

**AN ENQUIRY INTO THE EFFECTS OF A TUTORING  
PROGRAM ON FORTY-EIGHT DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS  
AND THEIR FAMILIES**

A thesis  
submitted for the degree of Masters of Education (Honours)  
**University of Canberra**

**Robyn Pierce**  
**SRN, Graduate Diploma in Social Sciences**

**November 2004**

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis focuses on two research questions:

1. What is the impact of Barnardos' Tutoring Program on the students involved?
2. How has the program influenced the parents, teachers and tutors?

In examining the literature I have identified a complex set of dynamics that affects students' school performance. The themes of relevance to this study are: the concept of disadvantage and poverty; the role of literacy and numeracy in educational attainment; the importance of social acceptance for student well-being; aspects of mentoring and tutoring, and issues related to homework.

In this study I examine the degree to which a tutor's involvement improves students' homework performance, literacy and numeracy, social skills and engagement with school. I also examine how the tutoring program enhances parents' involvement with their children's education. And I assess the tutors' contribution, the influence of the program on the teachers, and the implications for the program.

My methods involved sending questionnaires out to 44 teachers, 41 students, 40 parents and 44 tutors. I also interviewed seven students under 10 years old. In addition to the questionnaires, I interviewed a core group of parents, students, teachers and tutors who had been involved with the program since 1999 (six tutors, five students, five parents and four teachers).

My findings indicate that homework places considerable strain on students who do not have adequate resources or support available to them, in their homes, to undertake their homework tasks. Tutoring programs which take place outside of the school environment and which are based on the one-to-one principle of mentoring programs offer considerable benefits to students and their families. The study indicates that the tutoring program has brought about significant changes to the homes and the lives of the students. These changes include a greater engagement with learning and an increased interest in school. The students also have better relationships with their peers and feel that they are valued members of their class. The parents believe that they have the support that they need and as a result there is less tension in the home with regard to homework.

The study also suggests that although the main role of the tutors is to help at-risk students with their homework and schoolwork, their role is much more diverse.

## **Acknowledgments**

I wish to express my greatest appreciation to the following people who have contributed to the completion of this study.

I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Joe Murik at the University of Canberra and I would like to thank him for his ideas, suggestions and encouragement over a three-year period. I would also like to gratefully acknowledge my secondary supervisor, Mr Tony Spinks, for his valuable ideas, suggestions and encouragement.

I would also like to thank the University of Canberra for offering me a scholarship to undertake this study.

My sincere gratitude goes to all the students, the parents, the tutors and the teachers for their participation in the study.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank my husband, Alan, for his support, kindness, patience, and frequent editing of my work.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE STUDY</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Overview of the chapter	1
1.2	The work of Barnardos Australia in the Australian Capital Territory	1
1.3	My position in this study	2
1.4	The tutoring program	2
1.5	Training	4
1.6	The research questions	4
1.7	The students	5
1.8	The setting of the study	7
1.8.1	The students	7
1.8.2	The schools	7
1.8.3	The volunteers	7
1.8.4	The 1999 study	8
1.8.5	Permission to undertake the study	9
1.9	Methods used	10
1.9.1	The setting	11
1.9.2	The use of people in an inquiry	11
1.9.3	Types of knowledge	11
1.9.4	Qualitative methods	12
1.9.5	Inductive data analysis	12
1.9.6	The type of theory used	13
1.9.7	The use of an emergent design	13
1.9.8	The type of interpretation	14
1.9.9	Establishing the research boundaries	15
1.10	The limitations of the study	15
1.10.1	General	15
1.10.2	The teachers	16
1.11	Summary of Chapter 1	16
<b>2</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1	Socio-economic status	20
2.1.1	A definition and the measurement of socio-economic status	20
2.1.2	The link between low socio-economic status and socio-economic disadvantage	21
2.2	The factors that contribute to socio-economic disadvantage	22
2.2.1	Family structure	22
2.2.2	Geographical location	26
2.2.3	Residential mobility	26
2.2.4	Ethnicity	27
2.2.5	Aboriginal background	28
2.2.6	Summary	28

<b>2.3</b>	<b>Poverty</b>	<b>29</b>
2.3.1	A definition of poverty	29
2.3.2	The causes of poverty	30
2.3.3	The culture of poverty theory - a historical perspective	30
<b>2.4</b>	<b>The impact of socio-economic disadvantage on education</b>	<b>31</b>
2.4.1	Analysis of the link between socio-economic disadvantage and educational outcomes	31
2.4.2	Families	33
2.4.3	The home environment	35
2.4.4	Factors that contribute to early school leaving	35
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Literacy and numeracy</b>	<b>39</b>
2.5.1	Introductory concepts	39
2.5.2	A definition of literacy	40
2.5.3	Social cultural view of literacy	40
2.5.4	Standards of literacy	42
2.5.5	The cultural and capital theory	44
<b>2.6</b>	<b>The social ecology of human development and mentoring</b>	<b>45</b>
2.6.1	The social ecology of human development	45
2.6.2	Mentoring	49
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Homework</b>	<b>54</b>
2.7.1	The American perspective	54
2.7.2	The Australian perspective	56
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>THE METHODOLOGY OF THE INQUIRY</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>The methods used for collecting the data</b>	<b>66</b>
3.1.1	Questionnaires	66
3.1.2	Interviews with students between 7 and 10 years of age	67
3.1.3	Interviews with the students, parents and tutors	67
3.1.4	Interviews with the students' teachers	68
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Stages of data analysis</b>	<b>68</b>
3.2.1	The questionnaires	69
3.2.2	The interview data	71
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Recording, coding and analysing the data</b>	<b>72</b>
3.3.1	The process of thematic coding	72
3.3.2	Making sense of the data	73
<b>4</b>	<b>PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>The effects of the program on the students: criteria 1-4</b>	<b>74</b>
4.1.1	Introduction	77
4.1.2	Criterion 1: Homework and school projects	78
4.1.3	Criterion 2: Literacy and numeracy	87
4.1.4	Criterion 3: Enhancing social skills	91
4.1.5	Criterion 4: Enhancing students' engagement with school	97
4.1.6	Summary of criteria 1 - 4	106

<b>4.2</b>	<b>The effects of the program on the parents, teachers and tutors</b>	<b>111</b>
4.2.1	Introduction	111
4.2.2	The effects of the program on the parents	111
4.2.3	Effects of the program on tutors	121
4.2.4	Effects of the program on the teachers	126
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Criterion 8: implications for the program</b>	<b>129</b>
4.3.1	Concerns expressed about the program	129
4.3.2	Program improvements	130
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>A SUMMARY OF THE THESIS</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>The major findings of the study</b>	<b>135</b>
5.1.1	The changes in the home	136
5.1.2	Changes in the lives of the students	138
5.1.3	Communication between the home and the school	141
<b>5.2</b>	<b>The implications of the findings</b>	<b>143</b>
5.2.1	For policy makers	143
5.2.2	For schools	144
5.2.3	For families	144
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>146</b>
	<b>APPENDIX A – THE QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>APPENDIX B – PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE STUDY</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>APPENDIX C – COMMITTEE FOR ETHICS IN HUMAN RESEARCH</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>APPENDIX D – APPROVAL FROM BARNARDOS AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>1</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1 - Concept of socio-economic status.....	20
Figure 2 – Components contributing to disadvantage (Graetz, 1995:x).....	21
Figure 3 – The concept of the operational view of literacy.....	41

## List of Tables

Table 1 – Students’ behaviour pattern based on family background (Booth & Dunn, 1996).....	37
Table 2 –Categories of participants and rates of questionnaires returned.....	67
Table 3- The criteria used for gauging the impact of the tutoring program.....	70

## List of Graphs

Graph 1 - Effect of tutoring on students' understanding of their homework .....	81
Graph 2 – Students’ ability to hand in homework to teachers .....	81
Graph 3– Teachers’ perspectives on effect of tutoring on students' numeracy.....	88
Graph 4 – Teachers’ perspectives on effect of tutoring on students’ literacy.....	88
Graph 5 – Teachers’ perspectives on effect of tutoring on students’ ability to understand classroom work.....	89
Graph 6 - Teachers’ perceptions of students’ level of isolation.....	93
Graph 7 – Influence of tutoring program on level of students’ engagement with school (tutor and teachers’ perspectives).....	101
Graph 8 – Students’ interest level following tutoring (parents’ perspectives).....	111
Graph 9 – Effect of program on parents’ understanding of homework .....	112
Graph 10 – Level of communication between parents and tutors about homework and schoolwork .....	113
Graph 11 – Level of communication between parents and tutors about the students’ family.....	113
Graph 12 – Level of Communication between Tutors and Teachers.....	121



# **1 INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE STUDY**

## **1.1 Overview of the chapter**

In this chapter I provide a brief description of the work undertaken by Barnardos Australia, Canberra Centre, in the Australian Capital Territory, and how the present study relates to Barnardos' services and programs. I also clarify the background to my involvement in this study. I consider the relevance of this research from the point of view of the children, their families, and in the wider context of education and provide a brief overview of the Barnardos' tutoring program. I discuss the main findings from an earlier study I conducted and explain the naturalistic methods that I used in this present inquiry.

## **1.2 The work of Barnardos Australia in the Australian Capital Territory**

Barnardos Australia is a children's welfare agency caring for the most disadvantaged children in our community through family support programs, temporary family care programs, programs for young people, mentoring programs and foster care programs. The agency has been operating in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) since 1964.

Children referred to Barnardos may live in families troubled by abuse, mental health problems or physical disabilities. The children may also live with families where there is long-term unemployment, instability, constant changes of location and poverty. The children's family background and life circumstances may adversely affect their performance at school. In this context, Barnardos Australia continues to research and develop innovative programs that the agency believes will be of benefit to Australian children.

One such program operating in the ACT is Barnardos' tutoring program. The tutoring program contributes to the broader aims and objectives of Barnardos Australia. When students are helped with schoolwork at home, there are likely to be longer-term benefits. Having a tutor may enable students to remain at school and continue their education for longer. It may also mean that ultimately students can enjoy and contribute to their communities.

### **1.3 My position in this study**

When I started this research I was the Coordinator of Barnardos' tutoring program (until May 2002). The program continues to operate as part of a larger family support program, but I am no longer involved.

### **1.4 The tutoring program**

The tutoring program began as a twelve month pilot program in 1999 funded by the Commonwealth of Australia through its literacy program *Grants for National Strategies and Projects*. After the initial funding ceased, Barnardos Australia continued to fund the program.

The tutoring program matches volunteer tutors with students who are having difficulties with their education and learning, and who do not have somebody at home to help them with their homework and schoolwork. The volunteer tutors are asked to commit a minimum of one year to the program. They are also asked to tutor a student for 1-2 hours once a week, either in the student's home or at a place convenient to both student and

tutor. This could be at a local library or at the tutor's home, if the student's home is unsuitable. The function of the volunteer tutors is much wider than that of a tutor and I discuss mentoring in the literature review. However, for the purpose of this study I refer to the volunteers as tutors.

Prospective volunteer tutors need to undergo rigorous procedures before being matched with a student:

- They must submit the names of two referees, one of whom must have known them for more than five years.
- They must pass a security clearance and undergo a lengthy interview.
- They must give a minimum commitment of one year to the program.

After the satisfactory completion of the interview process the volunteers are matched with a student living nearby and with similar interests to the volunteer.

The aims of the tutoring program are to:

- reduce the likelihood of school suspensions;
- improve students' literacy and numeracy skills;
- improve communication between home and school;
- help students with their homework and school projects;
- increase students' confidence and self esteem;
- provide support for parents with their child's education;
- provide support for teachers;
- reduce the likelihood of students changing schools, and

- re-engage students in the learning process.

The key elements of the tutoring program are that tutors are able to help students with their homework and schoolwork at an agreed place away from school. Students have the one-on-one support of their tutors, and parents may be helped with their child's education and homework.

## **1.5 Training**

Training for tutors in children's challenging behaviours, the characteristics of disadvantaged families and expectations of change was provided by Barnardos Canberra Centre. Other training in the nature of homework tasks, the importance of home-school partnerships, and supportive tutoring strategies for literacy and numeracy was provided by the staff of the Australian Catholic University (ACT Campus) and the Australian National University. The Australian Catholic University (ACT Campus) conducted a training day for tutors in 2001.

## **1.6 The research questions**

The questions addressed by this research are:

- 1) What is the impact of the Barnardos' tutoring program on the students?
- 2) How has the program influenced the parents, the teachers and the tutors?

Examining the impact of the program on all the participants will give me a holistic picture of the effects of the program.

What is the relevance of this research, from the point of view of the students and their families, and in the wider context of education?

## 1.7 The students

The students referred to the tutoring program are experiencing a range of difficulties at school. From the referral process documented on the students' application these are:

- poor literacy and numeracy;
- social isolation;
- low self esteem;
- homework;
- disengagement from school;
- behavioural difficulties at school and in the classroom;
- irregular school attendance;
- frequent change of schools, and
- frequent school suspensions.

It is also suggested from the referral process that some students have witnessed domestic violence in the family. Other students live with families where there is drug and alcohol abuse.

Parents commonly feel overwhelmed by homework. Single parents in particular comment that they feel the strain of continually arguing with their son or daughter about their homework. This may be because parents do not have adequate resources available in the

home to help their children. There may be a lack of material goods, computer equipment, pens, pencils, paper, and reading material.

Parents may have insufficient time to help their children because of work commitments or caring for other children in the family at the same time. Parents may not be able to understand the homework because of their low levels of education. Single parents may not have any other support in the home to help them with their child's work. All of these factors may adversely affect the parents. Furthermore, it is also suggested from the referral process that for many students, their parents have not had any contact with the school for some time. In the wider context of education students may not be achieving at school because their daily life experiences may be preventing them from performing well. As a result, students may leave school early because of the difficulties they are experiencing with their education.

The relevance of this research for the students and their families, and the value of mentoring, is that a volunteer tutor may be able to help students who are struggling at school, and who do not otherwise have anybody at home able to help them with their homework and schoolwork. In having a tutor at home parents may also feel supported with their child's homework and learning. If students and their families feel supported, and a tutor is able to make a difference to the students' education and learning, and to the parents' well-being, then the introduction of a tutor into students' homes may be one strategy for meeting the needs of the students.

## **1.8 The setting of the study**

### **1.8.1 The students**

The 48 students who participated in the study live at home in the ACT with either a single parent, both parents, or another adult member of the family. The students are referred to the program by the Department of Family Services, other non-government agencies, school counsellors, teachers and parents, or may refer themselves. The students are between 7 and 16 years of age.

### **1.8.2 The schools**

Almost all the students attend a local school. The schools comprise both primary and secondary government and Catholic schools in the ACT and the Queanbeyan areas of New South Wales. There are students from eight Catholic schools and 40 government schools involved in this study. Two students in the program from the Queanbeyan area have not been included in this study (see 1.9 below).

### **1.8.3 The volunteers**

The volunteers are professional people, housewives, students and people in the business and general community. They range in age from 18 to 72 years. Although the majority of the volunteers are women, considerable numbers of men are also involved with the program.

#### **1.8.4 The 1999 study**

At the beginning of 1999 I did some research for a Graduate Diploma in Social Science at the University of Western Sydney (Pierce, 1999). My aim was to evaluate the effects of the first six months of the Barnardos' tutoring program on students, parents, teachers and tutors.

I found that after six months the students believed they were better able to understand their homework and their classroom work. The teachers suggested it was too early to judge if there had been any improvement in the students' literacy and numeracy skills. However, 91% of the parents believed that the students' learning skills had improved. 90% of parents also believed that having a tutor had made it easier for them with regard to their son's or daughter's undertaking of the homework and 100% of parents believed having a tutor had made it easier for them with regard to their son's or daughter's school project tasks.

Some of the important findings from the study were that:

- communication between home and school was inadequate;
- there was a lack of communication between the tutors and the school;
- the students believed that their homework had improved after the involvement of the tutors;
- the students felt less stressed at school and appreciated having a tutor;
- the parents valued having a tutor in their home;
- the teachers enjoyed being able to talk to the tutors, and
- the parents did not feel their role as a parent had been undermined in any way after the tutors' arrival.



The 1999 study is related to the present study because this study provides a set of data that has been thoroughly analysed and will illuminate the issues further.

In their final evaluation of this particular tutoring program Shopen and Liddicoat (1999) suggested that the needs of many students were more long-term and could not be met within a six- month period. The same authors suggested that there was evidence that the program was beginning to have benefits for both the students and their families.

In my study I also suggested that further research was required to ascertain the longer-term effects of the program on all the participants. The present study builds on the work I did in 1999 and explores to a greater extent and in more detail the effects of the tutoring program on all the participants.

#### **1.8.5 Permission to undertake the study**

Permission to undertake the present study was granted by the Ethics Committee of the University of Canberra in 2001 and by the Education Department of the Australian Capital Territory and the Chief Executive Officer of Barnardos Australia. Relevant documentation is included in Appendices B, C and D.

Students who lived in the Queanbeyan area were not included in this study. This was because there were only two students living in the Queanbeyan area who were involved with the program at the time. The involvement of these students in the study would have

required permission from the New South Wales Department of Education. It was felt that this would have been a long and involved process for only two students.

## **1.9 Methods used**

This study is based in the naturalistic paradigm as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Setting the study in the naturalistic paradigm differentiates it from a study set within a positivist paradigm. These two paradigms differ in their axiomatic systems for arriving at the truth in an inquiry. That is, they differ in the basic beliefs that are accepted by convention, or by established practice, as the theoretical structure for arriving at the truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The proponents of the positivistic paradigm believe that the nature of reality is single and tangible, and any part may be studied independently. They also believe that the inquirer and the object of inquiry are independent of each other.

I discuss the nine main characteristics that differentiate the naturalistic paradigm from the positivist position in the following pages. The main proponents of the naturalistic paradigm, Lincoln and Guba (1985), Guba and Lincoln (1981), identified these characteristics.

### **1.9.1 The setting**

In the naturalistic paradigm the inquiry takes place in the natural setting because the subjects of the study (in this case, the parents, students, teachers and tutors) take their meaning as much from the context as they do from themselves.

This suggests that realities are wholes and cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts. Whatever happens between people within the context must be acknowledged.

This study takes place in a natural setting; that is, in the homes of the tutors, the students and their parents. In the case of the teachers it takes place in their respective schools.

### **1.9.2 The use of people in an inquiry**

In the naturalistic inquiry people are used as the primary data-gathering source. In this study I have made use of people as the primary data-gathering source because I believe that only people can adjust to the variety of realities that they encounter. Furthermore, I believe that only people can understand the meaning of the different interactions among each other.

### **1.9.3 Types of knowledge**

This study makes use of both propositional and intuitive knowledge. This is based on the naturalist assumption that the researcher who makes use of propositional and intuitive knowledge is better placed to understand the complexities and multiple realities that will be encountered during the course of the study.

### **1.9.4 Qualitative methods**

In the naturalistic paradigm, qualitative methods are preferred because they are more capable of dealing with the multiple realities encountered when people are the main source of the data. Qualitative methods are best suited for my purpose because they are extensions of normal human activity. This research utilises and values the qualitative impression of the people involved, and therefore takes into account the integrity of the realities of the students, the parents, the teachers and the tutors. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, are a measurement of quantity and therefore, convert a set of data to numbers. Quantitative methods are less suitable for dealing with multiple realities with all their complexities.

Although this naturalistic inquiry uses mainly qualitative methods, it also makes use of statistical data to highlight some aspects of the study.

### **1.9.5 Inductive data analysis**

In the naturalist paradigm, data is inductively analysed by a coding process which allows raw data to be transferred to units or codes of simple sentences or extended paragraphs. In this inquiry I used thematic coding to analyse the data inductively. I colour-coded sentences and paragraphs that were similar or connected in the raw data and placed a word or words on top of each colour to capture the main idea represented by a particular colour. Thus particular themes evolved.

### **1.9.6 The type of theory used**

By using inductive analysis, the naturalistic inquiry allows the theory to emerge from the raw data; that is, the analysis permits the theory to be grounded in the data. In this study, in using inductive analysis, I opted to have the main guiding theory emerge from, and be grounded in, the raw data. Therefore, I do not make use of *a priori* theory, because the inquiry takes into account the many aspects of the complex realities that I encountered during the process of the inquiry, and the integrity of all the participants.

### **1.9.7 The use of an emergent design**

One of the main characteristics of an inquiry set in the naturalistic paradigm is that the research design emerges as the inquiry progresses. An inquiry based in the naturalistic paradigm allows the research design to emerge from the complexities faced by the researcher in analysing a large volume of data collated from the participants' responses to the questionnaires in the study. The research design in this study therefore emerged as the inquiry progressed. In the emergent design, I developed a set of criteria that I believe are important indicators of the effectiveness of the tutoring program. Developing a set of criteria appeared to be the best way to do justice to the perceptions of the participants in this study. This aspect of the methodology is described in greater detail in Chapter 3.

As the research design emerged, I considered the following conditions.

- a) My experience of running the tutoring program for the past two years gave me tacit knowledge that one or more of the criteria were given as reasons for referring students to the program. Also of significance, and taken into consideration in the

emergent design, was the parents' own concerns at the time of the students' referral to the program.

- b) By knowing the reasons for referring students to the program, I was able to develop a set of criteria that I regarded as the key elements in the students' performance at school. The reasons for students' referral to the program also provided me with criteria for assessing the impact of the program on the participants.
- c) My 1999 research indicated that the lack of communication between the tutors and the teachers had been a significant concern because the tutors did not know if they were productively assisting their students.

### **1.9.8 The type of interpretation**

In this naturalistic inquiry, in keeping with the fundamental assumptions of the naturalistic paradigm, I interpret the findings idiographically. That is, I apply the conclusions that I draw tentatively. Idiographic interpretation implies understanding what is occurring in a holistic way. This is because meaning cannot be attained for a whole simply by looking at the parts. Although my conclusions may be generalised to some extent, they are dependent upon the contextual factors of time, place, and the different value systems of the participants.

### **1.9.9 Establishing the research boundaries**

The naturalistic paradigm avoids *a priori* theory and acknowledges the need for the research design to emerge from the continuous analysis of the data, in a value-laden context. Although there may be changes of subjective manipulation as to what is included and what is excluded in an emerging design, what guides this naturalistic inquiry is the focus of the study.

In this inquiry, the focus of the study is the effects of the Barnardos' tutoring program on each group of participants: the students, the parents, the teachers and the tutors, with particular emphasis on the effects of the program on the students. The research boundaries in this inquiry are therefore defined by the emergent data serving to answer the research question in the most accurate way.

### **1.10 The limitations of the study**

#### **1.10.1 General**

In this study I examine stakeholders' perceptions of the impact of the tutoring program; I did not have access to pre-and post program test results to gauge the actual effectiveness of the program. However, I have assumed that both teachers and tutors would be basing their perceptions on their observations of the impact of the program on the students.

The students in this particular study are highly disadvantaged. They were asked to complete the questionnaires by themselves. Therefore, their ability to articulate their perception of what tutoring was doing for them may be limited. However, the interviews

with a core group of students in their homes permitted the students to freely talk about their experiences of having a tutor.

### **1.10.2 The teachers**

The questionnaires were sent to teachers during the latter part of the year. This may account for the fact that only 34% of teachers returned their questionnaires, compared to 82% of the tutors, 73% of the students, and 63% of the parents. I acknowledge that teachers are extremely busy, and participating in a study during the last two months of the year may not have been possible for many of them.

## **1.11 Summary of Chapter 1**

In this first chapter I have briefly described the work of Barnardos Australia, Canberra Centre and presented an overview of the aims of the tutoring program and the process for recruiting volunteer tutors. I have clarified my position in this study and discussed the reasons for students' referral to the program and the referring agencies. The relevance of this research from the point of view of the students and their families has been examined.

