tutors individually. To this end, the data confirmed the effect of the individualized relationship, as a result of ongoing mentorship between myself as coordinator and the tutors. From the data it is evident that the tutors responded positively to the individualized relationships they had with me as coordinator, in that they felt supported, nurtured and guided. I suggest that this feature of my development programme was significant in that it provided the programme with a personalized approach. This approach was characterized by the “open-door” policy that I adopted as well as the rapport that I developed with the tutors.

Significantly, I viewed the tutors as individuals and allowed time to work through their individualized tutoring challenges. For example, each tutor received a detailed report on their tutoring gleaned from the classroom visit (Appendix G). Before the classroom visit, the tutors filled out a self-evaluation (Appendix F). I used these as a guide for my feedback when reflecting with the tutor after the visit. This “reflection” session served to invite and encourage dialogue between myself and the tutor. An example of this process is illustrated by this scenario: one tutor expressed that he was concerned that his students were not listening to him, and were conducting private conversations whilst he was speaking. I observed that he had managed to establish his authority in the class and that discipline was not an issue. In our discussion, he informed me that he had gained a lot of confidence from the visit. He reiterated that my affirmation had enabled him to see that he indeed had control of his classroom.

Moreover, the respectful way in which I dealt with the tutors was appreciated by them as indicated in their perceptions of their relationships with me. Moreover, I suggest that the goal of classroom visits, the report and dialogic feedback thereafter functioned to engender trust between the tutors and I. In so doing both parties disclosed their thoughts and feelings to secure a closer relationship (Watson-Todd; 2004:111). As Watson-Todd (2004:111) explains once the trainer and the tutor have engaged in such an exchange, there is a reduction of power between them for equal benefit. On the one hand, the tutor’s development is promoted through increased reflection, increased sharing of ideas, and deeper understanding of rationales. On the other hand, the trainer’s own development is also facilitated because of the feedback from the tutors. Danica captured the role of mentorship with this observation,

I believe I have received the necessary support as a new comer to the programme from our regular Monday meetings and the training at the beginning of each semester and above all my coordinator has been of immense help and ready to offer assistance whenever the need arises.

Whilst Elvin in his year-end reflection observed

I would not have grown as a tutor without mentoring.

Furthermore, Melissa described her relationship with me in this way,

I think that Jenni and I have a very good relationship. She is extremely supportive and has an “open-door” policy so that I feel welcome in her office. If there is anything that I need to discuss with her I know she will address the issue professionally and with consideration for myself as well as the students.

Matthew responded to my individualized council in this way,

...Jenni’s guidance has been essential in the classroom management, especially because the classes are so diverse. Because of this diversity at times the work material is approached differently with a particular class. Jenni has been instrumental in helping me deal with these aspects of tutoring.

Thus this mentoring technique gleaned positive results. Reed (1973:42) maintains that the success of a peer tutoring programme depends on the leadership and initiatives provided by the programme director/ coordinator. Reed (1973:42) argues further that one of the characteristics of the director/coordinator is that they should be perceptive and sensitive to tutor needs. My aim was to consistently provide and demonstrate support for the tutors in a way that was tangible to them. To this end, the data also reveals how tutors acknowledged the support they received from me as coordinator as a feature of ongoing mentorship and it also revealed the effect of that support. For example, Danica in reflection wrote,

I love Jenni! I got ample support firstly as a new tutor and also as a tutor with a very different academic background to the others. Jenni allowed me to take a more active role in the course and I was able to put a great deal of input towards some of the work. She followed our progress closely at the beginning of the term, but I also appreciate how she always acknowledged our personal growth as tutors throughout the year.

Likewise, Beth asserted that,

I started teaching LES with some anxiety but all the support and encouragement that I got from my coordinator and the other tutors helped boost my confidence as a tutor in the course of the year.

Thus it is evident that the individual tutors felt strongly that they had been supported and encouraged as well as acknowledged for their achievements or contributions. I tried to do this consistently in the reports that I generated for the tutors from the classroom visits (Appendix G). They also felt the support was consistent and sustained throughout the year. In supporting the tutors, I benefitted in my role as coordinator. The more I worked with the tutors and witnessed their development, the more confidence I had to deliver the tutor development programme.

4.4.2 Developing a Cohesive Tutor Group with the Coordinator

In addition to the individual mentorship that the tutors received, they were also offered group support and mentorship from me in my role as coordinator of LES. The data verifies how the tutors responded positively to the opportunities they were given to meet and discuss as a characteristic of ongoing group mentorship. The data illustrates that the tutors acknowledged that the weekly meetings provided the forum for group mentorship. Moreover, the tutors identified the characteristics of this mentorship as enabling the tutor group to challenge uniformity in presentation, engage in problem solving, draw on diverse academic literacies in the tutor group and moderate student work as a tutor group. These characteristics are each discussed in turn below.

4.4.2.1 The weekly meetings as a forum for group mentorship

It emerged from the data that the weekly meetings as a feature of the tutor development programme were predominately positive and valued by the tutors. Trevor described the meetings in this way when he identified that they function to,

Make sure that the tutors have the bigger picture in terms of work that will be presented to the student.

Additionally, Benjamin said,

The weekly tutor meetings were extremely helpful and insightful, as they not only aided me as a tutor with understanding and considering that week's work, they also aided my organization and workload distribution.

Elvin described his experience of the weekly meetings as follows,

The discussion with all the tutors and the coordinator I feel were most useful in as they had many inputs and situations- with that weeks work- were pre-empted which made it easier to understand the intended outcomes. Without those meetings I found myself at quite a disadvantage.

Likewise Lee said,

I cannot live without them. They made the work clearer and allowed us to build relationships as a team.

Hence the tutors responded favourably to the weekly meetings and found them instrumental in orientating the tutors as to the week's tutorial work. They also served to bring the group together fostering team organization, structure and enthusiasm. It was encouraging that the tutors recognized and felt that they were a part of a team or a learning community (Arkin, 1981:25). The tutor meetings were also a site for reflection on the tutorial material and tutoring practice. Rich discussion ensued in them wherein tutors sought advice from one another and provided support for one another. This was another way in which Bruffee's (1993) "craft of interdependence" was realized and drawn upon.

4.4.2.2 Ascertaining uniformity in tutoring – collective problem solving

Further analysis of the data presented another function of the weekly meetings with regards to group mentorship in that they allowed for uniformity in presentation of tutorial material.

Kate said,

The weekly tutor meetings were an essential part of ensuring that there was uniformity amongst the tutors as well as picking up on aspects of the tutorials that were not working as expected. The meetings were invaluable.

In addition, the data illustrates that the weekly meetings also created a forum for problem solving in the tutor group thus enhancing group mentorship by me. For example, Beth explained,

Work could be explained well and any issues that arose could be dealt with by the coordinator immediately.

Furthermore Matthew affirmed,

This was an excellent forum to present concerns about how to deal with issues that have arisen from the previous tutorials and expected problems with the work.

