THE ROLE OF JOURNAL WRITING IN INITIATING REFLECTION ON PRACTICE OF TUTORS IN A COLLEGE LEARNING CENTRE

by

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We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

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Abstract

A discrepancy appears to exist between the value placed on reflective journal writing by the writers of journals and the value seen by educators of that same journal writing. In this study, I explored the journal writing of six tutors working in a learning centre at a two-year community college in western Canada. I examined: (1) tutors' perspectives on the journal writing task; (2) the content and reflectivity of tutors' journals; and, (3) the accuracy of the journals in representing tutor thinking initiated by the journal writing task.

The initial data collection for the study included observation of weekly in-service training sessions and examination of tutor journal entries. Tutors were interviewed about their perceptions of journal writing and their thinking around issues they wrote about in their journals. The tutor trainer was interviewed about his expectations of tutor journal writing, his reactions to tutors' journals and his perceptions of the journal writing task. After the initial data collection, the participants were given summaries of data collected in the initial phase. Tutors read the summaries and as a group discussed issues raised by the data. I interviewed the trainer about insights he had gained from the summaries.

Content choices and levels of reflectivity in the tutors' journals varied widely. Factors affecting the content and levels of reflection in the tutors' journals were affected by tutors' understanding of the journal writing task, their
motivation for journal writing, their feelings of vulnerability, their personal histories, their tutoring experience, their preference for writing as a mode of learning, and their purposes for writing journals. Most tutors perceived their journals as useful to them, but the tutor trainer regarded the journals as less useful. This difference in perception of the benefits of journal writing can be attributed, at least in part, to the differing levels of access of the trainer and the tutors to the benefits of journal writing. The trainer based his understanding of the benefits of journal writing on the journals themselves whereas the tutors were aware of benefits that were not apparent from studying the journals. Interviews with the tutors showed that tutors reflected more as a result of the journal writing task than was evident from their journals. The trainer's view of the reflection initiated by the journal writing task was obscured in tutors' journals due to the fact that tutors reported prior reflection, provided incomplete representation of their reflective thinking, made rhetorical choices which masked their levels of reflection, and continued to reflect after completion of journal entries.

Implications of the study for educators include the importance of a process approach to journal writing, the risks of assuming that journals provide an accurate picture of the reflection the task initiates, and factors for consideration in the construction of the prompt for journal writing.
Implications for researchers focus on the risks of assuming that journals provide an accurate measure of the benefits of the journal writing task. Collaboration with journal writers is seen as essential for any such measure to be achieved.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

In 1993, I began developing a learning centre for a two-year community college in western Canada. The purpose of the learning centre was to assist students registered in courses across the college with reading, writing, word processing, math and study skills which they needed to be successful in their courses.

Students were referred to the learning centre by their course instructors. Each student then met with me; we did needs assessment and developed a learning plan which utilized the resources of the learning centre. I assigned students a tutor to assist them in carrying out that plan. The students or their tutors came back to me for further assistance as needed.

Part of my job was to train the staff and peer tutors. The training involved 12 hours of pre-service training designed to give tutors the basics needed to start work. This was augmented by hour-long weekly in-service training sessions. I have described the learning centre model and tutor training in more detail elsewhere (Robinson, 1994).

In the second semester of the centre’s operation, I began to require peer tutors working in the centre to complete weekly journals reflecting on their tutoring practice. I did so in the belief that reflection on practice would encourage tutors to learn from their experiences and increase their competence.
Like many teacher educators, and educators in general, I was influenced by the work of Schon (1983) who emphasized the learning potential of reflection on practice. I was also following a current trend favouring action research as a mode of inquiry aimed at improving practice (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). My background in adult education led me to believe that adult learners are capable people who can and should be active partners in developing their own learning opportunities. Making use of experience is a crucial aspect of adult learning. My ten years of experience as both a writer and an English as a Second Language (ESL) writing teacher had also led me to believe that writing aids thinking and critical reflection. I approached my own teaching from the perspective that theory and experience work jointly to inform practice.

Beyond these philosophical reasons, practical considerations contributed to my decision. I had very limited time for the pre-service training of tutors. As a result, I believed that the training of tutors needed to be highly practical. Particularly because the learning centre was new, I had little evidence on which to base decisions about what practical training was needed. I regarded journal writing as providing me with data for needs assessment as well as helping tutors tackle issues which were pertinent to their tutoring work. I was also concerned to create within the learning centre the atmosphere of a learning community in which everyone, students, tutors and faculty members, learned together.
When I began to receive weekly journals from the three tutors I had working for me, I was greatly disappointed. Their journals appeared to be nothing more than superficial logs of their activities during the week. I encouraged the tutors to make journals more reflective by discussing the purpose of journal writing, by modelling reflective journal writing based on my own work in the learning centre, by asking tutors to focus on only one or two tutoring sessions each week and by giving feedback on their journals which encouraged reflection. All my efforts seemed to have little lasting effect.

I looked to the literature for some answers but found little literature focusing on tutor training and journal writing. As a result, I reviewed some of the literature on journal writing in teacher education. I found much optimism about journal writing as a reflective tool (Wellington, 1991; Robinson-Armstrong, 1991; Surbeck, Park Han, & Moyer, 1991), but a number of writers expressed concern about the results of journal writing in teacher training (Anderson, 1993; Ho & Richards, 1993). These teacher educators had examined journals of teachers-in-training and found that there was little evidence of reflection in those journals. I began to question whether journal writing was good in theory but for some reason not useful in practice. I was concerned that the tutors were spending time on what appeared to be an unproductive activity, but I continued to require tutor journals until the end of the year.
At the end of the year, I interviewed the tutors individually about their journal writing experiences in an attempt to understand the factors which had led to the journals' lack of effectiveness. Much to my surprise, all three tutors reported that they had found journal writing a very useful experience. They felt that they had learned a great deal about tutoring in the process of writing their journals and that it had positively affected their tutoring practice. The discrepancy between my perceptions of the lack of usefulness of the tutors' journals and the tutors' perceptions of the usefulness of journal writing led me to undertaking the current study.

Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of the present study was to explore the perspectives on journal writing of tutors working in the learning centre. Three questions were used to guide the research:

1. How do tutors perceive the journal writing task?
2. What do tutors write about?
3. How accurately do tutors' journals represent the thinking initiated by the journal writing task?

The perspectives of tutors on their journals and their journal writing would have implications for the future use of journals in the context of the learning centre. The study would also have implications for how journal writing should be studied by researchers.
The study, based on interviews, tutor journals, observations of in-service training sessions and training documents, describes both tutor journals and the thinking tutors reported they had done in relation to their journal writing during a one-semester period. Six tutors participated in the study including one staff tutor and five peer tutors. The tutor trainer was also interviewed with the aim of understanding his perspectives on the journals he received and his efforts to elicit useful tutor journal writing.

Definition of Terms

This section defines terms as they are used in the study. A tutor is someone engaged in assisting a college student with academic skills needed for successful completion of a college course or courses. Tutors in the study were of two kinds: peer tutors, who were academically successful full-time college students working part-time as tutors in the learning centre, and a staff tutor, a unionized employee of the college who had some teacher training and experience. All tutors worked under the supervision of a college faculty member who was the centre’s Director. This faculty member was responsible for tutor training, needs analysis and program planning for students, and development of centre policies and procedures. For the purposes of this study, the Director will be referred to as the tutor trainer. Students were referred by an instructor in the college to the learning centre for assistance because of weakness in one or more of their academic skills.
Instructor refers to a college faculty member outside the learning centre. These instructors taught academic, applied or developmental courses in the college.

Reflection is used as defined by Lucas (1991). He defines reflection as "systematic inquiry into one's own practice to improve that practice and to deepen one's understanding of it" (cited in McIntyre, 1993, p. 42-43). Journals are unstructured reflective writing done by tutors about their tutoring practices.

Significance of the Study

Practical Significance

I hoped the research would have practical significance, both for participants in the study and for tutor and teacher trainers.

I hoped that the research process would be beneficial to the participants in a number of ways. First, I felt that the interview process would improve tutors' understanding of constraining factors in their journal writing and thereby relieve them of feelings of inadequacy engendered by trainer efforts to elicit more reflection on their practice in journals. Second, I was hopeful that by discussing their thinking around journal writing issues, tutors would reflect more on their practice with a resulting improvement of their understanding of tutoring. Finally, I felt that participation in the study would give them an introduction to academic research. The peer tutors were good students who I assumed
would be intending to go on to university and graduate-level studies in the future.

From studying the perspectives of tutors toward journal writing in the learning centre, I hoped that faculty involved in tutor training in the centre would learn how to use journal writing more effectively as an in-service training tool in the future. I also felt that the implications of the perspectives of the tutors could assist teacher educators in approaching journal writing when using it to encourage reflective practice of teachers-in-training. Although in-service tutor training is somewhat different from pre-service training of teachers, I felt that there were sufficient parallels that these implications would be useful in that context.

**Significance to Research**

Although research into journal writing typically regards it as part of the reflective process, I had seen evidence (Anderson, 1993; Ho & Richards, 1993) that researchers were examining journals as products in order to assess their contribution to reflection. I suspected, from my short experience with journal writing, that the assumption that an analysis of journals leads to an understanding of the reflection on practice they initiated was erroneous. I hoped that my research would clarify difficulties involved in examining journals for such analysis. I was concerned that research based on journals as products could discourage practitioners from using journal writing in training tutors and
teachers. An examination of tutor perspectives might contribute to a better understanding of journal writing within the reflective process. I also hoped the study would help to establish a literature on the use of journal writing in tutor training.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter One introduces the thesis. Chapter Two reviews literature related to the study. Chapter Three describes the research methodology and the findings of the study. Chapter Four links findings of the study to findings of other researchers and suggests implications of the study.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The dearth of research on reflective practice and journal writing in tutor training led me to turn to a cognate field for an understanding of the issues of reflection on practice and journal writing. Like Mann (1994), I turned to the field of teacher education.

The similarities between teacher education and tutor training are many. The trainees are typically young college students engaged in early attempts to facilitate learning. In working in their new role, they are facing many similar issues such as time management, interpersonal relations, assessment and teaching strategies. They are often involved in other concurrent training, and their work with students is supervised by trainers.

In this chapter, I explore findings from teacher education research about reflection on practice. I then examine the potential of writing as a learning tool. The chapter ends with an examination of issues around journal writing in teacher education research.

Reflection in Teacher Education

Teaching student teachers to reflect on their practice is a current trend in teacher education programs. Researchers (e.g. Hatton & Smith, 1995; Bartlett, 1990; Bolin, 1988; Copeland, Birmingham, De La Cruz, & Lewin, 1993; Ho & Richards,
1993) ascribe to Dewey (1933) the idea that reflection is crucial to the ability to learn from experience. The current interest in reflective teaching, however, was sparked by Schon (1983) who asserted that a key professional attribute was the ability to reflect on professional actions. Since the publication of Schon's seminal 1983 work *The Reflective Practitioner*, reflection in various forms has been the focus of a large body of literature in teacher education and has become a goal of many teacher education programs (Valli, 1993).

This trend in teacher education has been prompted by a number of factors. First, reflective teaching has been seen by some teacher educators as a way of helping students relate theory to practice (Jarvis, 1992; Pape & Smith, 1991). There has also been growing teacher disenchantment with theoretical assertions "proven" in studies which appear to have little in common with real teaching and learning situations (Eisner, 1988); this has been associated with the move in social science away from logical positivism to the view that educational phenomena are socially constructed (Tom, 1985). Another reason that teacher educators are teaching their students to reflect and to regard learning and teaching as a critical process is that it enables teacher educators to model the teaching behaviours they hope prospective teachers will employ in their own classrooms (Anderson, 1993).

The ongoing efforts of practitioners and academics to have teaching recognized as a profession is another major reason for
the interest in reflection. In part, reflection is seen as a reaction to the increasing tendency of educational bureaucracies to regard teachers as technicians who should have little control over the goals and contexts of education. Researchers see reflective teaching as a way of teachers gaining legitimacy in taking control of the goals and means of education. Many teacher educators (Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Smyth, 1989; Wellington, 1991), following Freire (1970), regard teaching reflection as a liberatory pedagogy leading to the empowerment of teachers.

Arenas of the Problematic

Not surprisingly, this range of purposes for reflective practice leads to similarly varied understandings of the things about which teachers and prospective teachers should learn to reflect. Tom (1985) identified what he called "arenas of the problematic". Following Habermas (1973) and Van Manen (1977), many researchers (LaBoskey, 1993; Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Hatton & Smith, 1995) have accepted three arenas or areas for reflection by teachers. The definition of these areas varies but there are crucial similarities among the conceptions.

The first level has been called the technical level (Hatton & Smith, 1995), the practical/technical level (LaBoskey, 1993) and technical/rationality (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). This level focuses on the means of teaching and learning. It problematizes the techniques and approaches of teaching and the identification of processes which lead to
specific learning outcomes (Bolin, 1988). At this level, the ends or goals of education are regarded as given.

The second level has been referred to as the practical level (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Zeichner & Liston, 1987), the social/political level (LaBoskey, 1993), and the political/ethical level (Tom, 1985). This level problematizes not only the means of teaching but also its goals. Zeichner and Liston describe the problem at this level as "one of explicating and clarifying the assumptions and predispositions underlying practical affairs and assessing the educational consequences toward which an action leads" (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, p. 24). Teachers are engaged in value judgements (Zeichner & Liston, 1987) and in relating theory to practice. They question assumptions about the goals of education.

The third level, which has been called critical reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Zeichner & Liston, 1987), the moral/ethical level (LaBoskey, 1993) and the societal level (Tom, 1985), problematizes the means and goals of education by examining moral and ethical criteria as well as the wider socio-historical and politico-cultural contexts of education. At this level, teachers reflect about the effects of activities, experience and goals on the achievement of social justice. Many theorists (e.g. Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Van Manen, 1977; Tom, 1985; Smyth, 1989) regard these three levels as in hierarchical relationship and believe this third level should be the goal of teaching teachers to reflect.
Others, however, question this position. Recent studies by Valli (1993), LaBoskey (1993), Pultorak (1993) and Hatton and Smith (1995) suggest that all three levels are equally important to the development of reflective teachers. LaBoskey (1993) argues that conception of the three arenas as levels in hierarchical relationship "devalues the practical", and that they should be regarded as "potential foci or content of reflection rather than levels" (p. 26). A further contribution to the position that critical reflection need not be the sole focus of teacher education programs is the difficulty teacher educators have had in engaging pre-service and in-service teachers in the higher levels of reflection (Wedman & Martin, 1986; Hatton & Smith, 1995). These studies suggest that progression through the three levels is developmental; one level must be achieved before progression to higher levels is possible.

Reflective Teaching Defined

These differing positions on the value and viability of engendering teacher reflection in different arenas of the problematic are echoed in researchers' attempts to define reflective teaching. Bartlett (1990) identified within the literature two vastly differing positions on how reflective teaching should be defined. He noted that Cruickshank and Applegate (1981) define reflective teaching as teachers thinking about what happens in the classroom and alternative means of achieving their goals. Zeichner and Liston (1985;
cited in Bartlett, 1990), on the other hand, define the reflective teacher as "one who assesses the origins, purposes and consequences of his or her work at all levels" (p. 202). These definitions are dependent upon the positions of the respective researchers toward appropriate arenas of the problematic.

Lucas (1991; cited in McIntyre, 1993) has provided a more general definition of reflection which avoids commitment to a particular view of appropriate arenas of the problematic. He defines reflection as "systematic inquiry into one's own practice to improve that practice and to deepen one's understanding of it" (p. 42-43). Lucas' definition neither requires nor precludes a focus on any particular arena of the problematic. The strength of Lucas' definition is that it leaves the question of arenas of the problematic open but focuses on a number of key aspects of reflection. First, following Dewey (1933), reflection is a process of systematic inquiry, not random musings. Second, reflection is focused on the reflector's practice but could include examining both (a) the socio-historical and politico-cultural influences on that practice, and (b) the moral and ethical ramifications of that practice. Third, reflection leads to both action and knowledge. Outcomes of both action and knowledge are seen as under the reflector's control.

A more recent definition of reflection by Hatton and Smith (1995) asserts that reflection is "deliberative thinking about
action with a view to its improvement" (p. 40). This definition, although wisely avoiding attachment to particular arenas of the problematic, does not attain the power of Lucas' definition in that it fails to acknowledge the central role of the reflector. A strength of the Hatton and Smith definition is its focus on "deliberative thinking" as opposed to Lucas' "systematic inquiry". Much of the reflection practised in teacher education programs is more accurately described as "deliberative thinking". Deliberative thinking can include systematic inquiry but does not preclude less structured forms of thinking. These definitions contribute to our understanding of reflection.

One problematic issue for researchers and teacher educators is how a reflective teacher can be identified. Hatton and Smith (1995) assert that there is "a considerable challenge to develop means for gathering and analyzing data so that evidence shows unequivocally that reflection has taken place" (p. 39). Copeland et al. (1993) suggest that "reflective practice in teaching is manifested as a stance toward inquiry" (p. 349). Reflection is a highly personal, often internal process, that cannot be measured easily in behavioral terms. Copeland et al. (1993) assert "it is the thought behind the actions of teaching, not the actions themselves, that is crucial to reflection" (p. 354). Thus, although skills of reflective teaching may be measurable, the inclination to use them is a result of attitude rather than skill.
LaBoskey (1993) points out that Dewey's stages of reflection--problem definition, means/ends analysis and generalization--fail because of their over-emphasis on logical thinking. She believes that attitudes suggested by Dewey of open-mindedness, responsibility and whole-heartedness are more crucial to the reflective process than any specific steps of reflection. She agrees with Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) that reflection is a complex process which involves interaction between cognition and feelings.

Factors Affecting Successful Implementation of Reflective Teacher Education

Factors affecting successful implementation of reflective teacher programs can be grouped into three areas: individual student differences, teacher training programs and school culture.

Individual Student Differences

Teachers-in-training have been found to react variously to attempts to teach them reflectivity. One cause of these varied reactions has been attributed to their range of previous experience or life history (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985a; LaBoskey, 1993; Zulich, Bean, and Herrick, 1992; Freeman, 1993). Students come to pre-service education with varied experiences of teaching and learning and various pre-conceptions of what it means to be a teacher.

Zeichner (1987) notes that there is evidence in the literature that reflective teaching programs "are more
frequently successful with those students who are already reflective and less successful and more frequently criticized by those students who are not predisposed to reflect about their teaching" (p. 573). LaBoskey (1993) grouped incoming students to a teacher education program in "Alert Novice" and "Common-sense Thinker" categories. Alert Novices wrote more reflectively than Common-sense Thinkers. Differences between the two groups included levels of cognitive development, strength of prior beliefs, impact of emotions, view of learning as short or long term, orientation to self or students, conception of the teacher role, awareness of a need to learn and locus of motivation.

Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education programs have had a number of difficulties in implementing reflective teacher education. A major problem seems to be the lack of comprehensiveness of many reflective programs (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Encouragement of teacher reflection is often localized in one or a few courses; other courses in the program do not take a reflective approach. A comprehensive approach which supports reflection in all aspects of teacher education is recommended (Valli, 1993; Hatton & Smith, 1995). Another concern with comprehensiveness is a perceived lack of commitment to the reflective approach by some program staff. This problem has been noted with some practicum supervisors (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). These supervisors are typically
graduate students who work in that capacity temporarily and have heavy workloads.

The role of the teacher educator in reflective teacher education has been seen as that of a facilitator (Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Calderhead & Gates, 1993) and a mentor (McAlpine, 1992). Calderhead and Gates (1993) suggest that "a culture of collaboration" (p. 5) may be needed in teacher education if student teachers are to become reflective teachers. Calderhead and Gates (1993) also note that the traditional role of staff in teacher education programs, that of assessor and gatekeeper, may make it difficult for program staff to take a facilitative role.

In shifting to teacher education which focuses on reflective teaching, program staff need to learn new skills and develop new understandings of the reflective process. However, this has not proven to be a simple task. One difficulty is the problem of assessing the effectiveness of teaching reflection. Copeland et al. (1993) assert, "An examination of the literature reveals a general assumption that reflection in professional behavior is desirable but very little guidance as to how confidently to determine that reflective behavior actually exists" (p. 348). This difficulty in assessing the effectiveness of techniques is explained by Boud et al. (1985):

...only learners themselves can learn and only they can reflect on their own experiences. Teachers can intervene in various ways to assist, but they only have access to
individuals' thoughts and feelings through what individuals choose to reveal about themselves. At this basic level the learner is in total control. (p. 11)

Thus, teacher educators are not only seeking new strategies for teaching but they are also experiencing difficulty in assessing the efficacy of the strategies they develop. The literature is replete with attempts by teacher educators to assess the usefulness of specific strategies in prompting a reflective approach to teaching (e.g. Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Freeman, 1993; Hoover, 1994; Ho & Richards, 1993). Some teacher educators attribute their limited success with specific techniques to failure to provide effective instruction in reflection and optimal reflective tasks (Ho & Richards, 1993; Hoover, 1994).