The 1999 research project was undertaken to evaluate the effects of the program on the students, parents, teachers and tutors after a six-month period. Although the research revealed that the program was beginning to have some benefits for the students and their families, it was not rigorous enough to claim any substantial outcomes. Therefore, the author suggested that further research was required, over a longer period of time, to



evaluate in more detail the effectiveness or otherwise of the tutoring program on all the participants.

Chapter 1 has also described the nine characteristics of the naturalistic paradigm used in this study.

In undertaking this study I will be able to examine the impact of tutoring programs and their place on the educational agenda. Chapter 2 begins with an exploration of the literature relating to the concepts of socio-economic status, and the factors that contribute to socio-economic disadvantage.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review contains eight sections, namely:

- 2.1 Socio-economic status
- 2.2 Factors that contribute to socio-economic disadvantage
- 2.3 Poverty
- 2.4 Socio-economic disadvantage and the impact on education
- 2.5 Literacy and numeracy
- 2.6 The social ecology of human development, and the mentoring process
- 2.7 Homework
- 2.8 Conclusion

### **General**

There is continuing debate in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom about the importance of literacy and numeracy skills as predictors of longer-term educational outcomes for children (Booth & Dunn, 1996; Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA), 1998; Marks & Fleming, 1999). Students who achieve at school are far less likely to leave school early. It is also suggested that home and school relationships play a vital role in and have a strong impact on children's literacy success (Shopen & Liddicoat, 1998).

Evidence also suggests that parental involvement in children's education leads to educational success (Batten & Russell, 1995; Cairney et al., 1995; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Frost & Hawkes, 1996; Kauffman, 2001; Manning & Baruth, 1995; McLoughlin &

Nagorcka, 2000; Osborne, 1990; Putnam, 2000; Rich, 2000; Withers & Batten, 1995; Wolfendale, 1983; and Wolfendale & Topping, 1996).

It is also argued by researchers in the field that family structure plays an important role too (Buckingham, 2000), and has the greatest impact on children's educational attainment (Ainley et al., 1995; Booth & Dunn, 1996; Feuerstein, 2000; Rich, 2000).

### **The justification for this literature review**

I acknowledge that children require sound literacy and numeracy skills for longer-term educational attainment and future success in life. Furthermore, parents' involvement in their children's education, coupled with socio-economic status and family structure, all have a significant impact on children's achievement at school. In this literature review I seek to investigate some of the theories and arguments put forward by researchers and authors who have examined these factors in more detail.

There have been significant changes to the structure of families in the last decade. How have these changes affected children and parents? Why do children continue to struggle and underachieve at school today?

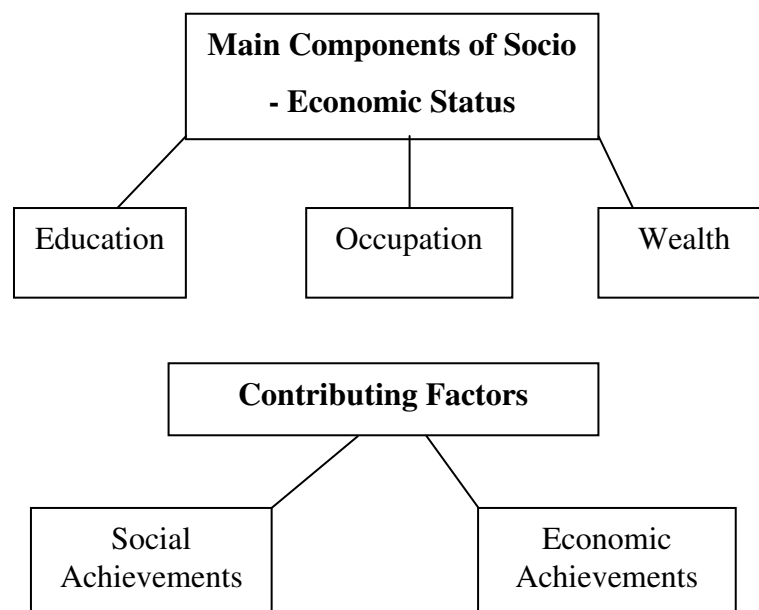
To appreciate the changes that are taking place in society and the impact of these changes on the lives of children, particularly with respect to literacy and numeracy, this literature review begins with an overview of the concepts of socio-economic status.

## 2.1 Socio-economic status

### 2.1.1 A definition and the measurement of socio-economic status

Graetz (1995) argues that socio-economic status has never been adequately defined.

However, he suggests that the very vagueness of the term has been both its weakness and its strength. The term 'socio-economic status' was once used to refer to a person's overall social position in some form or other in the community. From the 1950s onwards, a person's overall education, income and occupation became the dominant measurement of socio-economic status. According to Graetz, the other two contributing factors to the composition of socio-economic status are a person's social and economic attainment. The concept of socio-economic status, suggested by Graetz, is set out below.



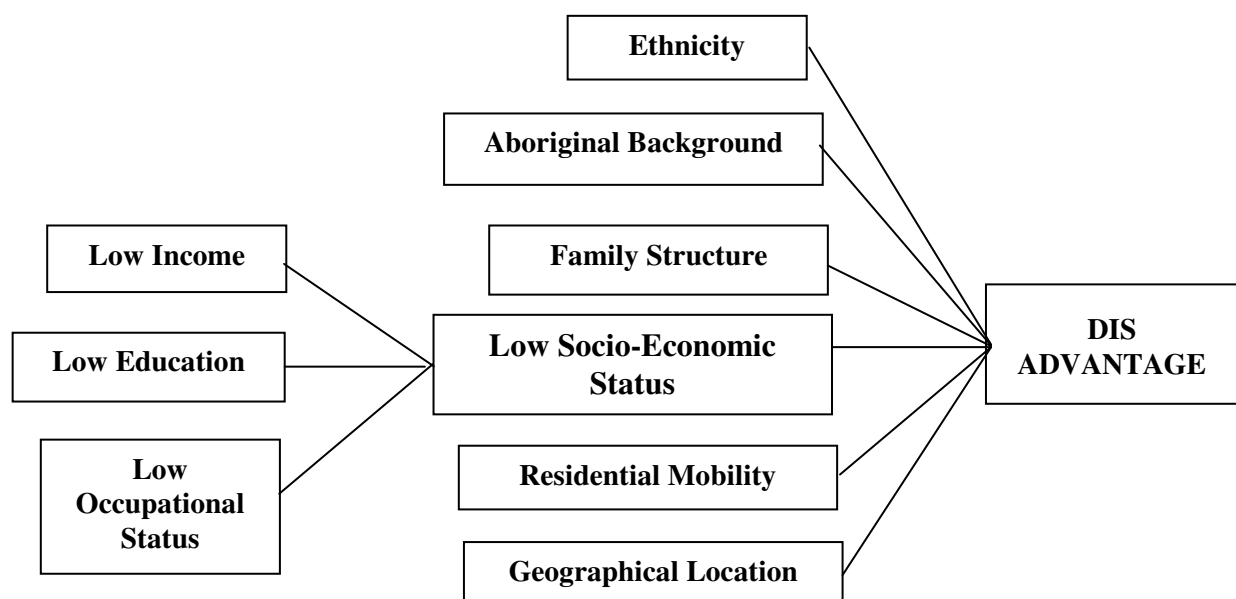
**Figure 1 - Concept of socio-economic status  
Graetz (1995)**

### 2.1.2 The link between low socio-economic status and socio-economic disadvantage

Frost and Hawkes (1966) note that disadvantage is a relative term. A disadvantaged situation compared to an advantaged situation could be applied to any aspect of life.

However, when the term 'socio-economic disadvantage' is used, it implies that a person is disadvantaged both socially and economically compared to a person who is more socially and economically advantaged. According to Graetz (1995) the attributes that contribute to inequality and disadvantage include low education, low occupation and low income. It is these attributes that may be correlated with low socio-economic status.

Low socio-economic status does not mean, however, that a person is disadvantaged in any way. What causes people to be disadvantaged, Graetz argues, are the components of a person's ethnic background, including Aboriginality, family structure, residential movements and geographical location. These components compound a person's already low socio-economic state, resulting in disadvantage.



**Figure 2 – Components contributing to disadvantage (Graetz, 1995:x).**

## 2.2 The factors that contribute to socio-economic disadvantage

### 2.2.1 Family structure

It is overwhelmingly agreed that the traditional family unit is becoming less common.

Evidence suggests that there has been a significant increase in the number of single parent families in the last 20 years in Australia. Between 1986 and 1996 the number of single parent families grew by almost 50% (Neville, 2000).

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002a) in 1991 14.2% of all families with children under the age of 15 lived with a single parent mother. By 2001 this percentage had increased to 19.3%. Also in 2001, fathers headed 2.3% of single parent families. Therefore, in 2001 21.6% of all children under the age of 15 lived with a single parent.

Based on the statistics in the *National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) Survey* (2002), approximately 35% of all families living in the ten most disadvantaged suburbs in the Australian Capital Territory were sole parent families. Harding et al. (2000) also note that the general characteristics of households living in poverty in these suburbs are of sole parents living in public housing, who either receive a government benefit or who are unemployed.

*The Australian figures*

The percentage increase in the number of single parent families in Australia between 1986 and 1996 is documented below (Neville, 2000).

<b>Years</b>	<b>The increase in the number of single parent families</b>	<b>The percentage increase</b>
<b>1986</b>	311,800	
<b>1996</b>	467,200	<b>50%</b>

The table below shows the percentage increase of single parent families in Australia between 1989 and 1998 (Rich, 2000).

<b>Years</b>	<b>Sole parent families constituted:</b>
1989	14% of all families
1998	21.5% of all families

In 2000, women headed 90% of single parent families (Buckingham, 2000).

*The causes for this increase in single parenthood*

Neville (2000) and Buckingham (2000) suggest that the main contributor to the rise in single parenthood in the Australian context is divorce. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002a) figures indicate that between 1990 and 2000 nearly 500,000 children under the age of 18 years were affected by divorce.

In the year 2000 alone there were 49,600 children under the age of 18 affected by divorce.

The other contributing factor to the rise in single parenthood is that of unmarried

motherhood (Sullivan, Buckingham, Maley & Hughes 1999). In the United States, divorce is also the main contributing factor to single parenthood followed by unmarried motherhood (Booth & Dunn, 1996). Divorce statistics indicate that up to 1963 there were very few divorces in Australia. However, from the middle of 1973 onwards there has been a steady increase in the number of divorces (Sullivan et al., 1999). The same authors suggest that the changing patterns in the divorce rate cannot be understood without reference to changes in the divorce law that took place in 1975. The Family Law Act of 1975 came into operation in 1976, easing restrictions for divorce by replacing the 14 grounds of the earlier Matrimonial Causes Act with one single ground: irretrievable breakdown of marriage, defined as one year's separation. The changes in the divorce law have been one of the main contributors to the increase in the divorce rate in Australia.

In 2000 nearly 30% of births were to unmarried mothers. This percentage has been rising steadily throughout the 1990s (ABS, 2002a)

The changes in the structure of families are taking place not only in Australia but also across the Western world. For example in the United States each year 1.5 million children (nearly 2.5% of all children) have parents who separate or divorce (Booth & Dunn, 1996). The same authors note that in the last 30 years child rearing outside of marriage in the United States has become more common. In 1992 1.2 million babies were born to single mothers. This was 30% of all births.



Two-parent, mother/father families may still be the dominant family structure; however, the increase in the number of single parent, female-headed families may have an effect not only on the children within that family structure, but also on the single parents themselves.

*The effects of these changes*

Poverty is the major risk of sole parenthood according to several authors (Buckingham, 2000; Fukuyama, 1999; Neville, 2000). This is because of the difficulty faced by sole parents in undertaking paid employment whilst bringing up children alone. In fact, Weatherburn and Lind (2001) argue that the pressures of poverty and sole parenthood cause psychological problems such as drug abuse, depression and anxiety. Parents may not be able to give their children the quality of parenting they need because of these psychological problems. The same authors suggest that single parenthood in itself is not a predictor of child maltreatment. What does affect children is how their parents cope with their environment and their lives. In Fukuyama's view poverty is also related to increasing levels of crime and declining trust. These effects have an impact on the relationship between members of society and a decline in social capital. Fukuyama (1999) argues that although money may mitigate most of the human and social conditions caused by family disruption, there are other factors to consider that affect the disrupted family.

Households with only one parent draw on only half the income, labour and social capital compared with households with two parents. One parent families also cease to benefit from the division of labour in the family. Another factor to consider is the role played by the father in the education, socialisation and raising of children. Fukuyama (1999) argues

that even if the father does not do very much in the household, his presence allows the mother to spend more time with the children.

### **2.2.2 Geographical location**

Edgar, Keane and McDonald (1989) point out that adequate housing plus a steady income are important factors that contribute to the reduction of poverty. A low income will reduce one's opportunities for acquiring reasonable housing at an affordable price. Neville (2000) further suggests that disadvantage is becoming increasingly localised. The author refers to the study of urban poverty in Australia undertaken by Gregory and Hunter (1995). This study found that within major cities, when both parents in a family were employed these families were living in areas of high socio-economic status; families where neither parent worked were living in areas of low socio-economic status.

These authors' arguments suggest that it is extremely difficult for people on a low income to obtain reasonable housing at an affordable price in an area that does not have elements of disadvantage. According to Neville (2000), people on a low income are only allocated homes in areas of low socio-economic status.

### **2.2.3 Residential mobility**

'Residential mobility' refers to the number of times families move from one residence to another. There are many reasons why families change their place of residence. Domestic violence in a family may mean that the family has to move to a safe refuge. Consistently being unable to pay rental and telephone bills and having other debts may be the principal reason for other families to move. Constant conflict with neighbours may also result in

families having to move. Families may also have to move because of retrenchment, ill health, having a sick child or having to care for an older parent (Tretheway, 1989).

Families who live in neighbourhoods where there is a high incidence of mobility will have fewer material and emotional resources to call upon to diffuse the stresses of parenting and poverty. Weatherburn and Lind (2000) note that geographical mobility may be a predictor of child maltreatment because of a parent's lack of material and emotional resources.

According to Putnam (2000) and Fukuyama (1999), living in a neighbourhood of high mobility disconnects members of society and the community of which one is a part. As a result people are at a greater risk of becoming victims of crime than people living in a more stable environment.

#### **2.2.4 Ethnicity**

Tretheway (1989) suggests that a considerable number of migrant families experience poverty on their arrival in Australia. Language barriers make it difficult for many migrants to obtain employment, leaving families to rely on unemployment benefits and to live in low-cost government housing. Many migrants, the author argues, have had professional occupations in their own countries but have had to rely on unemployment benefits whilst looking for work and studying English. As a result of this unemployment migrants have had to move to areas of low socio-economic status and disadvantage.

### **2.2.5 Aboriginal background**

According to Graetz and McAllister (1994), indigenous people remain one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged groups in Australian society. The economic disadvantages faced by indigenous people include low levels of educational attainment, a considerably higher rate of unemployment and lower occupational status and earnings when employed.

### **2.2.6 Summary**

The literature makes clear that one of the main effects of the break up of the nuclear family is poverty. People who are poor may not be given a choice about where they live, the type of housing they would like, or the type of school their children may attend.

The psychological problems of drug abuse, anxiety and depression are common reactions to the pressures of poverty. It is these reactions that affect parents' ability to care for their children. Furthermore, if parents have to constantly move they will not be able to develop trusting relationships with their neighbours and their community. In fact, areas in which there is a high incidence of residential mobility are associated with higher levels of crime.

Families who are affected by divorce and separation are less well off regardless of the personal circumstances of the family prior to the divorce or separation. The literature suggests that what makes a difference to families who are being disrupted is the ability of the single parent to find employment that will allow the family to live a reasonable lifestyle. In this context, access to employment also means that parents are connected to their wider community. As a result trust and friendship may develop between workers.

Without work parents may be disconnected from their communities and from society in general. If families live in locations where there is a lack of connection between people they may feel extremely isolated.

The following pages explore some of the reasons why people continue to live in poverty today.

## **2.3 Poverty**

### **2.3.1 A definition of poverty**

The official definition of poverty was once thought of in terms of the level of resources at which a person became entitled to supplementary benefits (Robinson, 1976). This argument defined poverty as an absolute concept; that is, nothing else can be compared to this economic state. However, there is almost universal agreement that poverty is a relative concept (Edgar et al., 1989; Hollingworth, 1979; Tretheway, 1989). In this context poverty is viewed as a concept of relative deprivation determined by the level of material and social resources or activities experienced by the person. A lack of resources and income excludes people from full membership of society (Edgar et al., 1989).

There has been an extensive body of research undertaken in Australia since the 1960s into the economic aspects of poverty. The Henderson Poverty Line has been used as the basis for measuring poverty (Edgar et al., 1989). This measurement sets the poverty line at half of the average person's equivalent disposable income. The same authors note that the use of the poverty line as a measurement for the incidence and structure of poverty is common

in many countries. The Orshansky poverty line is used in the United States and the 140 percent of Supplementary Benefit Standard is used in the United Kingdom (Edgar et al., 1989).

### **2.3.2 The causes of poverty**

A situational view of poverty, explaining its causes in structural terms, was taken by Hollingworth (1979). People are poor because they do not have access to a basic income, essential goods and supportive services. Furthermore, if the underlying economic and social circumstances deny people the resources to control their lives they will stay in poverty. The causes, the same author argues, are not as much to be found in the individual as in the structures of society that surrounds them. The lack of capacity to secure resources including housing, health, welfare services and education, means that people will remain poor. Poverty may lead in the end to a feeling of powerlessness.

### **2.3.3 The culture of poverty theory - a historical perspective**

In the 1960s and 1970s a theory was current about the culture of poverty which was vigorously debated. Some of the theories were put forward by Oscar Lewis (1969) and Valentine (1972). The argument put forward on the one side by Lewis was that the culture of poverty was a way of life handed down from one generation to the next. On the other side of the debate, Valentine (1972) argued that the culture of poverty theory was nothing more than the need for concepts to make knowledge coherent, to shape public attitudes and public opinion. Terms began to be developed such as ‘ways of life’, ‘group traditions’ and ‘lifestyles’. These terms became seriously attributed to a “*disorderly collection of human groupings*” Valentine (1972). According to Valentine, the essence of

poverty is inequality. Rutter and Madge (1976) argue that the culture of poverty theory ignored the fact that it was the structural features of society and not family factors that cause the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The theories that raged during that time do not have much currency in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia.

According to McGregor (2001), most Australians today view their society as a three-tiered class structure with an upper class, a middle class and a working class. Results from many surveys indicate that over half of Australian men and women regard themselves as middle class. However, there is also an argument that in Australia today that there is an under class of people who are chronically disadvantaged. This under class lies below the working class and consists of people who are unemployed, homeless, mentally disturbed and/or poverty-stricken (McGregor, 2001).

## **2.4 The impact of socio-economic disadvantage on education**

### **2.4.1 Analysis of the link between socio-economic disadvantage and educational outcomes**

The Plowman report (1960) undertaken in Great Britain identified two social background variables that could contribute to a student's school achievement: material circumstances and parental attitudes.

Hollingworth (1979) views material circumstances (for example, reasonable housing and living conditions and access to proper clothing), as factors contributing to a child's successful and systematic learning.

According to Edgar et al., (1989) the links between poverty and educational outcomes are far from simple. Low income has material affects such as a lack of books and equipment. The author argues that there are also environmental and psychological pressures associated with poverty ranging from damaged self-esteem to racism. There is also the complex cultural dynamic around education, and education selection itself.

The way in which schools and colleges select and stream their students produces social inequalities and disadvantages the children of the poor. So, too, does the mainstream education system's academic curriculum and its method of competitive assessment. The complex cultural dynamic around education leads to families in poverty being excluded from educational decision-making, to their skills being misunderstood and to their children being judged as innately less intelligent (Edgar, et al., 1989).

McLoughlin and Nagoreka (2000) note that longitudinal studies of the influences on educational outcomes and life chances of disadvantaged children provide evidence that low socio-economic status, family poverty and residence in a less advantaged area are all independently associated with low levels of school achievement. Furthermore, the same authors suggest that ongoing family adversity greatly affects children's cognitive performance, behaviour, school performance and delinquency.

There are also common parental responses to poverty and unemployment such as increased irritability, arbitrary discipline, parent-child conflict, physical punishment and weak parental supervision, all of which affect children (Weatherburn & Lind, 2001).



According to Kauffman (2001), inadequate food, clothing and shelter have the strongest negative impact on children's cognitive and social development. In addition, chaotic living conditions and the lack of opportunity to learn from a nurturing adult also adversely affect children's cognitive skills and social development.

### **2.4.2 Families**

Frost and Hawkes (1966) suggest that the disadvantaged child is one who is handicapped in the task of growing up to lead a competent and satisfying life.

In the United States there has been considerable debate about how the changing family structure is affecting children's ability to learn. Booth and Dunn (1996) note that on the one hand it was argued that coming from a disrupted family was a serious impediment to a young person's academic success and later life chances. On the other side the authors note that being brought up in single parent families or stepfamilies had no particular bearing on how children performed at school. These families were no less supportive than two-parent families.

During the last decade there has been a significant body of research undertaken in the United States on the effects of family disruption on students' achievement at school. The results from this research indicate that neither of the above arguments is correct. They insist that divorce and unmarried motherhood are not the major causes of a child's failure at school; neither have academic achievements declined because of family disruption.

What is clear, Booth and Dunn (1996) argue, is that family structure is only one of many

factors that contributes to a child's success or failure at school. Booth and Dunn (1996) view single parent or stepfamilies as being risk factors contributing to lower school achievement.

According to Fukuyama (1999), people persist in arguing that family structure does not make a difference to the welfare of children because, in his view, sole parenthood or disrupted families are highly disposed to an array of social ills beginning with poverty, living in dangerous neighbourhoods, drugs and disadvantaged schools. Rich (2000) supports the theory that single parenthood is not the cause of educational disadvantage. The critical factors in the author's view are race and economic status. The same author also suggests that there are other researchers who insist that economic disadvantage is not the only way to explain children's poor performance at school. Instead, it is the low educational attainment of the parent, low employment and the lack of parental support for the child that are independently related to the structures of disorder faced by families. These structures of disorder contribute to the disadvantage faced by children in these families (Rich, 2000, Fukuyama, 1999).

Osborne (1990) identifies parents' attitudes and behaviour as strong contributors to students' school achievements. The author argues that the worry of living in inadequate housing, unemployment and the constant struggle to make ends meet make meeting the demands of parenting, beyond the basic needs of shelter and food, impossible. Parents who have a positive attitude to their children's education and a non-authoritarian attitude in the home outweigh the effects of social factors that are affecting children.

### **2.4.3 The home environment**

It is argued that family structure is one of many factors influencing the success of a child's education. The child's home environment can either be conducive to their ability to learn, or conversely it can be a place of stress. Therefore, the home environment plays an important part in a child's ability to learn and their enthusiasm for school (Rich, 2000).

### **2.4.4 Factors that contribute to early school leaving**

The *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) Report on Early School Leaving in Australia* (Marks & Fleming, 1999) drew on the most recent and extensive data collected on early school leaving. This research indicated that one of the greatest contributors to early school leaving was a student's low level of achievement, measured by their performance in literacy and numeracy. Marks and Fleming (1999) argue that students who leave school early are very clearly in an at-risk group of young people; there is strong evidence to suggest that early school leaving is associated with poor jobs, likely unemployment, lower salaries and general feelings of insecurity about employment.