Thus it is apparent that the tutors viewed the weekly meetings as a forum for discussion in which consensus and standardization could be attained and concerns could be readily addressed. I suggest that the weekly meetings that took place in the LES tutor development programme were characterized by tutors asking questions and having the confidence to contribute to the understanding of the material itself as well as how it should be delivered to students (Clark, 1998).

4.4.2.3 Drawing on diverse academic literacies from the tutor group

Moreover, the data validates that yet another intention of the weekly meetings was to create a community of tutorship out of a tutor group with different academic literacies as a result of their individual subject disciplines. Consequently, it is apparent from the data that the tutors recognized the advantage of drawing on each other's literacies to the end that it served to enhance any deficit knowledge

however, it was also noted that for this exchange to work, flexibility and open-mindedness were needed in the group. Additionally, the weekly tutor meetings were a nexus where diverse discourses could meet and view one another as resources. As a result, I suggest that the knowledge exchange was enriching for tutors. The tutors seem to have concurred.

For example, Elvin significantly argued,

I think that a mix is an invaluable advantage. It allows for a significant degree of transfer of skills between tutors and a greater range of personal experience to draw upon. This range is beneficial for the student who can be developed into a more effective academic (in relation to their specific field) as well as beneficial for tutor development.

Lee from the Economics department explained that,

Having people with a language background was very important as when one is not sure of something, at least there were people who had more insights and were always there to assist.

In the same vein, Melissa, a Linguistics postgraduate student noted,

Those without the content knowledge might be at a disadvantage but I feel that this is not really an issue. I tutor the economics group and I am a linguistics student, but the meetings with the coordinator helped me with the grouping of ideas.

Furthermore, the data indicates that diversity was celebrated in terms of tutors drawing on each other's literacies and weaving this into their tutoring. Lee reflected,

...the majority of my students have appreciated my knowledge of economics and have used my knowledge to assist them in producing a better standard of writing.

What is more, Beth, a tutor without an Economics background wrote,

...I have never enjoyed math or accounting but economics has fascinated me and made me want to research and know more about this topic in order to teach my students better.

Thus, significantly one tutor was even inspired to move outside her discipline and research another. However, the data also illustrates that more work needs to be done in relation to creating a cohesive tutor group from characterized by different literacies, for example, Kate observed,

....the disadvantage is that some individuals "stick to their guns" and are not flexible or accommodating in their approach.

Clark (1998) observed that her tutor meetings were a site of intensive tutor development. I suggest that the LES tutor meetings were too. They were rich in debate and discussion especially given that tutors may have disagreed about how to approach material. However, tutors had to always bear in mind the fact that students were entering into the Economics discourse with a view to functioning there. To this end, tutors needed to be made aware of the fact that this specific discourse has its own language to express its individualized values and practices (Kress, 1989). Kress (1989:7) describes discourse as follows.

A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organizes and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about. In that it provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual action.

As a result, at times, the tutors with an Economics background may have felt more empowered. Henrique (who had a Linguistics background) commented that

... the mixture has its advantages and disadvantages. It's useful but at the expense of others feeling superior to others.

I suggest that attempting to unpack the challenges facing students of Economics in initial training was a good place to begin the tutors' journey in understanding why students may struggle with Economics as a discourse. However, I suggest that tutors only completely understood the intricacies of Economics as the tutoring of LES progressed. Additionally, Economics tutors only began to understand how academic skills could be taught overtly in relation to the discipline as tutorials evolved. A symbiotic relationship between these two perspectives developed which energized tutoring in the module.

4.4.2.4 Moderating student work as a tutor group

Another reason why tutors met regularly in LES was for the purpose of moderating student work. This occurred several times a year when assessments or substantial written assignments had to be marked by the tutor group. Moderating the students' work as a group formed part of the group cohesiveness. The data reveals that the tutors responded well to the moderation sessions as a means of support for the tutor group and appreciated their role in their development. For example, Kate observed that,

[it was] necessary because a standard had to be set for everybody....this made everyone's work easier because you knew what was acceptable and what was not and what angle to approach different pieces of work from.

Elvin reiterated the value of moderating as a group by stating,

I sometimes tend to be subjective. Moderation helped me to look at the work from an objective perspective to see the work and not only

the student. I found the feedback as useful. I chose to look at the entire experience as positive feedback.

The data affirms that significantly the tutors understood the rationale for moderation. Lee explained that,

... moderation helped me move towards a more standardized method of marking. I tend to consider too many things when marking a student's work and so ja moderation helped me to take a more objective view of the work.

Melissa added,

I found it [moderation] encouraging. It was good to have my work checked, and I felt more confident knowing that I was doing the right thing.

Finally Henrique acknowledged the role of the coordinator in mentoring that moderation process:

I would like to commend the economics coordinator, Jenni for introducing the strategy consisting in all tutors getting together to mark a few works, this gives us insight into the way of approaching students' works and set the standard which allows us to become more confident markers.

Therefore it is evident that the tutors acknowledged moderation for its importance in helping them to remain objective, consistent and fair when marking. It also built confidence in tutors as they could gauge whether they were 'on the right track'. Importantly, moderation formed an integral part of tutor development in that tutors had to discuss and negotiate as a team and learn to self-regulate. This kind of group collaboration was the very type of cooperativeness that tutors needed to duplicate in their tutorials.

4.5 TO ENABLE SELF- EVALUATION DURING TUTORING

The third theme deals with the responses from the tutors of the opportunity to evaluate their own performances via self-reflection, as a direct result of the classroom visits from me, the coordinator. The key areas that the tutors identified as being most significant in realizing this self-evaluation were firstly, incorporating tutoring strategies as a result of self-reflection and secondly, integrating the coordinator's comments resulting in self-evaluation. In addition to these two areas, it emerges from the data that the overall response to the classroom visits was positive for example, Melissa expressed her view on the classroom visits in this way,

I think the visit is an important component of the programme because it was a way of getting a critical perspective on my role as a tutor and how I perform that role. It has therefore acted positively on my tutoring because I have been able to apply the coordinator's comments.

Elvin reiterated this when he noted that it was,

...good to have an outsider's view of my classroom. She [the coordinator] noticed problem areas that I didn't pick up on.

Thus a key way in which tutors can gain insight into tutoring practice is through classroom visits whereby a trainer will "sit in" on a tutorial session for the purpose of review (Randall, 2004:159). Randall (2004:159) explains that learning about teaching, although needing to be based on individual reflection, cannot be constructed alone, but it is more effectively gained in a coaching situation where the novice is given the chance to practice the "art" under the guidance of an "expert". Central to the classroom visits is the role of de-briefing or feedback sessions after the classroom visit has taken place (Randall, 2004:158). Randall (2004:159) suggests that the aim of the reflection session is to construct connections between the theoretical aspects of tutoring with their practical applications in the classroom. Randall (2004:159) explains further that what essentially is taking place in feedback sessions is the Vygotskian (1978) principal of constructing knowledge through a dialogic process between a more experienced knower and a less experienced knower. In this way, explains Randall (2004:159) the inexperienced tutor is being led to "discover" new knowledge by a process of interacting with another person. Additionally through this process the tutor is led to personalize and internalize both the "lower order" (Randall, 2004:159) behavioural skills of classroom techniques and the "higher order" meta-cognitive skills of understanding the processes involved in tutoring.