A final factor worthy of note is the importance of time in learning to reflect (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Wedman, Martin, & Mahlios, 1990; Surbeck, Park Han, & Moyer, 1991). Reflection takes time, but student teachers often lack time for reflection. As Wedman et al. (1990) note, "A person needs time for reflection and the necessary time is usually not available during initial phases of classroom teaching" (p. 23). Furthermore, the development of reflective skills and a reflective stance takes time and programs often do not have the duration required to make significant changes in teachers' reflectivity (Ho & Richards, 1993).
School Culture

School culture has been seen as a conservative force which often discourages teachers-in-training from reflecting, particularly on the goals of education (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Wedman et al., 1990; Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Zulich et al., 1992). As Wedman et al. (1990) note, "Clearly it is difficult to develop a reflective teacher in a non-reflective environment" (p. 17). Calderhead & Gates (1993) suggest that "reflective practice requires a supportive environment" (p. 5). Practicum and other early teaching experiences typically work against efforts to foster reflectivity in novice teachers.

Strategies Used in Reflective Teaching Programs

Hatton & Smith (1995) identify four broad strategies which are claimed to promote reflection: action research projects; case studies and ethnographic studies; microteaching and other supervised practicum experiences; and, structured curriculum tasks. They note that "writing tasks are often employed" (p. 36), and they suggest the most frequently used writing task is journal writing.

Writing to Learn

Writing has been acknowledged as a powerful learning tool (Emig, 1977; Yinger & Clark, 1981; Hoover, 1994). Emig (1977), based on the works of Vygotsky, Bruner and Britton, has identified four key parallels between successful learning strategies and the writing process. According to Emig, one
reason that writing is such a powerful learning tool is that it is "multi-representational and integrative" (p. 124). It incorporates three modes of representation posited by Bruner (1966; cited in Emig, 1977): the enactive mode (doing), the ikonic mode (picturing) and the symbolic mode (representing with symbolic code). Representing information in more than one mode has been found to "create richer memories and representations than through either mode of representation (code) alone" (Yinger & Clark, 1981, p. 4).

Writing is also a successful learning strategy in that it provides a record of the writer's thinking. This record is useful both during the writing process and after the writing is complete. During the writing process, ideas are reviewed and evaluated, potentially leading to further development of those ideas. Eisner (1988) suggests, "the act of representation ... provides the occasion for discovery" (p. 16). After the writing is complete, the written product provides a resource for reading and further thinking (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

The third way that writing is seen by Emig as sharing the characteristics of learning is that writing develops awareness of the connections between ideas. Lexical, syntactic and rhetorical devices are used to establish explicit relationships between ideas. Writing allows the reader to draw on "relevant knowledge and experience as preparation for new learning..., reformulating or extending existing knowledge" (Hoover, 1994, p. 84).
Finally, Emig suggests that writing, like successful learning, is active, engaged and personal. Writers actively negotiate meaning, beginning with their current understandings and progressing at a speed appropriate for them.

The acknowledged strengths of writing as a learning tool have encouraged many teacher educators to utilize writing tasks to develop student teachers' reflective thinking skills (e.g. Smyth, 1989; Hoover, 1994; Yinger & Clark, 1987; Anderson, 1993; Robinson-Armstrong, 1991). Journal writing has been used extensively in reflective teaching programs; the expressive nature of journal writing takes advantage of the benefits of "writing as a mode of learning" (Emig, 1977).

Journal Writing in Teaching Reflective Practice

Purposes of Journal Writing

Journal writing has been used in the context of teaching reflective practice with three main goals: (1) as a vehicle for reflection; (2) as a mode of communication; and, (3) as a research tool.

Journal writing is widely accepted as a useful task for encouraging reflection among teachers-in-training (e.g. Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Gipe & Richards, 1992; Zulich et al., 1992; Jarvis, 1992; Bolin, 1988). Zeichner and Liston (1987) suggest that journal writing provides "student teachers with a vehicle for systematic reflection on their development as teachers and on their actions in classroom and work contexts" (p. 33). Implied in Zeichner & Liston's assertion is the role
of journal writing in helping student teachers make connections between things. One frequently cited connection facilitated by journal writing is the connection between theoretical knowledge and teaching practice (e.g. Ho & Richards, 1993; Jarvis, 1992; Yinger & Clark, 1981; Wedman & Martin, 1986). Other connections facilitated by journal writing include connections between self-knowledge, practical experience and teaching and learning situations (Yinger & Clark, 1981), connections between self and institution (Wedman & Martin, 1986), connections between daily routines and teaching effectiveness (Wedman & Martin, 1986), and connections between life experience and teaching (Anderson, 1993). By giving prospective teachers practice in making these connections, journal writing is seen to improve their thinking skills and to stimulate "conceptualization and reconceptualization" (Carswell, 1988, p. 12) of ideas about teaching.

Another benefit of journal writing cited in the literature is its role in individualizing instruction (Robinson-Armstrong, 1991; Fulwiler, 1980). Not only can prospective teachers work with ideas at their own level of understanding, but they can also explore those ideas at their own pace. Students can explore the relationship between their own learning and their daily lives (Robinson-Armstrong, 1991) and personal histories (Zulich et al., 1992). Through journal writing they can develop their own voice (Wedman et al., 1989; cited in Hatton & Smith, 1995) and a personal professional stance (McAlpine, 1992).
Journal writing is also seen to provide an opportunity for "attaining new depths of personal understanding which may in turn facilitate increased personal development" (Wedman & Martin, 1986, p. 69). Robinson-Armstrong (1991) suggests that journal writing can be "therapeutic" as it provides an opportunity for students "to explore their emotions and attitudes" (p. 8). McAlpine (1992) asserts that this exploration of emotions can serve a "cathartic" function (p. 24).

Journal writing is valued as a communication tool, primarily between teacher and students, and secondarily between students and other students. Bolin (1988) posits that "journals serve as the supervisor's link to the classroom" (p. 50). Zeichner and Liston (1987) assert that journals are intended to furnish instructors "with information about the ways in which their students think about their teaching and about their development as teachers, with information about classroom, school, and community contexts" (p. 33). Zulich et al. (1992) note that they used journal entries to gain access to students' personal biographies and progress in the program. In this way, journals become an important needs assessment tool. The communication achieved through journal writing between students and instructors has been seen as improving their rapport (Carswell, 1988), particularly when instructors provide extensive feedback on journals or when dialogue journals are used. When journals are shared, they have also been found to
"stimulate more productive class discussions" (Porter, Goldstein, Leatherman, & Conrad, 1990, p. 235) and "create interaction beyond the classroom, both between teacher and student, and among students" (Porter et al., 1990, p.236).

Journals have been used as a research tool both for examining teacher thinking and for assessing the efficacy of strategies and programs aimed at encouraging reflective practice. Yinger and Clark (1985) found that journals could be a useful tool for examining teacher thinking. They wrote, "personal documents in general, and journals in particular, can be a window through which to view some of the workings of the human mind" (p. 27). They used journals to help them understand teacher thinking around lesson planning. Mann (1994) used journals as a window to understanding factors impeding the development of peer tutors-in-training. Surbeck et al. (1991) used journals as a means to understanding how students "typically organize their thinking" (p.25).

Journals have also been used extensively as a means of assessing the effectiveness of teaching strategies and programs aimed at encouraging reflective teaching (Gipe & Richards, 1992). Bolin (1988) suggests that journals are useful "in assessing how well our students meet personal and program goals" (p. 51).

**Approaches to Journal Writing**

Journals are referred to in the literature with a variety of terms. Terms such as "learning logs" (Porter et al., 1990),
"learning diaries" (Jarvis, 1992) and "learning records" (Jarvis, 1992) appear to be interchangeable with the term journal. There is some evidence that particular terms are chosen by educators for the impressions they create for journal writers (Jarvis, 1992; Carswell, 1988). The term "dialogue journal" (Bolin, 1988; Newman, 1988; Zulich et al., 1992) is also used; the dialogue aspect of these journals typically relates to the quality and quantity of feedback given by instructors and others to students' journal writing. However, the feedback given by many who describe the task as simply journal writing appears to be similar to that of proponents of dialogue journals. Specific types of journals which focus on particular aspects of the student teacher experience are also mentioned in the literature: practicum journals (Wedman & Martin, 1986); visitation journals (Pultorak, 1993); and, academic journals (Robinson-Armstrong, 1991).

Besides changes in name and focus, journal assignments also vary according to frequency of writing and according to degree of structure in the task. Journals are assigned on various time frames including daily journals, bi-daily journals, weekly journals, bi-weekly journals and journals timed in relation to other course assignments. Journals are also given varying degrees of structure. Many teacher educators assign unstructured journals in which students may write about any experiences or insights they gain in teaching and learning (e.g. Carswell, 1988; Gipe & Richards, 1992; Anderson, 1993).
Such unstructured journals are often presented with a list of questions aimed at helping students understand the nature of the journal writing task (e.g. Ho & Richards, 1993). Other journals are more structured; educators pose specific issues to be explored in each journal (e.g. Pape & Smith, 1991), or they incorporate specific activities into each journal entry (e.g. Yinger & Clark, 1981).

Feedback given on journal writing by supervisors varies in quantity and quality; however, generally feedback focuses on the content rather than the form of student writing (e.g. Anderson, 1993). Written feedback on journals can vary from a few written comments on what students have written to extensive written feedback equalling the original journal in length. Most educators use at least some of the following strategies in giving students feedback; they provide: (1) positive reinforcement and encouragement (e.g. Anderson, 1993; Jarvis, 1992); (2) questions designed to encourage students to probe issues more deeply (e.g. Pape & Smith, 1991; Newman, 1988); (3) models of higher level thinking in relation to issues discussed by the journal writer (e.g. McAlpine, 1992; Newman, 1988); and, (4) challenge to student assumptions (e.g. McAlpine, 1992; Newman, 1988). Some instructors also use journals in the classroom by sharing excerpts from student journals and by responding to common concerns (e.g. Jarvis, 1992).

Problems with Journal Writing

Despite the laudable theoretical benefits of journal
writing, implementation of journals in teacher education programs has been problematic. Studies suggest a number of difficulties which appear to reduce the effectiveness of journal writing as a reflective tool. Some of these difficulties echo the problems experienced in encouraging reflective teaching as a whole whereas others appear to be particularly problematic with journal writing.

As in reflective teaching in general, teacher educators have had difficulty teaching student teachers to reflect deeply in journals. Jarvis (1992) found that many students simply made lists of classroom activities in their journals. Anderson (1993) attempts to quantify the problem:

At least one third of the journals which I have read in the last 5 years have been mostly summaries of assigned readings or in-class activities and with no evidence of analysis, synthesis, deliberation, or reflection. (p. 307)

Other studies have found that many students who reflect in their journals limit those reflections to the means of teaching (Gipe & Richards, 1992; Wedman & Martin, 1986), what has been called a technocratic orientation (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Furthermore, teacher educators have been unsuccessful in increasing student reflection in journals over time (Pape & Smith, 1991; Ho & Richards, 1993).

It appears that journal writing, like other efforts to improve reflectivity, does not work for some students. Newman (1988) notes that many students have no experience with the
genre of journal writing. This is borne out by Carswell (1988) who cites extensive research showing that most writing done by students in school and university "is done in a formal transactional mode which is produced for the purpose of grading" (p. 105). Zeichner & Liston (1987) note that writing is not the preferred reflective mode of some students. Fulwiler (1982; cited in Carswell, 1988) suggests that some students prefer verbalizing to writing their reflections. LaBoskey's study (1993) which identified differences in orientation between reflective and non-reflective groups of students may also suggest factors affecting levels of reflectivity evidenced in the journals of some students. Non-reflective students, whom she called "Common-sense Thinkers", seemed "to be unable to engage in the cognitive process of reflective thinking" or they "seemed to have beliefs, values, attitudes or emotions that prevented or distorted the reflective process" (p. 30). They focused on "how to" and "what works" questions as opposed to "why" questions (p. 30). The "impetus" for "acts of reflection" (p. 31) by these students was from external sources. She also found that some of these students were "overwhelmed and distracted" by other concerns.

The issue of time constraints seems to affect journal writing as it does reflective activity in general. One of Gipe and Richards' (1992) students summed it up, "I do reflect. But, I do it naturally... like in the shower or driving or going to sleep. You've got to have time to write and I'm working 32
Some problems seem to be more specifically associated with journal writing than with other reflective tasks. One such problem is that some students make inappropriate comments in journals that they do not make in other program forums. Anderson (1993) found that some students expressed "blatant bigotry" (p. 306) and made personal attacks on other students. Jarvis (1992) found that many students used journals to make comments which she regarded as competitive. These comments denigrated the work of other students in the class. Jarvis suggests that this competitiveness interferes with some individuals' abilities to reflect.

Some students seem to experience resistance to journal writing. One cause of this may be over-use of the journal writing task, a point made by one of Anderson's (1993) students who reported, "We have been journaled to death" (p. 306). This would suggest that instructors in reflective teaching programs need to coordinate their use of common reflective techniques. Another factor which could play a role in this resistance has been suggested by Jarvis (1992). She suggests that a tension is created by the journal writing task because students are asked to create "a record of personal relevance" and yet that same record is being read by their instructor (p. 135).

Jarvis' comment raises an important problem with journal writing--it is a threatening task. Bolin (1988) asserts, "student journals may not be as powerful a tool for self-
revelation as a personal diary or journal since the journal is required and students know that a College Supervisor will read and respond to their entries" (p.50). Hatton & Smith (1995) note that journal writing may increase feelings of vulnerability in students because of the risk of "exposing one's perceptions and beliefs to others" (p. 37). They see this as particularly problematic "if the locus of control is not seen to be with the individual, who may tend to self-blame for any perceived weaknesses uncovered through reflection" (p. 37). Lather (1991; cited in Middleton, 1993) suggests that "an intended liberatory pedagogy might function as part of the technology of surveillance and normalization" (p. 178). Whether or not journal writing is used by teacher educators with the intention of carrying out surveillance, students may perceive surveillance as the educators' goal. One way in which students respond to the threat of journal writing is by writing to please the teacher (Jarvis, 1992; Anderson, 1993; Newman, 1988) rather than for their own purposes.

The issue of threat is exacerbated by the use of journals in the evaluation of student teachers. Hatton and Smith (1995) question "the veracity and ethics of journal writing which is to be assessed" (p. 36). Newman (1988) reports, "The problem is for me to help those who are writing for me as teacher-as-examiner to assume some real purpose of their own" in writing their journals (p. 151). Anderson (1993) questions whether journals should be graded. He notes that when he has graded
journals, students who are prolific but relatively unreflective have complained about the grades he has given them. On the other hand, he finds "when there is no attempt at differentiation, there is an observable decrease in the quantity and quality of the entries of all students" (p. 307). Newman’s point suggests that students must be helped to find internal motivation for journal writing to replace the external motivation of grades.

**Analysis of Reflection in Journals**

The thinking evidenced in student journals has been analyzed for reflectivity in a number of ways. One common approach is to assess reflective thinking in journals according to arenas of the problematic. Wedman and Martin (1986) and Pultorak (1993) classify thought units in journals according to Van Manen’s three levels of reflectivity: technical, practical and critical.

Another approach is to categorize thought units in journals as either routine or reflective (Wedman et al., 1990). These terms are based on the work of Dewey (1933) who posited that routine practice is the result of impulse, tradition and authority whereas reflective practice involves "active, persistent, and careful consideration of teaching beliefs and practices and the possible consequences which may result from them" (Wedman et al., 1990, p. 16). Thus, routine writing reports on actions or summarizes theoretical stances whereas reflective writing explores actions or theoretical issues.
Analysis of thought units as routine or reflective is often used in conjunction with content categories.

Surbeck et al. (1991) take a different approach. They identify a framework of categories and sub-categories in student journals. They do not explicitly focus on the issue of reflective and non-reflective categories, but identify patterns of reflective thought. Their three categories are reaction, elaboration and contemplation. The reaction category includes reporting and expressing feelings. The elaboration category includes more detailed reporting as well as comparative and generalized elaboration. The contemplation category has three foci: personal, professional and social/ethical. These categories are sequential in the sense that for a thought unit to be put in the contemplation category, it must be preceded by reaction and elaboration. Surbeck et al. found that the sequence was at least partially developed in most journal entries.

Journals as Evidence of Reflective Thinking

When journals are assessed for reflective thinking the results tend to be discouraging. Surbeck et al. (1991) found that few of their students’ journals included the contemplation category. Likewise, Wedman and Martin (1986) found that all but one of the journal entries they examined exhibited only the low level of reflection characterized as technical reflection. Pultorak (1993) also found that most bi-weekly and visitation journals he examined were technical and practical in
orientation. Wedman et al. (1990) found most reflective thought units in journals in their study were technical in nature. Gipe and Richards (1992) found that in students' 15 journal entries, the number of reflective statements ranged from 4 to 42, with most students including fewer than 20 reflective statements in their 15 entries. In a case study of a practicum student she calls Lou, Bolin (1988) reported:

Out of 158 paragraphs, 111 are descriptions of what has happened with little analysis. Of the 47 paragraphs that are more reflective, most are brief statements of about seven lines each, dealing with feelings or concerns. Seldom does Lou explore issues thoughtfully or weigh alternatives. (p. 51)

Ho and Richards (1993) found that although there was wide variation in the levels of reflectivity and the content areas students reflected on in their program, only 3 of 10 students wrote reflective journals. Four were somewhat reflective and 3 wrote "in a largely non-reflective manner" (p. 20). They also noted that students showed no significant increase in reflectivity over time. Anderson (1993), in a more subjective appraisal of journal writing in his courses, concluded that although the journal writing of some students was reflective, as many as one third of his students showed no signs of reflectivity at all in their journals. This evidence must raise serious questions about the usefulness of journals as a reflective task.
Despite this negative evidence on the levels of reflection evidenced in journals, teacher educators continue to feel that journal writing is a useful task. Anderson (1993), after presenting a damning portrayal of the problems associated with journal writing, states, "I do not wish to suggest that journals do not have a valid pedagogical role to play in teacher education programs. I support the value of journals" (p. 307-308). Besides the fact that journals seem to work well for some students, Anderson presents no evidence to support his continuing allegiance to journal writing. Ho and Richards (1993) also imply that they will continue to use journal writing despite the fact that they found that journal writing "does not necessarily promote critical reflection" (p. 20). Their rationale is based on the value of journal writing as a communicative tool; they value its role in giving instructors access to the teaching and learning experiences of their students. Wedman and Martin (1986) take another approach. They regard the low level of reflective thinking in their students' journals as evidence that the questions they use to prompt journal writing need refinement, not that journal writing is an ineffective way of encouraging reflective thinking. They continue to assert that "the journal writing component of an inquiry-oriented student teaching curriculum provides a means for student teachers to reflect on and process teaching and schooling experiences" (p. 71). Surbeck et al. (1991), despite their findings of limited reflection in journals, assert,
"using journals... takes time but assists prospective teachers in becoming better thinkers who probe deeper into both professional literature and their own teaching/learning" (p. 27).

This allegiance to journal writing as a reflective task can be explained in a number of ways. Perhaps the theoretical benefits of journal writing are so convincing that educators persist in trying to develop approaches that can make them more productive despite repeated evidence of failure. They may, like Carswell (1988), "have an intuitive conviction that they [journals] are a useful device" (p. 107). Then again perhaps, like Ho and Richards (1993), teacher educators find the benefits of journal writing as a communication tool great enough to outweigh their seemingly limited capacity for engendering reflective thought. A further and less flattering possibility is that using journals allows educators to pay lip-service to teaching reflective practice with little effort and little class time required. Although all of these possibilities may be true for some educators, I believe that the main reason for the continued use of journal writing is the fact that educators assume that journals engender more reflective thinking than studies evidence.

Studies suggest that journals do not give evidence of all the reflective thinking they engender. Student evaluations of the journal writing task reported in the literature tend to be overwhelmingly positive. Surbeck et al. (1991) found that their
students regarded journal writing as a useful reflective and learning tool. Ho and Richards (1993) report that only 4% of their students found journal writing "not useful" while 71% found it "useful" and 25% found it "fairly useful" (p. 20). Jarvis (1992) also found that the majority of her students were very positive about the outcomes of journal writing. Carswell (1988) reports that all but two of his students found journal writing a positive experience. He notes, "the comments [on journal writing] were more positive than I expected" (p. 107).