The authors analysed a series of models of school drop-out in Australia to determine the significant factors that contribute to early school leaving. The important findings from this report are that students who perform well at school are far less likely to leave school early. Among students with the same level of achievement at school, those from less educated backgrounds are far more likely to leave school early. The report concludes that the level of parents' education had far more effect on students' school leaving than did a parent's occupation (Marks & Fleming, 1999). Booth and Dunn (1996), Batten and

Russell (1995) also argue that parents' educational attainment has a positive effect on students' educational outcomes.

Booth and Dunn (1996) examined two large-scale reports undertaken in the United States. From the first report (*The National Health Interview Survey on Child Health*, undertaken in 1988 by the National Centre of Health Statistics) they assessed what factors contribute to the highest observed frequency of school problems. From the second report (*The National Longitudinal Study of Youth-NLSY* (1965) they examined the factors contributing to the longer-term effects of family disruption on students.

Their analysis of the first report revealed that of 10,027 students aged between 7 and 17, those living with a single parent mother who had never married had the highest observed frequency of school problems, including:

- being in the bottom of the class in the current year;
- having to repeat a grade;
- behavioural problems at school, and
- greater frequency of meetings at school with parents for behavioural problems, and suspensions.

The same authors suggest that children from single parent or step-parent families were significantly more likely to exhibit each type of these behaviours than students living with mother/father families.

The comparative figures for students living with a single parent mother who has never married and those from intact families are given in Table 1.

<b>Types of behaviour</b>	<b>% of students living with a single parent mother who has never married</b>	<b>% of students living with intact families</b>
Bottom of the class	60%	38%
Repeat a grade	33%	13%
Required a parent conference	30%	13%
Suspended or expelled	55 %	17 %

**Table 1 – Students’ behaviour pattern based on family background (Booth & Dunn, 1996).**

According to Booth and Dunn (1996) an important finding from this study for students from single parent or mother-step families was that even after controlling for poverty, there were still significant differences in:

- student grades;
- suspensions;
- parent conferencing;
- a student’s position in class, and
- a student’s need to repeat a grade.

The second American report, *The National Longitudinal Study of Youth*, examined the longer-term effects of family disruption on school attainment for 14, 000 young men and

women between 1958 and 1965. The study was sponsored by the Bureau of Labour Statistics of the United States Department of Labour to provide information on the education, labour participation and military service of young Americans born during those years. The report concluded that the risk of dropping out of school was twice as high for students from single parent families than for students from intact families. Furthermore, family disruption increased the chances of school drop-out from 11% to 28% for white children and from 25% to 49% for Hispanic children. Family disruption also increased school drop-out from 17% to 30% for African-American children.

The chances of leaving high school early were considerably lower for children whose parents had some college education than for children of less educated parents (Booth & Dunn, 1996).

It is further argued by Putnam (2000) that children whose parents are closely involved with their upbringing and their school are much less likely to drop out of high school than children who lack this support. The author notes that there is evidence from a long-term study of low-income teenage mothers in Baltimore to suggest that children will succeed at school if their mothers have a strong support network and children have a high level of emotional support from their mothers. In other words, the author argues, children who are at risk of leaving school can succeed at school if their mothers have enough social capital.

## 2.5 Literacy and numeracy

### 2.5.1 Introductory concepts

According to Cope and Kalantzis (2000), literacy is seen as the heart of education's promise, and the ability to read and write is fundamental to this promise. Batten and Russell (1995) view students' literacy attainment as the critical factor in their subsequent academic performance. Conversely, poor literacy skills lead to a "*downward spiral of academic deficits and negative motivational consequences*". The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government (2000) views literacy and numeracy skills as essential for successful learning in all areas of the school curriculum. Proficiency in English literacy for all students is also the core of *Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998).

There is widespread agreement that proficiency in English literacy for students in Australia is not only important for their personal, social and cultural development (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998), but also contributes to students remaining at school for longer (Marks & Fleming, 1998).

If proficiency in literacy is at the heart of education's promise as argued by Cope and Kalantzis (2000), and the ability to read and write is seen as being fundamental to this promise, then what does it mean to be literate?

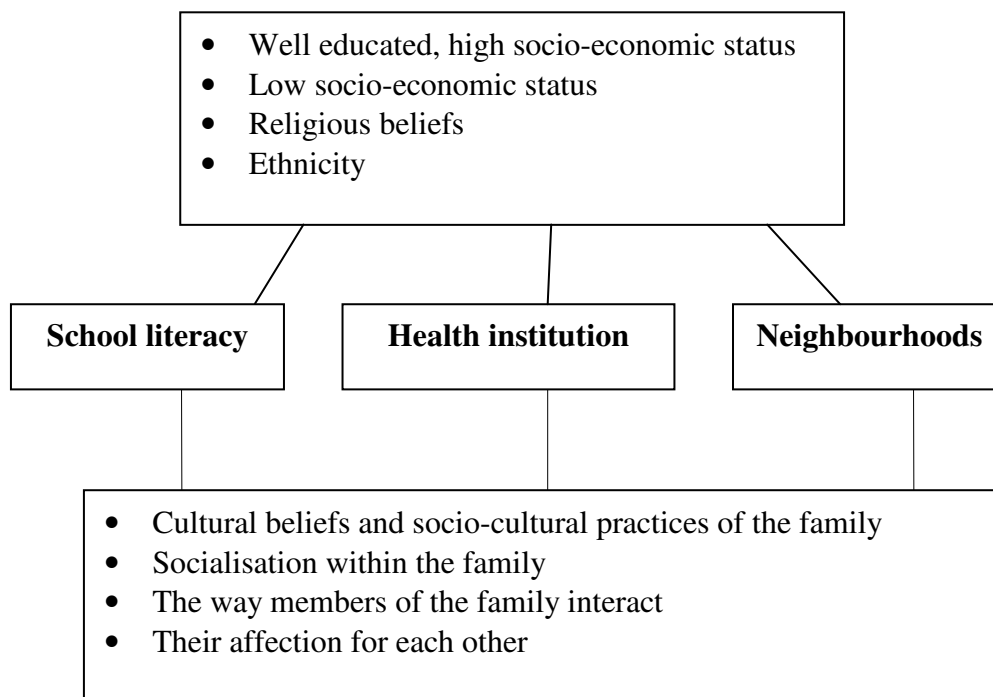
### **2.5.2 A definition of literacy**

According to Lankshear (1998), literacy has typically been thought of in terms of reading and writing. When literacy is viewed in this way it suggests that literacy is learnt through a unitary skill. A person looks at an image, decodes what that image means and translates it into a written form. Prior to the 1970s literacy was viewed as a unitary skill, but today, according to Cairney and Ruge (1998), Delgado-Giaten (1990), a social/cultural approach to literacy is now taken.

### **2.5.3 Social cultural view of literacy**

Delgado-Giaten (1990) suggests that the operational definition of literacy (Figure 3) takes into account the influences on a family's social and cultural standing of socio-economic status, ethnicity, religious beliefs, political relations, and the family's relations with institutions such as schools, health authorities and neighbours. Literacy viewed in this context will have different meanings for different people.





**Figure 3 – The concept of the operational view of literacy**

Figure 3 shows that people from different walks of life, with different beliefs and literacy practices, may interact with their neighbours and the institutions that surround them in different ways. On the one hand, people who are well educated may be able to interact quite confidently with the schools and institutions that surround them. On the other hand, people whose literacy skills are not as well developed may have difficulty dealing with these same institutions. The impact of these interactions with schools and other institutions will affect families and members of the family in different ways.

Lankshear (1998) agrees with Delago-Gaitin's view of literacy and what it means to be literate. He also suggests that people who live within a certain group will have developed their own social and cultural approach to literacy. Cairney and Ruge (1998) further argue that families construct particular views of literacy and what it means to be literate.

Therefore, to function within different groups of people, various concepts of reading and writing will have been developed and understood for that particular group of people. That is, there will be different literacy practices taking place within each particular group of people. Cairney et al., (1995) refer to these literacy practices as, respectively, family literacy, community literacy and intergenerational literacy practices.

Lankshear (1998) views the social and cultural perspective of literacy as having three main forms:

- **The operational form:** where through the medium of language an event happens;
- **The cultural dimension:** the meaning aspects of literacy, and
- **The critical dimension:** the socially constructed nature of human practice.

The critical dimension of literacy is the basis for ensuring that people not only participate well in literacy tasks but also are able to make meaning from those tasks. Lankshear (1998) argues that the current literacy debate in Australia around benchmarks and literacy standards is how the critical dimensions of literacy are classified.

#### **2.5.4 Standards of literacy**

In the report *Outcomes and Funding in the Commonwealth Literacy and Numeracy Program*, Ainley (1999) clearly states that the purpose of the Commonwealth Literacy and Numeracy Program is to improve measurably the literacy and numeracy of students experiencing educational disadvantage. The Commonwealth program is based on the principle that a failure to develop competence in the foundation skills of literacy and

numeracy is a key source of educational disadvantage to which resources and programs should be targeted.

In *The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth*, Lamb and McKenzie (2001) note that achieving well at school and completing year 12 have significant employment and earning benefits for young people a decade or more after leaving school. Today, any person without the skills of literacy and numeracy will probably be unemployed, or at the very best only able to take up one of the few poorly paying jobs remaining (Christie & Mission, 1998).

In the report *Mapping Literacy Achievement: Results of the 1996 School English Literacy Survey*, Masters and Forster (1997) argue that there are a number of diverse factors associated with individuals, homes, schools or classrooms that are correlated with differences in the literacy achievement of primary school students. The main findings from this report were that in each aspect of literacy, girls outperform boys. The report also showed that children of parents from upper professional and managerial occupations have significantly higher average levels of literacy achievement than children whose parents have clerical and skilled manual occupations. Children whose parents are unskilled manual workers have even lower levels of literacy achievement. In this study, socio-economic status was measured by parents' occupations. Parents who were unskilled workers were classed as labourers or similar workers, factory hands, construction workers, laundry workers or garbage collectors. The same authors suggest that some literacy-related activities of students outside of school were associated with students' achievements. The frequency of doing homework, reading at home, and home and school

communication were associated with higher achievements at school. Students' enjoyment of literacy activities such as reading was also linked to achievement at school.

### **2.5.5 The cultural and capital theory**

According to Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett (1982), Comber (1998), children bring with them to school their parents' own educational experiences and strategies. This suggests that if children have parents who are well informed about the educational process and confident about approaching any educational institution, their children may have a better chance of achieving well at school. Conversely, if parents have a low level of education, or had an unfortunate educational experience, this may affect their enthusiasm for their children's learning. As a result, children may not have the same support with their education as some of their peers.

Connell refers to this relationship as the transfer of cultural capital between parent and child. The same author suggests that cultural capital can be compared to money capital. Money capital can be viewed as the birthright of the privileged classes and is passed from one generation to the next.

Discussing the theory of cultural capital, Feuerstein (2000) refers to Bourdieu's (1997) theory of cultural capital. Feuerstein suggests that not only do schools reproduce middle or upper class values and forms of communication, but teachers are also able to communicate more effectively with middle and upper class parents who share similar beliefs. It is argued that teachers may have difficulty relating to parents who come from different environments and from different cultural frames of reference. This bias may

place parents and students from working class families at a disadvantage because they have to adapt to the dominant culture of the school in order to meet teacher expectations. According to Cairney and Ruge (1998), these cultural differences and structural inequalities may be possible explanations for schools' failures to ensure high academic success for children from minority backgrounds.

## **2.6 The social ecology of human development and mentoring**

### **2.6.1 The social ecology of human development**

Arthur, Gordon and Butterfield (2003) refer to the seminal work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments of Nature and Design*, in which the author proposed that human development and the environment in which it occurs are inextricably linked. The term 'ecology' is used to emphasise the complex and sensitive relationships involved in a child's development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) views the ecological environment as being a set of nested structures. At the innermost setting of the home or the school is the developing person. Each interconnection between the structures is as decisive for development as the events that take place within a given setting. This suggests that a child's development in the home and the school will have a direct effect on the behaviour the child carries to the next setting. All of the interconnections that the child makes between the settings are linked.

Kaufmann (2001) gives an example of the transfer of behaviour from one setting to another. He argues that the degree to which strong study practices and positive expectations for success are modelled at home will influence how a student undertakes

academic work at school. What happens at school will have a direct impact on what happens in the home. Similarly, what happens in the home setting has a direct impact on what happens at school. The child's development also depends upon the existence and nature of ties between the home and the school.

Bauer and Shea (1999) refer to Bronfenbrenner's theory of the ecology of human development to propose a social system perspective of development concerned with how a child's development matches with the child's ever-changing environment. One of the main factors in the social system perspective of development is that of 'congruence'. The authors argue that people whom we judge as normal are those whose behaviour is congruent or in harmony with the norm or the standards of their environment. Those judged to be deviant or incompetent are those who are not in congruence with the environment. These people may either be out of harmony with the norm of the environment, or lack the necessary skills to perform effectively in the environment.

A child who comes to school well prepared with the necessary social and academic skills to participate productively in classroom learning may adapt to the environment of the school. Consequently the child will feel in harmony or in congruence with the school environment. On the other hand, a child who comes to school socially and academically unprepared for the school environment may not be able to adapt to that environment. As a result the child may not feel in harmony or congruence with their environment, and may even be judged by others to be incompetent or deviant.

If students are not congruent or in harmony with their environment at school this may affect their relationships with their peers.

Osterman (2000) uses the term 'relatedness' to refer to a student's sense of belonging or connection to his or her community. It is their relatedness to the environment and to the community that affects how students perform at school. The same author argues that relatedness does not only mean feeling connected to the community, but also involves feeling oneself as being worthy of love and respect within the community. He further argues that relatedness is one of three basic psychological needs that are essential to human growth and development. Autonomy and competency are the other two basic needs.

According to Osterman (2000), the social aspects of schooling play a significant part in determining whether individual needs are satisfied. Furthermore, the needs of students are domain-specific and on going. In this relatedness perspective, if students feel respected by their peers and valued as part of the school community, their needs in the particular school setting will be met. As a result students will be able to perform better at school.

Conversely, if students do not feel respected or valued by their peers, their needs in the school setting will not be met and they will not be able to perform as well at school.

Osterman further argues that studies of peer acceptance and friendship consistently show that high achievement is correlated with peer acceptance and peer interaction. Students who are preferred by teachers are those who are academically competent.

Kaufmann (2001) further argues that the better-liked children are those who are consistently helpful and able to appeal to group norms and rules, without alienating their peers. Social acceptance is associated with friendship, helpfulness and conformity to rules. In other words, students who are able to transfer well-developed patterns of behaviour and learning from one environment to the next will be accommodated within the next environment. Their teachers and their peers may prefer these students. This argument suggests that students who are unable to transfer well-developed social and academic skills to the school environment may not be accommodated in that environment. As a result these students may not feel connected to their school. According to Kaufmann (2001), students' rejection by their peers is highly predictive of academic difficulties.

Osterman (2000) and Kaufmann (2001) both argue that rejection by peers is further associated with behavioural problems in the classroom, low interest in school, school drop-out and social withdrawal. Furthermore, students who are rejected, withdrawn or neglected at school lack sufficient social skills. Consequently, the social skills training that children receive at home may be important factors in determining school success. It is argued that in facing rejection by their peers, younger children tend to show aggression more prominently than withdrawal. However, as children grow older, withdrawal is clearly associated with rejection. Although some children may show high levels of positive behaviour and conformity at school their lack of assertiveness may result in them being judged less socially competent by their peers. As a result, their peers also neglect these children.



Bauer and Shea (1999) refer to the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), who argues that in the context of human development each individual requires a strong and enduring emotional attachment to another individual in order to facilitate learning and development. In the context of society today, Bauer and Shea (1999) note that parents do not spend as much time with their children as they did in the past. As a result there may not be a strong connection between younger people and older members of society. The authors suggest that age-segregated peer groups will develop where increased alienation, indifference, antagonism and violence become the norm. Kaufmann (2001) views the peer relationships of rejected and neglected students as the most important consideration for the daily work of educators. He argues that very little is known about the most effective means of intervening to improve students' status and difficult behaviour once it has become well established.

According to Vygotsky (1896-1934) schools should not be measuring what students are able to do by themselves, but rather what they are able to do with the help of another person and have the potential to learn (Beck & Winsler, 1995; Newman & Holzman, 1995).

### **2.6.2 Mentoring**

In this study I focus on mentoring because whilst tutoring is a more restrictive form of mentoring, a good tutor ends up being a good mentor.

MacCullam and Beltman (1999) suggest that the traditional definition of mentoring is where an unrelated adult takes on the responsibility for socialising a young person, beyond

the extent of the young person's normal social environment. Other authors also define mentoring in similar ways. For example, Guetzloe (1997) suggests the term mentor generally "*refers to a relationship between a young person and one who is older, that lasts over time and is focused primarily on the developmental needs of the younger individual*" (p100). Townsel (1997) defines mentoring as a "*one-on-one relationship between a pair of unrelated individuals, of different ages, interacting on a regular basis, usually characterised by a special bond of mutual commitment*" (p125). These definitions suggest that the term mentor refers to a relationship between a younger person and an older person, with the older person being responsible for development of the younger person. It is this relationship between the mentor and the young person that is paramount to the success of any mentoring program.

Withers and Batten (1995) note that a set of programs that use the concept of mentor as key personnel, working directly with youth, on a one-to-one basis to respond to the needs of at-risk young people, has attracted increasing attention. The same authors suggest that the role of the mentor may have been undertaken by a teacher in a school, or by a group of individuals from within the school, or even by the person responsible for pastoral care. However, the principle has now been extended to different situations well outside of the school environment. In conducting their research for the *International Year of Older Persons Mentoring Research Project*, MacCallum and Beltman (1999) point out that mentoring may occur in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes and may be referred to in a variety of ways. Furthermore, the concept of mentoring provides a framework for a range of different relationships that share similar aims, but that can be modified to suit the setting and the individuals involved.

This has particularly been the case in the United States, where not only have the business sector, industry and private foundations all incorporated mentoring into their training procedures, but they have also moved to participate in community programs that use this procedure (Withers & Batten, 1995). One example of this is the Chicago-based Cabrini Connections, which is totally funded by 60 corporations and 350 private individual donors. The mission of Cabrini Connections is to provide an organised framework that empowers and encourages adult volunteers to give their time, effort, ideas and advocacy in seeking life changing solutions for children living in educationally and economically disadvantaged environments.

Cabrini Connections was founded in 1992 by a team of volunteers with an extensive history of tutoring students in a public housing estate known as Cabrini-Green. Today, Cabrini Connections is the umbrella organisation for all tutor/ mentor programs operating in the Chicago area. This tutor/mentor program adheres to many of the principles identified by the above authors. The concept of mentoring provides a framework for a range of different relationships that can be modified to suit the situation.

In Canada, the national Big Brother-Big Sister mentoring program has 181 agencies operating across the country. Each of the programs offers a traditional one-to-one adult relationship with a younger person. Big Brother and Big Sister of Canada has also had to develop new programs to meet the changing needs of volunteers and young people. Some of the new programs that involve one-on-one mentoring are: In-school Mentoring, Kids N

Kops Mentoring, and E-Mentoring. All of these programs use the classic principle of mentoring.

The concept of mentoring suggested by MacCallum and Beltman (1999) is the concept adopted in this study. They state that mentoring provides a framework for a range of different relationships that have similar aims and that can be modified to suit the setting and the individuals involved. Furthermore, mentoring may occur in a variety of forms, for a variety of purposes, and be referred to in a variety of ways.

In this study there is a range of different relationships between the students and their tutors. There are very young students matched with older members of the community and there are senior school students matched with younger tutors. Although there is a range of relationships between the tutors and the students, the traditional one-on-one mentoring principle is maintained throughout the program.

The role of the tutors is clearly defined: to help students who may be disadvantaged in their education, by supporting them with their homework and schoolwork.

There has been some criticism of the variable results of mentoring program evaluations, and of the effectiveness of the new, structured, mentoring programs. Despite this, there is overwhelming evidence that one-to-one mentoring programs are advantageous to young people (Guetzole, 1997; Jekielek, Moore, Hair & Scarupa 2002; MacCallum & Beltman, 1999; Rockwell, 1997; Withers & Batten, 1995).

A study by Jekielek et al., (2002) of ten national and local mentoring programs in the United States concluded that mentored young people are likely to have fewer absences from school, better attitudes towards school, fewer incidences of hitting others, less drug and alcohol use, and improved relationships with their parents. The same authors further argue that mentoring programs may also provide emotional support, advice and guidance about subjects that young people may feel uncomfortable or apprehensive discussing with their parents.

From their research the authors drew some salient conclusions:

- First:** The longer the mentoring continues the better were the outcomes. Mentoring relationships of less than six months produced no significant improvements in either academic, social or substance use problems.
- Second:**
- Young people are more likely to benefit if mentors maintain frequent contact with them and their families.
  - Young people who had regular contact with their mentors had higher grades, greater confidence about their schoolwork and fewer school absences.
  - Young people who rarely saw or spoke with their mentors experienced no benefits from participating in the program.
  - Young people who felt that their mentors knew their family were twice as likely to enrol in college as young people whose parents did not know their tutors.
- Third:** Young people who reported high quality relationships with their mentors attained the best results.

**Fourth:** Young people who are the most disadvantaged or at risk benefit the most from mentoring.

Jekielek et al., (2000) do point out that not all mentoring programs are successful. The lack of training and supervision for mentors and lack of commitment can adversely affect their relationship with the young people.

## 2.7 Homework

### 2.7.1 The American perspective

Kralovec and Buell (2002) note that in America the homework debate has been in progress since the early 1900s. Furthermore, educational research on the topic of homework has been limited in scope and has mainly examined the effects of homework on student achievement. Researchers in the field of family studies argue that the ecology of homework must be formulated in any further research on the topic. That is, homework must be examined not only in the context of how it affects the organisation of the family and family structure, but also how it impacts on families in socio-economic terms. To date homework studies have failed on these grounds.

The same authors point out that few educators have looked into the home and the interactions among family members to learn how homework is handled. Homework takes time, space, and study aids. It also takes particular academic skills and resources that are not evenly distributed. Homework has become one of the most entrenched institutional practices in the United States; this is despite the fact that it is acknowledged that it causes

anguish in many families. Kralovec and Buell (2002) argue that if there is to be equality in education, students must have equal access to academic resources for the completion of homework.

### 2.7.2 The Australian perspective

According to Shopen and Liddicoat (1998), homework has emerged as the central link between literacy practices at home and at school. In their study: *Challenges for Partnership: Literacy at Home and School in the Middle Years*, the authors found that there was a range of views and certain tensions about homework. Teachers believed that if they did not set homework, parents would complain. As a result homework was set even if it was not especially useful, appropriate or desirable for the students. Other teachers reported that they set homework because it was required by school policy. The authors argue that homework may be driven by factors outside of teachers' control. As Bourke and Fairbairn (1995) point out, homework has become a tradition in schooling and endures because it has gained a life of its own.

According to Taylor and Fraser (2003) in the *Eleven Plus: Life Chances and Family Income* study, homework was of considerable concern for parents. Parents were unable to assist with homework because of language difficulties, long work hours, shift work, and meal preparation at the end of the day. Other parents had difficulty understanding the mathematics homework.



## 2.8 Conclusion

Because my research deals with children and families from disadvantaged backgrounds it is important to understand the literature on disadvantage and poverty. I have surveyed the literature and the themes of relevance to this study include:

- The concept of disadvantage and poverty;
- The role of literacy and numeracy in educational attainment;
- The importance of social acceptance for student well-being;
- Issues related to homework, and
- Aspects of mentoring and tutoring.