I suggest that utilizing classroom visits to help tutors to problematize (Randall, 2004:161) their tutoring practice and arrive at their own solutions through dialogue with a trainer, (Randall, 2004:161) is a highly effective way to develop tutors. As mentioned above, I wrote extensive reports (Appendix G) for tutors commenting on their tutoring and offering suggestions for improvement. The dialogue between myself and tutors was started in their self-evaluation (Appendix F) before the classroom visit. However, after reviewing the literature I do concede that there are benefits to involving experienced tutors in mentoring new tutors (Whitman, 1988; Falchikov, 2001). I also concede after reviewing the literature that there are other ways in which tutors can engage in reflection (Falchikov, 2001; Watson-Todd, 2004) besides that prompted by classroom visits. However, I suggest that classroom visits are one of the most effective ways to engage tutors given the results this study has generated.

4.5.1 Experimenting with Tutoring Strategies as a Result of Self-Reflection

The data firstly makes evident that the role of the classroom visits was to inspire in the tutors critical thinking and self-reflection during tutoring about their tutoring practice. Thus it is evident that the tutors developed a critical perspective of their tutoring as a result of the classroom visits and through discussion and conversation with me were able to critically reflect on their practice and make effective changes to it.

For example, Kate said that;

...the classroom visits from the coordinator were useful...especially when it came to the self-monitoring aspect of tutoring. They gave me an objective and distant view of my performances which were necessary in terms of self-improvement. They help confirm the right things and change on (sic) the things that need improvement...I believe you learn more from your own mistakes or success through reflecting on your experiences and making changes for future reference.

Similarly, Trevor observed that,

Before the visit, I thought I was doing all that was expected. I thought all I needed to do was to prepare before the tutorial so that I can deliver what I know to the students. But, after Jenni paid me a visit, I then became aware of my weaknesses, most of which I was not aware of. We discussed how I need to present and explain the task and ensure that students have understood. I became aware that the students can actually be a resource for themselves; hence, I am now making them work in groups more often. These group discussions have actually helped even those students who would never raise their hands in class to open up.

Additionally, Benjamin said,

I do feel confident that I have made some improvements and this is largely because of the feedback from the classroom visit. And I think with continued support I will get closer to the kind of tutor I perceive as a good tutor.

These quotes indicate that critical reflection is an integral feature of ongoing development for tutors. To this end, from the literature, reflection is widely perceived to be a necessary element of the development of effective tutors (Cullen, 2004:142; Falchikov, 2001:168; Jones, 1998:202). I suggest that the self-evaluation before the classroom visit, the visit itself and the report with feedback generated after the visit, all served to stimulate critical reflection in the LES tutors. Accordingly, tutors were encouraged to think about their tutoring and consider what worked in a session, what did not work, why it did not work and whether the aims and objectives were met, what could be done to address the problem, what could the student do (Falchikov (2001:168). Tutors could think about recurring patterns in their tutoring or "bad habits" (Watson-Todd 2004:107) and incorporate the feedback for solving tutoring dilemmas or challenges.

4.5.2 Integrating Coordinator's Comments in Subsequent Tutoring Sessions

The data also shows how the classroom visits were consistently framed by the notion of encouragement and positive reinforcement which were relayed in my commentary feedback to the tutors. Trevor captured the ethos of my approach,

...Jenni was very encouraging in her comments on my teaching in class. She created such a relaxed atmosphere that it was as

if she wasn't even there. I have really benefitted a lot from her comments on my style of teaching.

Melissa explained that,

My teaching has improved in Term 2 since I have incorporated the feedback from my course coordinator Jenni, after the class visit she paid me in Term 1. In other words, I stopped assuming that my students understand what I am talking about and have come up with questions that help me assess my students' background knowledge/prior knowledge and new/integrated knowledge on a specific issue. I also make sure the task is clearly explained before allowing my students to write.

Consequently, the tutors responded positively and openly to the feedback and suggestions given to them and were, as a result, able to incorporate improvements and development into their tutoring practice.

4.6 TO ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TUTOR IDENTITIES

This final theme addresses the effect of the tutor development programme on the development of tutor identity. There were several areas of tutor identity development as acknowledged by the tutors in the data. These were recognition of contributing to and improving tutors' own academic identity, workplace identity and personal identity. Ivanič (1998) describes the "journey" that students undertake to acquire the identity of a student, I suggest that tutors undertake a journey of their own in LES so that they may realize their developing identities as a result of tutoring. This development may be described as a spin-off to the tutor development programme in which more than several benefits of tutoring for tutors were unexpectedly realized.

4.6.1 Contributing to and Improving Tutors' Own Academic Identity

As a starting point to illustrate this theme, the data demonstrates that tutors commented on how the programme enabled development of their own skills such as improved communication and presentation skills for example, Beth reflected that,

Tutoring LES has improved my speaking skills and presentation skills, forced me to be prepared at all times for their queries and greatly improved my confidence as a tutor... I have learnt many new skills and improved in subtle ways that have impacted on other areas of my life.

Moreover, Henrique asserted that his,

...confidence has increased considerably. I have "good" research skills and writing skills I realized.

Hence it is clear that the tutors have learned from tutoring and have honed their own skills needed for life. The data also makes it evident how tutors recognized the link between acquiring the skills they tutored for themselves and their own academic identity. Beth explained her experience,

As a student I look to my own lecturers for more feedback on my work now. I am more open to criticism of my work, but have also gained more confidence in my writing ability. I am more likely to follow the steps and apply the skills that I have tried to teach my students in my own work. I am a more confident student and speaker now that I have tutored.

Likewise, Melissa described the experience of tutoring in this way,

Tutoring has had a big impact on my own studies, the topics that we deal with on a weekly basis, are topics that apply across the board to all students, thus as I tutor the students, I am also learning and refreshing my own memory on these topics. I have become the kind of student that I have always esteemed to be, the kind of student who owns her own learning experience and I have found my own voice and identity as a student.

Equally, Kate explained,

Through LES, I feel like I have finally become the student that I have always wanted to be, it has been a learning experience academically. As I tutored the students, I tutored myself too. My personal sense of self has also improved in terms of being more aware of myself, because of dealing with students with different points of view, identities and backgrounds. The diversity helped me to reflect on myself and my identity.

Additionally Elvin asserted that,

Tutoring the LES course has definitely impacted positively on my own studies in that reflecting on my students' work in order to feed back to them has improved my ability to self-criticize my own thesis.

Finally Henrique expressed that,

Tutoring LES has had a positive and enriching impact on both my academic identity and sense of self. It has shifted my identity from being a student who occasionally shares knowledge solely with his supervisor, and most of the time, interacts only with books, which are actually inanimate objects to being a student-teacher who learns from both his mentors and his students, which are indeed animate objects and in turn then, shares his knowledge with them. Teaching what I know to my students and successfully

guiding them through the prescribed work boosts my sense of self as I feel that I am making a difference.