Many researchers assert that journals cannot be assumed to accurately represent the thinking of journal writers (Powell, 1985; Gipe & Richards, 1992; Boud et al., 1985; Fulwiler, 1980; Jarvis, 1992; Yinger & Clark, 1981). Gipe & Richards (1992) suggest that this may be because of "personal preferences for privacy and individual choices for reflective modalities" (p. 55). Furthermore, the process of journal writing may initiate further thinking that does not appear in the journal (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Hatton & Smith (1995) assert, "many of the [journal] entries may be personal, reactive, emotive, and at the time of writing not at all reflective. However, those entries can provide ideal substance for later reflecting upon action" (p. 43).

The Need to Access Student Perspectives

The assumption of many teacher educators appears to be that although journal writing does not show much evidence of reflective thinking, there is a lot more reflection going on
than meets the eye. Copeland et al. (1993) assert, "we are now in danger of being drawn beyond our knowledge base to the employment of practices that are founded only in assumptions" (p. 347). I suggest that educators are using journal writing based on assumptions that journals are more useful than the extant evidence suggests. To clarify the validity of this assumption, we must approach journal writing from the perspective of journal writers. We must understand their perspectives on journal writing and the role it takes in their reflective processes. In this study I examine the perspectives on journal writing of journal writers, identifying both what they write about and what evidence of reflection exists in their journals as well as the role of their journal writing in their ongoing thinking about issues.
CHAPTER THREE
THE STUDY

In this chapter, I describe the research methodology and the findings of the study. First, I give an overview of the chapter and introduce the learning centre context and my entry into the field. I divide the rest of the chapter into seven sections. Sections One and Two describe the research design and the participants in the study. Sections Three, Four, Five and Six focus on answering the research questions. Section Seven describes the process and outcomes of the collaborative analysis utilized in the study.

My approach in the chapter is to draw on the perspectives of the tutors and trainer to tell the story of the use of journal writing in a college learning centre during a one semester period. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) assert that the educational importance of using narrative inquiry in educational research is that "it brings theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived" (p. 3). They suggest that those being studied need to be given the opportunity to tell their stories so that those stories gain "the authority and validity that the research story has long had" (p. 4). In this chapter, in telling the narrative of my research, I attempt to highlight the voices of participants.
The Context of the Study

The context for the study was a learning centre in a two-year community college in western Canada. The learning centre, which I had started a year and a half earlier, was aimed at assisting students registered in courses across the college to improve weak academic skills which were hindering their success in those courses. The learning centre was overseen by the developmental education department of the college, and the Director of the learning centre was a faculty member within that department. The learning centre was a converted classroom in the developmental education area of the college.

The students who attended the learning centre varied widely. They included recent high school graduates as well as older adults who had been out of school for some time. They included students who spoke English as their first language as well as students who spoke English as a second language. The students were enrolled in programs in all areas of the college: academic, applied and developmental. In the centre, the students worked on a range of skills, including: writing, reading, study skills, mathematics and word processing. The biggest demand, however, was for assistance with writing.

The learning centre had been in operation for only a year and a half prior to my undertaking this study. Up until that time, I had been the Director of the centre. When I took educational leave to work on my thesis, a new Director replaced me. Tom, the new Director, gave me permission to approach
learning centre staff about participating in the study. I begin by telling the story of my entry into the field.

Beginnings

Tom suggested I attend the year's first weekly staff meeting at the learning centre to ask tutors to participate in the study. I knew who would be there. They were all familiar, but I was approaching them in a different role--that of researcher, not Director and tutor trainer. Tom would be there, long time colleague. Krista and Felicia, peer tutors who had worked with me the year before, would be there. Ann, the staff tutor, had started working in the centre for me the previous January. Christopher would be there; he hadn't worked with me last year, but the year before I had hired him to teach word processing in the centre.

I arrived at the learning centre early; it was still only ten to nine. I got out my key and unlocked the door. Turning on the lights, I looked around what had been my workplace for a year and a half and was no longer. Most things were the same: the computers humming under the windows; the book shelves with their worn books on reading, writing and study skills; the black board with its fragments of thoughts; the tables and chairs awry, as abandoned last evening. Some things were different from memory. A new bulletin board was looking very smart with neatly ordered notices and announcements. Two fancy-looking computers behind a room divider crowded the tables and chairs more than ever.
People began to arrive. Ann came in, full of humour. She regaled me with the trials and tribulations of getting the centre going at the beginning of term. Krista arrived looking tired, full of the new courses she was taking. We began to set up a table for the meeting. Tom came in, file folder in hand. He asked me how long I needed in the meeting. Christopher arrived looking a little less confident than the others. Tom began the meeting; Felicia arrived in a flurry, waving to me as she sat down.

Tom began by talking about the purpose of staff meetings, to solve operational glitches and learn to do a better job. He asked the tutors what they had learned in their experience tutoring. The three women suggested some things: confidence, speaking skills, problem-solving skills, grammar and composition. Tom gave out a handout, titled "Staff Learning (The Development of Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes)" (M-Oct.12). The group worked part way through the handout, Tom frequently asking questions. The tutors participated actively, except for Christopher who mainly just spoke when asked a direct question. Tom pointed out that the handout could give tutors some ideas for journal writing. He gave out another handout, "Don’t Help Too Much (a strategy for working with writing assignments)" (M-Oct.12). He said, "Here’s some ideas; try them out and see what works for you" (M-Oct.12). Then the meeting moved on to operational issues: meeting times, computer orientation scheduling, and difficulties about sharing the
space with another program. Then Tom raised an issue tutors had identified in their journals—the problem of students not showing up for appointments. Tutors made suggestions of things they could do to resolve the problem. Tom then told the tutors that I was there to talk to them about my research and that he would turn the meeting over to me.

After Tom left, I explained the background to my research, and my purpose in doing it. I discussed the uses of the research and the time commitment it would entail on their parts. I tried not to let my keenness show because I did not want them to feel they would be letting me down if they did not agree to participate. They asked questions and I gave them the consent form. I told them they should think about it, but Ann signed hers right away and gave it back to me. Krista and Felicia followed suit. Christopher was busy putting papers away. He had a ten o'clock class; he had to run. We agreed that I would call him as he hustled out the door. I set up interview times with Felicia and Ann. I had to wait to set up a first interview with Krista; the centre was now open and one of her students had arrived for an appointment. Krista and her student were conferring quietly in one corner, huddled over a book.

That was the beginning of this semester-long study of the perspectives on journal writing of tutors working in the learning centre. Christopher did agree to participate in the study as did two other peer tutors, Paul and Billy, who were hired later in the semester.
Section One: Data Collection Strategies

The first phase of data collection for the study involved examining tutors' journals, interviewing the tutors and Tom about journal writing, and attending weekly staff meetings.

Tutor Journals

When tutors handed in their weekly journal entries to Tom, they made a copy of them and put them in my mailbox. On the day of my interview with them, I would go to the learning centre ahead of time and read their journals. I would note evidence of reflection and issues for discussion in the interviews.

The number of journal entries handed in by the students varied. Two tutors, Billy and Paul, were hired later than the others and as a result did fewer entries. Paul was in a car accident near the end of term and as a result handed in fewer again. Because of the few entries Paul handed in, I got one more journal from him at the beginning of the semester following the one under study. I received 4 journal entries from Paul, 5 from Billy, 6 from Felicia and 7 each from Christopher, Ann and Krista.

At my request, after Tom had written feedback on the journals he often photocopied them for me.

Tutor Interviews

My goal was to interview students two or three days after they had completed a journal entry. This was long enough after their journal writing to allow more reflection to have taken
place, but not so long that they would not remember their thinking prior to and during the writing process. Establishing interviews on that time frame, however, proved to be more difficult than I had anticipated. Besides working 10 to 15 hours per week in the learning centre, the tutors were full-time students. Busy times for tutors and busy times for students coincided, so it was difficult to schedule appointments. Furthermore, Tom was not strict about when tutors handed in their journals, so the journals came in at varied times. These factors made it impossible to schedule interviews strictly in relation to when journals were completed.

As a result, I interviewed tutors at a range of times in relation to their completion of journal entries. Although this did not provide the tidy data I had looked for, it did give me access to their thinking about their journals before, during and after writing. I did not, however, get accurate data on all three time periods for every journal they wrote. Sometimes I interviewed tutors the same day they wrote their journal entries; in those cases, little time had passed to allow for further reflection. At other times, I interviewed them a week or more after they had completed their entries. In those cases, I did not attempt to explore their thinking prior to journal writing.

I conducted "moderately scheduled interviews" (Gorden, 1975). In each interview, after an initial chat, I began by asking the tutor general questions potentially related to the
tutor's perspective on journal writing. Such issues included: their employment and educational backgrounds and goals; their current life situations both in and outside the college; their attitudes to tutoring, writing and problem-solving; interpersonal relationships in the centre; the feedback Tom gave them on their journals; and, their understandings of the journal writing task. We spent the first part of the interview discussing one or two such issues. We returned to most of these issues more than once over the period of the study.

After dealing with these general issues, we would shift our focus and begin to look at the journal. Typically, I would ask tutors to think back to writing the journal. I asked where they were and what else was going on at the time. I asked them about their writing process and whether they were interrupted during that process. This was primarily an attempt to help the tutors return to the time of writing the journals and thereby activate their memories of their thinking prior to and during the writing process. It also provided data for the study. I would then ask tutors to read through their journal entry and tell me about their thinking on the issues they wrote about. I particularly asked them to identify: (1) their thinking on the issues prior to focusing on writing their journal entry; (2) any new thinking they did while planning or writing the journal entry; and, (3) any further thinking they had done on the issues since writing their journals.

After working through the journal in this way, I would ask
tutors about their reasons for choosing to write about issues. We also occasionally returned to issues written about in previous journals to discuss any further thinking they had done about those issues.

The interviews ranged in length from 20 minutes to one hour. This variation depended on a number of factors: (1) the time tutors had available; (2) the amount of thinking they had done; (3) the number and type of general issue questions I asked; and, (4) how talkative the participant was. At times discussion of a journal issue would lead to wide-ranging discussions in which we both participated actively. At other times, tutors briefly reported their thinking and we left it at that. I interviewed each tutor following every time they handed in a journal entry. I audiotaped and later transcribed the interviews.

**Trainer Interviews**

I interviewed Tom, the tutor trainer, 6 times during the semester under study. Our interviews were typically about an hour long. I interviewed Tom with the goal of understanding his perspectives on the journals tutors handed in to him. In our moderately scheduled interviews (Gorden, 1975), we discussed Tom's purpose for assigning journal writing, the guidelines he gave tutors as the prompt for journal writing, his feedback on tutors' journals, the value of the journal writing tutors did, problems he encountered with tutor journal writing, and the implications of his experience using journals
for future use of journal writing in the learning centre. We spent part of every interview examining and discussing Tom's perception of the usefulness of individual tutor journal entries to the tutor's development. I also audiotaped and later transcribed these interviews.

Staff Meetings

The staff meetings were mainly geared toward tutor in-service training. Tom planned and chaired these meetings, often giving out handouts on aspects of tutoring and leading discussions of tutoring issues. The meetings were for one hour once a week. I attended the meetings as an observer and took notes on what people did and said.

I attended the meetings for a number of reasons. First, these meetings were the only time in the week that all centre staff were together. This gave me an opportunity to observe staff interactions. I believed interpersonal relations could affect journal writing. Second, I wanted to be aware of any discussion of journal writing that occurred in the group: Tom might give guidance or feedback on journal writing; tutors might comment on the journal writing experience; and, Tom might use the journals in choosing what to include in in-service training. Finally, I wanted to be aware of other training activities going on in order to recognize the impact of those activities on tutors' journal writing. I took notes during the meetings and collected handouts Tom gave the tutors.
Citation of Data Sources in the Thesis

In citing data from journals, interviews and staff meetings in the study, I have used notation such as "(J-K-Nov.3)". The first letter in the notation identifies the type of data source: "J" for journal entry, "I" for interview, and "M" for staff meeting. In the case of journals and interviews, there is a second letter in the notation which indicates the first initial of the journal writer or interviewee. The end of the notation is the date of the journal entry, interview or meeting. Thus, an interview with Billy on November 18 is identified by "(I-B-Nov.18)".

My Role in the Research

I began the research process with the naive intention of trying to study the perspectives of tutors on journal writing in their natural state. As an observer, I wanted to have as little impact on the data as possible. It soon became clear to me that being "a fly on the wall" was neither possible nor desirable (Roman & Apple, 1990, p. 47). First, I had a personal history with the majority of the participants in the study and with the learning centre program. I was, to a large extent, an insider. Second, to engage the participants in meaningful discussion about journals, I had to ask questions. These questions clearly affected the "natural" state of things (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Third, I began to see evidence that I could improve the journal writing experience for participants in the study. As a result, I began to conceive of
the research more as an action research study (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) than a naturalistic study. I began to recognize and record the impact I was having on the course of events. My inevitable impact on the socially constructed setting meant that it would be important to locate myself in the study in relation to the research (Opie, 1992).

This changed perspective on my role in the study allowed me to conceive of the research as a more collaborative venture in which the participants and I would work together to build descriptions and theorize about their experiences. This approach to the study had a number of attributes which fit with my goals for the research. First, a better understanding of participant perspectives clearly could be gained if participants not only provided data but also participated in the analysis of that data. Second, as tutor trainer I had attempted to create an egalitarian approach to supervision based on my own political and pedagogical beliefs. It seemed inappropriate to attempt to change this approach with tutors in the study, many of whom were the same tutors I had worked with. Third, I hoped that a collaborative approach would be empowering (Roman & Apple, 1990). Peer tutors were in the vulnerable role of student workers in financial need. Journal writing, an isolating task, asked them to expose their thinking to the trainer. The trainer had the power not only to fire them but also to affect their working conditions. I believed that collaboration among the tutors which allowed them to share
their experiences of subordination (Freire, 1970) would help them to see the structural influences on their journal writing practices. As Lather (1986) suggests, "For researchers with emancipatory aspirations, doing empirical research offers a powerful opportunity for praxis to the extent that the research process enables people to change by encouraging self-reflection and a deeper understanding of their particular situations" (p. 263).

My reconceptualization of the study as a form of action research allowed me to accept a more authentic role. As participant-observer, I could question not only participants' perspectives on journal writing but also the effects of the research process on the participants.
Section Two: The Participants

In this section, I describe the peer tutors, the staff tutor and the tutor trainer who participated in the study. In my initial interviews with participants, I asked them to suggest a pseudonym they would like me to use for them in the study. Those names are used throughout the study.

The Peer Tutors

The peer tutors were hired on a government sponsored work/study program aimed at assisting financially needy students by giving them work within the institution. The program paid students reasonably well for part-time work. The guidelines for this work/study program required students to show financial need and to be enrolled at a post-secondary institution full-time. Students could work up to a maximum of 15 hours per week.

All peer tutors were academically successful students who exhibited strong writing skills, effective oral communication skills and a reflective approach to problem-solving.

Their primary role in the centre was to assist students having difficulty with academic skills to improve their skills. They did this with the guidance and supervision of the tutor trainer. The trainer would meet with a student who was new to the centre, do needs assessment, recommend a program of study, and assign the student a tutor. The tutor would assist the student in carrying out the recommended program, sometimes
modifying it as new needs arose. The trainer was available for consultation and could see students again as needed.

The tutors also did other jobs in the centre. They dealt with telephone and in-person inquiries by students, made appointments for students with Tom and the tutors, assisted with materials preparation and provided trouble-shooting assistance to students doing word processing. Some tutors also taught basic word processing to small groups of students.

Felicia

Felicia was in her third semester working as a peer tutor. I had hired, trained and supervised her the previous year. When she began to write journals for me, she had never kept a journal before. Felicia was in her early twenties, studying Criminology and Psychology. The semester under study was to be her last working in the centre because she was moving to the local university full-time the following semester. She intended to finish her Bachelor's degree at the university, and, after working for a couple of years, go on to do a Master's degree in Psychology.

Felicia had a very heavy workload during the study. She began the semester taking 3 courses at the college and 2 courses at the university as well as working 16 hours per week at another job and 12 hours per week at the learning centre. Early in the semester, because she found the workload too heavy, she dropped one of her courses at the college and reduced the hours of her other job from 16 to 8 hours per week.
Even so, she was over-burdened by her workload. Shortly after mid-term exams, she said, "two weeks ago, I broke down and cried because I couldn’t handle it" (I-F-Nov.23). Although she was doing her work and getting good grades, she found the lack of time to relax difficult.

Felicia had a long history of work, both full and part-time. Because her family was unable to help her financially, she was putting herself through school. Prior to attending the college full-time, she worked full-time as a legal receptionist for a year. During that time, she also studied at the college part-time.

An important issue for Felicia was her confidence. She reported that until her late teens she had been unsure of herself and that it was only recently that she had begun to develop confidence in her abilities. Despite her fledgling confidence, she acted confident with both students and colleagues.

Felicia liked the tutoring job, but she felt that it contributed a lot of stress to an already stressful life. She at times discussed a fear of being fired from the tutoring job, but she also noted that she had never had any trouble finding jobs when she needed them.

Due to her strong background in English and the Social Sciences, Felicia primarily tutored students in essay writing. Many of these students were taking a university transfer English composition course. For the first two-thirds of the
semester, she also taught weekly hour-long orientation sessions in using a word processing program to small groups of students.

Krista

Krista, like Felicia, was in her third semester as a peer tutor. She had been trained by me and had handed journals in to me the previous year. Krista was in her early twenties, and had been studying at the college for two and a half years, mostly in Science and Mathematics. During the semester under study, she had branched out and was taking mostly Social Science courses.

Krista had a heavy workload during the study. She was taking four courses but because of her switch to the social sciences, she found her courses demanding, particularly the essay writing component. Besides working 15 hours a week in the centre, she also worked at a volunteer job 2 hours a week and, beginning early in November, worked 10 hours a week at a retail sales job. Krista was a person who liked to stay busy. However, she found that she was too busy. Looking back at the end of the semester, she said, "this semester I had too much on the go, and I felt that was taking away from my tutoring, I couldn't concentrate as long or do as much" (I-K-Dec. 8).

An important issue for Krista was to have a good job in which she was independent and valued. Prior to working in the learning centre, she had had many waitressing and cashier jobs. In those jobs, she had felt exploited. She felt that she was paid and respected too little and asked to take on too much
responsibility and work too hard. She liked the tutoring job because she did not feel exploited, it was convenient to school, it gave her the opportunity to learn new things, and it provided money she badly needed. Her goal was to study Physiotherapy or Occupational Therapy in future. She felt the tutoring job gave her good experience for these professions. She said:

In this job I have to think. Actually, it applies to my future work, because you’re always trying to think of creative ways to deal with problems ... you have to put yourself in other people’s situations and help them. (I-K-Nov.9)

In the semester under study, Krista was involved in the learning centre beyond her tutoring duties. She sat on the learning centre advisory committee and also participated in a college-wide "think tank" looking at possible future models for learning support services at the college. Participation in these committees was part of her work time, so the amount of time she spent tutoring was reduced.

Krista tutored students with a wide range of needs. She tutored some students in Math, helped some ESL students with their general language development, tutored some students in reading and study skills, and helped some students with grammar and essay writing. For the first two-thirds of the semester, she also taught weekly hour-long orientation sessions in using a word processing program to small groups of students.
Christopher

Christopher was working in the centre for the second time, but there had been a gap of a year since he had worked there before and the job had changed considerably over that time. When he first worked at the centre, he only taught word processing. He had not written journals, but he was hired and trained by me. In the semester under study, he started working in early October and his duties were the same as those of the other tutors.

Christopher had a heavy workload during the study. Besides taking four courses, he worked 10 hours a week in the learning centre and two to three evenings per week at his uncle's watch repair company.

Christopher was about 30 years old and had been a junior high school teacher for four years in Hong Kong. The school he had worked at used English as the language of instruction. While teaching, he took an education certificate on a part-time basis. His training focused on planning, methodology and teaching techniques while the methodology for language teaching was based on a theory of "maximum exposure to the language environment" (I-C-Oct.27). Much of his teaching and learning experience in Hong Kong was in teacher-centred classrooms. Christopher enjoyed teaching in Hong Kong but found the heavy workload there a problem.

Christopher had come to Canada two and a half years before the study. He took the college's Business Diploma as well as
some extra Math courses. He would finish his diploma the semester following that of the study. He intended to go on to university and major in Accounting. He did not intend to go back into teaching; he saw that as too difficult because of his English ability and his lack of Canadian credentials.

Christopher had never written journals prior to the study. He liked writing in Chinese and had completed a Chinese Language Honours Diploma prior to his teaching. The process he used for writing in both Chinese and English relied heavily on detailed outlining prior to composing. Christopher reported, "if I've got time to prepare... I can write well" (I-C-Oct.27). In English, his writing was clear but included non-standard grammar and diction.