### *The first theme: The concept of disadvantage and poverty*

Authors have argued for decades that it is not the fault of any individual that he or she is disadvantaged or poor. It is the lack of access to the basic structures of society, and to the ownership of these structures, that keeps people in poverty. If people do not have access to education, health, work and property, and to ownership of these structures, they will be less well off. If young people do not have a reasonable level of education that enables them to obtain work, and so live a reasonable lifestyle, low-paying jobs, unemployment and government allowances may be their only option. Having a job is an important precondition for avoiding poverty. In this context, if children from socio-economically disadvantaged families do not have the support at home to enable them to undertake their schoolwork to the best of their abilities, they are indeed severely disadvantaged.

During the last two decades there have been significant changes to the structure of the family. One of the main drivers of change was the restructuring of the Australian Family Law Act in the 1970s, which made it easier to obtain a divorce. The increase in the number of divorces has led to an increase in single parent families. Another increase in single parenthood is due to single motherhood. In the year 2000 nearly 30% of births were to unmarried mothers. This percentage had been rising steadily throughout the 1990s.

The literature refers to the increase in the number of children who are affected by divorce or separation. The literature also refers to the number of children who are growing up in single parent female-headed households. It is argued that families who are disrupted through divorce or separation are less well off, regardless of the previous financial circumstances of the family.

The major risk associated with single parenthood is poverty. This is because it is difficult for single parents to undertake paid work whilst bringing up children. What makes a difference to single parent families is the ability of the parent to get a job and earn an income that will allow the family to lead a reasonable life. Single parents who are unemployed may not have a choice about where they live, or the school their children may attend. The literature review establishes that families that are most severely affected by the disruption of divorce or separation are those families that are already poor.

The literature review documents the devastating effects of poverty on families. These include poor housing and living conditions, and a lack of adequate food and clothing.

There may also be psychological problems of drug abuse, anxiety and depression, caused by the stress of poverty. There are other common parental responses to poverty ranging from irritability, parent-child conflict and inadequate parental supervision. Some parents may also have low self-esteem because of the damaging effects of poverty on their lives. As a result parents may believe that their opinions are unimportant and avoid attending school functions or communicating with the school.

Parents may also be excluded from participating in educational decision-making because of the perceived differences between the home and the school. Their children may also be judged by others to be innately less intelligent. In other words, poverty has a major impact on the lives of parents and their children. If single parents are unable to work they may also be disconnected from their community and society in general. As a result many single parents may feel isolated from their community. If single parents do not have another person to share the work in the home or to help care for their children they may feel overwhelmed by their daily life circumstances. In fact, the lack of support in the home may cause parents considerable stress, which results in irritability, anxiety and parent/child conflict. There is strong evidence in the literature that on-going family adversity affects children's cognitive development, their performance and behaviour at school.

The literature review identifies two important factors that contribute to children's strong school performance. These are parents' educational attainment and parental attitudes. This suggests that parents who are well educated may have a better understanding of their children's homework and schoolwork, and a better understanding of the school system

itself. Well-educated parents may have considerable confidence in talking to teachers and attending school functions. Consequently, the school or the school environment may not intimidate these parents.

A low level of education is a contributing factor not only to parents' socio-economic disadvantage, but also to their children's under-achievement at school. This suggests that parents who have a low level of education may find it difficult to understand their children's schoolwork and homework. They may feel anxious and concerned that they are unable to help their children with their work. They may also feel intimidated by the school environment and therefore shy away from school functions and activities.

Research in the United States suggests that children whose parents are single and have never married have the highest incidence of school-related difficulties. These difficulties range from being at the bottom of the class, to school suspensions. Furthermore, the risk of dropping out of school is twice as high for children from single parent families as it is for children from two parent families.

This suggests that in two parent families each of the parents may be able to offer the other support. Parents are able to share tasks in the home, support each other in times of need, and take turns caring for their children. They may even share the homework tasks.

It is the lack of support in the home that single parents may find extremely stressful. Parents may be enthusiastic about their children's schooling and education in general but if there is no other assistance in the home they may not have the time to devote to their

children's needs. The lack of time to undertake tasks can cause considerable stress for any parent. For single parents who have to care for children, cook meals, and deal with their own daily lives, schooling problems and homework may be more than they are able to deal with.

There is no doubt that parents' positive attitude to schooling, homework and setting homework routines, benefits their children. Similarly, parents' strong communication links with teachers, and their positive attitudes in creating a nurturing environment, are also beneficial for children. If parents are unable to assist their children with their homework, or to set homework routines, or communicate with teachers, their children's performance at school may be adversely affected.

*The second theme: The role of literacy and numeracy in educational attainment*

The literature review reveals that literacy today is viewed as a social and cultural practice that differs between social groups. Families construct their own particular views of literacy and what it means to be literate. Therefore, literacy will have different meanings for different people. In families where there are high levels of literacy children may have developed strong literacy skills by the time they start schooling. On the other hand, some children may not have had the same opportunity to develop strong literacy skills.

Children who have well-developed literacy skills will be able to transfer these skills to the next environment, the school. As a result these children may be able to settle into the environment of the school relatively easily. Conversely, children who do not have such well-developed literacy skills may not be able to adapt so easily to the school environment.

It is argued that children are influenced by their parents' educational experiences and strategies. Educational experiences for some parents may have involved ambivalence towards their own schooling, misunderstanding or rejection. Other parents may have enjoyed their education and become involved with it. As a consequence of their educational experiences, parents transfer either their positive or their negative feelings about their schooling to their children.

There are also skills and strategies that parents may have taught their children that are transferred from the home to the school. These strategies and skills may include being able to cope with disagreements between peers, being able to abide by school rules and regulations, and being able to work productively in the school environment.

Children who do not arrive at school with these strategies and skills may not settle into their school environment as easily as some of their peers.

*The third theme: The importance of social acceptance for student well-being*

The literature refers to the social systems perspective of development in which one of the main factors is that of congruence. In this context, congruence is identified as the ability of the child to adapt to their own ever-changing new environments, particularly that of the school. It is argued that people are judged as being normal if their behaviour is congruent or in harmony with the norm or standards of that environment. Those students who are judged to be deviant or incompetent are those who are not in harmony with their environment.

The literature indicates that in childhood development the interconnection that takes place between the home and the school is as decisive as the events that take place within a given setting. Therefore, if children are taught strong homework practices, reading and social skills, they will transfer these skills to the next setting. Children will take to each setting the behaviour that is learnt in the previous setting. Children arrive at school bringing all they have learnt from their own life experiences. That is, they bring to the classroom the literacy practices of their home, their parents' attitudes towards education, and their parents' emotional and academic support for their homework and schooling.

If children arrive at school well prepared for the school environment they will probably feel in harmony with their environment. These children may feel a sense of belonging to the school community. On the other hand, if children arrive at school socially and academically unprepared they may not feel in harmony with their environment. Authors refer to a child's sense of belonging to their community as relatedness. It is the students' relatedness to their environment that affects how they perform at school.

How children are valued and respected by their peers and others in their school community is an important aspect of their feeling of relatedness. When children are not in harmony with their school environment this adversely affects their relationships with their peers. Rejection by their peers is associated with behavioural problems in the classroom, low interest in school, social withdrawal and school drop-out. Children's behaviour at school will be directly transferred to the home. Therefore, parents may feel anxious about their child's lack of relationships with their peers and their behavioural difficulties in the

classroom. If parents feel they are unable to help their children with their homework, this may further add to their anxiety.

*The fourth theme: Issues related to homework*

American research indicates that homework places considerable strain upon families. Furthermore, homework has become one of the most entrenched institutionalised practices in the United States. This is despite the fact that it causes anguish in families. In Australian there are differing views and clearly identified tensions about homework. Some teachers set homework because of parents' expectations. Other teachers set homework only because it is required by school policy.

Homework has also become a tradition in Australian schooling because it has gained a life of its own. The literature indicates that homework must be examined not only in the context of how it affects the organisation of the family, but also how it impacts on families in economic terms.

*The fifth theme: Aspects of mentoring and tutoring*

If parents have nobody at home to help them with their children's homework and schooling, having a tutor in their home may be beneficial to all the family. There is ample evidence in the literature that traditional one-on-one mentoring is effective in offering disadvantaged young people emotional support and guidance and in meeting their educational needs. Mentoring/tutoring may also meet the needs of parents and in so doing may benefit their children. Authors suggest that each individual person requires the strong emotional support of another person to facilitate learning and development. In this



context, both the child and the parent may have the assistance they require with the introduction of a tutor into their home. Vygotsky (1896-1934) argues that the most effective area to teach is in the zone of proximal development; that is, what the child is able to do initially with the help of an adult or expert peer and then by himself.

Mentoring/tutoring aids in this process by scaffolding the learning for the child. The same author also notes that what we should be measuring is not what children are able to do by themselves but rather what they are able to do with the help of another person and what they have the potential to learn.

### **3 THE METHODOLOGY OF THE INQUIRY**

In this chapter I describe the methods I used to collect, analyse and interpret the data.

#### **3.1 The methods used for collecting the data**

##### **3.1.1 Questionnaires**

I designed questionnaires because the study involved 159 participants living across a wide geographical area in the Australian Capital Territory. All students on the tutoring program who had had a tutor for more than 12 months were invited to participate in the study. The students' tutors, parents and their teachers at the time were also asked to participate.

I sent questionnaires to 44 teachers, 41 students, 40 parents and 44 tutors. I also sent a consent form to all the parents, advising them of the aims of the study and seeking their agreement for their child's participation. I enclosed a stamped self-addressed envelope with each questionnaire. The students were asked to complete the questionnaire by themselves and give the sealed envelope to their parents to post. To protect the participants' privacy, I assigned a number to each returned questionnaire.

The categories of the participants and the percentage of questionnaires that were returned are shown in Table 2.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Rate of return</b>
Tutors	82%
Students	73%
Parents	63%
Teachers	34%

**Table 2 –Categories of participants and rates of questionnaires returned**

### **3.1.2 Interviews with students between 7 and 10 years of age**

I conducted interviews with seven students under 10 years of age instead of asking them to complete a questionnaire. This was in agreement with the Ethics Committee of the University of Canberra. I interviewed the seven students in their own homes at a pre-arranged convenient time, and after obtaining written consent from their parents. I asked these children the same questions as those in the questionnaire.

### **3.1.3 Interviews with the students, parents and tutors**

After sending the questionnaires to all the participants, I invited a core group of parents, students and tutors (those who started with the program in 1999) to participate in an interview. The aim of conducting the interviews was to give this core group of participants' time to discuss, in more detail, the work undertaken by the tutors. Although students were able to tick the boxes in the returned questionnaires many found it more

difficult to make any comment on a particular question. Therefore, giving students the time, in their own homes, to discuss their tutor's work would give me better insight into the effects of the program on the students.

#### **3.1.4 Interviews with the students' teachers**

I also interviewed a core group of teachers who were the students' teachers at the time of the study to seek their opinion about any program benefits for their students and for themselves as teachers.

In all I interviewed six tutors, five students, five parents and four teachers (I was unable to contact one parent and student, and one teacher had retired. The school did not return any phone calls regarding the possibility of interviewing another teacher who may have known the student). The interviews with the parents and students took place in their own homes. The interviews with the tutors took place at a convenient location for the tutor. This was usually a small quiet cafe near their place of work. One particular tutor was interviewed in her own home because she was on leave. The interviews with the teachers took place at their respective schools.

### **3.2 Stages of data analysis**

My research design has emerged from continual analysis of the data collected from the questionnaires and the interviews with the participants, and a study of the literature. The design has been modified to reduce any repetition.

I took the following steps to analyse the data.

### **3.2.1 The questionnaires**

I used qualitative methods to analyse participants' comments in response to a particular question, and quantitative methods (statistics) to analyse their answers. For the qualitative analysis I used the thematic coding process recommend by Roberts and Taylor (2002), and I will discuss this in more detail below.

To address the research questions I chose a set of criteria for each group of participants (Table 3). Some of the criteria comprise subsections that relate to the particular criteria. I chose the criteria following a review of the literature, which revealed five important themes that are relevant to this study (Section 2.9). The criteria are developed from four of these themes:

1. The role of literacy and numeracy in educational attainment.
2. The importance of social acceptance for student well being.
3. Issues related to homework.
4. Aspects of mentoring and tutoring.

I have not included the concept of disadvantage and poverty as a criterion because I did not ask the participants any particular questions relating to disadvantage and poverty. I considered that it was not appropriate to ask participants questions of this kind in the context of the survey. However, it is apparent from the referral process (Section 1.7), that students are experiencing a range of difficulties at school and at home. During my two years of running the program one or more of the criteria had been given as reasons for

referring students to the program by teachers, school counsellors, parents and other referring agencies.

<b>EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>SUBSECTIONS</b>
<b>ON THE STUDENTS</b>	<b>1. Homework and school projects</b>	1a) Understanding of homework 1b) Handed-in homework 1c) School projects
	<b>2. Literacy and numeracy</b>	2a) Literacy and numeracy 2b) Schoolwork
	<b>3. Enhancing social skills</b>	3a) Tutor & student relationship 3b) Less isolated at school 3c) School friendships 3d) Social skills 3e) Best parts of the program 3f) Tutors' relationships with the students' families
	<b>4. Enhancing engagement with school</b>	4a) The innovations that the tutors introduced 4b) Students' engagement with school
<b>ON THE PARENTS</b>	<b>5. Enhancing parental involvement in their children's education</b>	5a) Students' interest in school 5b) Better understanding of homework 5c) Communication 5d) Parents' appreciation of having a volunteer tutor for their children
<b>ON THE TUTORS</b>	<b>6. Tutors' contribution</b>	6a) Communication 6b) The tutors' relationships with the students 6c) Program support
<b>ON THE TEACHERS</b>	<b>7. Effects of the program on the teachers</b>	7a) Parents' involvement with school 7b) Students' home situation 7c) Best parts of the program
<b>IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM</b>	<b>8. The program</b>	8a) Concerns experienced about the program 8b) Program improvements

**Table 3- The criteria used for gauging the impact of the tutoring program**

For each criterion, I analysed participants' responses to the question for that criterion both qualitatively and quantitatively. Both the qualitative and quantitative data were examined simultaneously. In following this procedure triangulation was used as recommend by Denzin (1970).

For example, the first question in the tutors' questionnaire asked what the tutors believed to be their students' difficulties at the time of their first meeting. Using the thematic coding process, which will be discussed in detail in 3.3.1, the main themes to emerge from the tutors' responses to the question are:

- Students' attitude to school;
- Students' behaviour at school;
- Students' academic progress;
- Students' personal attributes, and
- Students' home situations.

### **3.2.2 The interview data**

I designed the interview questions to obtain a better understanding of the tutors' work over the past two years from the perspective of the tutors, students, parents and teachers. The interview questions were also designed to see if the techniques, innovations and activities devised by the tutors were helpful and enjoyable for the students.

The interview data were numerically coded and conversations with the participants were collated under the same question. For example, one of the questions asked the tutors to

discuss the work they had been doing with their students for the past two years. All of the comments made by the tutors were collated and examined in order to understand the perceptions of this group of participants. The process of triangulation as recommended by Denzin (1970) was therefore used to triangulate the qualitative interview and questionnaire data.

### **3.3 Recording, coding and analysing the data**

I have already alluded to the process of thematic coding when discussing the qualitative methods of analysis above. In this section I explain how the thematic coding process was used.

*I used the thematic coding process (Morse and Field, 1995; Roberts and Taylor, 2000; and Wilkinson, 2000) to analyse the comments made by the respondents to the questions in the questionnaires. Jones (2002) also suggests that an appropriate system of analysis in qualitative research is one that produces themes and findings that convey or develop an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.*

#### **3.3.1 The process of thematic coding**

In this process, I identified patterns or themes within the text. In order to collect the patterns and themes within the text I used the colour coding process recommended by Roberts and Taylor (2000). I chose this method of coding because I wanted the richness of the text to be evident; assigning the data to a number coding system would have lost the complex description within the text. Miles and Huberman (1984) argue that words may



be more unwieldy than numbers but they have more meaning than numbers alone. The authors further note that focusing on numbers shifts the attention from substance to arithmetic and the whole notion of qualitative research is at risk of being lost.

### **3.3.2 Making sense of the data**

The first stage of this process was to collate all the data under the criteria as set out in **Table 3**. For example, I collated all the qualitative and quantitative data for Criterion (1) Homework and School Projects. I then documented the themes that emerged from the participants' responses to the questionnaires in relation to that criterion, ensuring I included all the participants' perspectives. I then analysed all the data for this criterion.

The data for each criterion in Table 3 was collated in this manner. I submitted the first draft that resulted from this activity to the thesis supervisor and we discussed it in detail. Following the critique provided by the thesis supervisor I then began a second, third and fourth draft of the chapter, each of which I presented to the thesis supervisor.

Working on each draft allowed me to make the meaning of the original recorded data clearer. In the latter stages of the drafting process I presented the material to a second thesis supervisor for further critique and advice.

Each of the criteria was analysed in light of my research question: the effects of the Barnardos' tutoring program on students, parents, tutors and teachers. In the next chapter I present an analysis of the data collected for this study.

## **4 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

### **4.1 The effects of the program on the students: criteria 1-4**

The themes that emerged from the participants' responses to the questionnaires for Criterion 1- 4.

#### *Criterion 1: Homework and School Projects*

Using the thematic coding process, nine themes emerged from the students', tutors' and teachers' responses to the questionnaires for components (1a), (1b) and (1c). These themes are set out below in order of significance:

- 1) Role of the tutor
- 2) Student and tutor relationship
- 3) Tutors' understanding towards their students
- 4) Tutors' difficulties
- 5) Students' difficulties
- 6) Students' attitude to the school
- 7) Students' positive and negative attitude to homework and school projects
- 8) School projects undertaken
- 9) Attitude of the school

### *Criterion 2- Literacy and Numeracy*

Eight main themes emerged when analysing the teachers' and students' responses to the questionnaires for criterion 2. These themes are:

- 1) The role of the tutor
- 2) School support
- 3) The classroom
- 4) Students' difficulties
- 5) Students' behaviour
- 6) Students' positive and negative attitudes
- 7) School assistance
- 8) Subject and general understanding

### *Criterion 3: Enhancing social skills*

As a result of the use of the thematic coding process, seven main themes emerged from the students', teachers' and parents' responses to the questionnaires for the six components. These themes are:

- 1) The students' attitude to their tutors
- 2) The students' positive and negative behaviour
- 3) The home situation
- 5) The students' difficulties
- 6) The students' relationships with their peers
- 7) School progress
- 8) The students' improved relationships

*Criterion 4: Enhancing the students' engagement with school*

Using the thematic coding process eleven main themes emerged from the teachers' and tutors' responses to the questionnaires. These eleven themes are:

- 1) The role of the tutor
- 2) Academic achievements
- 3) The students' attitude (both positive and negative) to school
- 4) The schools' attitude towards the students
- 5) The students' home situation
- 6) The incentives and rewards used by the tutors
- 7) The innovations developed by the tutors
- 8) The purchases made by the tutors
- 9) The tutors' personal approaches
- 10) The general techniques used by the tutors
- 11) Reading techniques

### 4.1.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section examines the effects of the tutoring program on the students. The second section examines the influences of the program on the other participants: the parents, teachers and tutors.

There are eight criteria to be examined in this chapter. The criteria are set out in Table 3. Each criterion consists of various components, which are also set out in Table 3 and described at the beginning of each criterion examination.

**The apparent imbalance in the interview data can be explained because I did not ask the students and parents specific questions relating to each criterion at the interviews. The aim of conducting the interviews was allow the core group of participants time to discuss the work undertaken by the tutors.**

To understand the effects of the program on the students, the first criterion I investigated was homework and school projects.

#### 4.1.2 Criterion 1: Homework and school projects

##### *Introduction*

Criterion 1 consists of three components:

- a) The students' understanding of homework;
- b) Handing in of homework to the class teacher, and
- c) School projects.

##### *The presentation of the data from the participants' responses to the survey*

According to the tutors, the students experience difficulties when trying to understand their homework. They are unable to read the instructions and the homework is often beyond their comprehension. According to one tutor their student was only able to do the homework in the tutor's presence. Another tutor remarked that their student had been in a behavioural unit. Yet another student did not attend school on a regular basis.

According to some of the tutors, there are students who do not receive any homework from the school. Other students do not present any homework or project work to their tutors. According to Tutor 16, "*the student fails to hand-in homework. This has not changed since I have been with her and we often complete part of the homework together. She is not confident enough to finish it on her own*".

In the case of another student, if she does not complete the homework in the tutor's presence, then the homework is never completed.

There are difficulties for the tutors with teachers changing schools and being unhelpful to the tutors. According to Tutor 33, “*when the school was first contacted they were quite disinterested (sic)*”. The lack of any feedback from the school about their students is another difficulty encountered by the tutors. Tutor 24 remarked, “*it has been difficult to connect with teachers, I have to try several times to get a response from one teacher*”.

According to the tutors, they are able to offer their students assistance with their school projects. This assistance includes research techniques and showing students how to use the library. Tutor 24 stated, “*I have provided books and arranged library visits. The student has someone to talk through ideas. Provided pencils, glue and paper etc*”.

Another tutor has been able to provide the student with a supportive environment, access to additional materials and guidance from an adult, which was not available at home. The tutors work on building students’ basic skills and helping to comprehend the complicated language of the homework. The tutors teach the students their times tables and help to complete assignments. Students’ school projects are often completed for the first time with the tutors’ help.

According to the teachers and tutors, some students do not take home the relevant homework. There are also students who are not able to hand in completed or nearly completed homework to the class teacher despite being tutored. Teacher 11 stated, “*the students being tutored are still not handing in their homework*”. According to the teachers, students undertake school projects at the school with the support of the teacher. A lack of organisation is a major hurdle for one student and another student is not engaged

with the school. For one student, the school assignments are the motivating factor for undertaking home study.

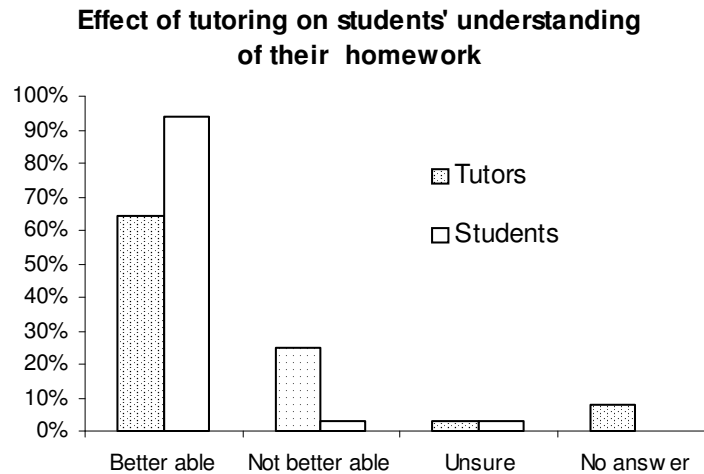
According to one teacher, the student's reluctance to hand in their homework has been overcome with the assistance of the tutor, and the tutor's regular contact with the teacher keeps projects on track. The tutors are not only able to offer the students guidance and structure, they are also available for the students to talk to. The students have somebody who is interested in them and with whom they can communicate their progress.

From the perspective of the students, their tutors help them to understand their work by explaining tasks clearly. Student 4 remarked about her tutor, "*she explains to me so I understand*". According to Student 18, "*she takes me through every question and she is the best*". Student 5 stated, "*they have helped me understand more questions and if I completely do not have an idea of what it means, they do not tell me the answers but make me understand*". The tutors do not mind going over the work for the students. They are available for their students every week and have become "*their friends*". According to Student 20, "*the tutor tells me what my homework means*".