Consequently tutors have become better critical readers of their own academic work as well as that of their teachers and generally they have become more animated, involved students with renewed self-awareness as a result of tutoring and tutor development. This resonates with the literature (Goodlad, 1998; Topping, 1996) notes how tutors gain invaluable academic and professional experience from tutoring.

4.6.2 Developing Academic Identity to Enhance Other Roles at University

Closely linked to the notion of becoming better students, the data reveals that the tutor development programme enabled tutors to also develop other areas of university life which they were involved in. Trevor explained,

It has helped me as a writing tutor to be less technical in the support I provide students with. I have also come to appreciate the impact that academic learning has on people. I have seen a remarkable progression in my students' personal character.

In a similar vein, Melissa expressed that,

LES training impacted on my approach as a Linguistics tutor for Linguistics and Literary theory 1A and B. My approach to students in that department is similar to the manner in which we approach students in LES I find to be so successful as the students feel at ease when it comes to approaching their tutor. As a writing consultant the LES training also impacts on my consulting because I am aware of the problems that the students face in class and I am trained on how approach these problems in a manner that guides the students to their own independent learning.

Moreover, Henrique described that,

The training that I received in LES has impacted positively on my tutoring English 1C in the Department of English. .. the training that I have received ... is my first formal training in tutoring. This has made me an experienced tutor at a tertiary institution level. The fact that I was exempted from beginner basic training by the English department is recognition of my 3-year formal tutoring experience and evidence of how successful the training has been.

Consequently, the impact of the development programme is far-reaching in that tutors applied it to other areas of the academy and to the system at large.

4.6.3 Developing Workplace and Personal Identity

Analysis of the data additionally shows that the tutor development programme on the one hand, enabled tutors to feel more prepared to go into the workplace. For example, Lee wrote,

I have become more aware of my academic writing, but most importantly, I am more confident that I can add value to a workplace. I realize it can be a blessing to be different to others and should not be afraid of having a different opinion to others as this will ultimately add value to any projects.

Importantly the long term benefits of tutoring and tutor development are acknowledged. On the other hand, the tutors also revealed in the data that their personal identities had transformed as a result of the tutoring as well as experiencing the tutor development programme. The following reflections were given:

Tutoring this year has impacted positively on both my academic identity and my sense of self in the sense that tutoring has allowed me to not only track my own progress as a scholar, but also to realize the impact of my contribution to the education of the youth. This has increased my self-image and sense of worth. (Matthew)

I believe in myself more because of the way my students have trusted me. I learnt so much about myself as a person and as a student through the year. This has been incredibly rewarding on a personal and academic level. I have become more confident. I have learned how to address people better. (Trevor)

In terms of self it has made me realize that ability is not something that one possesses and then applies to a given situation or context, but rather that ability is a dynamic concept dependent on interaction and situations rather than the individual. (Benjamin)

This year I was a tutor for the first time and the learning curve was very sharp. I have learnt a lot about myself, seen the other end of the spectrum... and generally become a better person. (Danica)

Thus it is evident that tutors feel they have developed on a personal level ranging from self-awareness to interpersonal skills to personal growth.

4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The four themes that emerged from the data are linked in that they map out the encompassing and consistent role of the peer tutor development programme as it was presented and engaged with in an academic year. The themes span across from the pre-tutoring phase through to during tutoring and finally through to post tutoring. Thus the initial training serves to orientate the tutors to the module and begin development by giving the tutors tutoring strategies. The ongoing mentorship sustains and supports the tutors as well as systematically develops them largely

through self-reflection and allowing them to operate in a community of tutorship. Finally the end result of the whole programme is the effect and additional spin-off effects on the tutors in terms of their transformed identities.

Chapter 5 gives a more detailed synthesis by superimposing the findings of the research with the literature review presented in Chapter 2 and addresses the gaps offered by the study. It also makes recommendations for the revision of the tutor development programme and presents concluding remarks.



CHAPTER 5: SYNTHESIS OF EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings emerging from the data have been described in the previous chapter and have been categorized into themes in an attempt to understand the role of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module. However, another vitally important element in the analytical process is making sense by interpreting the findings to inform the practice of tutor development and training. The findings should highlight the practice of developing tutors and their experience of the training and development programme by discussing how they resonate with the literature or by addressing any gaps that occur. Moreover they should provide understanding of the impact of any changes that need to be introduced into the practice of training and developing tutors as well as any deficits or shortcomings which may need to be addressed. This was done to some extent in Chapter 4. A more detailed discussion of the findings that follows is divided into four broad areas. These are providing basic tutoring skills, providing ongoing mentorship to tutors, enabling self-evaluation of tutoring, enabling the development of tutor identity. These will be dealt with below in turn.

5.2 POSITIONING THE FINDINGS IN ACADEMIC LITERACIES THEORIES

As discussed above the B.Com Extended degree at UJ in which the LES module is situated, offers an alternative route of access to university education for disadvantaged or 'educationally underprepared' students. In LES tutors have three fifty minute tutorials per week which means that the teaching of the module is largely reliant on the successful delivery of tutorial material. Thus, as a starting point, this study adds to the literature (Bruffee, 1993; Boughey, 2007; Clark, 1998; Goodlad, 1999; Topping, 1998) on the benefits of implementing a tutorial system in student development.

In addition, my findings reveal that the tutors predominately expressed that the initial training provided was indeed useful and productive in that it guided supported and served to develop them. Furthermore, my findings indicate that the tutors were able to refer to the initial training throughout the year as a point of reference on how to manage elements of tutoring. In so doing, my findings resonate with the literature which presents widespread agreement that tutors should be trained in order to be effective and that without training tutors cannot provide the support they are required to give students (Bruffee, 1993; Clark, 1998; Falchikov, 2001; Goodlad, 1998; Hayes, 2004; Reed, 1973; Topping, 1998; Whitman, 1988). Thus, this research verifies the need for training of tutors as presented in the literature and extends the literature by suggesting that without training, tutors would not have coped with the demands of the LES module especially given its unique characteristics that is, it teaches academic skills and development, using Economics as the vehicle for subject content to 'underprepared' students. Moreover, my findings add to the literature on initially training tutors in that they describe how tutors learnt to support as well as develop students with 'special needs' both academic and holistic.

The literature (Clark, 1998:125; Goodlad, 1999:13; Taylor, 1998:169) details that there are several generic components that should constitute initial tutor training namely tutorial preparation, tutoring strategies, management of attitudinal problems, managing group work as well as practical, functional elements such as record keeping. My training included these necessary components that have been documented to constitute a good training programme and in so doing are in tune with the literature.

With regards to the academic needs of the students, it was important that the tutors realized the essential need to teach academic skills and language in an explicit manner and not assume that students 'knew' them or were exposed to them at secondary school level. For this understanding tutors were tasked with unpacking and internalizing the theories presented by Lillis (2001) and Lea and Strierer (2000). Thus tutors were tasked with developing student competencies and analysis of the data made evident that the tutors identified particular areas in which the training provided them with ability to develop students' academic writing, summarizing, note-taking and note-making skills.