Christopher's spoken English was fluent and clear. Only occasionally were there specific vocabulary items which he used differently from standard English. For example, he used the word "feeling" often in our interviews. By feeling, he meant "idea", "a big impression" and "I noticed it a lot" (I-C-Nov.10). He reported that the word "feeling" has all these meanings in Cantonese. Although such problems sometimes caused a bit of confusion in the interview process, Christopher's English was sufficient for him to participate effectively in the interview process.

Christopher enjoyed the job in the learning centre and found it very beneficial to his own English skills. He improved his understanding of English grammar and resolved some of his
diction problems. He also found that the increased exposure to English and to English-speaking peers increased his confidence in participating orally in his courses.

During the semester under study, Christopher mainly tutored students in Math and Computer. However, he also worked with a few students, mainly ESL students, on writing and study skills.

Billy

Billy was hired as a peer tutor in early November and this was his first semester at the college. He was studying Commerce and Business Administration and getting good grades. He had no previous experience with journal writing. Billy was in his early twenties. He was taking 5 courses and working at the learning centre 10 hours per week.

Billy's courses had a heavy writing component. He was a good writer who liked writing. Most of his academic writing experience came "from doing literary analysis essays" (I-B-Nov. 16). His preferred way of studying was to "write everything down" (I-B-Nov.16). He found that it helped him remember things and see connections between ideas.

Billy had not tutored formally before, but he had provided feedback on papers for friends in high school. After finishing high school, he had worked at a convenience store and gas station for a year, ending up as Assistant Manager. During that year he had also taken a distance education college Math course, an experience which taught him "a lot about how to do
it yourself without having someone teach it to you" (I-B-Nov.16).

Billy liked the challenge of the tutoring job. He noted, "just finding ways to help people is very challenging I find" (I-B-Nov.23). The job helped him financially but he was not dependent on his income from it. Rather, it allowed him to conserve his savings.

In the semester under study, Billy mainly tutored students in writing and study skills.

Paul

Like Billy, Paul was hired as a peer tutor in early November. He was in his third semester at the college, taking a writing-for-publication program. Paul, who was in his mid-forties, had a varied background. He had worked in the hotel and restaurant business, and had owned his own bar and his own bookstore. In his bar days, Paul had had a substance abuse problem and spent time in a rehabilitation centre. He then attended a micro-computer processing program and subsequently was a captions editor and a teaching assistant for a computer course. Most recently, as a student, he had had a part-time night job as a security guard. Paul's goal was to become "a free-lance, public relations, marketing spin doctor" (I-P-Nov.10). He was doing well in his studies and intended to complete his program the following year.

Paul had a heavy workload during the research period. His studies were demanding; he typically had 16 hours of class each
week and 25 to 30 hours of homework. Besides working in the learning centre 12 hours per week, he also had his own technical writing company which took about 15 hours per week of his time.

Paul was an avid writer. He loved all kinds of writing but was particularly keen on creative writing. He had kept his own personal journals for 22 years and during the study kept not only his learning centre journal but also his personal journal and separate journals for two courses he was taking. Paul described the value of his journal writing:

I find that it’s really good because it helps me to go back and reflect...[journals] they’re wonderful tools to help me find out where I’ve been and where I’m going and how I’ve gotten there and what’s happened to me in the interim. (I-P-Nov.24)

Paul liked tutoring. He said:
This is one of the most enjoyable jobs I’ve ever had because I get to help people and make a difference... and use my skills ... most important is the fact that it ties in [to my course work]. (I-P-Nov.24)

One of the key factors in Paul’s enjoyment of the job was the benefit he saw in it for himself. He reported, "it’s really a great source of goodness ...for me" (I-P-Nov.17). He was able to use many skills he had acquired in his varied background. He said, "I’m finding this job is helping me greatly, I’m getting to use all sorts of past training from grammar to counselling,
I use it all" (I-P-Nov.17). He also felt that it was psychologically good for him and commented, "It [the job] helps my humility and it's ego gratifying that I have the skills to help people and that's great for my self-esteem" (I-P-Nov.24).

All the students assigned to Paul were referred to the centre for help with writing.

The Staff Tutor: Ann

Ann, the staff tutor in the centre, was in her second semester in that job. A trained teacher who had taught elementary school for 7 years, she had left teaching because she and her husband moved from another province and she was not qualified to teach in her new province. After moving, she worked at the college in accounting for many years. Later, she worked as the administrative assistant for the college's literacy tutoring program. During her 19 years of working at the college, she also studied, completing most of her Accounting Diploma at the college. She came to the learning centre in order to have a change and to reduce her working hours. She worked in the learning centre 25 hours a week. She was in her late fifties and anticipating early retirement. In fact, she retired at the end of the semester under study.

Ann really enjoyed the job and described it as "an in depth learning experience" (I-A-Nov.24). She said, "I'm really glad that I'm able to go out of my working life with something that I've enjoyed doing" (I-A-Nov.24).

She worked with all kinds of students on a wide variety of
needs. She worked most with mature students and with students in technical programs and communications courses. However, she also worked with many students on academic programs. Besides her tutoring work, she was responsible for providing the centre with administrative support.

The Tutor Trainer: Tom

Tom was the faculty member in charge of the learning centre. This was a half-time position. Besides running the learning centre, he taught ESL half-time. Tom's background included extensive teaching of college-preparatory ESL, some literacy teaching, a Masters degree in Adult Education and experience teaching a university TESL course. As part of his ESL teaching at the college, he had frequently taught an adjunct course to the college's university transfer English composition course.

The semester under study was Tom's first semester running the learning centre. His duties included: hiring, training and supervising tutors; assessing and developing learning plans for students; establishing Centre policies and procedures; and, liaising with college faculty and the department head about learning centre matters. Tom's approach to his first semester in the centre was to maintain the status quo, working on the assumption that he should learn how the centre had been operating prior to making any changes.

Tom and I had been colleagues for 6 years and had shared an office for the last 3 years. Two years earlier we had worked
together on a curriculum development project and had collaborated on writing a handbook on assessing student needs for literacy tutoring. We got along well together and had common philosophical assumptions about students and about teaching. I encouraged him to apply for the learning centre job, and I was very pleased when he was selected to replace me.
Section Three: The Journal Writing Task

In this section, I explore tutors' perspectives on the journal writing task, the focus of my first research question. First, I describe the trainer's guidelines for journal writing, his purpose in assigning the journal writing task and the feedback he gave tutors on their journals. Next, I describe the tutors' perspectives on the purpose for journal writing and the feedback they received. I then describe tutors' attitudes to journal writing. After that, I discuss the trainer's perception of tutor attitudes to journal writing. Finally, I describe the writing processes employed by tutors in writing their journals.

**Trainer Guidelines**

When Tom began the semester, he asked tutors to write journals. He did not give any specific instructions. The tutors had done journals the year before and he simply asked them to continue, relying on their knowledge of journal writing from the previous year. This was somewhat problematic when Christopher joined the centre as he had not done journals before.

In the first staff meeting of the year, Tom suggested that tutors could write about strategies, attitudes and skills (M-Oct.12). The following week, at my suggestion, Tom developed guidelines for journal writing.

The handout he gave tutors began like this:

To help you with your journal writing, here are a few
suggestions:
1) remember that journal writing has a purpose -- to help you become a better tutor by reflecting critically on your tutoring. This means asking questions which help you to reflect about your tutoring:

-What are you learning (past, present)
-What do you need or want to learn?
-How do you learn or don’t you learn best?

2) to be useful for you, this kind of journal writing needs to be much more than reporting what happened during the week; it needs to have an analytical or critical focus which asks questions about specific situations that you encountered during the week. (M-Oct.19)

The rest of the handout consisted of more discussion and a long list of possible questions tutors could use to help them reflect on their practice. The questions suggest that the trainer intended the tutors to focus on the practical arena of the problematic (Tom, 1985). The questions problematized the techniques and approaches tutors used; the questions did not suggest that tutors question the goals of their work.

In that week's staff meeting (M-Oct.19), Tom introduced the guidelines, summarizing what he saw as the key points. He noted that, "reflecting rather than reporting is the goal" and that tutors should "think about a situation and consider, what do I need to do better?". He suggested that tutors "tear apart
a situation and look at it from many angles". He ended by saying, "just follow these questions".

**Trainer Purpose in Assigning Journal Writing**

Initially, Tom asked tutors to write journals mainly because the tutors had done journals the year before. This was in keeping with his policy of maintaining the status quo in his first semester in the job. A further contributing factor was that he knew I was interested in studying journals. By mid-way through the semester, however, he had a clear picture of the purpose of journal writing in his tutor training scheme. He said:

T: It should contribute to their learning on the job by helping them reflect about what they’re doing... the word reflect is important because instead of just sitting down and doing it without even thinking about it, and always doing the same thing over and over, it’s to sit back and say why, why did it go that way? how could I do it better next time? what is too difficult? what isn’t difficult any more? and what has changed? I guess some things like that, because I think one of the major issues that we’re running into here is, to a certain extent tutoring is not in any way developing in the person’s mind, they’re not really developing as tutors, they’re there to do a job and do the same thing every time, it’s not as if they want to develop. Or they’re too busy doing the
tutoring to sit back and have time to think about what works and what doesn’t and so they’re just putting in the time doing it without reflecting a lot about it whereas others do think about, well, how are they doing it, um, so I think there’s a spectrum there.

J: So are you saying then that you think that the journals sort of enforce people taking the time to stop and think about it?

T: That’s, yes, it structures it in. That’s the purpose of structuring in an opportunity, or requirement maybe, to to reflect on how it’s going and what isn’t going well and what is going well. (I-T-Nov.17)

So, Tom’s purpose for journal writing was to provide a structure which pushed tutors to learn from their tutoring experiences and thereby develop as tutors.

Trainer Feedback on Journals

Tom required tutors as part of their job to write weekly journals. Initially, due to his heavy workload at the beginning of the semester, Tom was slow to return tutors’ journals to them. However, after three or four weeks he returned all their journals to them with feedback. After that, he returned tutors’ journals more quickly.

The feedback Tom wrote on tutors’ journals was of four main types. One type could be called encouraging comments. He
wrote things such as "good idea" (J-A-Nov.16), "yes!" (J-B-Nov.15) and "you’re absolutely right!" (J-B-Nov.15). This approach to feedback has also been employed by Anderson (1993) and Jarvis (1992). Another type Tom used was probing questions. He wrote things like, "Did this approach work with him?" (J-A-Nov.16). He also occasionally restated what he understood from a tutor’s writing and asked if that was what the tutor meant. Probing questions have also been used by Pape and Smith (1991) and Newman (1988). A third type of feedback was information. For example, when a tutor described a problem he had in helping a student, Tom responded with step-by-step instructions for how to work through the problem. As variations on this type, Tom would sometimes refer tutors to handouts he had given or discussions they had had in staff meetings, or he would ask tutors to provide him with more information so that he could help them. The final type could be called drawing principles from experience. He would take what tutors wrote and note principles which they had implied but not stated. For example, when one tutor wrote about how a student’s enthusiasm had made him feel, Tom responded, "Motivation is an important factor in learning" (J-B-Dec.7).

Tom’s feedback was written on the journals which tutors handed in. He made extensive use of margins, often underlining segments of the journals and drawing arrows to his comments on those segments. His comments were brief and clear.

Tom gave tutors feedback on issues they raised in their
journals in two other ways. In meetings, he often brought up issues and focused on problems that tutors had raised in their journals. He used journals as data for his needs assessment of tutors and planned staff meetings, in part, based on those needs. This approach to journal feedback is also cited by Jarvis (1992). Tom also occasionally discussed issues raised in journals with tutors on a one-to-one basis. This did not occur systematically and I did not have access to these discussions, but occasionally tutors reported to me that they had discussed an issue with Tom.

Tutor Perspectives on the Purpose of Journal Writing

Before Tom presented the guidelines for journal writing, the four tutors then working tended to regard journal writing mainly as a means of communication. Ann described her journals as "a diary, like a running commentary of what happened over the week" (I-A-Nov.10). Ann also described using her journal to give Tom "messages" (I-A-Oct.13). Sometimes these messages consisted of comments from which she hoped Tom would take hints about how he might do things differently. She noted that "you don’t want to tread on anybody’s toes or hurt anybody’s feelings so you try to suggest things by say being diplomatic" (I-A-Oct. 13). Felicia described using her journal to ask Tom’s advice about tutoring issues she was facing. Christopher used his early journals to explain to Tom what he saw as his limitations and abilities in relation to tutoring.

Tutors also used their journals at that stage to create a
positive impression on Tom, their new boss. Krista described
the purpose behind one journal entry; "I wanted him to think
that I'm actually thinking about things, like, and I'm trying
to find new ways of doing things" (I-K-Oct.19). Ann reported
using her journal to "cover" herself when she had not had time
to do all the tasks which were part of her job (I-A-Oct.27).
Christopher tried to make a good impression by showing Tom that
he enjoyed his job, that he was gaining in confidence, and that
he was a team player. Other researchers have also identified
this tendency to try to please the teacher (Jarvis, 1992;

Within a few weeks of receiving the journal writing
guidelines, the tutors had changed their perspectives on the
purpose of journal writing. Felicia's comment was typical of
this new understanding; she said:

He asks us to write stuff down in order to think about it
more. 'Cause if you write it down, you're obviously
thinking about what happened or how to better yourself
more when you're writing it down. Otherwise you wouldn't
have to think about it, so I think he does it in that
aspect, just to make us think more and to better our
ability to help people. (I-F-Nov.16)

Christopher made a similar comment but he also found that
journal writing facilitated communication between him and Tom.
He noted that writing down ideas was a good way of
communicating with Tom because "it's not too good to reflect
our feeling in oral speech so better write it down and then I think it avoids an embarrassing environment" (I-C-Nov.10). Christopher saw this communicative purpose as an important by-product of the journal writing task.

Krista seemed to have some difficulty understanding Tom's purpose for journal writing. She said she had "tried to" use the guidelines in writing her journal (I-K-Nov.3). When asked about the guidelines she could remember a few specific questions but not their overall thrust. She said she'd have to refer back to them again when she did her next journal. Two weeks later, she was still confused about the guidelines. In the staff meeting she complained to Tom about always having to look at the negative of what she did (M-Nov.16). In discussion with me later that day, she said:

K: ...I thought they [journals] had to be ... just about problems, trying to find a problem, to make yourself a better tutor, like to always, um, have to think about ways of improving yourself, which is good but (pause)

J: Is that what the purpose of journal writing is?

K: Um, yeah, I think so....But I always thought it was a negative way of, like today that straightened it out for me when we were saying, oh no you can talk about like good things ... but then explain why you felt they were good ... instead of just listing like we used to do, expanding on why you feel they work.
The new tutors, hired in early November, were given the guidelines for journal writing and asked to write journals. After writing journals for several weeks, Billy saw journal writing as having two purposes. He reported that Tom wanted the tutors to write "a kind of critical analysis... so you reflect, so you’re constantly trying to improve yourself" (I-B-Nov.30). Although this was the purpose Tom had stated for journal writing, Billy felt that Tom’s primary purpose was "to see where everyone is" (I-B-Nov.30). He said that Tom used the journals "just to see what’s going on, so he has an idea of what’s going on so he can try and help us out" (I-B-Nov.30). Billy saw clear outcomes of this use for journals in the staff meetings. He said, "he [Tom] seems to take information out of the journal and just kind of develop the meetings around them" (I-B-Nov.30). Paul regarded journal writing as having "a three-pronged purpose" (I-P-Jan.27). The first two purposes were similar to those described by Billy. The third purpose was to maintain a record of what happened in tutoring sessions. He felt this record was useful both for reference in staff meetings and for accountability. He said,

If we had someone that put a complaint in ... against us ...we would have some way of going back rather than just trying to rely on memory, we’d have some way of going back and saying well this was the entry that I made concerning this student. (I-P-Jan.27)
Eventually, all of the tutors came to an understanding of Tom’s stated purpose for journal writing; in Krista’s case, however, this understanding took time. It must also be noted that they recognized other purposes for the journal writing task which Tom did not state.

Tutor Perspectives on Journal Feedback

When asked about the kinds of feedback Tom gave, most tutors identified at least some of the four types of feedback I observed on tutor journals. Most tutors reported that Tom wrote positive comments on their journals and responded to their questions. Billy, Ann and Felicia also noted that Tom wrote probing questions which made them think more about issues. Most tutors also pointed out that staff meetings often included feedback on issues they had raised in their journals. Krista noted that she often got oral feedback from Tom on her journals. However, this did not appear to occur with all tutors.

The tutors reported that they found Tom’s feedback useful. As Christopher reported, “he’s showing a positive way in reading our journal... he treats this journal and our feelings very seriously” (I-C-Oct.27). Billy reported that he appreciated benefitting from Tom’s experience. He said, “It’s just a different view of what I’m saying or thinking, so it helps just to see a different view and to see what he thinks. He’s been here a lot longer than I have” (I-B-Nov.23). He also noted that he found the positive comments good “reinforcement”
Ann recognized that there was potential in following up on Tom's comments. On one occasion she said, "I was thinking that I'm going to focus my next journal on answering his questions and comments that he put on, maybe go back and talk more about that" (I-A-Nov.10). She did not, however, follow up on that idea. Christopher did follow up on one of Tom's probing questions by writing a paragraph in his next journal which attempted to answer a question Tom had posed. Felicia noted that Tom's questions "help us to analyze ourselves more" (I-F-Oct.24). Despite the tutors' views of the usefulness of Tom's feedback, it should be noted that interviews and journals provided little evidence of the impact of Tom's feedback on tutors' thinking.

Near the end of the semester, Ann made three suggestions of the kinds of feedback she thought would be more useful. She noted "I think if he gave me some negative comments about things, some criticism, then that would spur me on to improve in that area" (I-A-Nov.24). Researchers (McAlpine, 1992; Newman, 1988) have also suggested that journal feedback should challenge the writers' assumptions. Another problem she saw with the feedback was that there was "never any follow-up to that feedback" (I-A-Nov.24). She suggested that she would gain from discussing the issues with Tom or with the other tutors. She also noted that she would like the tutors to read each others' journals and write feedback on them. Newman (1988) employed this strategy with students in her study.
Because of the feedback they received, Felicia and Krista sometimes dealt with issues in other ways instead of writing about them in their journals. Felicia pointed out that she often wrote questions in notes to Tom instead of including them in her journal. She found that she got faster feedback that way. Krista often spoke to Tom about issues she was facing instead of writing about them in her journal. She preferred oral interaction to written reflection.

**Tutor Attitudes to Journal Writing**

Most tutors were very positive about the journal writing experience. Ann expressed her perspective at the end of the semester in her journal. She said:

> I know that I have evolved from a mediocre tutor to a pretty good tutor. Mainly, this is because I kept an open mind, I was willing to adapt, and I learned something from each experience. I ... believe my journal has assisted me in this evolution. (J-A-Dec.6)

Christopher also regarded journal writing as beneficial because of its impact over time. He identified journal writing as "one of the way (sic) to become a mature tutor" (I-C-Nov.10). Billy and Paul reported that for them journal writing fulfilled its purposes well.

**Problems with Journal Writing**

Krista and Felicia were less confident about the value of journal writing. Although they both described benefits they saw in journal writing, they also had reservations. Both made
negative comments about the value of individual journals they had written. For example, Krista said about one journal she had written, "this journal is dumb" (I-K-Nov.16).

Krista ascribed her reservations about journal writing to her lack of confidence in her ability to reflect in writing. She did not think writing was a good way for her to explore ideas.

She also repeatedly expressed confusion about the role journal writing took in helping her think about tutoring. She said:

I don’t know if it’s having to write the journal or if it’s just because, maybe it’s making me think more along the lines, maybe by making me do it it’s making me think ... but I’m just not realizing, do you know? that it’s connected. Like, because I’ve had to think about that maybe it’s this whole thing like maybe it’s not just, maybe the journal does promote it but it’s just everything that promotes like thinking of new ideas and stuff like that. The journal does, but that’s one area that helps me to think ..., and meetings and just concerns and concerns of other people and having to deal with it basically and wanting to help the people and wanting to give them the best that you can and not... so I’m always trying to think. (I-K-Oct.19)

Felicia felt the pressure to be analytic in journals damaged her confidence. She described the problem this way:
It [journal writing] puts pressure on you to keep learning, keep advancing, you have to keep finding new ways to figure out problems, like I don't know, like I think it definitely helps but if you're analyzing yourself all the time, like usually in everyday life you're analyzing yourself because you're doing something wrong, you don't really analyze the good as much as you do the bad, so if you analyze yourself, you see more of the problems, you see that you have to improve which is good, but it does set the stage for feeling not as competent as you probably would have (I-F-Dec.7)

Felicia felt her journal writing was more valuable to her when it was simply reporting what she had done in the week than when she attempted to meet Tom's goal of more analytic journals. In the following discussion she contrasted writing analytic journals for Tom with writing journals the previous year:

F: When I write about an appointment...like last year, reporting back to you about what happened in my appointments, I'll go through and I'll think about the appointments, and that helped me think more about my appointments...