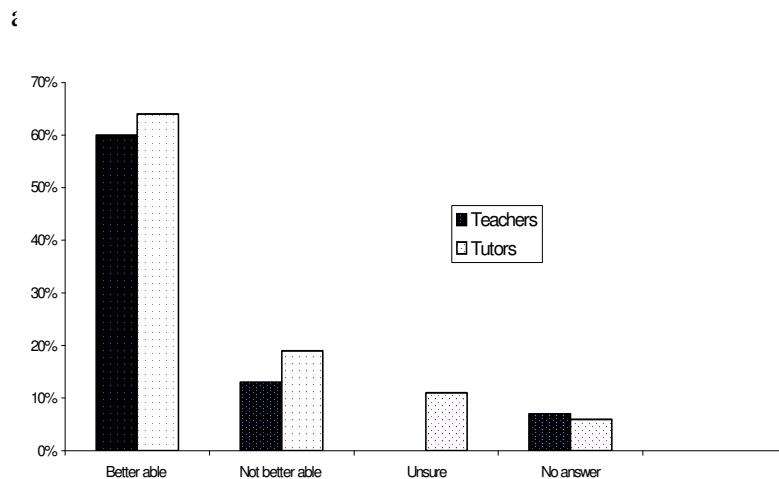
*Homework: the quantitative data*

Graph 1 demonstrates the percentage of students and tutors who believe that the students are better able to understand their homework following tutoring.



**Graph 1 - Effect of tutoring on students' understanding of their homework**

Graph 2 shows the percentage of students who the teachers and the tutors believe are better able to hand in their homework to their class teachers.



**Graph 2 – Students' ability to hand in homework to teachers**

*Tutors: the interview data*

All of the tutors interviewed remarked on the difficulties faced by the students in trying to complete their homework.

According to T2, their student was very weak at mathematics and experienced great difficulty understanding mathematical concepts. Furthermore, the student found it very difficult to use words that were outside her daily environment. Having to read a paragraph of set work and answer questions relating to the paragraph was difficult for this student. T2 remarked, “*she could not read the words*”. According to T3, their student did not bring home the homework sheets because “*he found them difficult*” and “*it was not where he was at*”.

In T4’s opinion, their student was not ready for high school. T4 further remarked that “*emotionally he was not ready*” and, “*the class had moved too fast for him*”. According to this tutor, as a result of the class moving too fast the student was unable to keep up with the work. The student had completed only half of the required homework.

In T5’s opinion, their student did not have the “*basic learning skills*” or “*anybody at home to encourage learning*”. This student had “*low expectations of herself*”. T5 also remarked that the student was quite disorganised and frequently lost the homework.

According to T2, the student “*did not have a clue where to start a project*”. T4 remarked that the student was “*missing from school and home a great deal*” and did not mention any homework whilst in Year 7.

Further discussion took place with the tutors about the work they had undertaken with their students over the past few years.

According to T1, if their student does not present any homework at the tutoring session, the tutor and the student work on two broad themes that include “*mathematics and English*”. T2 remarked that the tutor and the student work on the student’s times tables, mathematics and homework. The work includes, “*English language homework, spelling and dictionary words*”. T2 further remarked that the work is broken down into small components. The student is taken through one topic of work at a time and each component has to be understood before the student moves forward. According to T3, the tutoring sessions involve cooking with the student for one week and reading, writing and mathematics work on the alternative week. T3 also remarked that the tasks undertaken by the student for reading, writing and mathematics are set at the student’s own level.

According to T4, the work undertaken with the student began with times tables and English when the student was in year six. T5 stated, “*I wanted to get the student excited about learning*” and “*to show her the relevance for her future*”. Changing the student’s motivation through modelling behaviours has been a large part of T5’s work. T6 remarked that the student started work with the tutor on homework subjects that included “*mathematics, science, English, geography, food science and religion*”. According to T6, the work undertaken with the student has consisted of “*reviewing the homework projects then looking at the student’s approach to the task and assisting the student with particular areas of work he requires help with*”.

### *Analysis of the data*

An examination of in Graph 2 reveals that:

- Over 60% of teachers and 60% of tutors believe that the students are better able to hand in their homework to their class teacher following tutoring
- 10% of teachers and 20% of tutors believe that the students are not better able to hand in their homework to their class teachers despite tutoring.

Ninety percent of the students believe that they are better able to understand their homework after the arrival of their tutors, and 60% of the tutors believe their students are better able to do so. According to the teachers and tutors over sixty percent of the students are also better able to hand in their homework to their class teacher. This suggests that over 30% of the students believe that they are better able to understand their homework but who are not able to hand in the homework to their class teacher. Thirty percent of the teachers and tutors also believe that the students are not better able to hand in their homework.

If the students are better able to understand their homework but are unable to hand it in to the teachers, this suggests that there are factors influencing the handing in of homework that are not related to the tutoring program. From the interview data, and the perspective of the tutors, it appears clear that the students face very significant difficulties in being able to undertake and complete the homework and school projects if they do not have anyone at home who can help them with their work.

Some of the students are unable to read the instructions or comprehend the complicated language of the homework. According to T2, the student has difficulty with words “*outside of her own environment*”. In T5’s opinion, the student “*did not have the basic learning skills*” or “*anybody at home to encourage learning*”. T2 further commented that the student “*did not have a clue where to start projects*”. These comments suggest that those teachers who hand out homework and project assignments to the students may be unrealistic in their expectations and/or demands if the students do not have the necessary help at home, nor the pre-requisite reading skills.

There are other difficulties associated with the homework. Some students fail to present homework to their tutors because of their irregular classroom and school attendance. They may also lose the homework or forget to bring it home, or they may fail to bring it home because as T3 remarked, the student “*found it too difficult*” and “*it was not where he was at*”.

Even if the students do not present any homework to their tutors, the students believe they are better able to understand their homework and to complete their school projects after the arrival of the tutors. With the help of their tutors, working on a one-to-one basis, 90% of the students believe that they are better able to understand their homework and over 80% of the students believe that they are better able to complete their school projects. This appears to indicate that having a tutor on a regular basis, working outside of the school environment, is beneficial for students who have a pattern of irregular classroom and school attendance.

The students are better able to understand their homework because their tutors have created a supportive learning environment for them. Even if the students do not present any homework to their tutors, or the tutors have difficulty receiving any feedback from the teachers, their students have help every week to encourage them with their learning.

The tutors devise lessons that will be of interest to their students. T1 works on two broad themes of “*mathematics and English*” whilst T3 works on “*cooking lessons for one week and reading, writing and arithmetic work for the next week*”. T2 and T6 work on students’ homework that is set by the school. The tutors are responsive to their students’ needs. They are able to take their students through their work at their own level and pace. The tutors are building students’ confidence in their abilities to progress with their work. Furthermore, students are not left behind with their work, wondering what it is all about. The tutors offer their students assistance with research techniques, show them how to use the library and, in the words of Student 19, “*explain everything properly*”.

### 4.1.3 Criterion 2: Literacy and numeracy

#### *Introduction*

Criterion 2 consists of two components:

- a) Literacy and numeracy, and
- b) Schoolwork.

#### *The presentation of the data from the participants' responses to the survey*

According to the teachers, some of the students choose to do little work or writing in the classroom. They have difficulties with numeracy and literacy tasks. Some of the students being tutored have challenging behaviours that do not come out in the one-on-one tutoring sessions. It is the challenging behaviours in the classroom that interfere with their work, rather than the students' abilities. Some students require one-on-one assistance in the classroom as well as during the tutoring sessions.

Teachers' believe that as a consequence of tutoring, the students are more willing to try set tasks in the classroom. Students' reading skills have improved and the regular tutoring and the completion of homework reinforce students' literacy and numeracy. The repetition of basic work also assists other students. One particular student has improved because of the extra classroom help. Other students produce more regular work for correction, and the tutors expand the students' schoolwork. The tutors are able to offer the students encouragement and support.

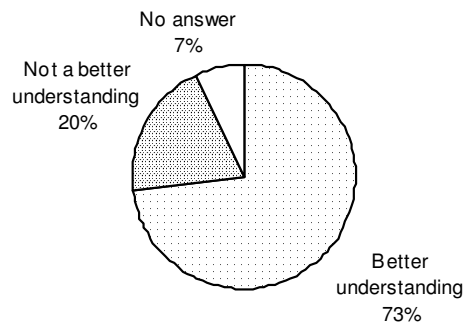
From the students' perspective, the tutors do not mind repeating their schoolwork. It is easier for the students to do their work because they "*understand a lot more about their*

work". The students are better able to read, and to do their times tables. Their mathematics and general academic results have improved.

*Literacy and numeracy skills: the quantitative data*

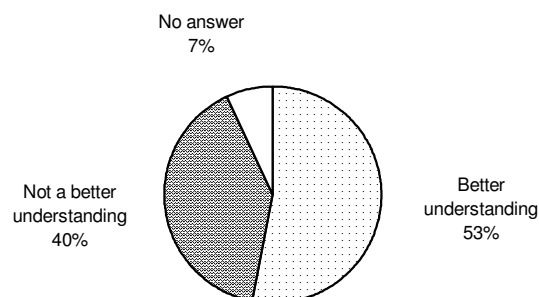
Graph 3 shows the percentage of teachers who believe that the students' numeracy skills have improved after the tutors' involvement.

**Effect of tutoring on students' numeracy**



**Graph 3– Teachers' perspectives on effect of tutoring on students' numeracy**

Graph 4 presents the percentage of teachers who believe that the students have become more literate through the tutoring program.

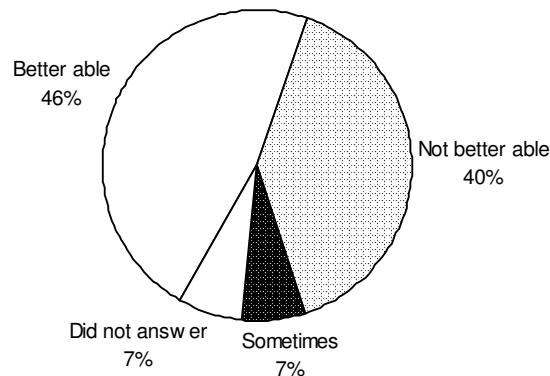


**Graph 4 – Teachers' perspectives on effect of tutoring on students' literacy**



Graph 5 shows the teachers' perspectives on the degree to which students' classroom work has improved following the introduction of a tutor.

**Teachers' perspectives on effect of tutoring on students' understanding of classroom work**



**Graph 5 – Teachers' perspectives on effect of tutoring on students' ability to understand classroom work**

#### *Analysis of the data*

Ninety-seven percent of the students believe that they are better able to understand their schoolwork after the tutors' involvement. However, the data in Graph 5 show that only 46% of teachers believe this to be so. These data suggest that there are factors outside the tutoring program that may be undermining the students' ability to undertake their classroom work. The students' irregular school attendance may be one factor affecting their ability to understand and complete their classroom work. If they are having trouble understanding their homework then their classroom work may also present difficulties for them. Some of the students stated that they are frightened of making mistakes in front of their peers and of working in groups with other students.

Teachers' report that although the students' literacy and numeracy skills have both improved, the students' numeracy skills have improved most. Working on a one-to-one basis the tutors are able to repeat the work for their students and can explain the basic work more clearly to them. The tutors discuss with their students how they can approach and complete their homework. Because the students have a better understanding of their schoolwork, the work has become easier for them. Also, being able to work on a one-to-one basis with their tutors, the challenging behaviours that are present in the classroom are not present at the tutoring sessions. It is likely that students receiving individualised attention may reduce the general level of frustration, because the group situation which may contribute to the higher rate of poor behaviour has been removed.

Although 97 % of the students believe that they are better able to understand their schoolwork, some students are still not able to do much writing or other work in the class according to the teachers. This may indicate that without the one-on-one support of their tutors, the students are facing difficulties with learning in the classroom. If the students remain perplexed about their work in the classroom, this frustration may lead them to misbehave.

#### 4.1.4 Criterion 3: Enhancing social skills

##### *Introduction*

Criterion 3 comprises six components:

- a) Tutor and student relationships;
- b) Degree of isolation at school;
- c) School friendships;
- d) Social skills;
- e) Best parts of the program for the students, and
- f) Tutors' relationships with the students' family.

##### *The presentation of the data from the participants' responses to the survey*

Teachers' indicate that some of the students' behaviour has been a problem at school. Some of the students behave differently in groups to how they behave on a one-to-one basis with their tutors. The students' social skills at school are a major problem. One student's home situation has deteriorated. There are also students who are always well accepted and have never been isolated at school. The students being tutored are perceived by some teachers as more settled and contented in the classroom and find greater peer group acceptance. According to one teacher, it is the innovation programs that the school has developed, and not the tutoring program, that have contributed to the students' improved social skills.

Parents' report that the students' confidence has improved and they appear more content. The students are accepted at their own level, are more a part of the class, and are able to

mix with friends. Other students have always been outgoing and have not had any problems making friends at school.

However, there are students who are not attending school and who have conditions, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which adversely affect their relationships with their peers. The lack of friendships has been upsetting for some of the students.

The quantitative data indicate that 91% of students appreciate having someone outside their family to talk to about their schoolwork. The quantitative data also suggest that 3% of students would prefer not to have a tutor.

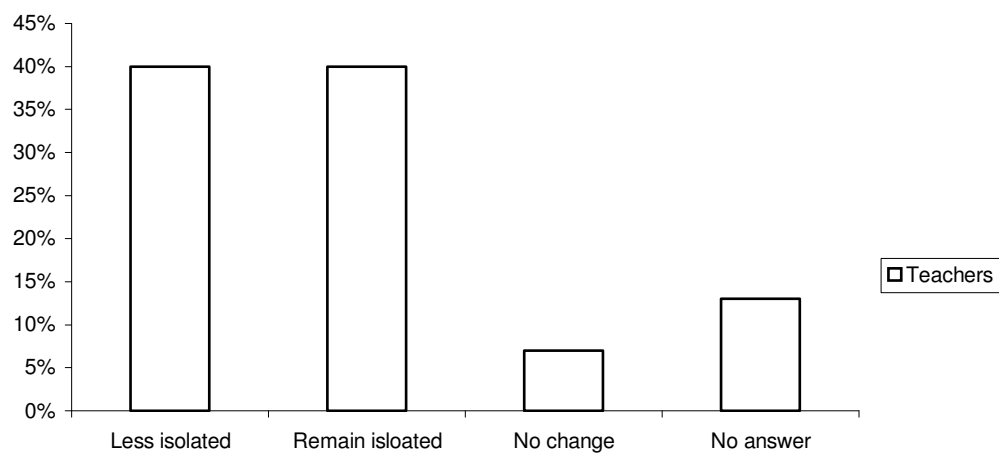
Students clearly indicate that they value having a tutor except for the 3% who would rather not have a tutor. The tutors are both supportive and encouraging, and one student remarked that his tutor has become part of the family. The tutors acceptance as part of the students' own family is very important to the students.

The tutors' favourable relationships with their students' families may be attributed to the parents' support of the tutors' role, and the open and positive communication between the two parties. This suggests that if parents and tutors have developed trusting relationships, parents may be receptive to ideas and suggestions from the tutor for helping their own children with their schoolwork. Furthermore, the students may feel reassured about the relationship with their tutors if their parents welcome the tutors into their homes.

Students who are having difficulties with family relationships value having someone to talk to about their schoolwork outside their family. For these students, having someone to talk to outside the family may reassure them about schoolwork and life in general.

### *The quantitative data*

Graph 6 shows the percentage of teachers who believe that the students are less isolated at school.



**Graph 6 - Teachers' perceptions of students' level of isolation**

### *Analysis of the data*

Graph 6 reveals that 40% of teachers believe that the students are less isolated at school as a result of tutor support.

It appears from the qualitative data that the way students behave socially in the playground and in the classroom affects their relationships with their peers

If the students have behavioural difficulties in the classroom they are less likely to be accepted into classroom and recreational groups. Teachers have stated that the way students behave on a one-to-one basis is very different from the way they behave in groups. This suggests that the pressures of the classroom situation for students who are struggling with their work may cause behavioural difficulties in the classroom.

There are also other factors that appear to affect the students' relationship with other students adversely. They include deteriorating home situations, medical conditions and students' irregular school attendance.

Teachers state that the students' improved social skills may also be due to the innovative programs run at various schools. This may be the case for some of the students.

However, 52% of parents believe that their children have become more sociable at school and have made more friends following the arrival of the tutors.

Although there are students whose social skills have not improved and who still remain isolated, there has been a significant improvement for other students. If the students' behaviour deteriorates at school, this suggests that in addition to one-on-one tutoring outside school, they may also require extra help in the classroom. The pressures of the school environment and of having to keep up with the work in the classroom may be adversely affecting many of the students on the tutoring program.

The students believe that the “*best parts*” of having a tutor include:

- having someone to help them with their homework;
- being able to learn and understand more about their work;
- being able to finish their assignments and projects;
- being smarter;
- no longer being teased at school;
- having someone to talk to outside of their family;
- having someone who is kind to them and who does not let them down;
- being able to visit special places that they might otherwise not visit like Questacon, the library, and the War Memorial, and
- being able to have fun and play games.

These statements suggest the importance the students place on their education. The statements also suggest the importance for students in having somebody in their lives who they like and trust, and who is able to make their lives interesting. If some of the students believe that their tutors ‘lack current thinking’, or are inexperienced or are unable to make the tutoring sessions interesting, this suggests that the students may be anxious about the tutoring sessions themselves. As a result, strong relations may not develop between the tutors and the students. The statements also suggest that students and tutors should be matched with care and that the tutors should be properly trained.

If students are embarrassed about having the tutoring sessions in any after-school care centre this suggests that the tutoring needs to be conducted in age-appropriate settings.

Having tutoring sessions outside of the school environment may be beneficial for the students. The tutoring is a private matter for the students. They do not have to worry about being teased at school. Generally, other students in the school do not know that the students have a tutor.



#### 4.1.5 Criterion 4: Enhancing students' engagement with school

##### *Introduction*

Criterion 4 comprises two components:

- a) The innovations that the tutors introduced, and
- b) The students' engagement with school.

##### *The presentation of the data from the participants' responses to the survey*

According to both teachers and tutors, some of the students in the sample are late for school, have irregular school attendance and engage in truancy. From the tutors' perspective, the students face difficulties within the school. According to Tutor 2, "*the school does not seem to support the student's situation and there does not seem to be much understanding or assistance*". Tutor 10 remarked, "*family disruption has weakened the link with the school*".

According to both tutors and teachers, students who complete homework assignments and are recognised by the school for these achievements are more likely to participate in school activities. Generally, these students are more relaxed about what is happening in the classroom and are more enthusiastic and engaged with school.

For Teacher 14, "*the tutor has worked very hard to keep up with the students' needs*".

Teacher 7 remarked, "*the student has more than school issues as his difficulty*".

*Tutors' innovations: presentation of the data from the tutors' responses to the survey*

Tutors commented that they have been patient with their students. They have long discussions with the students about their daily lives and what the students want to achieve. Tutors have reinforced learning by repeating tasks and taking their students through their work step-by-step. They work on projects that are of interest to their students.

Tutors report that they have created Bingo games, used junk mail, supermarket advertisements, card games, scrabble games, train timetables, shop catalogues and spelling competitions and maths crosswords to engage their students. The tutors have related assignments to real-life situations, thus emphasising the functional role of both reading and mathematics.

They have also concentrated on building the students' confidence through encouragement and by trying to improve students' reading skills.

The students' stories have been documented for use as reading material. Tutors choose texts which students are interested in for reading. Fast food restaurant vouchers and outings have been used as rewards.

*Presentation of the interview data*

To engage the students the tutors needed to spend time preparing lessons. In discussing how much time the tutors have spent preparing for their students' lessons every week, Tutor1 remarked that although time was not spent preparing a regular lesson, the tutor emailed the teacher two to three times a term, and collected books, magazines and articles

that are of interest to their student. According to Tutor 2, two to three hours are required to gather information about the school project work. Tutor 2 further commented, “*the information has to be sorted so the student is able to read the material*”. In Tutor 2’s opinion, “*my student finds it hard to grasp what she is reading*” and “*school projects are a lot of work*”. Tutor 3 remarked that it has taken one hour to prepare material for a tutoring session that includes “*reading, writing and arithmetic*”.

In Tutor 4’s opinion, lesson preparation time is between one and one-and-a-half hours. Tutor 5 remarked that the student presents work at the tutoring session, so prior preparation has not been required.

When five students interviewed were asked if they had enjoyed the games, four of the students answered positively, whilst S4 remarked “*there were not any games because I was an older student*”. The same students were also asked if they believed that the games and activities have helped them with their schoolwork. All five students answered positively. The answers ranged from S5 who remarked, “*I think they do*” to S3 who stated, “*they sure have*”.

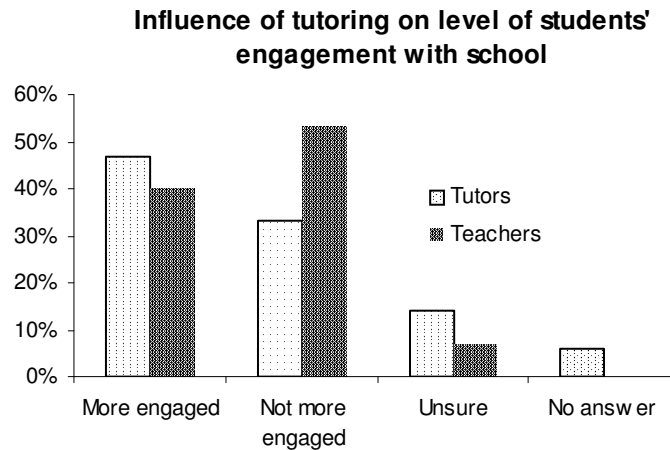
When the teachers were asked if the students have talked to them about their activities with their tutors, Teacher 1 remarked, “*Never*”. According to Teacher 2, the student has sometimes made a comment such as, “*oh, we did that on Tuesday night- a passing reference*”. In Teacher 3’s opinion, the student has not made any comment about the activities but the students’ parents have done so. According to Teacher 4, the student has never mentioned the tutor.

In discussing with the parents the activities developed for the students by their tutors, and whether the students have enjoyed these activities, the parents agreed unanimously that the students have done so. According to P1, the student has “*really needed a tutor*”. P2 remarked that one of the games the tutor developed was a Bingo game. According to P3, “*the tutor is nice*” and “*they do photography together*”.

P2 spoke about the cooking the student and tutor do together and P2 further remarked that the tutor has taken the student to Parliament House, the War Memorial and to Questacon. P4 reported that when the tutor arrived, “*I let them get on and do things. They seem to be enjoying things together*”. In P5’s opinion, the tutor has made the activities fun. The tutor has also taught the student how to use the computer and the library. According to P5, the student also has dinner at the tutor’s home. The student and the tutor do the homework together and afterwards watch a movie.

*The students' engagement with school: presentation of the quantitative data*

Graph 7 illustrates teachers' and tutors' responses to the question about the effect of the tutor program on the students' engagement with school.



**Graph 7 – Influence of tutoring program on level of students' engagement with school (tutor and teachers' perspectives)**

*Interview data relating to the students' school life before and after tutor involvement*

Without exception, the students interviewed found the schoolwork difficult before they had a tutor. In S1's opinion, school was "*hard and the work was difficult*". S2 remarked that school was "*hard and boring*". S3 made the comment that the school was "*hard and aggravating*". According to S4, there was so much incomplete homework that "*I hardly turned up for school*".

In S5's opinion, her grades had been "*pretty poor*" and she did not work to the best of her ability. S5 further commented that there was nobody to "*push me along*".