Delivery of these academic competencies was framed by the subject Economics. The tutors were tasked with apprenticing students into this discourse so that they could be assimilated into the discipline (Gee, 1990; Rose, 2008). The conceptual understanding of why students become alienated from the study of Economics is one offered by Paxton (1998). My training attempts to extend the literature in that it shows how tutors needed to understand how to decode the discourse before they could demonstrate this to their students. Furthermore my study resonates with Clark (1998:122) and Rose (2008:12) who argue that strong postgraduate students who act as tutors do not realize the difficulties involved in acquiring a discourse as it was so "natural" for them. I suggest that training is the forum to present this understanding. Once this awareness is created in tutors they can then integrate academic language and skills with academic content, knowledge and practice into their tutoring.

To assist tutors in understanding issues of discourse I presented Street and Lea's (2000) models of student writing in Higher Education in the initial tutor training. The motivation for this was so that tutors would gain insight into student writing at the levels of epistemology, authority and contestation over knowledge and not only at the levels of technical skill, surface linguistic competence or assimilation into academic culture (Lea & Street 2000:36). This orientation provided for the tutors was not only designed to assist them in gaining a theoretical background for the module, but also to enable them to deal with student writing, as it presented itself in assignments and tasks. The next section presents the findings of the initial training from my study and provides discussion of the following features: giving feedback to students, developing classroom management and managing diversity, breaking the mould of tutor dominant practice and collaborative learning.

5.2.1 To Provide Basic Tutoring Skills and to Develop Interpersonal Skills

As a starting point, I will discuss giving feedback as a component of providing tutors with basic tutoring skills. My findings reveal that the training on giving feedback was not as effective as it should have been. This was because although tutors did come away from the training with an understanding of the theories

underpinning feedback, they did not feel they had been given enough practice of feedback to really handle it with confidence. In fact several tutors said that they had to have individual counsel with me to help them improve their feedback and that because giving feedback was central to tutoring the module, it needed to be extended in training and development.

Thus, to some extent, my study aligns with the literature (Falchikov, 2001; Watson-Todd, 2004) on training tutors to give effective feedback in that I included feedback in my training as many tutor training programmes do. However, I focused only on the theories underpinning feedback and especially that of diverting tutors from focusing not only on technical or surface feature correction but rather on how the student had engaged with the task at hand. The literature (Falchikov, 2001:16) offers several ways in which feedback can be practised for example: by dividing tutors into pairs and allowing them to feedback on each other's writing.

Hence, upon reflection I concede that this is an area of change that I need to make to my initial training with a view to making feedback more tangible by, for example, including samples of student writing for commentary and review. I could also consider offering additional training workshops on feedback throughout the year. I could use these to discuss the progress tutors are making with providing effective feedback.

Another feature of the training that tutors felt warranted improvement, based on the findings, is that of classroom management. Like feedback, tutors commented that classroom management needed to be presented in a more practical, tangible way. Interestingly, the tutors offered ways in which this could be done that resonate with suggestions from the literature for example: tutors thought about using role-play exercises to demonstrate good classroom management practice which is advocated by Falchikov (2001:164). Another suggestion by Falchikov (2001:166) is to allow new tutors to be paired with experienced tutors to either observe them or to team tutor with them. In my findings the tutors noted that the experienced tutors could be used for effectively to "teach" new tutors. Thus upon reflection I realize that I have been under utilizing the expertise of experienced tutors and will attempt to involve them more in developing new tutors by acting as mentors and as demonstrators of good practice. This would probably alleviate some of the recurring classroom management challenges that I tried to address after the classroom visits.

Closely linked to classroom management is managing diversity. In LES the tutors were dealing with mixed level ability diversity as well as diversity of race, religion, gender and culture in the student body. The unique tensions possible in the UJ context had to be included in the tutor training and involved tutors devising, through discussion, ways in which mock possible scenarios could be averted. My findings illustrated that the tutors consistently made use of their training on diversity, framed by conflict management, as it enabled them to manage diversity with professionalism and sensitivity in the classroom. However as diversity management is such a multifaceted and challenging aspect of tutoring, it seems there needed to be more input in that area of training. Thus, I concede that this is another area of the training that warrants change. To this end drawing on the "real experiences" of experienced tutors could offer a way for tutors to work through problem and solution scenarios.

Inextricable from managing diversity and conflict resolution is establishing a good rapport with students and then maintaining that rapport framed by trust and open-mindedness to foster cooperativeness in the classroom (Watson-Todd, 2004:108; Goodlad, 1999:13). The literature (Falchikov, 2001; Goodlad, 1999; Topping, 2000) describes that managing conflict is a key component of training. However, in my study this manifests as diversity management. Where my training dovetails with the literature is with the ideas of Watson-Todd (2004:108) who asserts that in order for good relations to ensue, tutors need to establish a relationship of trust and open-mindedness in the classroom. Thus my findings align with the literature in that the tutors recognized the need to establish a good rapport with their students in the form of a bounded professional relationship.

However, where my study attempts to add to the literature on this issue is that given the context and nature of the LES module, the tutors also saw how attending to the holistic development of the students was pivotal to their success in the module. Central to my tutor development programme was the notion that tutors needed to have empathy for their students, particularly because of some students' backgrounds and home lives. Thus tutors were guided as to how to encourage and empower students.

This notion of empowerment was illustrated overtly and not dependant only on the idea that tutors may act as role models to students as offered by the literature (Clark, 1998). Whilst LES tutors did act as role models because many of them did not have English as a first language and had themselves been access students, they also had to be very clear about, and conscious of, the example of empowerment that they were setting for the students. Moreover, their role in developing student confidence in the midst of the marginalization and the stigmatization of the LES module was vital. As a result, this aspect needed to be stressed in the training and development of the tutors.

5.2.2 Collaborative Learning as a Means to Tutor Effectively

Related to classroom and diversity management is the practice of breaking the mould of tutor dominance in order to successfully facilitate student learning. This is in keeping with the theory of social constructivism. Tutors working with LES students needed to think of learning as a collaborative process in which they played a vital role. Thus, ideas of social constructivism are discussed in training so that tutors may internalize and reflect on them. Under the guidance of a peer tutor, students can reach what is termed by Vygotsky (1978) as the "zone of proximal development". This is the level of potential development that a student cannot reach unless he/she collaborates with others and is guided. To ensure that this happens tutors need to understand how students can work as collaborative teams, wherein individual learning is essentially related to successful group learning (Vygotsky, 1978). To enable collaborative learning to successfully take place, tutors need to be trained in empowering students to actively participate in discussion and in class as a whole. Thus it is in this sense that tutors needed to break the mould of tutor dominant practice.

The contribution that my research attempts to offer on this point is that significantly a key aim of LES is to create independent learners and critical thinkers ready for

academic study. Allowing students to find their voices in tutorials is central to creating a student ready for the academy. This cannot be achieved if the transmission mode of instruction is applied in which students are passive. With regards to this feature of developing tutors, my findings are in tune with the literature (Falchikov, 2001:165) as the tutors expressed understanding and perception of themselves as facilitators of learning, with a view to enable students to take responsibility for their own work.