J: Than when you're supposed to be analyzing them?

F: Yeah (with feeling), definitely, like last year the journal writing helped me a lot more, but this year we're not supposed to report on what happened in our appointments, just what worked, what didn't, the
techniques and why, and I can't write about stuff like that, that doesn't help me as much.

J: But giving an overview of your appointments starts you thinking about some things?
F: Yeah, it does. (I-F-Dec.7)

Hatton and Smith (1995) suggest that journal writing may increase feelings of vulnerability in journal writers. They suggest that this is especially likely when the locus of control is not seen to be with the journal writer. The provision of guidelines for journal writing may have caused Felicia to feel that she had to give up control of her journal writing.

Ann felt that journal writing was a valuable learning tool, but she felt it could have been more valuable. She frequently mentioned the idea that journals would be more valuable if they were shared among tutors. One reason for this was her concern that she didn't know if her journal writing was "off base" (I-A-Dec.8). She wanted to see the journals of others to confirm that she was doing what was expected. Another reason was that she wanted access to differing perspectives on tutoring. She thought seeing the journals of others would introduce her to some new ways of looking at things. However, the main point which Ann returned to again and again was her desire to share her own journal with others. She saw this as a way to get feedback on her ideas and to enter into discussion about issues with other tutors. She said, "it would help us all
be better tutors" (I-A-Dec. 8). Ann’s suggestion was in keeping with Mann (1994) who asserts that an important function of tutor training should be to encourage tutors to share and discuss tutoring strategies.

Benefits of Journal Writing

All tutors described some benefits of journal writing. Many of these benefits related to journal writing as a reflective tool. The tutors felt journal writing helped them focus on issues in a way they might not have without the journals. Paul and Krista described this as the journal providing a "trigger" (I-P-Jan.27) or "spark" (I-K-Oct.19) for further thinking. Tutors also described journal writing as helping them clarify their ideas. Often writing journals led tutors to recognize new connections between experiences. Tutors suggested journal writing also had other benefits: an opportunity to view the "gestalt" of tutoring sessions (I-P-Nov.24); reduction in planning time (I-C-Oct.27); and heightened awareness of tutor learning (I-F-Nov.2). Billy noted that he thought journal writing was "an excellent tool for reflecting" (I-B-Dec.7). He felt the journal writing requirement "reinforced" the pressure he already put on himself to improve his tutoring. He said, "If you don’t think back, you’re not going to improve really. If you don’t try and see what you’re doing wrong or or see what you’re doing right, you’re not going to improve yourself" (I-B-Dec.7).

A few tutors also mentioned the benefits of journal
writing in facilitating communication between themselves and Tom. Krista regarded journal writing as a good forum for making suggestions to Tom. She said:

Because I have the journal to write, I felt oh good, this is a great time to express those concerns and try to write it down, hopefully not in a way that would upset him [Tom] or anything but, so I think that really helped, to know I would have a way to express it, yeah at the time, just get this on paper before you forget what you're thinking about. (I-K-Oct.19)

Paul felt that one benefit of journal writing was the way it enabled him to tell Tom about problems that they could then work on together.

A number of tutors described affective benefits of journal writing. Although Felicia felt that analytic journal writing reduced her confidence, in other ways she felt journal writing built her confidence. She said, "if you write it down that you did a good job, you'll believe you did a good job" (I-F-Oct.11). Christopher felt the same way. Both Felicia and Christopher felt that self-confidence was very important for a tutor. Christopher explained his reasoning this way: "self-confidence is the most crucial factor to determine one's ability to solve problems" (I-C-Nov.24). Some tutors also valued journal writing as an outlet for their frustrations. For example, Ann described using one journal as an opportunity to "release a little frustration that I was holding within. I
needed to get it out I guess" (I-A-Oct.13). This would seem to support McAlpine’s (1992) assertion that journal writing can perform a cathartic function.

Paul identified a value of journal writing for him that no other tutor mentioned. He believed that the three-pronged purpose he had identified for journal writing was a valid one. He said:

I think it [journal writing] is probably the best way to do that [fulfil those purposes]. Thinking about it any other way would involve the necessity of sort of filling out forms and following guidelines and having structures in place. I think this [journal writing] allows you a bit of freedom and I think it does the job of keeping those three points in focus. (I-P-Jan.27)

Thus, for Paul, journal writing provided an opportunity to meet needs of reflection, communication and record keeping while maintaining some freedom of choice in how those needs should be met.

Most tutors also saw value in journal writing beyond its direct impact on their thinking about issues they wrote about. Some tutors noted that they thought a great deal more about their tutoring in the process of writing their journals than was evident in their written products. Christopher described it this way:

While I’m writing the journal, it’s a filtering process... during the thinking process I may think more than what
I've written down... I mean the thinking process during the journal writing is different from the actual journal. (I-C-Dec.8)

Billy also noted that writing his journal caused him to review his whole week of tutoring and that this led to more reflection than what he actually wrote in his journal. Ann noted that writing her journal encouraged her to think about her ideas after the writing was complete; sometimes this further thinking was in areas not touched on in the journal.

Paul noted that journal writing created a record of experiences and that the record allowed for later reading and reflection. Ann found that re-reading old journals had led her to important new understandings; these understandings included recognition of the improvement she had made in her tutoring over time and recognition of the importance of reading skills in being an effective writer. Paul and Ann were the only tutors who reported having re-read journals they had written in the past.

Christopher and Felicia both noted that journal writing set a tone for working in the centre that valued ongoing learning. When asked about whether he would do his job differently if it did not include journal writing, Christopher replied:

It would be quite different, for journal writing give me a deeper thought, a deeper thinking in my work attitude in general, but without writing journal I will, yeah you
might say, I will be quite absent-minded about what happens around us, I mean the working environment... I won't concern so much about it, just finish day by day okay will be fine. (I-C-Dec.8)

Felicia also felt that journal writing encouraged an atmosphere valuing ongoing learning for centre staff. However, as noted above, this was a double-edged sword. She felt that it encouraged her to strive for improvement in her tutoring abilities but that it also sometimes made her feel like she was on a treadmill that was going a little too fast. Because she didn't improve her tutoring as much as she felt she should, it reduced her confidence.

In summary, although most tutors felt journals were very beneficial, two tutors expressed concerns about their usefulness. These concerns focused on discomfort with reflective writing and detrimental effects on tutor self-confidence. Despite these concerns, all tutors described themselves as having benefited from journal writing. The benefits cited by tutors included increased reflection on tutoring and tutor learning, improved communication with Tom, affective benefits, freedom to choose issues and formats for reflection, and creation of an atmosphere valuing ongoing learning of centre staff.

Effects of the Research Process on Tutor Attitudes to Journal Writing

Tutors suggested that the fact that I was studying their
journals increased the importance of the journal writing task. As Billy said, "Just the fact that you're doing this [interviewing tutors about their journals], kind of just reinforces the journals', um, importance or usefulness, not just to us, but even to you" (I-B-Dec.7). Early in the following semester, Paul echoed Billy's sentiment, noting that journals didn't seem as important anymore because I was no longer studying them.

The importance given to journal writing by the research process had a negative effect for Felicia. We discussed it as follows:

F: I think about my tutoring more now than I did last semester when you weren't talking to me about my journals, like when you weren't doing it, it didn't matter what I wrote in my journals, I didn't think about it as much and therefore I could write about anything.

J: You weren't going to have to face it in public again?

F: Exactly, but now when they're being analyzed a little bit more, now it's really hard to write about anything. Like that, along with doing the same thing over and over again for the past year, all that combines into, that's why I haven't been able to write many journals... (I-F-Dec.7)

However, Felicia seemed willing to discuss some difficult situations with me in the interview situation that she was reluctant to write about in her journal. For example, she told
Felicia expressed great anxiety about Tom finding out about what had happened. In the interview, we discussed the reasons the student might have got a poor grade and the limits of Felicia's responsibility for it (I-F-Oct.24). In the following staff meeting, she brought up the situation and told everyone about what had happened and how she had felt (M-Oct.26). The interview process seemed to have given her more confidence about revealing the problem she had faced.

When tutors described problems they had with journal writing in personal terms, I tried to help them reach an understanding of the structural factors affecting them. This happened most often with Felicia. In one interview, I suggested:

You have to look at the situation, like I think I wouldn't take it very personally, that this is some great flaw in you that you can't write this journal, right? It sounds like there are a number of factors that have made it difficult for you to write a journal, not that you are somehow defective, right? But rather that these factors, which is what I'm trying to understand, what these factors are, you know? (I-F-Dec.7)

As a result, she would talk to me about such factors. My purpose in taking this approach was directly tied to my goal of making the research emancipatory. I felt if tutors understood
the effects of structural factors in the situation on their journal writing, they would feel less personally at fault when their journal writing did not meet their own or others’ expectations.

**Trainer Perception of Tutor Attitudes to Journal Writing**

Tom felt that tutors under-valued journal writing. We discussed it this way:

T: The difficulty is in getting tutors to appreciate the fact that it’s a useful activity rather than just something they have to do for me.

J: Why do you say that? Have you found people reluctant to do them [journals]?

T: Yeah, they’re too busy and comments from Krista and Felicia that they can’t think of anything to write and from Krista saying that she just doesn’t like journal writing, and that makes me realize that to a large extent they’re doing it only because I want them to. And so they see it as an assignment that benefits me but they don’t quite see how it benefits them, or they haven’t allowed themselves to think about that. (I-T-Dec.1)

**The Journal Writing Process**

Tutors wrote their journals under varied conditions. Some tutors wrote their journals on their work time whereas others did them on their own time. Ann and Paul did their journals at home. Christopher generally planned his journal at home and composed it
on a computer in the learning centre outside of his working hours. For Paul, doing his journal in the evenings at home seemed to fit with his previous habits of journal writing. Ann and Christopher said they worked on their journals at home because there was not enough uninterrupted time at work to do them properly. Billy, Felicia and Krista usually did their journals during their work time. They experienced different amounts of interruption while journal writing and it seemed to affect them in different ways. Billy reported that he was not interrupted often and when he was it didn’t seem to be a problem. Krista also managed to find quiet times to write her journals and avoided much interruption. Felicia, however, found that she was interrupted constantly and that this adversely affected her journal writing.

Tutors spent between half an hour and two hours each week writing their journals. Billy spent only about half an hour working on his journals, while Felicia spent about an hour, and Krista and Ann spent an hour to an hour and a half. Krista noted that much of that time was spent trying to think of things to write about. Christopher spent one to two hours working on his journal each week. Paul dealt with his journals differently. He would spend some time after each shift he worked in the centre writing up his journal for that shift. The time he spent varied.

Paul’s journal writing process was different from that of the other tutors. On each of his work shifts he would make notes of students he worked with, identifying their names and a few key
words to help him remember what they did together. In the evening at home, he would use these notes to write up his journal for that shift. Unlike the other tutors, he wrote about every tutoring session he had with a student.

The other tutors were more selective about the contents of their journals. Billy, Christopher, Felicia and Ann used various strategies to review the sessions they had had during the week. Felicia would review the appointment book to remind herself of the sessions she had had over the week. Ann would often note down all the students she had worked with during the week and make a few notes on each. Then she would choose one or a few to write about. Christopher and Billy would, as Billy put it, "run all the events through your head, just thinking about them" (I-B-Dec.7). A difference between these two was that Christopher would do it a day or two prior to actually writing the journal whereas Billy would do it when he sat down to write the journal.

Christopher and Ann often did a lot of planning for journal writing. Christopher would spend a day or two mulling over what to write. He would develop an outline, sometimes in his head and sometimes on paper. Part of his planning was geared toward figuring out how to write his ideas and avoid "Chenglish", Chinese-English (I-C-Nov.10). Ann would keep a running list of students she worked with and then a day or two before journal writing would start to plan the journal. Sometimes she wrote an outline. Often, whether or not she wrote an outline, she would have her journal planned in some detail before actually sitting
down to write it. At other times when she had no particular issue she wanted to write about, she did much less planning.

Krista, and sometimes Ann, would just sit down and start writing, one thing leading to another. Ann also, particularly near the end of the semester, would simply start writing about something "in the fore-front" of her mind (I-A-Nov.3). In the process of writing other issues "would come to mind" (I-A-Nov.24). In these situations she would often see the connection between one idea and the next as of importance in the development of her thinking.

Christopher and Ann, despite sometimes elaborate planning, would often modify their ideas while actually writing their journals. Once Billy had decided what to write about he would "scribble out" the journal (I-B-Nov.23). He would explore the issues he had chosen to write about while writing. For example, he reported, "I knew the thing I was going to talk about but I hadn’t thought about what I was going to gain from it" (I-B-Nov.16). Paul described writing with a "stream of consciousness" approach (I-P-Jan.27), mainly focusing on what he did with his students.

The editing practices of tutors also varied widely. Krista, Billy and Felicia did little editing. Christopher and Ann edited for clarity. Paul proofread his journals carefully and reflected on their contents as he did so.
Section Four: Contents of Tutor Journals

In Sections Four and Five, I describe what tutors wrote about in their journals, the focus of my second research question. Section Four focuses on the content of tutors' journals and Section Five describes levels of reflectivity in the journals.

In this section, I first describe content categories in tutors' journals and issues involved in their choices of what to write about in their journals. Next, I discuss the effects of the research process on tutors' content choices. Finally, I describe the trainer's perceptions of difficulties with tutors' choices of content for their journals.

Content Categories

I used a constant-comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to develop categories for the contents of tutors' journals. Figure 1 shows the categories which tutors discussed in their journals. The numbers in the chart represent a ranking of the relative amounts of tutor journals focused on the different categories. For example, Ann discussed 10 different categories. The number "1" under "A" in the figure signifies that she spent more of her journals discussing writing tutoring than she spent on any other category. The number "10" signifies that she devoted less of her journal writing to discussing issues of student motivation than she devoted to any other category.
Below, I discuss the types of issues tutors discussed in each of the categories.

**Writing tutoring.** In this category, tutors mainly discussed techniques for tutoring writing, assessment of needs
and progress in writing, affective responses of themselves and their students to writing tutoring, and problems underlying difficulties with writing. This category represents the largest portion of journal writing for most tutors. Christopher did not write a great deal about tutoring writing, largely because he did little writing tutoring. Some of what little he did write on the subject was clearly in response to activities in staff meetings rather than in response to tutoring experience. Krista wrote quite a lot about writing but most of this was simply reporting that she had met with a student and worked with the student on a paper or exercise.

**Self-assessment as tutor.** In this category, tutors assessed their abilities and limitations, described their affective responses to success or failure in tutoring, and identified techniques for learning tutoring skills. This category was written about a lot by all tutors but Paul.

**Student motivation.** Tutors wrote about attendance, causes of lack of attendance, effects of high and low motivation on tutoring, and techniques for fostering motivation. This was an important focus for Billy, Felicia, Krista and Paul, but Christopher and Ann put little emphasis on this area.

**Role of tutors.** Tutors described aspects of good tutoring, the relationship of the tutoring role to more familiar roles, and issues of peer relations. Felicia and Krista, two of the more experienced tutors, discussed the issue of tutor role little or not at all. However, Ann, the other experienced
tutor, devoted a considerable portion of her journals to describing aspects of good tutoring.

**Study skills tutoring.** Tutors wrote about techniques for tutoring study skills, assessment of student needs and progress in the study skills area, causes of study skills problems, and study skills as a problem underlying writing difficulties. Felicia did not write about study skills tutoring.

**The job.** Tutors discussed how busy the centre was and how they felt about the job. Busyness was often discussed in the opening lines of the journals and served as a kind of introduction. Ann and Felicia, those tutors leaving at the end of the semester, devoted a considerable portion of their journals to discussing their satisfaction with the job and their feelings about leaving the job.

**Staff meetings.** Most tutors wrote little if anything about the staff meetings. Paul was the exception. In keeping with his more log-book approach to journal writing, he mentioned every meeting, often summarizing what happened in the meeting and expressing opinions about things that went on. A few other tutors also mentioned the staff meetings. Their main foci were the benefits of the meetings and of the techniques suggested in the meetings.

**Journal writing.** Some tutors described problems they faced in writing journals, mainly the difficulty of coming up with things to write about. The tutors who did this were Ann, Krista and Felicia, those who had been writing learning centre
journals for the longest time. Paul and Krista made comments about the quality of their journals, and Ann discussed the benefits and potential benefits of journal writing.

**Effect on self of tutoring.** Tutors described learning in a number of areas with a focus on the effects of tutoring on their own personal knowledge and skills: learning of academic skills, learning of language, learning of content, and learning about the college. Krista, Felicia and Ann, the most experienced tutors, did not write anything in this category.

**Computer tutoring.** Discussions of computer tutoring by Christopher and Felicia mainly focused on their own and their students' affective responses to their computer tutoring. Ann discussed equipment problems and needs assessment. Although Krista, Felicia and Christopher all conducted word processing orientation sessions on a weekly basis, Krista did not discuss this activity in her journals.

**Centre policy.** Krista and Christopher both briefly discussed problems they had in carrying out specific centre policies. With Christopher, this took the form of questioning the policy.

**Personal.** Krista frequently began or ended her journals by mentioning personal issues. In some cases, she described issues of importance to herself such as visits home on the weekend. In other cases, she focused on Tom, her reader. For example, she wished him well over the holidays. This personal focus may be the result of the format Krista chose for journal writing. She
wrote her journals in the form of letters to Tom. Felicia and Billy also mentioned personal issues; however, their discussions were more closely related to tutoring. For example, Felicia described her stressful weekend and related it to her tutoring on Monday.

Centre operations. Early in the semester, Krista, and to a lesser extent Ann, discussed scheduling issues. Felicia wrote one long segment about an upset student who had mistakenly thought that the centre would contact her to make an appointment.

Language learning. Christopher, the only member of the staff who did not speak English as a first language, devoted much of his journals to issues of how people learn language and how language should be taught. No other tutors discussed this issue.

Reading tutoring. Although few students were referred to the centre for help with reading skills, Ann felt that many of students’ writing problems were caused by reading problems. As a result, she devoted some of her journal writing to discussing techniques for tutoring reading. No other tutors wrote about reading tutoring.

College policy. In one journal, Paul discussed the college’s policy of open access to courses. He expressed concern about the perceived detrimental effects of this policy on students, instructors and the community at large. No other tutors discussed college policy.
Choice of What to Write About

Krista reported early in the semester that "basically for me the journal recounts everything I've done" (I-K-Oct.12). However, after receiving the guidelines tutors attempted to meet Tom's expectations. As Christopher reported, "you can write about problems you have or about what you've learned during the week" (I-C-Nov.24). After the introduction of the guidelines, tutors chose experiences to write about from their experiences during the week. The exception to this was Paul who throughout the study wrote about all his tutoring sessions. However, he chose to reflect more about some sessions than about others.

The tutors typically chose to write about issues that were "foremost" in their minds (I-A-Nov.3) or "stuck out" (I-B-Nov.23). Christopher noted that the centre was so busy it was hard to remember individual students. As a result he wrote about the students he could remember. Tutors described a number of factors that could make a tutoring session stick out. One important factor was time. Generally tutors would write about more recent tutoring experiences because they were most easily remembered. Another factor was their familiarity with a student. Tutors would write about students they saw frequently or with whom they shared a common bond. Christopher, for example, noted that one student was memorable because he and she shared the same cultural background. A third factor was the degree of difficulty they experienced in a tutoring session.
Both Billy and Ann noted that they were more likely to write about sessions they found challenging. Krista noted that she would often write about new students. Another factor was the affective impact of a tutoring session. Tutors described choosing to write about sessions they enjoyed. They also chose to write about sessions with students who showed their appreciation, seemed desperate for help or were emotionally distressed.

Tutors also described other reasons for writing about specific issues or tutoring sessions. Christopher often wrote about sessions or issues because he had written about them before. This was in direct contrast to most tutors, as we will see later. Christopher had a sense of needing to maintain continuity in his journals for the readers' benefit, both mine and Tom's, and thus, in part, this is an effect of the research process. Christopher felt he should write things that I was interested in. Because I had been interested in what he had written in the past, he felt he should follow up on those issues. Felicia suggested another factor she employed in choosing what to write about in her journal. She wrote about things she found easiest to write about. She said, "I find it easier to talk about the good things and how I build my confidence, it's a lot easier to write about than it is to write about how I helped a student, the techniques I used" (I-F-Dec.7). Contributing to Felicia's emphasis on writing about positive things was her concern about Tom's attitude towards
her. Early in the semester we had this conversation:

J: Do you feel comfortable about telling him [Tom] the real honest truth or do you sometimes feel like you kind of want to put your best foot forward, if you know what I mean?