S1, S2 and S4 claimed that they had not attended school on a regular basis. *“I missed a lot of school”*, S4 remarked. According to S3, they had not attended school on a regular basis because of *“special events”* or *“sickness”*. After the tutors arrived, S4 made the comment that the schoolwork was done on a *“regular basis”* and *“school was more enjoyable”*. According to S5, they were more confident about the work.

#### *Analysis of the data*

An examination of the quantitative data in Graph 7 shows that after participating in the tutoring program, 45% of tutors and 40% of teachers believe that the students are more engaged with school.

Although the students interviewed found the school and the work either *“boring”*, *“aggravating”* or *“difficult”* before they had a tutor, it became clear from the student responses that the main factors that adversely affect their engagement with school are truancy; irregular school attendance; lateness; the difficulties they face within the school; schools being unsupportive towards them; and disruption in their family life.

Since the tutors' involvement students are more engaged with school because they are able to both complete and confidently present the completed homework to their teachers, who consequently acknowledge their achievements. The students experience a sense of accomplishment and are more engaged with school because they are more confident with their work and therefore more relaxed about what is happening in the classroom.

However, the students' level of engagement with school did not improve if the adverse

factors affecting their engagement, as discussed above, were already present when the tutors became involved.

This suggests that the factors undermining students' engagement with school may cause disenfranchisement from the whole school system itself. The inconsistency in their school attendance may prevent them from building strong and trusting relationships with their peers. As a result they may become disaffected from the whole culture of the school, and may feel alienated and lost.

Having a tutor is significant. Although teachers report that 50% of the students are still poorly engaged with school despite the tutoring program, these students do have someone who is attempting to re-engage them with their learning and reconnect them to their school. The presence of tutors reduces the adverse factors affecting students' engagement so that students are kept up to date with their work, are better able to handle their work and the school environment.

If students are not attending school on a regular basis, or do not have somebody to assist them with their homework, (as S5 remarked, there was nobody to "*push me along*"), they are going to get further and further behind with their work and are more likely to avoid going to school. According to S4, "*there was so much incomplete homework that I hardly turned up for school*". This suggests that the emphasis placed on homework can cause severe difficulties for the students if they do not have any tutoring help.

The tutors have focused on the needs of the individual student and devised games and activities to meet their needs. They have listened to what the students have to say and respected their opinions.

By working on a one-to-one basis, the tutors are able to discuss and explain to the students what they are required to do with their homework. They are able to take the students through their work step-by-step. The tutors are also able to repeat the work and to set the work at the student's individual level, thus ensuring that the students are not placed in any unnecessary, stressful or embarrassing situations. If the students are unable to start or understand the homework, the tutors can break it down into manageable components. As the students gain confidence in a piece of work, so the tutors move them on to the next stage of their work.

Working in this manner, the students are never placed in a situation that may cause them undue stress. Therefore, there are few behavioural problems present at the tutoring sessions. Furthermore, the students do not have any of their peers to compete with at the one-on-one tutoring sessions, further reducing any stress about their work. The students can work at their own pace, and their tutors are able to repeat the work until they are able to understand. These are all confidence-building strategies for the students.

Developing games and activities that the tutors know their students will enjoy and be interested in, creates a positive learning environment for the students. According to P5, *"the tutor has made the activities fun"*. By using supermarket advertisements for mathematics, cooking lessons, train timetables, TV weekly magazines and the students'



own stories for reading, Bingo games and card games, the tutors have developed activities that are relevant to the students' everyday life. They work in an environment that the students understand.

#### 4.1.6 Summary of criteria 1 - 4

There are serious difficulties for the students in being able to undertake their homework and school projects. Many of the students do not have access to basic materials. Other students are unable to read the homework instructions or understand what the homework is about.

If factors like truancy; irregular school attendance; lateness; the difficulties the students themselves face within the school; the schools being unsupportive towards the students; and family disruption are already a problem then the tutoring program has little positive impact on these students' engagement with school. However, having a tutor has had a major impact on the students' understanding of their homework, their ability to complete the classroom work, and in presenting homework to their teachers. This suggests that the above factors are adversely affecting the students' learning rather than the students' own abilities hampering their progress.

Although students face many difficulties in doing their homework, 60% of the tutors believe that the students are better able to understand their homework since being involved in the tutoring program. 90% of the students also believe that they are better able to do so. This suggests that the students' difficulties faced by the students may not have been overcome without the help of their tutors.

In the classroom the situation is different. Although 46% of teachers believe that students are better able to complete their classroom work, 40% of teachers believe that this is not the case. Teachers also believe that 7% of the students are only sometimes better able to

do their classroom work. However, outside of the classroom and answering the questionnaires in their own homes, 97% of the students believe that they have a better understanding of their classroom work. If the students believe that they have a better understanding of their classroom work, but some of the teachers believe that the students are unable to complete their work in the classroom, this suggests that there may be factors within the school environment that adversely affect the students' ability to do their work. Students' anxiety in the classroom may be a significant factor.

The students are anxious about having to work in groups and fear making a mistake in front of their peers. This suggests that the classroom may be a stressful environment for students, particularly if the students believe that they are not able to do the classroom work. If students have little belief or confidence in their own abilities, and a sense that they may not receive any praise from their teachers, they may feel a sense of worthlessness. As a result, they may seek attention from their peers and teachers in other ways and their behaviour may begin to deteriorate in the classroom and the playground. There are also other factors, such as family dislocation and conditions such as ADHD, that affect the way students behave at school, and in turn their relations with other students, and ultimately, their sense of well-being within the school community.

If teachers believe that 40% of students remain isolated at school and 36% of parents believe that their son or daughter has not made any more friends at school despite the tutoring program, this suggests that the students may not feel part of the social fabric of the school or in harmony with the school environment.

The school environment includes friendships with other students, being accepted as part of a peer group, being recognised for accomplishments and feeling secure. If students do not feel part of the social fabric of the school, they may not be able to function to the best of their ability within that environment. The school encompasses a social environment, which affects the students' performance, behaviour and progress.

Being isolated in the school environment may adversely affect the students. This study clearly indicates that it is not the students' abilities, but other factors that are impeding their progress. For students who are already showing signs of disengaging from the school by their truancy, irregular school attendance and continual lateness, their relationships with the other students may also be adversely affected by this behaviour. This may lead to them becoming further isolated within the school environment.

If the students are to function within the school environment, they need to feel a sense of belonging. Factors that adversely affect students' ability to do their schoolwork include isolation at school; lack of friendship with their peers; behavioural difficulties in the classroom; truancy; lateness; irregular school attendance, and family dislocation.

These factors are affecting the students' ability to function in the classroom and the playground. Their acceptance as part of a peer group and their relationships with their peers are important aspects. So too is the students' belief that their teachers acknowledge them. Students thrive on reinforcement for the work that they are able to accomplish.

This study has found that as a result of the tutor program, 53% of students have more friends at school, 40% of students are less isolated, and 40% of students have more social skills. This suggests that the longer the students are exposed to one-on-one help from their tutors the better their chances of being able to work to the best of their abilities within the school environment.

Being able to offer students a tutor (whom they can trust, with whom they are able to discuss their work, their progress and their daily lives) has a measurable influence on maintaining connections with school.

The tutors create a variety of innovative games and engaging activities for their students. The tutors' involvement with their students in enjoyable, reinforcing natural environments leads to incidental learning and confidence building.

Working on a one-to-one basis, in an environment that suits the students, their confidence in their ability to do their homework and schoolwork has increased. The students view their tutors as their friends and as someone in their lives upon whom they can rely. The students trust their tutors and value their partnership with their family. If there is trust in a relationship, it is likely then that the students' confidence will increase. The students know that they have someone they can rely upon to assist them with their work. With their increased confidence in their ability to do their work, the students are less anxious about their classroom work and are therefore more settled in the class. As a result the students are able to perform more confidently. For example, they are able to talk about news in front of the class. They are more engaged in the classroom and more willing to

try their work. The students are accepted into classroom and recreational groups, and their peers accept them as individual people. In other words, the students are performing in the manner expected of them at school and are praised by their teachers, accepted by their peers and accepted into the social environment of the school. This inclusion at school is important to students.

## 4.2 The effects of the program on the parents, teachers and tutors

### 4.2.1 Introduction

In this study I also investigate the effects of the tutoring program on all the other participants: the parents, tutors and teachers.

### 4.2.2 The effects of the program on the parents

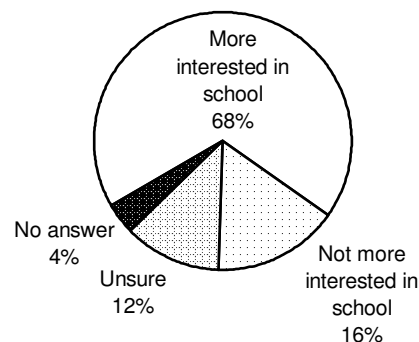
*Criterion 5: Enhancing parental involvement in their children's education*

This criterion consists of four components:

- a) The students' interest in school;
- b) The parents' better understanding of the homework;
- c) Communication, and
- d) parents' appreciation of having a volunteer tutor for their children

*(1) Parents' belief about the students' interest in school: the quantitative data*

Graph 8 shows the percentage of parents who believe that their children are more interested in school since they started being tutored.



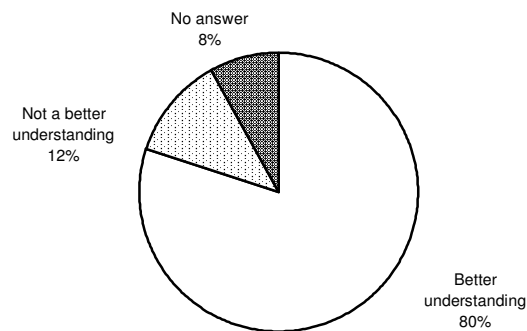
**Graph 8 – Students' interest level following tutoring (parents' perspectives)**

Graph 8 reveals that after the involvement of the tutors:

- 68% of parents believe that their children are more interested in school;
- 16% of parents believe that their children are not more interested in school and,
- 12 % of parents are unsure whether their children show any more interest in school.

*(b) Better understanding of homework by the parents: the quantitative data*

Graph 9 indicates the percentage of parents who have a better understanding of the scope and purpose of homework after the involvement of the tutors.



### **Graph 9 – Effect of program on parents’ understanding of homework**

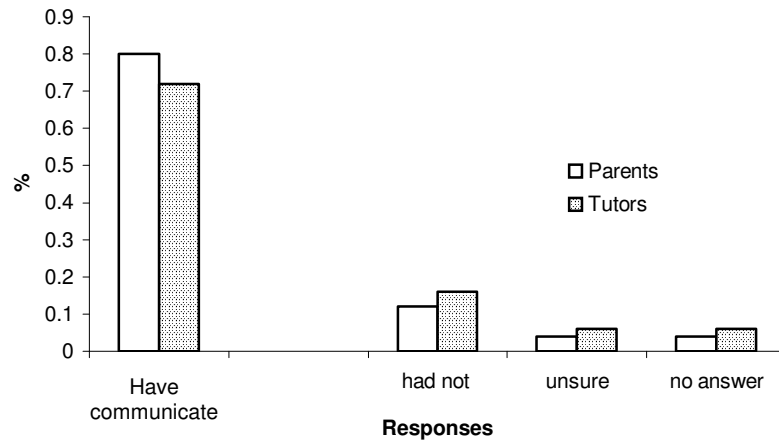
Graph 9 shows that 80% of parents have a better understanding of their child’s homework after the arrival of the tutors.



*(c) Communication*

Communication between the parents and tutors about homework and schoolwork: the quantitative data

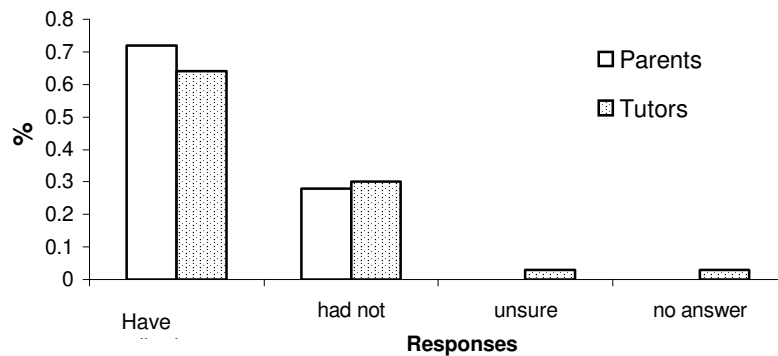
Graph 10 shows the level of communication between the parents and the tutors about homework and schoolwork



**Graph 10 – Level of communication between parents and tutors about homework and schoolwork**

Communication between the parents and tutors about any other family matters: the quantitative data

Graph 11 indicates the percentage of parents and tutors who are able to talk about the students' family matters together.



**Graph 11 – Level of communication between parents and tutors about the students' family**

The data in Graph 10 and Graph 11 reveal that:

- Over 60% of tutors and 70% of parents believe that they are able to talk to each other about family matters, and that
- 30% of tutors and 25% of parents believe that they are unable to discuss family matters together.

#### Communication between the parents and the teachers: the quantitative data

The quantitative data reveal that:

- over 70% of parents believe that they are better able to communicate with the teachers after the involvement of the tutors, whilst 30% of teachers believe that the parents are better able to do so.
- 50% of teachers believe that the parents are still not able to communicate with them despite the tutors' involvement.
- 20% of parents believe that their communication with the teachers has not improved since the tutors' arrival.

#### *d) Parents' appreciation of having a volunteer tutor for their children*

The quantitative data reveal that 96% of parents appreciate having a tutor helping their child (the remaining 4% of parents did not respond). The quantitative data reveal that after a 12-month involvement with the tutors:

- 68% of parents believe that their children are more interested in school;
- 80% of parents have a better understanding of the child's homework;

- 80% of parents have been able to talk to the tutors about homework and schoolwork;
- 70% of parents have been able to talk to the tutors about their own family matters;
- Over 70% of parents are better able to communicate with their child's teacher;
- 100% of parents believe that they are less stressed about the homework and schoolwork;
- 100% of parents believe that their role as a parent has not been undermined in any way after the arrival of the tutors, and
- 96% of parents enjoy having a tutor.

#### *The presentation of the interview data*

I interviewed a core group of parents about their own school experiences. According to P1, school was not an enjoyable experience. P1 further remarked, "*I finished school in grade 4 and I went out to work*". P2 loved school and reiterates this to the children, suggesting, "*It should be fun.*"

In P3's opinion, school was enjoyable but "*my father was a drunk and an alcoholic. We never sat down at home to do homework. We were not allowed to sit down. If your home is unhappy how can you be doing things yourself?*". P3 loved school because it was away from the home. She tried to do well at school, finishing in year 10. In P4's opinion being an Air Force child meant that the family moved every two years, which was very unsettling. He left school after completing year 10 and started work as a mechanic. P5

stated that her schooling was completed in year 11 after which time the parent started work in the public service. *“School was fun for me”*, P5 remarked.

I also asked the parents about the best parts of the tutoring program for them as parents. According to P1, having help with their child’s homework was the best part of the program. P2 remarked that their child’s fun with the tutor, particularly as the child did not enjoy school, was the best part of the program. In P3’s opinion, the best elements were not having to sit down and do the homework, and having a tutor, which was like having another parent to help. P3 further commented, *“I am a single parent and it has been a great help to me”*. P4 remarked that the improvement in their child’s homework resulted in less conflict between them at home. According to P4 *“it is less stressful”* and *“he generally seems happier at school”*. P5 saw the relationship between the tutor and the child as very important and felt that the tutor’s ability to help the child in particular areas such as *“mathematics, reports, video use”*, which the parent was unable to help with, was the best part of the program. P5 admitted, *“I do not have the time”*.

#### *The presentation of the data from the parents’ responses to the survey*

From the perspective of the parents, tutors have been able to offer them the support that they need. Parents feel relieved when the tutors arrive knowing that their son or daughter can get the help that he/she requires. Parent 22 remarked, *“I am happy to have a tutor with the kids because I have a problem to help them with the homework”*. According to the parents, having a tutor for their child means that they are able to watch the child’s progress and to better understand what the child is doing. Parents do more homework and ask about assignments. They do not have to *“yell and get cranky and feel stressed”*.

Parents are able to ask the tutors questions and the tutors clearly explain the homework to the parents. Other parents have found the homework easier to understand since *“the tutor arrived”*.

Parents find the tutors approachable and easy to talk to. According to Parent 1, *“I found it easier whereas with the school I am not confident”*. The parents are able to discuss with the tutors any family, housing or financial difficulties. They are able to talk to the tutors about their child’s behaviour, their different attitudes, medical conditions, school relationships and irregular school attendance.

Parents also believe that they are better able to communicate with the school. Parent 7 remarked, *“I am able to understand more about the schoolwork”*. Parent 13 stated, *“I know more thanks to the tutor”*, and according to Parent 15, *“I have felt more confident”*. Parent I also remarked, *“I feel they listen to us more and are more willing to take notice”*. The parents believe that the students are more interested in school because they have a better understanding of their work and a better understanding of what they are required to do with the homework. The students do not find the work so difficult and are therefore happier. Parent 8 remarked, *“she is more confident and happy with herself”*. According to Parent 25, *“he gets more homework and he knows what to do. It is much easier for him”*.

### *Analysis of the data*

The interview data reveal that this particular group of parents has a minimum level of education. Although some parents obtained work after leaving school, other parents have had a difficult life with their families. Having a tutor in the home has made a significant difference to the parents. They are better able to understand the homework and to communicate with the school. Their children also have a better understanding of their homework and are more interested in school. This suggests that if families have the support that they need to enable them to understand what the homework is about, it may create a more relaxed homework atmosphere in the home for both parents and children.

All parents expressed the view that any stress they may have felt about their child's homework and schoolwork has been reduced after the tutors' involvement. This indicates that homework may place considerable strain on parents. Parents who appear to be most adversely affected by homework allocation are those who have little communication with the school, who have difficulty understanding the homework, and who have no support at home to assist them with the homework. Parents' anxiety may be increased if there is tension between the home and the school about student's irregular school attendance, and particularly about behavioural difficulties in the classroom.

Parents state that the students' improvements, their enjoyment of having a tutor, and the support the tutors are able to offer with their children's homework and schooling, are the best parts of the program.

The tutors' regular visits and kindness to the parents have built trusting relationships. As a result parents are able to discuss with the tutors matters relating to school, homework and the family. The parents are able to ask the tutors questions, to learn about homework, and particularly, to find out what their child is expected to do to complete their homework. Therefore, as parents gain a better understanding about homework they are in a better position to assist their children.

Although parents believe that their children are more interested in school because they have a better understanding of their work and a clearer idea of what they are required to do, it is possible that students' increased interest in school may also be because of their parents' increased understanding, interest in their work and better communication with the school.

Offering educational support to parents in their own home means that the parents may learn more about homework, and therefore gain the confidence to approach the teachers. As a result the parents may feel that the teachers respect their views and opinions about their child's work.

12% of parents believe they do not have a better understanding of their child's homework. Parents' low level of education may be a factor. If parents are unable to understand what the homework is about they are unlikely to be able to help their children. As a result, parents may not show an interest in their son's or daughter's work. They may also not understand or know what type of work their children are doing at school. Therefore, parents may find it difficult to become involved with or to communicate with the school.

Parents may also feel anxious about being present at the tutoring sessions. A lack of communication with the school may exacerbate any anxiety that the parents may already feel about the homework. If parents believe that schools are “*too big to cope with students who have difficulties*”, and “*do not communicate with them*” they may become alienated from the school community. If there continues to be mistrust and tension between the home and school, students may become caught in this rift. The school environment may be a stressful and intimidating place for parents. Being able to offer parents and students a tutor in their home may be one way to bridge the gap between the home and school, to alleviate educational stress in families, and to offer parents the support that they need.

The anxiety that parents feel about homework and about their communication and involvement with the school is highlighted in this study. The school relies upon students to take their homework home so that they may complete the work together with their parents. My data suggest that if there is a lack of parental communication or involvement with the school then teachers may not be able to ascertain whether there is anybody in the students’ home who can help them with their homework and schoolwork.



### 4.2.3 Effects of the program on tutors

#### *Introduction*

Criterion 6 (effect of the program on tutors) consists of three components:

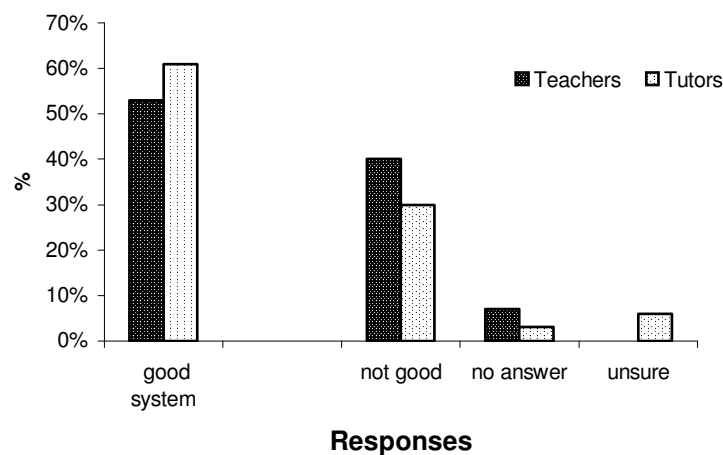
- a) Communication;
- b) The tutors' relationships with their students, and
- c) Program support.

#### *(a) Communication*

Strong communication links between the tutors and the school mean that the tutors may feel supported in undertaking the academic work with their students. The data suggest that communication between teachers and tutors has been difficult for many of the tutors.

#### The presentation of the quantitative data

Graph 12 indicates the level of communication between the tutors and teachers after a twelve-month period.



**Graph 12 – Level of Communication between Tutors and Teachers**

*(b) The tutors' relationships with their students*

Strong positive relationships between tutors and students may lead to successful outcomes for the students. If there is conflict in a relationship between a tutor and a student, the tutoring process may not be as successful.

The presentation of the data

The quantitative data reveal that 94% of tutors are contented with the students they have been matched with, but 6% of tutors are not contented with their students.

For 94% of tutors, the difficulties they have encountered in undertaking the tutoring have not affected their relationships with their students. These difficulties include:

- the students' irregular school attendance;
- truancy;
- behavioural difficulties in the classroom;
- parents' lack of support and communication with the tutors;
- lack of communication with the school, and
- keeping students focused, interested and engaged with school.

This suggests that the tutors' enjoyment when working with their students and their strong relationships may overcome any difficulties during the tutoring sessions.

The factors that do appear to adversely affect the tutors' relationship with their students for 6% of tutors are:

- the tutors' lack of training;
- students' unreliability, and
- students' learning difficulties which, in one tutor's opinion, are beyond the scope of the tutoring program.

The strength of the relationships between the tutors and the students may be related to the tutors' positive feelings towards their students, and their students' positive response to the tutoring. Although for some tutors there is a lack of communication with parents, it is the tutors' positive feelings towards their students that produce beneficial results. If students are responding positively to the tutoring program, this suggests that these students take their education seriously. Furthermore, without their tutors' assistance, students may be educationally disadvantaged. Tutors' view their students as good natured and friendly young people, who are spirited, happy, polite and caring. According to Tutor 23, "*I cannot ask for a more challenging thirteen year old or a more heart-warming one*". Tutor 22 remarked, "*the pleasure with which I am received every week and the knowledge that, in some small way, I am opening my student's eyes to a different world is very satisfying*".

*(c) Program support*

An important aspect of all volunteer programs is providing adequate support for the volunteers so that they can do their work confidently.