Once it is made explicitly clear that the role of the tutor is to create a space for students to openly express themselves and “explore” the work via discussion and group work, tutors also needed to have the where withal to achieve this. The literature (Falchikov, 2001:164) suggests that the ways in which tutors can be developed to be facilitators is to define the roles a tutor may adopt in training and then do mock tutorials characterized by role-playing exercises. I did not proceed in this way and there was criticism from the tutors in my findings levelled at the fact that there were no “practice” exercises in the initial training. I concede that demonstrating how facilitation works is a very effective means of showing tutors the difference between dominating and facilitating a tutorial. Thus upon reflection, I concede that this is an area of change that I need to make to my initial training and expand in tutor development.

Closely linked to the notion of facilitation is the idea of collaborative learning. My findings revealed that several key features from the development programme were significant for the tutors. These were: how to give the students individual voice by creating an atmosphere of safety and trust so that students feel comfortable expressing themselves, how to build relationships with students in a small group setting and finally how to address a group of mixed level abilities.

I suggest that it was as a result of the fact that the tutors were trained and developed as a collaborative team that enabled them to know how to reproduce collaborative learning practice for the students in tutorials. In this sense my findings are in tune with the literature (Arkin, 1981; Bruffee, 1993; Clark, 1998; Falchikov, 2001) in that the tutors operated as a collaborative team wherein they depended on each other to work out problems and not solely on an authority figure for guidance (Bruffee, 1993:1). As a collaborative team they experienced the importance of good interaction between people in which everyone’s opinion is valued. They could then in turn create this with the students.

A juncture at which my study extends the literature (Bruffee, 1993; Clark, 1998) is at this notion of collaboration. My findings showed that tutors recognized the advantages of drawing on each others literacies to the end that it served to enhance any deficit knowledge for example, a Linguistics based tutor could draw on the knowledge of an Economics tutor via discussion and visa versa. However, my findings also revealed that for this kind of exchange to work, flexibility and open-mindedness were needed in the group. Thus, not only did the collaboration between tutors serve to demonstrate to them how to work with students, but it also helped to make known to tutors how they had to be tolerant of each other. The issue of tolerance and managing diversity is another feature of training and development where my study modifies the literature.

The literature (Bruffee, 1993; Clark, 1998) describes the benefits of training and developing tutors collaboratively and sites several examples of this practice. These include: working out issues around tutorial material such as organizing and planning material as well as reflecting on and modifying tutorial material. However in my study the idea of collaboration goes further. This is because of the fact that the LES module demanded a collaboration of diverse academic literacies as a result of individualized subject disciplines.

In the above discussion I have mentioned several features of the initial tutor training from my study and have discussed how they add to, depart from or converge with the literature with a view to make improvements to my practice as well as the tutor development programme. The following discusses the findings in relation to providing ongoing mentorship to tutors.

5.2.3 To Provide Ongoing Mentorship to Tutors – Collegiality

As a means of setting the scene and achieving the tone for tutors to operate from a premise of good rapport and cooperativeness as well as to engage as role models, I had to set the precedent in my role as coordinator. My rationale was that if I demonstrate collegiality and cooperativeness, then the tutors will mirror that behaviour in their dealings with the students. In this way, my study resonates with the literature (Watson-Todd, 2004:118) which stresses that generative leadership is realized when the coordinator acts as role model for tutors.

However, my study also extends the literature (Clark, 1998; Falchikov, 2001; Watson-Todd, 2004) on the notion of mentorship given by a trainer or coordinator. The literature (Watson-Todd, 2004:106) offers several ways that a coordinator can mentor tutors and build personalized relationships with them for example, through reflective journals in which tutors engage in written dialogue with the coordinator about their practice and development. Another means is via reflective tutor logs in which tutors reflect on work and plan future practice and then present this to the coordinator for review (Falchikov, 2001:170). I digress from the literature as I suggest that the equitable dialogue created in these written forms is not the only way that tutors can develop relationships of trust and security with their coordinator to then be carried through to the students.

Instead I engaged in a personal, verbal and informal relationship with the tutors characterized by an “open-door” policy and my findings suggest that this was as effective, if not more so, than a relationship conducted in written exchange. Through this relationship, the tutors felt nurtured, valued and guided. The findings also point out that the tutors felt that they had been acknowledged for their contribution and achievements. Moreover, this type of support allowed tutors to develop confidence in their practice, and importantly they enjoyed and thrived in the exchange. This response was most encouraging given that a central aim of the LES module was to inspire confidence in students. I suggest that a supported tutor will best support their student and that this effort on behalf of the coordinator is where my study most significantly attempts to make its contribution. This coordinator support was realized in a myriad of ways that connected to each other with a domino effect.

5.2.4 To Enable Self- Evaluation During Tutoring – Reflection

One of the ways in which I initiated dialogue with the tutors was through classroom visits. My findings reveal that tutors described how they engaged with the visits as an opportunity to learn from their own mistakes and modify their practice after reflection. This practice aligns with the literature (Randall, 2004:158-159) The verbal exchange that I had with each tutor after my classroom visits is also confirmed in the literature in that conversation with me parallels with the Vygotskian (1978) principal of constructing knowledge through a dialogic process between a more experienced knower and a less experienced knower (Randall, 2004:159). Thus tutors could problematize their tutoring practice and arrive at their own solutions which were confirmed in my findings.

Both the classroom visits and the ongoing conversation that the tutors had with me allowed for tutors to engage in critical reflection which is central to effective tutor development and improved practice. However, where my study adds to the discussion on reflective practice is through the ongoing conversation that I offered to tutors. Our exchange was not one isolated conversation after a classroom visit, rather it was sustained throughout the academic year. Because it was verbal, informal and ongoing, the lessons learnt from the classroom visits were mentioned several times and I could monitor how they were being integrated in tutoring on a daily basis. For example tutors would constantly refer to and describe practice and classroom management for my commentary. Thus critical reflection was weaved into daily tutoring and made for rich development.

The support that I gave the individual tutors through their relationship with me was extended to supporting the tutor group as a whole. In this way, my findings are in tune with the literature in that tutors attested to feeling as if they were part of a team. As mentioned above, the tutors were explicitly developed as a collaborative team for the benefit of translating this practice in their tutorials. The features of team building included weekly meetings which is a feature of tutor development stressed in the literature as being key (Bruffee, 1993:85, Clark, 1998:128; Goodlad, 1999:14). My findings confirm that the weekly meetings were regarded as a central area of development, collaboration, self-evaluation, problem solving and positive exchange which enabled the tutors to feel as if they were part of a community (Bruffee, 1993:87). Additionally once the tutors felt part of a learning group - a community-they could then proceed to create and duplicate the same experience for the students and assist them to enter the larger discourse community they were required to join.