F: I think it’s more like I, it’s not that I don’t feel comfortable, like it took a while with you...

Just like with you the first semester is kind of iffy, like I don’t know what to expect from him and um, but the second semester I found with you I was fine, I could tell you anything in my journal, and I wouldn’t feel like you were going to get angry or get mad that I did something wrong, but with him I don’t know. (I-F-Oct.24)

Another feature of choosing what to write about was related to the journal writing process. Writing about one issue would trigger thoughts about another issue. Ann described such a process as "a progression of thinking" (I-A-Nov.24). For example, she said:

I started out with this one and it was funny ‘cause I started out with this week I’ve been thinking about how seldom I get feedback about various students and how they’ve gone off and left me. I’ve helped them with a paper or they disappeared and I never feel like I get any feedback. And for some reason all of a sudden I’m doing this and think of it and then a picture of Hideaki came
into mind and so that's why this jumped in in the middle of the paragraph. I got it in and I thought well he was positive, you know, and so I had to write about him ... and all of a sudden I thought oh, yes and then there was Yin Wing, you know, and then I got into him...(I-A-Nov. 24).

Tutors also deliberately chose not to write about some issues. The most common reason for choosing not to write about an issue or session was that tutors had written about the same or a similar thing before. They tried to avoid repetition.

Another reason for avoiding writing about some issues was because Tom would read the journals. Ann, for instance, sometimes chose not to write about an issue she had on her mind because she was not ready to share her ideas. She also would avoid making some suggestions about centre operations because she didn’t know how Tom would react. She said:

Since he [Tom] gets it [the journal] then he’s liable to solve it [the problem] before I get a chance, do you understand what I’m saying? So I’d rather back off sometimes on the way I put things or the way I say things because he’s ... getting it. (I-A-Dec.8).

Ann also avoided discussing issues that she thought would reflect badly on other tutors. Christopher and Paul both tried to tone down their subjective responses. For example, Paul identified differences between his personal journals and those he handed in to Tom. He found that in his personal journals he
could be "slightly more honest, slightly less benign" (I-P-Jan.27). Christopher reported writing and then removing one comment because he felt it was too subjective.

Felicia avoided writing things in her journal which she felt reflected badly on her tutoring ability. She reported:

I don't feel like I could say everything 'cause if I have a really bad experience like something, like I don't know, it looks like my teaching ability or my tutoring ability isn't that great, it makes me feel like I could lose my job. So I'm scared to say something to him. (I-F-Oct.24)

She went on to speak very emotionally about one such situation. She said:

When a person comes back with their essay and they didn't get a good mark on it, I just feel like it's all my fault (quavering voice), and I feel like if Tom finds out that this person didn't get a good grade it's on my shoulders. Like I know that's not true, like there's only so much you can help a student with but it feels really bad. (I-F-Oct.24)

Tutors expressed concerns not only about losing their jobs but also about maintaining Tom's respect.

**Effects of the Research Process on Content in Tutor Journals**

Most tutors reported that the research process had not affected what they chose to write about in their journals. They said that when they wrote their journals they thought of Tom as their audience.
There were, however, some exceptions. Felicia noted that she included more information because I was studying her journals, "so that there's more to discuss" (I-F-Oct.24). Christopher reported that my interest in his journals affected both what he chose to write about and the kinds of thinking he chose to report. We discussed it:

C: I have to write something that you are interested in too, like say the line of thinking and also some events...
J: So it encourages you to sort of follow through on issues. Is that what you mean?
C: Yeah. ... You see, journal after journal I will continue to tell about the person I have mentioned.
J: And that's because of my interest?
C: Yeah. For your interest, and also you are one of the readers in reading the journal, you know. So you know much about what I'm writing. So I continue to write the person I have mentioned before.
J: Okay, if I wasn't reading them do you think you would do that for Tom as well?
C: Not really, I will write something in more aspects, besides writing the person you are concerning with. Let's say, my attitude to work or the problems I am now encounter...
J: I would encourage you as much as possible to do the journal however you would do it for Tom and try not to change it for my sake, because I want to see
about how journals really are, not how they are for me, you know?

C: Okay. (I-C-Nov.17)

So it would appear that indeed the research process had some effect on what tutors chose to write about in their journals.

**Trainer Perspective on Difficulties with Journal Content**

Tom regarded some of what tutors chose to write about as not sufficiently related to tutoring to be useful. Tom’s understanding of this problem changed over time, partly as a result of the interview process.

Christopher’s journals contained the majority of material which Tom regarded as not sufficiently focused on tutoring. Christopher wrote at length about how ESL students learn and about his own improvements with English. Tom saw these content areas as unproductive because Christopher did not relate these reflections to his tutoring strategies. Part way through the semester, Tom and I discussed the issue of writing about language learning:

J: Do you think that reflection on learning in general is useful for a tutor?

T: Only if it helps the tutor somehow bring it back to their own practice. How am I then applying this principle? The only way he [Christopher] is implying it is by talking about how Chinese students by coming to the learning centre and even dealing with tutors are being exposed more to English and therefore
having the opportunity to learn English by exposure....

J: Do you think that serves any useful function for his development as a tutor?

T: No. He seems, I mean I don’t think so. Because I think he’s too broad, he’s focusing more on what helps ESL students learn, to get exposure, not on how can we help them as tutors. (I-T-Nov.17)

Other tutors besides Christopher wrote about their own learning as a result of tutoring. However, Tom did not see their discussions as off topic. Near the end of the semester, I questioned Tom about his approach to the issue of appropriate content. We discussed it this way:

J: I guess my original question was about content, like, obviously it matters what they’re writing about, like if Krista writes about the reasons why she hasn’t got her baking done, that’s obviously not seen as useful reflection in a journal. Well that’s obviously an extreme case, but then there’s all these other things in between. Like Christopher reflecting on learning in general, on how ESL students learn. It’s not directed at how can I be a better tutor, it looks at, okay, side effects if you like, of the centre, his own learning. Understanding of his own learning presumably helps him be a better tutor, but it’s kind of like these things, you have to stretch
it a bit as opposed to somebody talking about what I did with this student on this day and how it worked and how it didn’t like Paul is doing here. One of my struggles is how do I look at that stuff.

T: Which stuff Paul’s stuff or Christopher’s stuff?

J: Well, anybody’s stuff that doesn’t really seem to be talking about tutoring, um, you know, and maybe if they say a little bit about it, Paul saying a little bit about how it’s helping his own writing, but maybe if he spent three weeks journals on it it would be a problem. So I’m just trying to get a handle on it.

T: Yeah, because Billy said the same thing, didn’t he, that this helps him become aware that his organizational skills aren’t what they could be....

But I think you’ve raised a very good point and it’s made me reconsider a little bit about Christopher, because I do agree with you that what Paul is doing here is the same as what Christopher is doing except that Paul did it just in one sentence, whereas Christopher spread it out in 2 or 3 journals. So it’s a matter of degree rather than the quality of it.

J: So it’s more like the overall emphasis in the journals.

T: Yeah. (I-T-Dec.1)

The difficulty of content not focused on tutoring rose in another way concerning journals of Krista and Felicia. In their
journals they put a lot of emphasis on how their tutoring experiences made them feel. Tom regarded these journals as less useful than journals focused on learning, again because of the amount of focus on the issue. He said:

Both Felicia and Krista tend to give a lot of sort of it made me feel good or it didn’t, it made me comfortable or it didn’t, or uncomfortable, it made me feel good as a tutor, um. But that’s more an evaluation of how did it make me feel, not what did it make me learn. (I-T-Nov.17)

Thus, what appeared as content problems initially were more problems of the amount of journal space devoted to issues that were not explicitly focused on tutoring practice. When tutors touched on these issues briefly, Tom found it acceptable and at times even desirable. However, when journals focused on these issues to the exclusion of other content more specifically focused on tutoring practice, Tom felt the journals were less useful.

Tom was also aware that tutors sometimes tended to write about positive experiences rather than tackle areas of difficulty (I-T-Nov.3). He noted:

I think this may be a little bit of what’s going on, I’m not sure, is that they’re afraid to tell me about problems because it will suggest that they’re failures. And so they end up reporting the way an employee reports to a boss, to make it look like
everything's okay. Even if it's not. So it doesn't reflect back on them that they didn't do it right or they failed, and I mean that's built into the situation.... So it's not so much a learning tool when it's done that way. It's let's try and keep the boss happy because he wants it to go right too, because they know I want everything to go well. And of course they don't want to be put in a position which makes it look like something's going wrong. (I-T-Nov.3)
Section Five: Levels of Thinking in Journals

I begin this section by describing the trainer's perspective on levels of reflection. Next, I describe tutor journals according to those levels of reflection. Finally, I give an overview of individual tutors' reflectivity in their journals and discuss the trainer's perspective on levels of reflection in the tutors' journals.

**Trainer Perspective on Levels of Reflection**

When Tom and I discussed tutors' journals, I asked him what kinds of thinking he found more and less useful in the journals tutors wrote. From the information he gave me, I developed a hierarchy of levels of thinking in the journals. We discussed this hierarchy and, at his suggestion, I made modifications. The main result of the modifications was the development of four rather than the original three levels. He accepted the second version with a few minor changes. The hierarchy which he decided on is listed in Figure 2.

Tom's understanding of the hierarchy was that it represented different levels of thinking which tutors did in their journals. He regarded Level I as the least desirable and least useful thinking in journals. He regarded Levels II, III and IV as progressively more desirable and more useful thinking.
Tom saw the development of this hierarchy as crucial to his understanding of journal writing and his ability to assess journals and provide useful feedback. He said that without our interviews:

I wouldn't have probably been quite so clear or explicit about understanding these different levels.

It would have been more of a mushy mess, not a mess.
but it wouldn't have been so clearly divided into well there's this, this, this, and this. It would have been a bit more, well there's this end of the continuum and there's this end of the continuum, but what's in the middle, I wouldn't have thought very clearly about that. So I guess your hierarchy helped and your probe questions and just the fact of having to sit here and talk about it helped. (I-T-Dec.8)

It is interesting to note that Tom frequently referred to "your hierarchy". I had presented it as what I had put together from his comments on tutor journals, and I had modified it under his direction, but he consistently referred to it as mine. It should be noted, however, that although I helped him construct the hierarchy, I regarded it as very much his hierarchy. I agreed with the hierarchy to a large extent but there were some details with which I disagreed. For example, I felt that when tutors recognized their affective responses to their tutoring experiences it was more useful than he thought it was.

Thinking in Tutor Journals by Levels of Reflection

Next, I describe levels of thinking evidenced in tutors' journals. I base this description on the hierarchy of levels of thinking which Tom and I developed.

In doing this analysis, I refer to "journal segments". A journal segment is a section of a journal, often a paragraph, which appears to focus on one issue or to be based on one major
Idea. For example, a segment might be a discussion of a tutoring session with a particular student, or a discussion of a specific problem with reference to the situations of one or more students. Journal segments ranged from as short as one sentence to as long as a typewritten page. Many segments included thinking at more than one level of reflection.

**Level I: Reporting**

Krista mainly wrote journals at this level. Although near the end of the semester she began to reflect at higher levels, the majority of her journal segments fit into this reporting category. She often reported very generally on her tutoring sessions. For example, she wrote, "Marek and I are still ironing out what it is we should get together and do during our sessions" (J-K-Oct.18). If there was any discussion beyond this simple reporting, it usually focused on how the situation made her feel or what her intentions were concerning appointment times. For example, she wrote:

Felicia gave one of her students to me. Her name is Florence Schmidt. She seems like she will be alright to work with. I have only met her once though. We have set up a regular time to come in on wednesdays. I think this is about the only time we could schedule together. (J-K-Oct.3)

When Krista mentioned approaches to working with students, made evaluative comments or examined reasons for things, it seemed

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1 I have replaced all student names with pseudonyms.
superficial. She noted:

Everything seems to be going fine with Amanda and Florence. We have set up permanent times during the week to get together. We only meet once a week even though they want more. I said to Florence to buddy up with a classmate because one time she wanted me to proofread a paper of hers but she didn't have an appointment and I was all booked up. So she said that was a good idea. (J-K-Oct.18)

Because of Paul's log-book approach to journal writing, he also did a lot of reporting. His reporting, however, was very different from that of Krista in the level of detail he included. Furthermore, because Paul wrote about every tutoring session, the journal provided ongoing reporting of his sessions with individual students. In most cases, Paul's reporting was accompanied by some form of higher level thinking, but the majority of his writing was reporting. For example, he wrote:

A student 'B' came in and requested help on her paper. Basically she was on the right track. The paper was a comparison/contrast on Jamaica/England. I got her to explain what she was trying to do and then steered her around some minor constructions. I Xed a few spelling errors and she seemed to be buoyed by the help. As much from the fact that someone read her writing and understood it, as from constructive help she received. (J-P-Nov.8)
In this segment, typically, he not only reported on what he did with a student but also noted her needs and progress.

Felicia also did quite a lot of reporting in her journals. In her reporting segments, like Krista’s, there was little indication of what she did with students in her sessions and frequent mention of how tutoring sessions made her feel. However, like Paul, she put a lot of emphasis on student needs and progress.

Reporting was a feature of the journals of all tutors in the study. However, only these three tutors had entire segments which fit clearly into the reporting category.

**Level II: Identification**

Identification was also a feature of the journals of all tutors. However, Ann always moved from identification to higher levels of reflection within a segment. The other tutors, at times, stopped at the level of identification. Felicia and Paul did so most frequently. Identification in tutor journals included identifying successes, identifying problems and identifying effects of tutoring.

Tutors often identified the success of strategies they used. Felicia and Krista would identify the success of a strategy and then identify its effects in terms of how it made them feel. For example, Krista wrote:

*Well, I tried out my idea from my last journal. I liked it, because I knew exactly where the student was and what the student was talking about. It was nice, because I*
didn’t feel like I was being put on the spot. (J-K-Nov.16)

Billy’s approach to describing successes put more emphasis on the effects of the techniques on student learning. For example, he wrote:

*I found this week that I was better able to question my students in a way that made them do the thinking. By using questions that did not imply the answer or open ended questions I found I could make my students do their own thinking. This did provide for some awkward moments of silence, but I feel these are better learning experiences than pure dictation on my part. (J-B-Nov.15)*

Tutors also frequently identified problems in their journals. Sometimes they simply described problems and asked for or implied a request for help from Tom as the following example from Felicia demonstrates.

*I saw Ali many times throughout the week to look at his essay. I believe that he is coming along slowly but surely. He really seems to understand me when I am trying to explain things to him. The only problem is that if I am explaining things to him he tends to write down exactly what I have said. I just tell him things as an example and then I say to write it in his own words, but he still writes down my words. I do not know how to give him an example without him copying what I say directly. (J-F-Nov.4)*

At other times tutors would more explicitly ask for help with
problems they described.

Tutors also discussed the effects of their tutoring. In some cases they explored the effects of their tutoring on student learning. For example, Felicia wrote:

*I had a very good experience this week as well. I worked with a student named Jennifer. She is a really good writer, she just needs a push and confidence. The only thing she really has difficulty with is with run-on sentences. She can spot them herself now. She will be reading her essay with me, and then she would say uh-oh there is another run-on. It is great to see that she can do it on her own now without me saying anything to her. It makes me feel good about my tutoring ability.* (J-F-Oct.19)

In other cases, tutors explored the effects of tutoring experiences on themselves. For example, Paul wrote:

*My first appointment was another Iranian, a chap named Reza. He needs a lot of sentence structure help but he did the lessons Tom gave him and for the most he seems to have gotten the drift of the exercise. He strikes me as being eager to master his problems. This makes my job easier in a number of ways. First, it helps to have someone who is willing to make the effort to improve. Second, I feel more secure when I know what the student wants. Third, when a student cares then I will make the effort to help as much as possible. Fourth, and finally, I find that having to translate, interpret, decipher et al., that I am becoming*
more careful and less sloppy in my own efforts to best utilize the language. Reciprocal help if you will. (J-P-Nov.22)

Level III: Elaboration

All tutors wrote some journal segments which reached the level of elaboration. However, Krista wrote few elaborative segments. Tutors elaborated by comparing or contrasting, by identifying the purpose of strategies, by exploring problems, by relating specific situations to general principles, and by describing student needs in detail.

Tutors often compared or contrasted students or groups of students with one another. For example, in his first week of tutoring, Billy contrasted his positive and negative tutoring experiences:

During the week I had several positive experiences as well as experiences which I felt were awkward. In the positive experiences I felt I was able to help the person and the emphasis was on that person learning, not me telling them how to do something. I found that these people knew what they needed help with and did the work themselves using me as backup. However, in another case I was faced with a situation in which I felt I was expected to supply all the ideas. This man came to me with no ideas, no work completed and apparently no desire to generate either. I seemed to spend most of the appointment time trying to pry ideas out of this man and juggling in my head the balance
between his work and my work. Although I was disappointed, I learned why my other experiences were positive and therefore why I might be able to react better in future experiences. (J-B-Nov.9)

Tutors also compared their previous knowledge with their current experiences as peer tutors. Both Christopher and Paul contrasted roles that were more familiar to them with their roles as peer tutors. For example, in this segment Paul contrasted the familiar role of editor with his new role of peer tutor:

My last tutoree(?) was an editing job. A student did a quite good paper for CREATIVE WRITING. She wrote a psychological thriller about sexual abuse. Some punctuation (every "it". possessive had an apostrophe) problems, some jumping around, and the odd interjection of a new character, but otherwise OK. I found myself wearing my editor's "hat" & I had to restrain myself from doing the "redline shuffle". (J-P-Nov.8)

Christopher elaborated on a student’s difficulties by comparing her to other students he knew:

Similarly, some of my friends, who are also the college students, have the same problems as Cathy’s. But they don’t want to spend time in studying ESL courses, for they find that these courses are not transferable. They watch Chinese movies and T.V., make Chinese friends, read Chinese newspaper, talk in either Cantonese or Mandarin.
Therefore, they can hardly improve their English. This make them hard to get into the main stream of the society. They may need a change for their living style. (J-C-Nov.1)

Billy and Christopher sometimes elaborated on their purposes in using specific strategies. In the following segment, Christopher identified the purpose of specific tasks he gave a student and then reported on what those tasks were:

Cathy is the only student I am now regularly dealing with. Last Friday, she finally dropped the Marketing course... which she has problems with. I also recommended her to take an English assessment test in order to see if she needs to take any ESL courses in the coming semester. She may have the result within this week. What I am now doing is to maximize her exposure to the English environment, e.g. read two newspaper cuttings in a week, attempt fifty questions of the Listening part of the TOEFL Test, write a short composition to me every week. She really did her work last time and this made me feel happy. I do hope that she would finally take her own initiative to improve her English standard. (J-C-Nov.17)

Ann and Felicia sometimes described a problem and then explored their understandings of the problem. For example, in the following segment, Ann described a problem. She explored the problem and described how the situation made her feel.

The repeating question, "Do I have a thesis?" the repeating answerer, "I don't know, what is your thesis
statement?" Question: "I am asking you, if I have one?" Answer: "What is it that you are writing about in this paper?" And on it goes until the original question is answered. Often the thesis statement (and the conclusion) is all the student wants to be verified. Quite frequently it is difficult to find their thesis statement. I don't know whether this is because so many papers pass under my eyes that it becomes hard to focus on what each student is writing about, or if the statement itself is so poorly written that it becomes unrecognizable. I cannot say to them that this is your thesis if I am not sure that it is one. Also, I feel, very strongly, that they should be able to recognize this themselves. How else were they able to write a paper if they didn't know what they were supporting. At times trying to answer this question makes me feel unsure of myself and my own competence. (J-A-Nov.2)

Tutors also elaborated by drawing principles from specific cases. For example, Felicia wrote:

I worked with 2 different students on articles. I like it when more than one student works on the same thing because it helps me better understand it myself. (J-F-Nov.14)

Paul, Christopher and Ann also explored student needs in detail, identifying problems underlying the students' most obvious difficulties. For example, after telling about a session with a student and the difficulties she was having with
her writing, Paul wrote, "I think part of her problem might be her outside life. She commutes to Victoria twice a week" (J-P-Nov.16).

Level IV: Problem-solving and Application

The majority of the journal segments of Billy and Ann reached this fourth level, as did some of Christopher’s. In contrast, Krista, Felicia and Paul rarely reflected to this depth. Often segments at this level included use of all four levels. The most common approaches tutors took at this level included identifying problems and exploring solutions, exploring why something did or did not work and exploring a range of issues culminating in decisions about future practice.