All the tutors feel that the program staff is supportive by valuing their service as volunteers, by keeping in regular contact, and by offering constructive and practical advice. Offering tutors regular and practical training sessions so that they are better equipped to productively help their students may help to address any communication difficulties with the school.

*Analysis of the data*

Tutors face psychological and academic difficulties when there is poor communication with teachers. Tutors may feel disenchanting with the lack of response from teachers, and may feel that their role as volunteer tutors is of little significance to the school. Lack of communication with the school means that tutors have to rely on their own creativity, knowledge and enthusiasm to help their students. Some of the tutors commented that the lack of support from the class teacher was difficult, and one particular tutor remarked that she would like the tutoring to be relevant and supportive of what is being done in the class.

When tutors are able to communicate with teachers they feel valued, and academically they feel supported in their efforts to help the students. Being able to discuss their students' progress with the teachers and talk over different ideas for helping them, means that the tutors feel supported. Poor communication may lead to mistrust. If the tutor's

phone calls to teachers are not returned, and their requests for advice remain unanswered, then it is understandable when the tutors stop calling the teachers, believing that they are too busy to talk to them.

Through developing trusting and positive relationships with the students tutors have overcome many difficulties. The program staff has been supportive of the tutors by being able to offer relevant advice and reliable contact. Offering volunteer tutors regular and reliable contact is an important aspect of any volunteer tutoring program. Volunteer tutors may feel a sense of isolation if they are not offered this service. Regular contact with the volunteer tutors will ensure early intervention to sort out any problems faced by the tutors.

#### 4.2.4 Effects of the program on the teachers

Criterion 7 examines the effects of the program on the teachers. This criterion consists of three components:

- a) Parents' involvement with school;
- b) Students' home situation, and
- c) The best parts of the program.

##### *a) Parents' involvement with school*

##### The presentation of the quantitative data

The quantitative data reveal that after the involvement of the tutors:

- 73% of teachers believe that the parents have not become more involved with school
- 7% of teachers believe that the parents are more involved with the school
- 50% of teachers believe that parents are no better able to communicate with the school
- 30% of teachers believe that parents are better able to communicate with the school

**From the perspective of some of the teachers, the tutor program has made very little difference to the parents' involvement with school.**

*b) Teachers' better understanding of the students' home situation: the quantitative data*

The quantitative data indicate that 80% of teachers do not have a better understanding of the students' home situation despite the involvement of the tutors; but 20% of the teachers did feel they understood their situation better as a result.

*d) The best part of the program for the teachers*

According to some of the teachers, the best parts of the tutoring program are the students' enjoyment of having a tutor; knowing that the students have support with their homework, and watching the students reach their potential.

Analysis of the data

The quantitative data suggest that although there has been an improvement in the parents' communication with the school after the involvement of the tutors, the school appears to be an area that the parents do not wish to become involved in. Some of the teachers believe that the communication between the home and the school has improved because of tutors' contact with the school. "*The tutor rings me,*" Teacher 1 stated. Teacher 14 remarked, "*the tutor has worked hard to keep up with the students' needs*". For other teachers, parents' written notes and verbal communication demonstrate that there are improvements in the communication between home and school.

One explanation for 80% of teachers stating that they do not understand the students' home situation any better despite the involvement of the tutors, is that teachers may have already known a considerable amount about the students' home situation prior to the tutors' involvement. However, if there is a distinct lack of parental involvement with the

school and limited communication between the home and the school, this may not be the case. Therefore, it may be difficult for teachers to know what resources, equipment, or members of the family are available to help students with their homework. These data also suggest that having a tutor working within the students' homes has done little to help teachers gain a better understanding of the students' home life.

Schools' confidentiality requirements may hinder discussion between teachers and tutors about the students' home life. However, where there is strong communication between teachers and tutors, both parties know more about the individual needs of the students and about the students' home situation. They are therefore better placed to help the students. If teachers know that the students have the support that they need at home, they may be reassured when they hand out homework in class. Teachers have stated that the students enjoy having a tutor, that they are more focused on their work in the classroom and more engaged with school.



### 4.3 Criterion 8: implications for the program

Criterion 8 consists of two components:

- a) Concerns expressed about the program, and
- b) Program improvements.

#### 4.3.1 Concerns expressed about the program

I asked the tutors about any difficulties they may have encountered with the program.

According to T1, the main difficulty is keeping up with the schoolwork within the time available of one and one quarter hours a week. *“This is my primary task”*, T1 further remarked. In T2’s opinion, *“getting teachers to contact the tutors”* is an area they would like to see improved. T2 further commented that e-mail contact may be helpful.

According to T3, having a special-needs student and attending lectures that were not specific enough for the student’s particular needs, were difficulties. T3 further remarked *“I have been learning as I go, but it has taken a while to understand the student’s individual needs”*. In T4’s opinion, the liaison with high school teachers is difficult. T4 further commented that parents’ relinquishing responsibility for the student’s behaviour, and making other people responsible, are other difficulties for the tutor. T4 further stated, *“my student needs to be spending one-on-one time with a class teacher”*. According to T5, the student transferred to a private school because she *“did so well at the one-on-one tutoring sessions”*. T5 further remarked that the student is now struggling at her school. *“It is the lack of basic learning skills and tools,”* T5 remarked. T6 commented that the school, and limited interaction with the student’s teachers, were concerns. According to

T6 the teachers had a view that the student had below average intelligence. The student was placed in a learning centre that he found extremely boring. Another difficulty mentioned by T6 was the limited tutoring time available because of work obligations.

The main difficulties encountered by the tutors in this study are the students' irregular school attendance; truancy; anti-social behaviour in the classroom; parents' lack of support for the tutors; the lack of communication with the school; and keeping students' focused interested and engaged with school.

#### **4.3.2 Program improvements**

Improvements that the teachers would like to see for the program include:

- a greater commitment from tutors to liaise with the school;
- to be able to coordinate particular programs for students for the longer-term;
- for tutors to contact the school soon after the tutoring begins;
- for the program to be expanded to accommodate more students;
- to receive more program information;
- for the program to work only with students who have indicated that they want help (one teacher mentioned this), and
- the recruitment of more tutors.

These statements suggest that although the teachers believe that the tutors have not made a commitment to liaise with the schools, or to contact the teachers, they would still like to see the tutoring program expanded and extended so that more students can participate.

## 4.4 Summary

This study clearly indicates that having a tutor who is not only able to help the students with their academic work, but is also able to offer emotional support, has positive outcomes for the students. The students in this study believe that they are better able to understand their homework and better able to hand in the homework to their class teachers. They feel a sense of achievement when their completed homework is presented to their teachers. When the teachers praise the students for their work they feel they are valued members of the class.

However, students who have a pattern of irregular school attendance, truancy and lateness face severe difficulties. They are going to get further behind with their academic work, they may not be able to build strong relationships with their peers and they may not be able to hand in completed homework to their teachers. The allocation of homework may cause students considerable stress if they know that they will not be able to complete the work without some adult help.

Given that homework continues to be a school policy, more careful consideration is needed of the types of support and resources for students in their homes that will allow them to do their homework. This study reveals that homework places considerable strain on families. Students generally require parental assistance to complete their homework and school projects successfully. If students do not have the assistance and support of their parents, or the resources available to enable them to do this, then they are not able to

participate in the classroom on an equal basis with their peers. In fact, students are disadvantaged from the moment the homework falls into their bags.

Parents who appear to be adversely affected by the demands placed upon them by their children's homework are those who lack any other support at home; those who have low levels of education or other educational difficulties; and those who have little communication with the school.

Parents' educational attainment and the resources they have available affect how they manage homework regimes. If they are unable to understand what the homework is about they are less likely to help their children with the work. Because parents know that homework is an important aspect of schooling they may feel embarrassed and anxious that their own difficulties may be an obstacle to their child's progress. This may result in tension in the home because neither the child nor the parent is able to do the work. Students may stop bringing homework home altogether because of the stress and anxiety it causes.

Although both teachers and parents believe that communication with school has improved since the involvement of the tutors, parents have failed to get more involved with the school. This suggests that the school environment may continue to be intimidating for some parents.

It also seems that if there is an improvement in communication between home and school after the involvement of the tutors, prior to the tutors' involvement this communication

was unsatisfactory. Therefore, if parents do not have any involvement with the school, or there is little communication between teachers and parents, teachers may have no means of knowing what resources are available in the home, or what support the students have to help them with their homework.

This study shows that 80% of teachers do not have a better understanding of the students' home situation despite the tutors' involvement. This indicates that, as previously recorded, teachers may already know a considerable amount about their students' home situations. However, if there is a distinct lack of communication between parents and the school, teachers may not be adequately aware of the students' home situation.

Furthermore, if the tutors are also unable to contact the teachers then nobody is going to know what is happening in either place. The tutors have tried to contact the teachers but as their phone calls have remained unanswered they eventually stopped calling.

Furthermore, the lack of communication between tutors and teachers tends to lead to mistrust. Where there is strong communication, both parties know more about the students' home situation and the individual needs of students.

This suggests that tutors not only can be of assistance to parents and students, but they also play a valuable role in keeping the home connected to the school. Being able to offer parents and students educational support in their home through the involvement of a tutor may be one way of helping parents to communicate with the school better, to increase their knowledge of homework, and to reduce the strain placed on parents by homework. Parents feel supported. They have found the tutors approachable and easy to talk to. They are able to discuss with the tutors matters relating to school and the family. Parents

believe that they are better able to communicate with the school because they have a better understanding of their child's work. Tutors are able to explain to parents, in the privacy of their own homes, what the homework is about. Parents are also able to ask the tutors questions about work that they may not understand. Students are more interested in school because they have a better understanding of their work and a better understanding of what they are required to do with their work. They may also be more interested in school because their parents have a better understanding about their work and as a result are more interested in the work they are doing. This suggests that family life may be more harmonious for both parents and children.

The tutors have been able to overcome the difficulties they have encountered by building strong, trusting relationships with their students. Even if the tutors believe that they are unable to communicate with the students' parents, their relationships with their students have remained strong. Tutors' lack of communication with teachers has been a difficult area. As a result, they have undertaken a considerable amount of work on their own. This may have been an exciting prospect for some tutors but it has posed a dilemma for others. If the tutors do not have the support of the class teacher, basic training in literacy and numeracy may prevent tutors from feeling anxious about being able to help with the students' homework.

## **5 A SUMMARY OF THE THESIS**

This thesis has examined the impact of Barnardos' tutoring program on students, as well as its influences on parents, teachers and tutors. The background to the current investigation is a 1999 study of the tutoring program which suggested that the program was beginning to have a positive influence on the students and their families. It was recommended that further study be undertaken to ascertain the longer-term effects of the program on all the participants, particularly outcomes for students.

A set of criteria was developed in order to undertake the current investigation. The process of thematic coding and categorisation were used for analysing the qualitative data. In this chapter I analyse my findings in the context of the literature review in Chapter 2.

### **5.1 The major findings of the study**

My analysis suggests that the tutor program has brought about significant changes to the homes and lives of the students. These changes are having a measurable influence on students' school performance. However, while parents' communication with the school has also improved, there is no significant change in their involvement with the school.

### 5.1.1 The changes in the home

I found that after the involvement of the tutors, parents in the study are better able to understand their children's homework, and are better able to help them. As a result these parents are becoming more interested in their children's education and feel less stressed about the issue of homework.

These factors suggest that there are important changes taking place in the home. First, there is less anxiety. Second, the children feel a sense of relief that their parents know more about their work, and are more involved with their education. Third, there may be more harmony between the parents and children over homework issues. As a result of these changes the students feel supported, and encouraged to complete their assignments and homework.

My findings support those of the research literature which suggest that not only does the home environment play an important part in children's ability to learn and in their enthusiasm for school, but parental attitudes and behaviour are strong contributors to students' success at school.

The literature suggests that an important factor in the social systems perspective of development is that of *congruence*, where a child's development 'fits' with the child's frequently changing perspectives, environments and 'world' views. The students in this study believe that they are better able to understand their homework, and are more skilled and confident in presenting their work to their teachers. The parents also believe that they have a better understanding of the homework. Further, the students' increased



understanding of their homework matches that of their parents, who are both included in the homework process and report feeling less 'left behind'.

The literature relating to the social ecology of human development indicates that a child's development is as decisive in one setting as it is in the next setting. Whatever happens in one setting will have a direct impact on other settings. Thus, what happens in the home will have a direct impact on what happens at school. The tutors are creating a learning environment in which the parents and the students feel at ease. As a result the parents are able to learn more about their children's education and the children increase their knowledge. My study indicates that the new learning environment created in the home tends to be transferred to the school setting. Where there may have been anxiety and conflict in the home around homework, there is now an emerging trusting interaction which is further reflected in the children's relationship with teachers at school.

The literature suggests that if parents, and especially single mothers, have enough *social capital*, their children will succeed at school. For the parents in this study the tutors have become friends, and people upon whom they can rely. The parents may feel that, in having a tutor, they are more connected to their community.

The literature relating to homework suggests that homework may cause additional strain on families. Not only does homework take considerable time and space, but doing homework requires an appropriate level of academic skills and resources. Parents most unable to deal with homework have a low level of education, little communication with

the school, or may not have access to other adults with the required academic skills to help them.

My review of the literature shows that in the last ten years there has been a significant increase in the number of children growing up in single parent families, mostly single mothers. Long-term studies show that children who live with single parent mothers who have never married have the highest incidence of school related problems. These problems range from being in the bottom of the class to school suspensions. There is also evidence in the literature to suggest that the low educational attainment of the parent, high unemployment and lack of parental support for the child, form structures of disorder within families that undermine children's school performance.

Support from home tutors means parents no longer feel isolated with homework and schoolwork that they may not understand. If there is tension between the home and the school the parents have someone from outside the school environment to whom they can talk about their concerns. Knowing that the tutors are supporting their parents may influence the students' attitudes and behaviour as the home environment changes.

### **5.1.2 Changes in the lives of the students**

My data suggest that students' anxiety about homework has been lessened by having a reliable tutor visiting them on a regular basis. The tutors have also helped the students to complete their homework. Having a tutor may bring a sense of relief about homework completion for the students.

However, the data show that the tutors' role is much broader, becoming more of a mentoring role. The tutors have become the students' friends and are important people in their lives.

There is strong evidence in the literature to suggest that mentoring has significant benefits for young people at risk. This is particularly the case if the mentoring takes place on a one-to-one basis. Young people benefit from one-to-one mentoring in a number of ways, including fewer absences from school, improved relationships with their parents, and better attitudes towards school.

According to the literature, homework in the Australian context has become a tradition in schooling, and endures because it has gained a life of its own. There is a lot of pressure on students to complete homework and a lot of anxiety felt by students who may not understand it fully and have no one at home to turn to for help.

The students in this study are better able to hand in their homework to their teachers. As a result the students are being praised by their teachers for their work. Being recognised for their work, the students may feel a sense of belonging to the class.

The term *relatedness* is used in the literature to refer to a student's sense of belonging or connection to his or her community. From this perspective, if students feel respected by their peers and valued as part of the school community, their needs in that particular setting are more likely to be met. My data suggest that, since having a tutor, the students have made more friends at school, are less isolated and have improved social skills. They

feel a sense of belonging to their school community and are able to perform better academically and socially in the classroom. Their literacy and numeracy skills have also improved. Some of the students are more confident in undertaking other classroom tasks. Their peers may be more accepting of them, which in some cases may result in less misbehaviour.

The literature suggests students who do not feel respected and valued as part of their school community will not be able to perform well at school. Factors like truancy, irregular school attendance, lateness, family disruption or schools being unsupportive of the students, undermine students' ability to perform well in the classroom. In this situation these students may not feel that they are part of their school community. The longer that these students are disconnected from their school community, the less likely are they to develop strong friendships with their peers.

Outside of the school environment these students may form relationships with other disaffected students. If there is no support in the home for the students' parents who have to deal with this educational turbulence, then the students may become further estranged from their school community.

My data suggest that although having a tutor has had little impact on the students' engagement with school if any of the mentioned factors are present, these students at least now have a trusting and reliable person in their lives to support them with their education. According to the literature, human development requires a strong and enduring emotional attachment to another person in order to facilitate learning and development. Without this

strong emotional attachment to another adult member of society, more age-segregated adverse peer groups will develop. Within these peer groups, violence and indifference may become the norm. The literature clearly indicates that peer relationships of rejected and neglected students are an important consideration for educators today. For the students in this study, the tutors offer them a strong and enduring friendship and become someone in their lives upon whom they can rely.

The tutors play a vital role in reconnecting these students to their school community and in strengthening ties within the family.

### **5.1.3 Communication between the home and the school**

My data relating to communication between home and school suggest that there is a disparity between the teachers' and the parents' beliefs. On the one hand, most parents believe that there has been an improvement in the communication with school since the involvement of the tutors. On the other hand, most teachers believe there has been no improvement. Although some teachers acknowledge that there is an improvement in the communication between the home and the school, quite often it is the tutors who have improved the communication. The data also suggest that there has been no significant improvement in the parents' involvement with school.

There are important factors discussed in the literature that may contribute to a failure of communication between home and school, and to the parents' involvement. The level of parents' educational attainment, the parents' socio-economic status, and their different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, are some of these factors.

The literature on the *operational view* of literacy suggests that people with different educational standards and literacy skills interact with institutions, such as schools, in different ways. Literacy is viewed as a social and cultural practice that has different meanings for different people.

Parents who are well educated are likely to have well developed literacy skills. Having competent literacy skills means that people will be able to liaise and negotiate confidently with an educational institution. Conversely, parents who are less well educated may not have such well-developed literacy skills. These parents are less confident communicating with these institutions.

In the *operational view* of literacy the positive interaction with institutions has an influence on other family members. Thus, it may be suggested that students whose parents are well educated and are confidently able to negotiate with the school are advantaged. Students may feel a sense of pride if they know that the school community accepts their parents. Conversely, students may feel a sense of rejection if they believe that the school does not value or respect their parents as much as other parents. The lack of school support for their parents may further isolate students within the school community.

The literature relating to the theory of *cultural capital* also suggests that schools reflect middle and upper class values and forms of communication which form the dominant culture of the schools. Working class families have to adapt to this dominant school

culture. The evidence in the literature suggests that Australia views itself as predominantly 'middle class'. People of upper and middle echelons in Australian society are the dominant group in the majority of educational settings.

Parents who come across as uneducated, unsophisticated or untidy are likely to be inadvertently treated unfairly by the school culture, resulting in these parents feeling intimidated by their children's teachers. One parent's comment succinctly demonstrates this unfairness: "Schools don't want to deal with parents like us".

## **5.2 The implications of the findings**

### **5.2.1 For policy makers**

1) Given that homework continues to be a policy in educational systems in Australia, teaching staff need to be more aware that some students have less support and resources at home for helping them complete their homework.

2) Consideration needs to be given to the way homework is structured. This includes the language that is used for instruction and the relevance of the homework to the students' own experiences outside of the school environment.

3) Tutoring programs that operate within the family setting and that involve at least one parent may be more beneficial than tutoring programs operating outside the home.

### **5.2.2 For schools**

1) For students who have difficulty maintaining their connection with the school, thoughtful consideration needs to be given to the impact of educational turbulence on the students' parents. This is particularly important if a student lives with a single parent who may not have any other support in the home.

2) Schools should consider communication practices that encourage marginalised parents to feel that they can communicate with educational institutions.

3) Schools should introduce programs that encourage all students to develop friendships, particularly those students who are isolated at school.

### **5.2.3 For families**

Tutoring programs that operate within a family setting offer significant benefits to disadvantaged families. Parents and their children are involved in the learning process. For parents who lack any other adult support in the home, the tutors offer some of the support that they need.

## **5.3 Conclusion**

The study points to the need for a radical reassessment of homework by giving due consideration to the resources and support available to students in their homes, and to the parents who do not have any other help with their children's education. Adequate funding



is needed to develop tutoring programs that operate within the home, based on the one-to-one principle of mentoring, to help disadvantaged students and their families.

The study also points to the necessity for both the school system and teachers to reassess the way in which the input from disengaged parents may become valued within school communities.

The findings of this thesis are a reminder to teachers that students have to cope with diverse backgrounds and that teacher expectations need to be modified to take account of the home influences in the lives of the students.

I have shown that educators have not adequately considered the impact of homework on the lives of the students and their families; nor have they made reasonable accommodations to address these issues. The tutors have played a vital role not only in maintaining students' connection to their school, but also by being creative in their approach to the educational needs of their students. For these students to be able to succeed at school they need to be on equal terms with their peers. When students arrive at the school gate they need to feel that they are part of their school community. Being respected by their teachers, and valued by their peers, are important aspects of the students' sense of belonging. The tutors have contributed to these ideals for many of these students through their one-on-one support, teaching, encouragement and friendship.

## 6 REFERENCES

ACT Council of Social Security (2003). Addressing disadvantage in the ACT. ACTCOSS Consultants with Non Government Organisations. Canberra: Publishing Services for the Chief Minister's Department.

ACT Government School Education. Literacy and numeracy (2000). ACT: Department of Education and Community Services.

Ainley, J. (1999). Outcomes and funding in the commonwealth literacy and numeracy programme, Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Ainley, J. Graetz, B. Long, M. Batten, M. (1995). Socio-economic status and school education. Melbourne: Council for Educational Research, Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET).

Arthur, M. Gordon, C. & Butterfield, N. (2003). Classroom management: creating positive learning environments. Southbank, Victoria: Thomson.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002a). Australian social trends 2002, Australia. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002b). Australian Capital Territory in focus. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Baldwin, J. (1964). Nobody knows my name. London: Michael Joseph.

Barbour, C. & Barbour, N.H. (1997). Families, schools, and communities: Building partnerships for educating children, New Jersey: Simon and Schuster.

Batten, M. & Russell, J. (1995). Students at risk: A review of Australian literature 1980-1994. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

Bauer, A.M. & Shea, T.M. (1999). Learners and emotional and behavioral disorders: An introduction. New Jersey: Simon & Schuster.

Beck, L.E. & Winsler, A. (1995). Scaffolding children's learning: Vygotsky and early childhood education. Washington DC: Volume 7 of the NAEYC Research into Practice Series, National Association for Education of Young Children.

Booth, A. & Dunn, J. F. (1996). Family-school links: How do they affect educational outcomes? Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bourke, S. & Fairbairn, H. (1995). Teacher attitudes to homework, *Unicorn 21*, 2:95-102.

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Buckingham, J. (2000). *Boy troubles*. St Leonards, N.S.W: The Centre for Independent Studies.
- Cairney, T. H. & Ruge, J. (1998). *Community literacy practices and schooling: Towards effective support for students*. Commonwealth of Australia: Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
- Cairney, T. H. & Ruge, J. (1997). *Community literacy practices and schooling: Towards effective support for students, Executive Summary*. Commonwealth of Australia: Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
- Cairney, T. Ruge, J. Buchanan, J. Lowe, K. Munsie L. (1995). *Developing partnerships: The home, school and community interface*. Canberra: Volume 2 Research Project, Department of Employment, Education and Training.
- Christie, F. (1990). *Literacy for a changing world*. Hawthorn, Victoria: The Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Christie, F. & Mission, R. (1998). *Literacy and schooling*. London: Routledge.
- Comber, B. (1998). *Literacies contingent repertoires and school success*. The Garth Boomer Memorial Address to the Joint National Conference of the Australian Literacy Educators Association and the Australian English Teachers Association.
- Commonwealth of Australia (1998). *Literacy for all: The challenge for Australian schools*. Canberra: Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
- Connell, R. W. (1993). *Schools and social justice*. Leichart, N.S.W: Pluto Press.
- Connell, R. W. Ashenden, D. J. Kessler, S. Dowsett, G. W. (1982). *Making the difference: Schools, families and social division*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Connell, R. W. (1977). *Ruling class, ruling culture*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (2000). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. South Yarra, Victoria: Macmillan.
- Cowles, M. (1969). *Perspectives in the education of disadvantaged children: A multidisciplinary approach*. USA: Pennsylvania International Textbook Company.
- Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (1998). *Literacy for all: The challenge for Australian schools*. Commonwealth Literacy Policies for Australian Schools, Australian Schooling Monograph Series No.1/1998.

- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1990). *Literacy for empowerment: The role of parents in children's education*. Lewes, East Sussex: The Falmer Press.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Chicago, Illinois: Aldine Publishing.
- Dey, I. (1993). *Qualitative data analysis: A user-friendly guide for social scientists*. New York: Routledge.
- Edgar, D. Keane, D. & McDonald, P (1989). *Child poverty*. North Sydney, N.S.W: Allen and Unwin, Australia.
- Feuerstein, A. (2000). School characteristics and parent involvement: Influences on participation in children's schools. *Journal of Education Research, Vol. 94, No1*.
- Flick, U. (1998) *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Frost, J. L. & Hawkes, G. R. (1966). *The disadvantaged child: Issues and innovations*. Boston, USA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Fukuyama, F. (1999). *The great disruption: Human nature and the reconstitution of social order*. London: Profile Books.
- Gregory, R. & Hunter, B. In Neville, D. (2000). *State of the family*. Melbourne: Anglicare Australia.
- Graetz, B. & McAllister, I. (1994). *Dimensions of Australian society*. Australia: MacMillan.
- Graetz, B. Perspectives on socioeconomic status. In Ainley, J. Graetz, B. Long. M. Batten, M. (1985). Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Greene, G. (1940). *The power and the glory*. London: Heinemann.
- Guba, E. G. (1978). *Towards a naturalistic inquiry in educational evaluation*, Los Angeles: University of California, Centre for the Study of Education, UCLA, Graduate School of Education.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1981). *Effective evaluation*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.
- Guetzloe, E. (1997). The power of positive relationships: Mentoring programs in the school and community. *Preventing School Failure, Vol 31, 3, 100-104*.
- Harding, A., Lloyd, R. & Greenwell, H. (2000). *Financial disadvantage in Australia 1990 to 2000*. Camperdown, NSW: The Smith Family.

- Hollingworth, P. (1979). *Australians in poverty*. Melbourne, Victoria: Nelson.
- Hollingworth, P. J. (1972). *The powerless poor*. Melbourne: Stockland Press.
- Jekielek, S. M. Moore, K. A. Hair, E. C. & Scarupa, H. J (2000). *Mentoring: A promising strategy for youth development*. Retrieved August 2003 from Trends Child Research Brief. Web site: <http://www.childtrends.org.htm>.
- Jones, S. R. (2002). (Re) writing the word: Methodological strategies and issues in qualitative research. *Journal of College Student Development*, July/August.
- Kauffman, J. M. (2001). *Characteristics of emotional and behavioral disorders of children and youth: Seventh Edition*. New Jersey, Ohio: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Kralovec, E. & Buell, J. (2000). *The end of homework*. Boston, USA: Beacon Press.
- Lamb, S. & McKenzie, P. (2001). *Longitudinal survey of Australian youth: Research Report Number 18, Patterns of success and failure in the transition from school to work in Australia*. Melbourne, Victoria: ACER, Australian Council of Educational Research.
- Lankshear, C. (1998). *Frameworks and workframes: Literacy policies and new orders*. Retrieved March 20, 2001. Web site: [http://colin.lankshear & michele.knobel--front page](http://colin.lankshear&michele.knobel--front.page).
- Le Compte, M. D. Millory, W. L. & Preissle, J. (1992). *The handbook of qualitative research in education*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press Inc, Harcourt Bruce and Company.
- Lewis, O. *The culture of poverty*. In Moynihan, D. P. (1969). London: Basic Books.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury park, CA: Sage.
- Louden, W. Chan, L. Elkins, J. Greaves, D. House, H. Milton, M. Nichols, S. Rivalland, J. Rohl, M. Van Kraayenoord, C. (2000). *Mapping the territory: Primary students with learning difficulties: literacy and numeracy*. Canberra: Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs.
- MacCallum, J. & Beltman, S. (1999). *International year of older persons mentoring research project*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
- Manning, M. L. & Baruth, L. G. (1995). *Students at risk*. Massachusetts, USA: Simon and Schuster.
- Marks, G. N. & Fleming, N. (1999). *Longitudinal surveys of Australian youth: Research Report Number 11 Early School Leaving in Australia: Findings from the 1995 Year 9 LSAY Cohort*. Camberwell, Victoria: The Australian Council for Educational Research.

Masters, G. N. & Forster, M. (1997). Mapping literacy achievement: Results of the 1996 national school English literacy survey. Canberra: Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

McGregor, C. (2001). *Class in Australia*. Victoria: Penguin, Australia.

McLoughlin, J. & Nagoreka, J.(2000). *Sooner not later: An international review of literature and program review of early childhood initiatives for disadvantaged families*. Fitzroy, Victoria: Brotherhood of St Laurence.

Miles, M .B. & Huberman, A.M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*. Beverly Hills, USA: Sage.

Miller, D. (1997). Mentoring structures: Building a protective community, *Preventing School Failure, Vol. 41, No.3*, 105-109.

Morse, J.M.& Field, P. (1995). *Qualitative research methods for health professionals: second edition* CA, USA: Sage.

National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, (NATSEM), (2002). *Addressing disadvantage in the ACT: Locating poverty in the ACT*. University of Canberra.

Neville, D. (2000). *State of the family*. Melbourne, Victoria: Anglicare Australia.

Newman, F. & Holzman, L. (1993). *Lev Vygotsky: Revolutionary scientist*. New York, USA: Routledge.

Osborne, A. F. (1990). Resilient children: A longitudinal study of high achieving socially disadvantaged children. *Early Child Development and Care, Vol.62*, 23-47.

Osterman, K. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research, Vol.70, No. 3*, 323-367.

Pierce, R. (1999) A research project for Barnardos volunteer tutoring program (unpublished).

Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York, USA: Simon & Schuster.

Rich, A. (2000). *Beyond the classroom*. St Leonards, N.S.W: The Centre for Independent Studies.

Roberts, K. & Taylor, B. (2002). *Nursing research process: An Australian perspective*. Victoria: Nelson Thompson Learning.

Robinson, P. (1976). *Education and poverty*. London: Methuen.

- Rockwell, S. (1997). Mentoring through accessible, authentic opportunities. *Preventing School Failure, Vol. 41, No.3*, 111-114.
- Rothman, S. (2002). Research report number 29: Achievement in literacy and numeracy by Australian 14 years-olds, 1975-1998. Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Rutter, M. & Madge, N. (1976). *Cycles of poverty: A review of research*. London: Heinemann.
- Shopen, G. & Liddicoat, A. J. (1999). *Final Report of the Volunteer Literacy Tutoring Program Research Project*. Canberra.
- Shopen, G. & Liddicoat, A. J. (1998). *Challenges for partnership, Literacy at home and school in the middle years*. Canberra: Final Report for the ACT Department of Education and Community Services.
- Sipe, C. L. & Roder, A. E. (1999). *Mentoring school-age children: A classification of programs*. USA: The National Mentoring Partnership.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J.(1998). *Basis of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sullivan, N. (2000). *State of the family*. Melbourne: Anglicare Australia.
- Sullivan, L. Buckingham, J. Maley, B. Hughes, H. (1999). *State of the nation*. St Leonards, NSW: The Centre for Independent Studies.
- Taylor, J. & Fraser, A. (2003). *Eleven plus: Life chances and family income*. Melbourne, Victoria: Brotherhood of St Laurence.
- Townsell, K.T. (1997). Mentoring African American youth, *Preventing School Failure, Vol.41, No.3*, 125,127.
- Trethewey, J. (1989). *Aussie battlers*. Burwood, Victoria: Collins Cove.
- Ungerieder, D. F. (1985). *Reading, writing and rage*.CA, USA: Jalmar.
- Valentine, A. C. (1972). *Culture and poverty*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Weatherburn, D. & Lind, B. (2001). *Delinquent-prone communities*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Wilkinson, D. (2000). *The researchers' toolkit: The complete guide to practitioner research*. London: Routledge.

Withers G. & Batten, M. (1995). Programs for at-risk youth: A review of American, Canadian and British literature since 1984. Melbourne, Victoria: The Australian Council for Educational Research.

Whiteford, P. Bradbury, B. & Saunders, P. Inequality and deprivation among families with children: an exploratory study. In Edgar, D. Keane, D. & McDonald, P (1989). Child Poverty. North Sydney, N.S.W; Allen and Unwin, Australia.

Wolfendale, S. (1983). Parental participation in children's development and education. New York, USA: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers.

Wolfendale, S. & Topping, K. (1996). Family involvement in literacy: Effective partnerships in education. London: Cassell.

Worthen, B. R. & Sanders, J. R. (1987). Educational evaluation, Alternative approaches and practical guidelines. White Plains, New York: Longman.

Zill, N. (1996). Family change and student achievement: What we have learned, what it means for schools. In Booth, A. & Dunn, J. F. (Eds) Family-School Links, How do they affect educational outcomes? Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.



## **APPENDIX A – THE QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**Barnardos Tutoring  
Program  
Research  
Questionnaire  
2001**

**The Students**

**Barnardos tutoring program**

**Research questionnaire  
2001**

**The students**

**Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.**

**Could you please answer the questions as best as you can, all by yourself, and when you have finished, put the questionnaire in the envelope with the new stamp on. Seal the envelope and give it to your parents to post back to me at Barnardos. Thank you**

**It will take you about 20 minutes to answer the 16 questions**

**Could you please tick the boxes and write any comments you would like to make**

**1) Before you had a tutor what was school like for you**

**1) Was it hard for you to do your homework?**

Yes

No

**b) Did you understand the work you did in the classroom with your teacher?**

Yes

No

**c) Did you go to school every day?**

Yes

No

Would you like to comment on any part of question 1?

**Since you have had your tutor**

2) Has having a tutor helped you to better understand your homework?

Yes

No

3) How has your tutor helped you to better understand your homework and to finish you homework?

4) What is the main part of the homework that you are better able to understand?

5) Are you able to understand more about your school work since you have had your tutor?

Yes

No

6) What are you better able to understand about your school work?

7) Do you believe you can do your school work with more confidence since you have had your tutor?

Yes

No

Would you like to comment?

8) Do you believe you are better able to complete school projects since you have had your tutor?

yes

no

Would you like to comment?

**9) Are you better able to understand what happens in the classroom since you have had a tutor?**

yes

no

**Would you like to comment?**

**10) Do you do more school activities since you have had your tutor?**

yes

no

**Would you like to comment?**

**11) Since you have had your tutor do you still feel nervous about some of your school work?**

Yes

No

**12) What makes you still feel nervous about your school and your school work?**

**13) Are you happy to have another person outside your family to talk to about your school work?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**14) Is there anything that has worried you about having a tutor?**

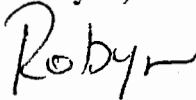
**15) What has been the very best thing about having a tutor?**

16) What new things would you like to see for the tutoring program?

17) Is there anything that you do not like about the tutoring program?

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Please put the questionnaire in the stamped addressed envelope and give it to your parents to post back to me at Barnardos.

Thank you,



Robyn Pierce  
student  
Faculty of Education  
University of Canberra



# **Barnardos Tutoring Program Research 2001**

## **The in depth interviews with the students**

**The following are the questions that I will be asking the students**

- 1) Has your tutor developed special games for you and your tutor to play together to help you with your school work?**
- 2) Could you tell me about some of the games**
- 3) Have you enjoyed the games?**
- 4) What other activities has your tutor developed to help you with your school work?**
- 5) Do you believe the games and activities have helped you with your school work?**
- 6) What has been the best part of having a tutor?**
- 7) How could we make this program better for all the children?**
- 8) Could you tell me about your life at school before you had a tutor**
- 9) Did you miss a lot of school before you had a tutor?**

**Barnardos Tutoring  
Program  
Research  
Questionnaire**

**THE  
PARENTS**

**Barnardos tutoring program  
Research questionnaire  
2001**

**The parent(s)**

**Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire**

**There are 25 questions to be answered in this questionnaire which should  
take about 20 minutes to complete**

**Could you please tick the boxes and make any comments to the questions  
that you would like to make**

**All information you provide will be treated in confidence**

**1) Did you have good communication with the school before your son/daughter was  
matched with the tutor?**

yes

no

**Since your son/daughter has had a tutor-**

**2) Have you been better able to communicate with the school?**

Yes

No

**3) In what way have you been better able to communicate with the school?**

**4) If you have not been able to better communicate with the school why do you believe  
the communication with the school still remains a problem?**

5) Did you attend school functions like the parent/teacher evenings before your child had a tutor?

Yes

No

7) 6) If you answered no, have you attended school functions like parent and teacher evenings since your child has had a tutor?

yes

no

7) What has made the difference for you in you being able to attend school functions?

8) Do you believe you have a better understanding about your child's homework since your son/daughter has had a tutor?

Yes

No

Would you like to comment?

9) Has having a tutor reduced any stress that there may have been in the family with regard to homework and study ?

Yes

No

Would you like to comment ?

10) Do you believe your son/daughter is more confident in their abilities at school?

Yes

no

11) If you answered yes in what areas is your son/daughter more confident?

yes

no

12) Do you believe your son/daughter has better self esteem about himself/herself?

yes

no

**Would you like to comment on question 12?**

**13) Do you believe your son/daughter has more friends at school and is more sociable?**

Yes

no

**Would you like to comment?**

**14) Do you believe your son/daughter is more interested in school since he/she has had a tutor?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

15) Do you believe your son/daughter's learning has improved since your child has had a tutor?

Yes

No

16) In what areas do you believe your son/daughter's learning has improved?

17) Has having a tutor made it easier for you as a family in regard to your son/daughter being able to talk to their tutor about school problems?

Yes

No

Would you like to comment?

18) Has the tutor been able to talk to you about your son/daughter's homework and school work?

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**19) Have you been able to talk to the tutor about any other concerns you may have with regard to the school, your son/daughter or, any other family problems?**

yes

no

**Would you like to comment?**

**20) Do you believe your son/daughter having a tutor has undermined your role as a parent in any way?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment ?**



21) Have you as a parent enjoyed the experience of having a tutor in your home to work with your son/daughter?

Yes

No

Would you like to comment on question?

22) What do you see as the main benefits of the tutoring program for you as a family?

23) What do you see as the main benefits to your son/daughter of the tutoring program?

24) Are you happy with the tutoring program so far?

Yes

No

Would you like to comment?

25) Are there improvements that you would like to see made to the program?

I gratefully appreciate your time in completing this questionnaire,  
thank you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robyn". The letter "R" is large and stylized, with a loop at the top. The rest of the name is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Robyn Pierce**  
student  
University of Canberra

## **Barnardos Tutoring Program Research 2001**

### **The in depth interviews with the student's parent(s)**

**The following are the questions that I will be asking the parents**

- 1) Could you tell me about the activities your son/daughter's tutor has developed to help him/her with their school work and learning**
- 2) Do you believe your son/daughter has enjoyed these activities?**
- 3) What has been the best part for you of having a tutor for your son/daughter?**
- 4) How would you like to see the program improved?**
- 5) Would you like to be more involved with the program yourself?  
(a parents' committee)**
- 6) Could you tell me about your own school life?**

**Barnardos Tutoring  
Program  
Research  
Questionnaire  
2001**

**TO THE TUTORS**

## **Barnardos tutoring program**

### **Research questionnaire 2001**

#### **THE TUTORS**

**There are 26 questions to this questionnaire, which should take about 20 minutes to complete. Could you please tick the boxes and write any comments that you would like to make.**

**Thank you very much for your time in completing this questionnaire. All information will be treated in confidence.**

**1) What did you understand to be your student's main problems at school at the time you were matched with your student?**

**2) Do you believe you have been able to make some difference to your student's learning?**

**Yes**

**No**

**Would you like to comment?**

**3) Do you believe your student is better able to understand his/her homework since you have been the tutor?**

**Yes**

**No**

**Would you like to comment?**

**4) Does your student receive homework on a regular basis?**

**Yes**

**No**

**5) Has your student been better able to hand in the homework to the class teacher since you have been with him/her?**

**Yes**

**No**

**Would you like to comment?**

**6) Do you believe the projects set by the class teacher have been suitable for the student to work on at home?**

**Yes**

**No**

**Would you like to comment on question 6?**

**7) Do you believe that since you have been with your student the school projects have been better able to be completed?**

**Yes**

**No**

**Would you like to comment?**

**Do you believe your student is more confident about tackling his/her school work?**

**Yes**

**No**

**Would you like to comment?**

**9) Do you believe the student is more engaged with his/her school?**

**Yes**

**No**

**Would you like to comment on question 9?**

**Do you believe a good system of communication has developed between yourself and the student's teacher/teachers?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**11) Do you believe the teacher/teachers have been responsive to your telephone calls for information about your student?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**12) Are you happy with the student you have been matched with?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**



**13) Do you believe you have developed a good relationship with your student?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment ?**

**14) Do you believe your student has been happy to see you every week?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**15) What are some of the innovations you have developed and techniques you have used to assist your student in his/her learning?**

**16) Do you believe your student's family have been supportive of you as a tutor?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment ?**

**17) Have you been able to talk to your student's family about their son/daughter's school and homework?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

18) Have you been able to talk to your student's family about any other issues and concerns they may have?

Yes

No

Would you like to comment?

19) What have been the most difficult aspects of the tutoring program for you?

20) What have been the most pleasing aspects of the tutoring program for you?

21) Do you believe the tutoring program itself has been supportive of you as a tutor?

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment on question 21?**

**22) Are you happy to talk to Barnardos staff about any problems and concerns you may have about your student?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**23) Do you believe the training sessions offered by the Australian Catholic University have been beneficial?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**24) Did you enjoy the training sessions?**

Yes

No

**25) What are the areas of the training that you would like to see improved?**

**26) Would you like to see an award system developed, within the school system, for students who have done well on the tutoring program?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**Thank you very much once again for completing this questionnaire and thank you for being part of the tutoring program.**

**All information that you give to this questionnaire will be treated with utmost confidence.**

**Yours sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robyn".

**Robyn Pierce  
student  
Faculty of Education  
University of Canberra**

# **Barnardos Tutoring Program Research 2001**

## **The in depth interviews with the student's tutors**

**The following are the questions that I will be asking the tutors**

- 1) Could you describe in more detail the work you have been doing with your student for the past two years**
- 2) How much time do you spent with your student on average per week?**
- 3) Do you spend a lot of time preparing for your student's lesson per week?**
- 4) Could you tell me some of the problems you have found with the program so far?**

**Barnardos Tutoring  
Program  
Research  
Questionnaire**

**THE  
TEACHERS**

**Barnardos tutoring program**

**Research questionnaire**

**2001**

**The teachers**

**Thank you very much for your time in completing this questionnaire.**

**There are 21 questions to be answered. Could you please tick the boxes and make any comments that you would like to make.**

**All information in this questionnaire will be treated in confidence**

**Since the student has had a tutor-**

**1) Do you believe the student is better able to complete his /her homework?**

Yes

No

**2) Do you believe the student is better able to hand in homework to you?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**3) Do you believe the student is better able to complete school projects that are set for completion at home ?**

Yes

No



**Would you like to comment on question 3?**

**4) Do you believe the student has a better understanding of literacy and numeracy?**

Numeracy

Yes

No

literacy

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**5) Do you believe the student is better able to complete his/her classroom work?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**6) Do you believe the student is more engaged with the school?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**7) Do you believe the student is less isolated at school?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**8) Do you believe the student is more confident at school?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**9) Do you believe the student has more social skills at school?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**10) Do you believe there is better communication between the home and the school since the student has had a tutor?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**11) Do you believe the student's parent(s) are more involved with the school since the student has had a tutor?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**12) Do you believe you have a better understanding about the student's home situation through the student having a tutor?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment on question?**

**13) Do you believe that a good system of communication has developed between yourself and the tutor?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**14) Do you believe the student has talked in a positive way about his/her tutor?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**15) Are you pleased to see a children's welfare agency working together with the education sector?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**16) Would you like to see this program extended to other states in Australia?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment?**

**17) Would you like to see a system of certification developed within the school system, where awards were presented to children for their achievements on the tutoring program?**

Yes

No

**Would you like to comment on question 17?**

**18) In what areas do you believe the tutoring program could be improved?**

**19) What do you believe has been the best part of the tutoring program for you as a teacher?**

**20) Is there anything else you would like to comment on?**

**Thank you very much once again for completing the questionnaire.**

**Yours sincerely**

*Robyn Pierce*

**Robyn Pierce  
student  
Faculty of Education  
University of Canberra**

## **Barnardos Tutoring Program Research 2001**

### **The in depth interviews with the student's teacher**

- 1) Could you tell me how the student was doing at school before he/she had a tutor**
- 2) What do you see as the main benefits of the program for the student**
- 3) Has the tutoring program been of help to you as a teacher?**
- 4) Has the student talked to you about the things he/she has done with his/her tutor?**
- 5) Do you believe the tutoring program could be of help to a lot more children in your class?**

## **APPENDIX B – PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE STUDY**



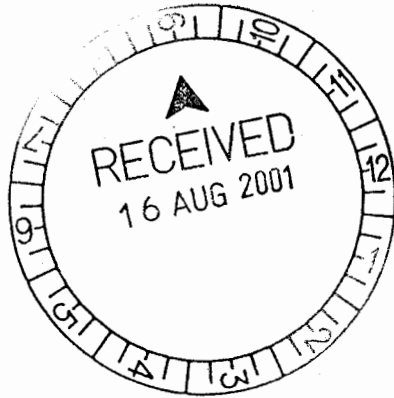
Letter omitted due to privacy legislation.

## **APPENDIX C – COMMITTEE FOR ETHICS IN HUMAN RESEARCH**

Letter omitted due to privacy legislation.

## **APPENDIX D – APPROVAL FROM BARNARDOS AUSTRALIA**

13<sup>th</sup> August 2000



*Head Office*  
60-64 Bay Street  
Ultimo NSW 2007  
Tel: (02) 9281 7933  
*Administration Fax*  
(02) 9281 0441  
*Marketing Fax*  
(02) 9281 0526  
[www.barnardos.org.au](http://www.barnardos.org.au)

GPO Box 9996  
Sydney NSW 2001  
DX 11801 Sydney  
Broadway  
A Company Limited  
by Guarantee  
ABN 18 068 557 906  
Registered Charity No.  
CFN 13840

University of Canberra  
Committee for Ethics in Human Research

*PATRON*  
Governor General of  
the Commonwealth  
of Australia

*CHAIR*  
Margaret Dowling  
*CEO & DIRECTOR  
OF WELFARE*  
Louise Voigt

*BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS*  
Jonathan Bell  
Angela Crammond  
Michael Crivelli  
John Fitzpatrick  
Anthony Forrest  
Joan Groth  
Dianne Jagelman  
Thomas Johnston  
William King  
Alan Neilson  
Gabrielle Trainor  
Geoffrey Willmott

Dear Committee Members,

I would like to advise the Committee that Barnardos Australia agrees to Robyn Pierce, Coordinator of the tutoring program at our Canberra Centre, to undertake the research as proposed in the application to the Ethics Committee. In 1999 Robyn undertook research before for the University of Western Sydney to examine the effects of the tutoring program for the first six months of operation. Barnardos Australia works in partnership with other Universities and we are very pleased to have the partnership with the University of Canberra.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Voigt  
Chief Executive Officer