Another feature of group mentorship emerging from my study was the moderation sessions. Although the concept of moderation is not new, the way in which it was done in my context is unique. Firstly, my findings illustrate that tutors viewed moderation as a form of personal growth in that it enabled them to view their work critically and improve their approach to marking. Secondly, the moderation of their work gave them confidence to proceed with engaging with marking and giving effective feedback to students. Thus moderation was an extension of the collegial, valued exchange that I offered to the tutor group which served to build confidence and direct the group to emanate this ethos to their students.

5.3 MY DEVELOPMENT AS A PRACTITIONER

In the above, I have outlined the ways in which tutors were developed both individually and as a group in my study. Additionally, I have described how the findings pertaining to mentorship have added to the literature or diverged from or aligned with it. In so doing, I have attempted to identify the changes that I have been encouraged to make to my programme. For example, I have mentioned above how I would make learning how to write effective feedback more tangible. Additionally, I would ensure that classroom management was made more practical with 'real' examples. I would also rely on the experience and expertise of experienced tutors and employ them in the role of mentor for new tutors. Moreover, through working so closely with tutors, I have refined how to manage tutors and how to encourage them. I attempted to encourage tutors overtly in my reports and dialogues with them after the classroom visits. With regards to the classroom visits, I identified a shortcoming therein despite their reported positive effect. I was only able to conduct one classroom visit in the year and I concede that they would have been far more effective if I had revisited the tutors each term. I could have done a comparison between the first and second visit to assess any improvements or new problem areas. This is certainly an amendment to the development programme that I endeavour to make.

Finally, I concur with Goodlad (1999:14) who argues that providing the necessary and effective support to tutors is often the most difficult but the most rewarding part of managing a tutor development programme. I felt motivated when I observed or experienced tutor motivation. I was rewarded by their effective work in the classroom. Just as I experienced personal and professional growth from managing the programme, so the tutors also experienced a shift in their identities. I realized that valuing the work tutors do allows them to give of their best. The discussion below deals with the findings with regard to enabling the development of tutor identity.

5.4 TO ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TUTOR IDENTITY

To begin with, the notion of gaining confidence is a key area of personal development and identity transformation experienced by the tutors. This could be described as the spin-off to the tutor development programme as although there is reference to tutors benefitting from tutoring in the literature, the context of the LES generated its own unique results. In my findings, tutors explained that they grew in confidence and as individuals, affirming great gains in self-awareness that resonate with the literature (Goodlad, 1998; Falchikov, 2001). This is one of the several benefits of tutoring described in the literature. Another benefit of tutoring from the literature (Goodlad, 1998; Topping, 1996) is that tutors gain invaluable academic and professional experience. For example, with regards to academia, tutors may make cognitive gains in their subject area as a result of tutoring because they have to reform and enhance existing knowledge when tutoring a subject. Additionally in keeping with the literature (Goodlad & Hirst, 1990) LES tutors attested to becoming better students who became critical of their own lecturers as a result of tutoring.

My findings also revealed that tutors felt they had indeed acquired long-term benefits for the workplace from tutoring. In addition, my findings illustrated a number of areas that tutors felt they had improved in such as presentation, speaking and writing skills. Thus my findings resonate with the literature (Goodlad, 1998:13; Topping, 1998:136) as it explains that tutors may acquire a myriad of skills which are then transferable to the workplace such as communication, organizational and interpersonal skills.

Where my study adds to the literature is with regards to how the tutors felt that the development programme enabled them to function effectively in other areas of university life at UJ. Several of the tutors were involved in tutoring positions with other academic departments. The tutor development, particularly that relating to academic skills and literacies development as well as confidence building, proved instrumental to their work with students based in other programmes. They did not receive the same kind of training and development from other departments. As a result they transferred and relied on their training and development from the LES programme to support efforts elsewhere. Thus my study makes clear that the effect of the development programme is far-reaching and can be applied to the tutorial system within UJ at large.

Closely linked to this notion is the argument from the literature (Clark, 1998:123) that training tutors is beneficial because tutors may move naturally into lecturing positions in academic departments. My study aligns with the literature in this regard as several tutors moved from tutor posts to those of junior lecturers. Additionally they took with them their training and development enabling them to integrate AD discourse with subject content.

In this section I have discussed my findings and presented with emphasis on where they deviate from or resonate with the literature. Furthermore, I have attempted to address the gaps in the literature that my study can fill. The following is a summary with recommendations.

5.5 SUMMING UP AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has offered a comprehensive qualitative assessment of the effect of the training and development of tutors in the LES programme. The findings have directed me to reflect on my practice and implement necessary changes in order to make the overall development of tutors more effective and rigorous for the purpose of tutoring the module, and of fulfilling its academic as well as holistic student development goals. Thus the model of training and development represented in this study is not only underpinned by theory but also been trialled with positive results and improved through reflection.

5.5.1 Offering a Model for Tutor Development at UJ

From this premise my training and development model can make a contribution to the discussion on developing tutors. This is particular to the University of Johannesburg where the use of tutors in several departments has increased dramatically given the diverse needs and magnitude of the student body there as outlined in Chapter 1. Given the challenge and complexity of this scenario the

argument for effectively training and developing tutors to help meet the institutional goals of throughput and retention are paramount. Thus in the current absence of a training and development programme for tutors offered by the university my model may be adapted for use by departments. Moreover, I suggest that there are key elements offered in my development programme that make the programme successful and if modified slightly to suit needs elsewhere will yield the same positive results. Some of these key areas broadly include: effective initial training for tutors presenting the “philosophy” of the course to be tutored, effective mentorship of tutors, weekly contact with tutors and an “open-door” policy for sustained support and value of tutors.

5.5.2 Tutoring for Academic Credit

In addition, I suggest that an evaluated programme that offers good practice that is well packaged and user friendly, as well as easy to coordinate, could evolve into an accredited course at UJ. Jones (1998:191) maintains that academic credit can validly be offered for courses appropriately organized around peer tutoring programmes. To support this, he notes that proper “deep” understanding of a subject comes from the ability to construct valid and conceptual maps of the knowledge domain, together with the ability to locate those maps in broader context. Moreover this is facilitated by peer tutoring arrangements. What is more, the skills involved are central to those that are articulated by academics and employers as desirable goals for Higher Education.

Furthermore, Jones (1998:202) lists several aspects which are important to address in organizing peer tutor programmes for academic credit. These criteria resonate with features evident in my training and development programme. For example, Jones (1998:202) advocates that tutors receive training and support so that they may reach high standards of professionalism in tutoring. In addition, Jones (1998:202) maintains that tutors should be given feedback on their performances as regularly as possible and that tutors should work together as a supportive team in which they meet to “debrief” and share experiences and reflections. Significantly and in relation to my programme, Jones (1998:202) notes further that a coordinator should practise what he/she preaches and incorporate elements of “good tutoring” in how one interacts with tutors.

Finally, Jones (1998:202) stresses the importance of evaluating the tutor accredited course. He suggests that this be done through an end-of-course questionnaire and informally by staying “in-tune” with what is going on in the programme as it proceeds and making changes if necessary. This is precisely what my study advocates.