Christopher and Krista sometimes reflected at this level about seemingly mundane issues, as did Billy on one occasion. In the following example, Christopher reflected about his future intentions concerning a student who had missed appointments:

Since October, I have been working with Kent. But for last 2 weeks, he didn’t show up in the Learning Centre. Though I phoned him two times during working hours, I still couldn’t find him. I know that he is going to take a Maths. assessment test shortly, but I think that he should do more exercises before he takes the test. So I’ll continue to phone him in the coming weeks to see what’s happening to him. (J-C-Nov.10)

However, tutors reflecting at this level typically dealt
with issues of more substance. Ann, Billy, Felicia and Krista sometimes identified a problem and explored the causes of the problem. In some cases, they looked at the roots of the problem as Ann did in the following example.

I have only encountered one difficulty this week and that is trying to get a student to find the topic sentence and/or the main idea. He keeps saying that he cannot do it himself, that he only sees the topic when we are doing it together. I think he is looking too hard and misses the point. It is like saying, "You can't see the forest for the trees!" Nevertheless, I find he lacks confidence in his own ability. He is afraid that what he chooses as the topic is not correct. I tried to get him to speak in generalities ie: in simple terms what is this article saying. Also, pointed out the title and sub-headings to him (which he missed) and explained that these will usually give you an idea of what the story is going to be about. Speculate! You may be right; you may be wrong. (J-A-Nov.16)

In many cases, tutors not only explored the problem but also identified intentions for future tutoring. In this example, Billy explored a problem and identified how he would deal with similar problems in future:

One of the students I had this week insisted on blaming her teacher for the difficulty she was having. It put me in a difficult spot; I could either stick up for her
teacher and risk the peer relationship or I could agree and irrationally blame her teacher for all her problems. I found that tricky. In the end I tried to be very neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with her. I tried to explain to her that the teacher wasn’t the cause of all her problems but it is extremely difficult to convince someone who has found a scapegoat for their problems. As well, I could relate to her in some ways. Teachers don’t always provide the best learning situation possible; not that I blame them—they are only human. In that situation I think I didn’t do as well as I could. In the future I think the best way to get around the problem is to explain to the student that teachers aren’t perfect but you have to take it into your own hands (it being your problem) and solve it yourself. I was frustrated by the experience because if I had not been in the Learning Centre I might not have acted the way I did. I may very well have agreed with her and not thought twice about it. (J-B-Nov.30)

In a few other cases, tutors identified solutions to problems without describing the problems themselves. For example, Paul wrote:

After only three shifts at the L.C. I find myself ready to make a recommendation (only in these pages), to have a universal test to determine level of oral, written and comprehensive English. It seems unfair to the student, the instructor and society-at-large (in terms of competency).
In other cases, tutors described problems they were facing, identified a solution and went on to explore possible pitfalls with their solution. For example, in the following segment, Krista identified potential pitfalls of a technique she had not yet tried:

I feel that the paper reading idea may work better with non-ESL students just because they would be able to identify the problems, and have an easier time solving them. One problem that may arise is that it might raise the noise level in the learning centre to the point of being bothersome. I also just remembered that when Florence reads her on (sic) words she changes what is actually on the paper. So, I guess follow along while she is reading. I’ll try it and see how it goes. I’ll let you know. (J-K-Nov.22)

Tutors also explored the reasons for successes and failures. In the following example, Billy explored the reason for his success with a student:

I had the interesting experience this week of having to work with a student who was in the same course as me. In fact, she was in the same class. Although I found some difficulty and awkwardness initially, I thought the experience was a productive one. It was productive most likely because I was able to help her specifically. I knew what the assignment was and what the teacher was looking
for. I would suggest that it must be comforting for a student to have someone to talk to who can relate specifically. I would also suggest that this type of situation works best because the peer tutor acts less like a teacher or tutor and more like a peer. (J-B-Nov.23)

A few tutors also wrote journal segments which included thinking at all four levels of the hierarchy. The tendency for journal writers to reflect at different levels within one journal segment has also been noted by Hatton and Smith (1995) and Surbeck et al. (1991). Ann did this most frequently, but Billy and Christopher also included segments of this type. In this example, Ann reported on a student’s need, explored that need in more detail, related the student’s needs to those of other students, reported on what happened in the session, identified her intention for future sessions and reflected on her feelings about working with the student.

One of my new students has difficulty understanding how to go about answering essay questions during an exam. He knew the content but became quite nervous and really blew it when he was required to use essay form for his answers. (Actually he had expected more multiple choice and true/false questions.) He tried brainstorming, but his efforts had failed. Like so many students he did not know the process of how to outline or how to jot down the main points and develop his answer from this. He also in some cases did not answer what was asked. I have encountered
this problem a few times over the past week; when students were required to do a summary and had trouble finding or sticking to the main ideas. Anyway, this new student and I went through his exam questions and we developed a procedure for answering them. I asked him to search for old exam questions or to develop some of his own questions for his next session so that we would work on answering them in essay form. As well, I have decided to discuss, with him, the key words that could be used in questions so that he is aware of what would be required in the answer. This should help him and I am looking forward to giving him some encouragement. (J-A-Nov.2)

Thinking in Tutor Journals: Overview

This identification of levels of thinking in tutor journals obscures some of the individual issues for individual tutors. In this section, I provide an overview of levels of reflection in the journals of individual tutors and link their reflectivity to other issues described earlier in the paper.

Krista wrote minimally reflective journals. This was particularly true of her entries early in the semester. However, near the end of the semester, as she began to understand Tom's purpose for journal writing, she wrote one journal which was far more reflective than any of her previous journals. The only journal she wrote after the reflective one was her final journal of the semester and it did not show a similar level of reflection. As a result, it is unclear whether
her new-found understanding would have lasting results in terms of the levels of reflection in her journals.

Felicia, on the other hand, after receiving the journal writing guidelines, began to write more reflective journals than she had previously. In her journals, she most often focused on assessing student needs and progress and describing the effects of techniques on her own feelings. As the semester progressed her journal writing decreased in reflectivity. Her main difficulty seemed to be the problem of thinking of new things to write about and her dislike of reflecting about tutoring techniques. By the end of the semester her journals showed little evidence of reflection. Overall, her journal writing could be characterized as moderately reflective.

Paul’s earliest journal was least reflective. In subsequent journals, in part at my urging, he began to reflect more. Because of his approach to journal writing, his reflections continued to be concrete, focusing on individual tutoring sessions. His journals gave little evidence of abstract theorizing about tutoring. However, his approach to journal writing allowed him to reflect on the development of students’ skills and of his tutoring over time. Because he wrote so few journals in the study, it was difficult to assess the value of this documentation feature of his journal writing in terms of reflective thinking. Paul’s later journals could be described as moderately reflective.

Christopher’s journals were difficult to assess for
reflectivity. In part, this may have been a result of the fact that he did less tutoring than the other tutors. His journals tended to be more abstract, focusing on issues less explicitly tied to his tutoring practice. Another issue may have been his difference in cultural and linguistic background. His rhetorical strategies differed from those of the other tutors. This difference may have affected the way he ordered his ideas, the level of abstractness he employed and the logical development of his ideas. A further factor is the degree to which journal segments Christopher wrote were interrelated. Christopher followed ideas from one journal to the next, often without referring to his previous thinking. As a result, his journals looked more reflective when examined in a group than they did when examined individually. An attempt to see beyond these complicating factors suggests that Christopher's journals were quite reflective.

Billy's journals were very reflective. There was no evidence of change in their levels of reflectivity during the study. His journal entries were the shortest in the study, averaging 263 words per entry. When he wrote he analyzed reasons for his successes and failures and either suggested future courses of action, reflected on the impact of the experience on his understanding of the role of tutor or inferred a request for assistance from the trainer.

Ann's journals were also very reflective. They were also the longest journals in the study with her entries averaging
739 words in length. She explored student needs, tutoring techniques, reasons for successes and failures, and her intentions for future tutoring. She related her tutoring experiences to one another as well as to her previous experiences of teaching and to her general approach to tutoring. Ann’s choice not to write about some issues until she had thoroughly thought them through is evident in her journals.

**Trainer Perspective on Levels of Reflection in Tutor Journals**

Tom expressed dissatisfaction with the depth of tutors’ reflections in their journals. He used two strategies to try to increase the amount of reflection tutors did. First, he developed the guidelines. Second, he made comments on their journals which he hoped would encourage the writers to reflect more on issues they had raised.

Of the two strategies, the guidelines had the most evident impact. Tom, however, had some concerns about the effectiveness of the guidelines. He said:

I thought the handout [guidelines] I gave them earlier could give them a lot of questions they could just go back to and ask themselves. But I’m finding that they don’t quite understand it, or it intimidates them so they don’t want to deal with it. And I’m not sure if that’s just because I made it too complicated for them, and if I would have made it somehow easier they could have done it more easily, or if the concept itself of analytical reflection is
more the graduate level kind of skill that students at this level just aren't used to dealing with, reflecting on their own practice, and so in a sense I'm asking more of them than I should be. (I-T-Nov.17)

Later in the semester, Tom was more positive about the ability of tutors to write reflective journals. Besides the fact that there was increased reflection in many tutors' journals, the hiring of new tutors who began journal writing from a fairly reflective perspective, encouraged him to believe that tutors could write useful reflective journals.

Despite the improvements in the reflectivity of tutor journals, Tom continued to think that if tutors reflected more deeply, they would gain more from journal writing. This was particularly true of Krista, Felicia, Christopher and Paul.

Another difficulty Tom had in assessing the usefulness of tutor journals was the degree to which he found it necessary to make inferences about tutor thinking as he read their journals. Because tutors' lines of thinking were often not explicitly stated, Tom often found it necessary to infer relationships between ideas tutors expressed. Thus, Tom would infer, for example, that two segments in a journal entry were related and together showed some new understanding. He was also aware, however, that his inferences were not necessarily accurate.

Tom found the role of the tutor trainer a difficult one because it was informal, giving him only limited power to
affect tutor behaviours. Although he did have the power to fire tutors, he would only have done so for gross incompetence, not for issues around journal writing. He described his dilemma this way:

I can't give marks, and the only way I evaluate or have a kind of evaluation of these and how they're doing is comments I make on them, but I can't give tutors a grade, so it's not a pass/fail kind of thing, and so this kind of tutor training, because it's not in, it's not set in a formal sort of teacher training situation, where they either pass or fail, there's not the same formal power and clout in products that... tutors give me. (I-T-Nov.17)

He went on to describe some of the difficulties he faced in trying to encourage tutors to write more reflective journals without damaging their self-esteem or his collegial relationship with them. He said:

I guess I don't feel comfortable in, sort of giving their journals back to them and saying, no this isn't what I wanted, do it again, or because I know they're busy people, I don't want to keep coming back at them, reinforcing the fact that they're not giving me what I want, because there's no pass/fail issue here.... Because we want to keep a sort of collegial feeling, I don't want to keep coming back at them, giving them that sort of negative reinforcement that
you guys aren't giving me what I want. Um, so that leaves me with a little bit of a dilemma of how can I encourage them to make this useful for themselves as learning exercises rather than just busy work because Tom wants it. (I-T-Nov.17)

Trainer Perspective on the Value of Journal Writing

At the semester's end, Tom felt that journal writing was worthwhile and intended to continue using it as an in-service training task the following semester (I-T-Dec.1). The value he saw in journal writing was that it to some degree fulfilled its purposes. The task provided a structure whereby tutors reflected on their tutoring practices and experiences and learned from them. The task also gave him information about what tutors were doing with individual students and what other training activities would be most appropriate.

He felt that journal writing had varying degrees of benefit for individual tutors but that all tutors benefitted to some degree. He saw Ann's and Billy's journals as very useful for them. He felt they were able to tackle issues and develop their tutoring skills through the journal writing task. He saw Paul's and Chris's journals as moderately useful and Krista's and Felicia's journals as less useful. However, he felt that all tutors benefitted from their journal writing and that there were some signs that what tutors gained from journal writing could be increased over time. He felt that the value of journal writing for tutors in the centre could be increased by him
modifying his approach to journal writing and other training activities. The modifications he intended to put into place are described in the following section.

Trainer Plans for Future Use of Journal Writing

At the end of the semester, Tom noted that there were a number of things he intended to do the following semester to help tutors benefit more from the journal writing task. He planned to: (1) change the feedback he wrote on journals; (2) provide tutors with more theoretical background about issues of teaching and learning; and, (3) help tutors recognize the learning potential of journal writing. He also planned to institute a procedure which allowed tutors to share their journals with one another.

He intended to modify his feedback on journals by using more probing questions and by modeling higher levels of thinking. Modeling of higher level thinking is seen by McAlpine (1992) and Newman (1988) as an effective form of feedback.

In the staff meetings, he intended to introduce more theoretical issues about learning and teaching. He saw this as giving "them more of an analytical frame or schema, almost, to reflect on their tutoring" (I-T-Dec.8). He hoped that providing tutors with more perspectives from which to examine their tutoring practice would assist them in reflection. Hatton and Smith (1995) suggest that an appropriate knowledge base is needed if teachers are to reflect meaningfully. Provision of differing perspectives could also be seen as an indirect way of
challenging tutors' prior assumptions, a strategy recommended by McAlpine (1992) and Newman (1988).

Tom hoped to help tutors recognize the learning potential of journal writing by raising their awareness of that potential. In a staff meeting, he intended to "get them to talk about what they see as the benefit of journal writing, and get them to... almost own it themselves" (I-T-Dec.1). This echoes Newman's (1988) assertion that journal writers need to have purposes of their own for writing their journals.

Another change which Tom planned to make was to provide an opportunity for tutors to talk about their journals with one another. Through the semester he came to the conclusion that "for journals to be most useful for students [tutors], they have to talk about them with somebody" (I-T-Nov.24).
Section Six: Tutor Thinking around Journal Writing

In this section, I explore the relationship between the thinking represented in tutors' journals and the thinking they reported to me in interviews as being initiated by the journal writing task. This focuses on my third research question. I identify three factors confounding accurate representation of tutor thinking in their journals. I also describe the effects of the interview process on tutors' thinking about issues.

Tutors' journals varied in how accurately they represented the thinking tutors did as a result of journal writing. Billy's journals fairly accurately represented the thinking he did about issues. He was explicit about his lines of thinking in his journals. He reported little further thinking after writing his journal entries. It should be noted, however, that due to scheduling problems, I frequently interviewed Billy on the same day that he had completed his journal entries.

The journals of the other tutors gave a much less accurate picture of the thinking initiated by the journal writing task. Krista's journals were mainly simply reports of thinking she had done before journal writing. The journals rarely assisted her in developing her thinking further. The journals of Felicia and Paul were deceiving in that two very similar segments might in one case represent a great deal more thinking than was evident in the journals and in the other case accurately represent their thinking. Interviews with Christopher showed
that he did a great deal of reflection which was not evident in his journals. The interviews also provided evidence that he connected some of his abstract discussions to tutoring practice more than was evident in the journals. Furthermore, he often thought a great deal more about issues after writing journal entries. Ann's journals were the tip of the iceberg. They showed evidence of reflection, but she also reflected a great deal more on the issues before, during and after writing her journals.

Powell (1985) suggests caution is needed in assuming that written comments accurately represent reflective thoughts prompted by a task. The data in this study supports the need for caution. In fact, the study suggests that it is impossible for a reader to appreciate the reflective thinking prompted by the journal writing task based on their reading of the tutors' journals.

**Factors Confounding Accurate Representation of Thinking in Journals**

Factors which made it impossible for a reader to get an accurate picture of tutor thinking resulting from the journal writing task included: tutor reporting of prior reflection, incomplete representation of the reflection which occurred, and further thinking which occurred as a result of journal writing.

**Tutor Reporting of Prior Reflection**

All tutors reported thinking in their journals that they had done prior to focusing on journal writing. In many of these
cases, writing the journals did not further their levels of reflection. For example, Krista reported that what appeared to be one of her most reflective journal segments was simply a report of reflection she had done anyway. She wrote:

*I would like to start off by talking about the idea I brought up at the meeting last Wednesday. I mentioned, that we should try to spend the first part of the appointment on exercises and then the second half, or what is left, could be used to look at the essay. I feel that in this way we can kill two birds with one stone. Not only would the students be keeping to their learning plans, but it would cure the dilemma the tutors are facing in being able to find the time to brush up on these exercises. It would also alleviate some of the pressure felt from constantly editing papers, and allow for more interaction between the student and the tutor. I don’t know about the rest of the tutors, but I almost feel like I have to edit the student’s paper if they bring it in. Somehow, I feel that this learning centre was not set up for that purpose alone.* (J-K-Nov.22)

Thus, despite the fact that Krista described a strategy, gave a rationale for the strategy and reflected on the purpose of the learning centre, her journal writing did not encourage her to reflect any further than she had done already.

Christopher and Ann also reported on prior thinking without reflecting further during journal writing. In some
cases, these journal entries showed considerable reflection. Both Christopher and Ann reported that they had not developed their ideas further while writing these segments because they did not have a reflective purpose in writing them. Typically these segments were included because tutors wanted to communicate things to Tom, the segment was simply part of the introduction or conclusion to a journal, or in Christopher’s case, the segment helped him provide continuity for the readers of his journals. For example, Ann appeared to reflect about the causes of student attendance problems in the following segment.

A few of the new students have cancelled or not shown up for their sessions. I think part of the problem is that they have too much of a work load and that they have not done any of the exercises given to them, or do not understand what is required. Therefore, it is easier to avoid coming or cancelling with a simple excuse and putting off the inevitable. (J-A-Oct.5)

In our interview, Ann stated that this segment did not include any new thinking. Her purpose in writing the segment was to give a message to Tom that he was giving the students too many tasks at the beginning of their work in the centre (I-A-Oct.13). Thus, despite evidence of reflection in the journal, writing the segment did not contribute to Ann’s thinking on the issue.
Incomplete Representation of Reflection

Often tutors' journals did not show evidence of the reflection that occurred during the journal writing process. One factor was that tutors sometimes only hinted at issues which they had thought about extensively in the journal writing process. Another factor was that they sometimes chose not to include any sign of thinking they had done. A third factor was rhetorical features of their writing.

Frequently tutors only touched on issues which they thought about a lot during the journal writing process. In the following journal segment, Ann discussed issues of content in student papers.

In many instances I have had to point out to students that the examples or quotes they were using were not relevant or did not support what they were saying. Once again rather than go over the paper I switched to a discussion of their topic. I guess I am doing this because I am trying to get them to think about the subject and what is wanted rather than presume. Also, when I tell them that they should give an explanation, quite frequently I get back the answer that it isn’t necessary because their instructor knows what they mean or their instructor doesn’t want them to do it that way. My comment is usually that they should not be writing specifically for one person that someone else may have to read their writings. The example I can use now is that I was asked by a student
(permission given by her instructor) to evaluate her paper and give my comments on the writing. Perhaps this will show some students that their writings could for a larger audience (sic). (J-A-Nov.23)

In our discussion, however, she made clear that the most crucial learning she did in writing the journal was only hinted at in the journal segment:

I guess what I wanted to say in that paragraph in the first place was that I want to teach them to think. I started out differently I guess with the problems that they have. They don't understand what they're doing so it's changing my tactics of going over their paper with them, and I want them to think, think about their topic and think about what they have to say and verbalize it, brainstorm it with somebody, a friend, me, anybody, but for goodness sake, get a feeling, get an enthusiasm for it, like Yin Wing's got, for their work. They just write a paper, 'cause 'this is an assignment I've got to do' and it shows in their work... so this is something I've learned to do this semester and I think it's worked really well... and if they start to think more about their papers next semester then I'll have accomplished something. (I-A-Nov.24)

She went on to tell me that a big goal of her work, that she had not seen so clearly before writing the journal, was to help students learn to think about their papers.
At times, tutors chose not to include ideas in journals which they had thought about in the process of journal writing. This was typical of Ann who preferred not to write about issues until she had thought them through. In one case, Ann planned an entire journal in her head about a problem she was experiencing. She subsequently discarded the idea because she had not yet come up with a solution to the problem. She said:

My journal this week was going to start out with a dialogue like question, answer and going through that kind of thing, and literally go through what I sometimes go through in the first ten minutes of a session with somebody who wants to know if they've got a thesis or not.... I dropped that idea. (I-A-Nov.3)

In another case, in her journal Krista suggested a tutoring technique and provided a rationale for using that strategy (J-K-Nov.7). What she did not report was that she had already tried out the technique with three students (I-K-Nov.9).

Rhetorical features of tutors' journals resulted in some of the discrepancy between the thinking evidenced in their journals and the thinking of the tutors about issues. As the trainer recognized, tutors often did not make their lines of thinking explicit in their journals.