5.5.3 Utilizing Tutors Effectively at UJ

In another study conducted by Nel (2006) involving the Writing Centre peer tutors based in the Faculty of Education at UJ, it was recommended that practical training be offered to peer tutors operating there in order to develop tutoring skills and techniques (Nel 2006:103). Nel (2006:103) also suggested that tutors be trained in key interpersonal skills so as to harness good listening skills, careful judgement of others, dedication to collaborative learning and creativity.

Thus at the very least, I suggest that UJ could afford to further and better utilize its tutor system as a means of developing or enhancing a learner-centred approach. Additionally, I suggest that this can only be realized if tutors are given the intensive development they need in the context of the discipline in which they work. I suggest that this entails, firstly, the understanding of social constructivism and the benefits of collaborative learning as a premise for good tutoring practice. Secondly, it includes the development of an understanding of academic literacies theory in student learning. The next element of a tutor development programme includes the notion of tutors functioning as a collaborative group themselves, and working with a coordinator to mentor and develop them. Finally, inclusive to tutor development is the development of interpersonal, professional and academic skills of the tutors so that may tutor effectively. Finally, I suggest that a tutor development programme be evaluated for maximum effectiveness.

Having summarized the issues and discussed the recommendations offered by this study, the following presents an overview of this research followed by concluding remarks.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The reason for undertaking this study was to understand the role of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module. As coordinator of LES I began developing the tutors without having undergone any formal training as such. My own "training" explored what researchers documented about training and development techniques and the variety of approaches that one could adopt when working with tutors for example, a collaborative approach and that of role modelling preferred behaviour. However, my reading led to a crystallized understanding of the educational benefits of using the tutorial system, particularly with reference to Higher Education demands in the South African milieu especially in the context of the University of Johannesburg (Chapter 1).

This was added to the understanding of the findings of both national and international researchers who advocated the tutorial system as a means of benefitting students, tutors and lecturers alike. Adding to this background was an understanding of the pedagogy of peer tutoring and the discussion thereof. From this foundation I investigated the correlation between the theories underpinning LES and those underpinning tutor development. Finally I examined the components making up the details of training and development programmes offered by researched practice including the practice of evaluation (Chapter 2).

Moreover, as my aim was to assess the effect of the training and development programme I had devised and undertaken, I used the opportunity to examine my programme and the tutor experience of it. This was possible through engaging with the programme as well as actively participating therein. Reflection coupled with adapting the theory that I had read allowed me to inform my own practice (Chapter 3). This was reinforced in the initial training of the tutors as well as in the ongoing development of them, comprising of group and individual mentorship.

Data was gathered from "the action" of the development programme through observation and interaction with the tutors spanning from the pre-tutoring phase through to tutoring and finally through to post tutoring and led me to interpret my

findings (Chapter 4). This Action Research cycle allowed me to identify further aspects that needed attention or further research through the disjuncture between theory and practice (Chapter 5).

Based on the findings of this research, the role of the peer tutor development programme is to empower, enable and equip tutors to meet and even exceed the demands and goals of the module they are required to tutor. When provided with the appropriate initial training which includes both theoretical and philosophical underpinnings, rationale for the module as well as practical technical strategies and skills for tutoring, tutors are enabled to tutor more effectively. Tutors can also tutor more effectively if they are provided with sustained development after being initially trained. This sustained development may be offered via mentorship of individual tutors and the tutor group as a whole. Additionally the value given to tutors must be reinforced by their relationship with the coordinator responsible for developing them. This relationship serves as a model for best practice characterized by empathy and support which is to be reproduced by tutors when dealing with students, for rewarding results.



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Appendix A

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Letter to the Director of The Learning Centre/ADD at UJ

Dear Dr Van der Merwe

As you are aware I am currently registered for a MEd degree in Educational Linguistics. As you also know I am tasked with coordinating the LES module in the B.Com Extended Degree Programme at UJ. I would like to conduct a research project on the tutoring experience within that module. This letter is to respectfully request permission to undertake the project in the Learning Centre now referred to as the Academic Development Division. My proposed study is entitled: The role of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module.

The overall aims of the research project are to:

- To understand what the role of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module is.
- To understand how tutors experience the tutor development programme.

In my capacity as module coordinator, I plan to focus on the experiences and feedback from the tutors in the LES module and I would like to participate in and observe all features of the tutor development programme for the purpose of this study.

These include:

- initial tutor training
- weekly tutor meetings
- tutor reflection meetings
- moderation sessions
- classroom observations
- critical reflection after the classroom observation
- daily and ongoing dialogue with the LES tutors pertaining to their tutoring experience

I will seek written permission from the tutors to use the data collected. At no stage in the research will the identities of any tutors be identified. Full anonymity will be ensured as the research participants will be given pseudonyms. I will also make it clear to the participants that they are entitled to withdraw their permission to participate in the research at any time.

I understand that all the data resulting from observations, interviews and documents will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

I would be happy to answer any questions pertaining to the proposed research project and thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Jenni Underhill

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DRing 313 (APK Campus)

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.....

Appendix B

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Consent of participant

I,, hereby agree to grant permission to Ms Jenni Underhill to undertake research in tutor training and development in the LES module in her capacity as module coordinator. I understand that the observations and data collected in her role as module coordinator forms part of Ms Underhill's research for her Master's of Education study on the role of tutor development in an academic literacies module making the tutor experience central to this research.

I understand that the overall aims of the research project are:

- To understand the role of a peer tutor development programme in an academic literacies module
- To understand how tutors experience the tutor development programme

I understand that although Ms Underhill plans to focus on the entire tutor group that when she writes up the research she may only focus on some of the tutors. I also understand that that towards the end of her research Ms Underhill may hold discussions with some, if not all the tutors, to verify her interpretations and conclusions.

I understand that Ms Underhill's participation in and observations of the following aspects of our tutor development may be used for research purposes:

- initial tutor training
- weekly tutor meetings
- tutor reflection meetings
- moderation sessions
- classroom observations
- critical reflection after the classroom observation
- daily and ongoing dialogue with Ms Underhill pertaining to my tutoring experience

I hereby grant permission for this possibility.

I further agree to fill in all the questionnaires at the end of each term pertaining to tutor development for the purposes of Ms Underhill's research which I may do anonymously.

I understand that all the data resulting from the observations and documents will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with confidentiality. Full anonymity will be ensured as the participants referred to will be given pseudonyms in the writing up of this research thus at no stage in the research will the identities of any staff be identified.

I also understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time.

Finally I understand that Ms Underhill is willing and available to answer at any time questions relating to this research.

.....

Participant's signature

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.....

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.....

Appendix C: Field notes



Appendix D: Observation sheet



Appendix E: Example of a Tutor Contract



Appendix F: Tutor Self-Evaluation Outlines with Sample Responses



Appendix G: Reports from Classroom Visits (samples)



Appendix H: LES Timetable (indicating possible times tutors may be visited)



Appendix I: Tutor Reflections including blank questionnaires and sample questionnaires.



Appendix J: Formal interviews with interview questions



Appendix K: Tutor Training schedule (sample)



Appendix L: Concept Map



Appendix M: Table of Contents (Data Analysis)