Christopher, for example, frequently wrote his journals at a fairly abstract level. One of the trainer's complaints about Christopher's journals was that he did not apply his abstract thinking to tutoring practice. However, as the following
example shows, this was in some cases a matter of Christopher's choice of what to include in the journal. He wrote:

Having been working for more than two and a half months, I have to say that I learn more than I give. In the Centre, I have more chances to polish up my written and spoken English. I also could build up more self-confidence while working with students with different ethnical backgrounds. I find that I am now easily get along with my classmates other than Chinese. I also feel more confidence in expressing my idea in front of my classmates of different races. (J-C-Dec.8)

In our discussion, Christopher provided more information about his learning. He also noted that his experiences in the centre of working with students from other cultural backgrounds had shown him that he needed to tutor students from different cultural backgrounds differently. He gave examples of Kent, who was from Africa, and Cathy, who was from Hong Kong. Christopher suggested that cultural differences needed to affect the pacing of tutoring and the tutor's expectations of students' attitudes. He said this point was a new insight he gained while writing the journal. Thus, a journal segment which appears to be an abstract discussion of Christopher's learning as a result of tutoring actually involved concrete thinking about tutoring practice.

Christopher's ideas in his journals also often appeared to lack logical development. For example, he wrote:
During the time while I was helping Cathy, I asked myself what role I should play in order to provide the most effective help. Sometimes I even get confused in being a peer tutor in the Learning Centre and being a private tutor. Genuine speaking, the assistance I offer to her is very limited, and I cannot push her too hard. Probably the main problem I am facing is how to make Cathy start her studying on her own. (J-C-Nov.17)

In the following discussion, Christopher described some of his thinking behind this issue. The thinking shows the logical connections between the points made in the journal. This excerpt begins near the end of discussing a previous segment.

J: You say you’re worried that maybe you’re helping her too much, that you’re sort of giving her the study method and she’s just doing it.

C: Yeah, that’s the point I mention in the next paragraph. That’s the difference between a peer tutor in the learning centre and a private tutor, in my opinion.

J: Yeah, that was something I wondered when you said this. What is the difference?

C: The difference is that, yeah, for to be a private tutor I think it’s really a role of problem solver, yeah, whenever a student come to any problem, he or she may seek help from you and it’s our job for her
mom or her parents pay me, yeah, in order to get help from me, yeah. For peer tutor our role of course also give help to student but most of the job duties are study skill instead of help her to solve the problem. Yeah. Therefore we do hope that she can solve the problem by herself after seeking our advice. J: So with the peer tutoring the goal is more to make them independent? C: Yeah, that's right. That's the point I want to make....I want to clarify. It's also my problem too, I find that I got confused in my role in helping Cathy, yeah. I wonder whether I should work in a different way instead of just giving her this photocopied stuff to let her read it at home and do the composition. It seems to be a real, generally a teacher instead of a peer tutor.... In fact I got quite adapted to teach or conduct the orientation sessions of word perfect. (inaudible) is my role the same as the role I had in Hong Kong. Just conduct the class. So I feel very comfortable in doing so. Yeah. But to give advice to student how to develop their study skill or how to help them develop their own method of studying is maybe a little bit different. Yeah. J: Yeah. I can see that. This idea of the difficulty between being a private tutor and being a learning
centre tutor, was that an issue which you thought of while you were writing or had you been thinking about that before?

C: ... In fact, this was a point I thought of while I was making my outline last night. I developed it more when I wrote it today. (I-C-Nov.17)

Christopher reported that this was all new thinking he had done while planning and writing his journal.

Another aspect of this lack of explicit representation of lines of thinking is that sometimes tutors did not show the relationships between ideas in different journal segments. Christopher often appeared to write about a wide range of different issues in his journal. In the interviews, however, he explained that many of the issues were related. This was not evident to the reader both because he did not show the relationships between the ideas and because he often wrote about other issues between segments he regarded as related. This lack of explicitness about the connections between ideas also occurred across journal entries. In Ann’s first journal she wrote the following segment:

I enjoy working with the mature (sic) students who are returning to school after many years of being out of the system. They bring with them a lot of background knowledge and living experience that can be applied to their class papers. Most of these students just need some reassurance and a little help with how to go about writing their
required papers. (J-A-Oct.5)

In her journal two weeks later, Ann mentioned in passing, "I have also asked them to tell me what it is that they would like to work on so that I am helping them with what they need to learn" (J-A-Oct.18). In our interview, she noted that this statement was a direct outcome of the thinking she had done about mature students earlier in the semester. However, in her later journal she showed no such connection. As a result, the later statement showed no evidence of the depth of thinking underlying her actions.

Another rhetorical feature that interfered with understanding the levels of thinking tutors achieved in journal writing was their choice of words. In one interview, for example, Paul implied that he regarded a description of student need as a statement of what he intended to do with the student in their next session.

My last student was Rhonda and in the four times I have seen her I notice some big changes. She is quite taken with the 'brainstorming' suggestion and today she came in with 6 pages of notes. Most in progression (thoughts). Still having a bit of a problem with focus and organization but I feel she is gaining confidence and starting to pick up speed. (J-P-Nov.22)

In our discussion, Paul reported that he was reflecting both when he identified her progress and when he noted "what to focus on next, organization". He said, "So it's a note to me
when I go back and read it I can say did I do that or didn't I do that, did it work or didn't it work" (I-P-Nov.24). Thus, although in his journal he described organization as a need, in the interview he described organization as what he intended to work on with her next. Considering Paul's penchant for discussing student needs in his journal, it is interesting to note that he equated his discussion of student need with a statement of intent for future tutoring of the student. If, in examining Paul's journals, one regarded all statements of need (Level I in the hierarchy) as statements of intent for future tutoring (Level IV in the hierarchy), his journals would have to be regarded as more reflective than they otherwise appear.

In another example, Billy made clear that his positive evaluation of a technique could be equated with an intention to continue using the technique. He wrote:

I found this week that I was better able to question my students in a way that made them do the thinking. By using questions that did not imply the answer or open ended questions I found I could make my students do their own thinking. This did provide for some awkward moments of silence, but I feel these are better learning experiences than pure dictation on my part. (J-B-Nov.15)

Part of our discussion of this segment follows:

J: Then here, but you feel that they're better learning experiences than pure dictation on your part, is that something you were aware of feeling when you were doing
it?
B: No, I was more feeling awkward and then afterwards, probably when I was writing the journal, I thought they were better learning experiences.
J: So would you say then that writing this journal helped encourage you to keep working at that?
B: Yeah, a little bit, yeah, 'cause it just kind of reinforces, I mean it's still awkward a bit but writing the journal helped a little bit, yeah.
J: Do you think if you hadn't written the journal, that you would have acted any differently?
B: Um, I may have, I may have just fell back to asking yes or no questions. (I-B-Nov.16)

Rhetorical issues have also been suggested by Hatton and Smith (1995) as a factor confounding the assessment of reflection in journals. They suggest that, "It may well be the case that in any research, the evidence for reflection is being distorted by students' lack of ability to use particular genre constructions" (p. 42). I would suggest that evidence for reflection can be distorted not only through writers' inabilities to use particular rhetorical devices but also through their preferences for particular devices. The evidence suggests that this issue may be particularly important in assessing the journals of those whose first language is not English. However, it also shows that rhetorical choices affect the assessment of native English speakers' reflective writing.
Thinking after Journal Writing

Most tutors reported thinking further about issues after writing their journals. In some cases, simply reporting on tutoring sessions led to further reflection. In other cases, new insights gained while journal writing initiated further reflection.

In many cases when tutors simply reported on a tutoring session in their journals, they subsequently reflected further on the session. As Felicia noted in one interview, "if you write it down then it might click in your head" (I-F-Oct.11). Focusing on issues and clarifying their ideas while writing journals may have enabled tutors to reflect. For example, Paul wrote:

*The next hour of tutoring was on WP [word processing]. So I did a Level 2 with a student, got him to do some simple exercises, showed him a couple of quick steps and recommended a couple of texts for him to check.* (J-P-Nov.8)

In discussing this segment, Paul said, "After I had written this and I was thinking about what Tom had said in the meeting, I realized that I had done too much and he probably didn't learn much. It was more a display of my skills" (I-P-Nov.10). In this case, Paul did not problematize the tutoring session until after completion of the journal entry.

In other cases after writing about problems in their journals, tutors reflected on solutions to those problems. In
the following example, after writing her journal Ann focused on the implications of the issue for future tutoring. She wrote:

One concern that I have, is regarding a paper that is returned by an instructor and is so badly marked with corrections that it is difficult to read the original work. I realize it is necessary for an instructor to indicate grammar errors, etc., but a paper graded and returned like this must be very discouraging for a student. The student didn’t seem too unhappy about this but looked at it as an opportunity to improve. Therefore, we used this paper as a tool for learning. We went over the paper and discussed why these things were wrong and how to apply this to future writings. Later, I chastised myself for not correcting her paper more thoroughly before she handed it in to her instructor. I was more intent on the contents and logic of her work and only pointed out the more noticeable grammar errors. But then, we would not have had the scarred paper as the basis for learning. (J-A-Oct.25)

Ann told me that only the last sentence of this segment was new thinking resulting from writing the journal. She had thought about all the rest prior to thinking about her journal. However, she also reported further thinking she had done as a result of clarifying her thinking about the situation. She had decided what to work on in future with the student. She felt that they needed to pay more attention to word choice in the
student's writing. She had also thought about the ramifications of the problem in a broader sense. She decided that in future she would encourage students to get feedback twice on their papers, once on content and organization and once on word choice and grammar issues (I-A-Oct.27). The journal writing had served as a catalyst for further high level reflection.

In other cases, new thinking done in the process of journal writing initiated further thinking about issues. Sometimes, this seemed to occur as a result of the "cathartic" function of journal writing described by McAlpine (1992). For example, in one journal Christopher wrote:

_Last week, Cathy was late for her appointments two times. I did feel a bit disappointed with her, for she didn't care what she has promised to me. I'd better give her a last warning before I put her name on the blacklist._ (J-C-Nov.10)

Christopher described the function writing this segment served.

_The time when I was writing this I felt a little bit disappointed, not really angry, but disappointed so that's why I wrote a last warning... but I modified it a lot,... writing the journal... really helped me to give her a moderate warning._ (I-C-Nov.10)

He had got out his feelings on paper and then modified his intention to a less extreme action.

_Often further thinking after journal writing related to implications of reflections in journals for tutoring practice._
In the following example, Paul described reflecting further about a new insight he had gained while writing his journal and as a result changing his approach to a student. In his journal, he wrote:

One [student] forgot to bring anything with her. No notes, no questions, just her referral. It looks like she was not real clear on the concept of what we do. I gave her some exercises that coincided with Tom's notes and suggested she come prepared with some problems she felt she needed help with. (J-P-Jan.27)

Paul said that the only new thinking which he did in writing this segment was to note that perhaps the student was not clear on the concept of getting tutoring. He said that prior to writing the journal he had simply regarded her as an "empty vessel". After writing the journal, while he was proofreading it in fact, he thought further about the situation. He felt that he had been correct about her not being clear on the concept and that he would need to "lead her step by step" to help her learn how to use the centre effectively. He felt that his initial reaction had been "a little too harsh" and reassessed the situation after writing his journal (I-P-Jan.27). Paul's recognition while journal writing of the student's lack of understanding caused him to reflect further about the implications of this recognition after writing the journal.

At other times, journal writing seemed to spark later
thinking about issues not touched on in the journals themselves. In the following example, Ann wrote about one issue in dealing with particular students and saw this as a catalyst for thinking about another issue in relation to some of the same students.

With [one group of] students it has been necessary to help them develop their thesis (and for them to be able to recognize that they have a thesis statement) before they can continue with their paper. Once again, I encountered the over use of quotes. One student had nothing but quotes in her paragraphs. She did not understand that quotes were only to be used to support what she was saying, and that she should not use too many of them in each paragraph. One paragraph consisted of approx. five sentences all of which were paraphrasing and quotes. After our discussion, I think she finally got the idea and went away to do a rewrite. She will drop it off for me to proof read. (J-A-Nov.16)

Our discussion on this segment went like this:

A: After I finished [writing the journal], I realized something that happened with regard to one of these incidents that I should have continued on about. And that was the fact that before I came to this point about quotes that I had already met with two of these students and I’d already discussed their thesis and how they would outline it and everything. And they went away and were pleased
about it and I was really pleased about how that session had gone. And then they came back with this and this was on my mind rather than, I guess I should have looked at this and why, why did this happen? And I’m trying to figure out why it happened. And I still haven’t come to the conclusion why one week they were set with their mind what they had to do and then completely reversed back to what they did before anyway. So writing this down, well, just made me think about it and I guess the only thing I can do about it is send them away and make them rewrite it so that I can have something to work with and that’s about it.

J: Yeah, so that thinking about how this fit with what you’d done previously, you thought about after writing this?

A: That’s correct.

J: So it sparked some thinking that was useful?


Writing about one problem led to thinking about another related problem.

Effects of the Research Process on Tutor Thinking

The interview process led to further tutor thinking about issues. Felicia noted, “when we talk about it [an issue], I think about it a lot more than usual, and it sticks in my head a lot more when we talk about it” (I-F-Dec.7). Tutors recognized that I affected their thinking in three ways: by
focusing them again on the issues they wrote about; by asking probing questions about their thinking; and, by occasionally sharing my perspectives on issues.

One difficulty in assessing the effects of the research process on this issue is that I did not at the outset of the data collection focus on the issue of the possible effects of the research process on tutor thinking. After reconceptualizing the study as a form of action research, I began to acknowledge and question the effects of my interviewing on tutor thinking. However, in my earlier interviews I did not typically question tutors about the effects of those interviews on their thinking. Many of the transcripts of those earlier interviews do not clarify whether further thinking reported by tutors occurred prior to or during the interview. The examples which follow, however, show tutor recognition of the effects of the interview process.

The structure of tutor interviews encouraged tutors to think about issues again. This resulted in a considerable amount of further tutor thinking on those issues. In the following example from an interview with Ann, she identified a new understanding triggered by the interview process:

I started to think about this boy and what he was doing and from this point it kind of triggered in my mind about some other students who I'd been working with during the week who were developing summaries. This was the reverse...I didn't make the connection when I wrote this
but I did just now talking about it. What I was doing with
him, I could do with them too. (I-A-Nov.3)

My questions in interviews also affected tutor thinking.
For example, Felicia wrote a journal entry about using a
technique for the first time (J-F-Oct.28). In the interview,
she reported that she would use the technique again with the
student. When I asked her if the technique would work with
other students, she said it probably would but that she had not
thought about that until I asked the question (I-F-Nov.2).

In some cases, I took a more active role in affecting
tutor thinking. For example, Ann wrote about a problem she had
helping a student recognize main ideas in reading (J-A-Nov.16).
In our interview, we had a long discussion about this issue
which changed Ann’s perspective. I suggested a number of
possible strategies for helping him with the problem. Ann
expressed considerable interest in one of my ideas and
suggested a modification to it that she thought might work with
the student (I-A-Nov.17).

It should be noted that although I occasionally took an
active role in interviews by suggesting techniques they might
use, I generally only did so when tutors seemed stuck and
somewhat desperate to come up with new ideas. I avoided this
for two reasons. First, Tom suggested techniques in staff
meetings and I regarded this as his role. Furthermore, I did
not have time in interviews to conduct individual tutor
training sessions. Second, I felt that ideas developed by the
tutors themselves would be most useful to them. I did not want them to turn to me for ideas. I wanted them to use their experience to develop ideas of their own.
Section Seven: Collaborative Analysis

In this final section of Chapter Three, I describe the collaborative analysis of the data and the writing of the thesis. First, I discuss my writing of individual case studies and the reactions of participants to those studies. Next, I describe how I involved participants in collaborating on the analysis of the data and the outcomes of those efforts. Finally, I describe the process of writing the thesis and raise some issues concerning validity.

Writing Individual Profiles

After completion of the first phase of data collection, I wrote case studies of the individual participants in the study. I called these case studies "profiles".

Writing the profiles had two purposes. First, following Middleton (1993), I wanted participants to have the opportunity to vet information that would be included about them in the study before others had access to that information. The small number of participants in the study and the personal nature of some of the information made me feel it was necessary to give participants an opportunity to remove data from the study. I told them about this step at the outset. I hoped this would reassure them that they could say what they liked in our interviews, secure in the knowledge that I would not make information about them public without their permission. Second, I wanted to give participants the opportunity to contribute to
the theory-building of the study. I hoped the profiles would allow me to try out my analysis of the data about each participant on that participant. I did so with the goal of avoiding what Said (1979) calls "appropriation". Appropriation is the tendency on the part of researchers to interpret meanings of subordinate groups for the researchers' own purposes. I also wanted to put the data in a form which allowed participants to access information about the other participants. This access would enable them to theorize about data collected on all participants.

In writing the profiles, I did not attempt to create a tight analysis of the data. My goal was to create an account which allowed for varied interpretations of the data. I did simple deductive analysis of each participant's journals and perspectives, and included extensive excerpts from journals and interview transcripts. Because each participant's profile had to stand alone, I did not use data collected about the trainer's perspectives in the profiles of tutors. This meant that discussions of reflection did not focus on the trainer's levels of reflection. Instead, I described participants' reflections in more general terms. Each profile consisted of general information about participant perspectives on the journal writing task as well as information about content and reflections in journals and about thinking around journal writing. The profiles were written using language I felt would be accessible to all participants. The development of the
profiles allowed me to create an individual portrait of each tutors' journal writing behaviours and perspectives.

Participant Responses to Individual Profiles

After completing the profiles, I gave participants their own profiles for a period of two to three weeks. I asked participants to do two things. First, I wanted them to identify any aspects of my analysis with which they disagreed. Second, I asked them to identify any data which they did not want made public. Three of the tutors responded that the profiles were accurate from their perspectives and that all information could be made public. Four participants, Ann, Christopher, Tom and Krista, agreed with the overall accuracy of the profiles but asked for minor changes in wording. These changes focused on connotations of specific words or phrases. Some of the problematic terms were terms I had used in my analysis of the data. In a few cases, terms they had used in our interviews were the problem. I discussed each change with the participants and we agreed on substitutions for the problematic words. I did not feel that these changes substantially affected the data or the analysis in the study. After making the necessary changes to the profiles, I distributed all profiles to all participants.

Tutor Collaborative Meeting

As well as the profiles of all participants, I gave each tutor a memo which clarified the purpose of the research and listed fourteen questions for their consideration. Some
questions were general in nature. They asked for such things as a general appraisal of the value of the journal writing task. Other questions focused on more specific issues raised by individuals. These included the trainer’s attitudes to levels of reflection and content, the effect of journal writing on confidence, the preference for oral as opposed to written reflection and the preference for reporting-style journals. In preparation for a collaborative tutor meeting, tutors were asked to read the profiles of the trainer and at least one other tutor and think about their reactions to the questions I posed.

Unfortunately, scheduling the collaborative meeting was difficult. It was the end of the following semester and tutors were very busy. Furthermore, some tutors were leaving town at semester’s end. The best I could do was schedule a meeting at a time that five tutors could manage. Ultimately, only four tutors attended the meeting because one tutor got held up with writing a final paper for a course. Ann, Billy, Christopher and Felicia attended the meeting.

At the meeting, Ann and Billy reported that they had read all of the profiles. Christopher and Felicia had read only those of one other tutor and the trainer. I began the meeting by asking about differences and similarities they saw across the profiles. We then discussed the questions I had provided. The meeting was two hours long. All tutors present participated actively. I audiotaped and later transcribed the discussion.
Tutor Collaborative Meeting: Findings

Below, I highlight some of the key findings of the collaborative tutor meeting.

Differences affecting levels of reflection. All tutors regarded a crucial issue affecting levels of reflection in journals to be the impetus for reflection. They felt that tutors who wrote journals for their own purposes wrote the most reflective journals whereas those who wrote journals to satisfy Tom's requirement wrote the least reflective journals. This supports LaBoskey's (1993) finding that more reflective journal writers were more internally motivated whereas less reflective journal writers relied on external motivation. Felicia identified lack of time as an important factor which reduced the reflectiveness of her journals. She found that she did not have time to write her journal outside of her working hours and that during her working hours she was constantly interrupted. Wedman et al. (1990) also found time to be an important constraining factor in achieving reflectivity. LaBoskey (1993) found that students who were overwhelmed and distracted by other concerns were relatively unreflective. Tutors also discussed levels of confidence in both tutoring and journal writing as possible factors influencing levels of reflection.

Levels of reflection. Tutors generally agreed with Tom's levels of reflection. They felt that in most cases statements at Level IV were most reflective and most useful whereas those at Level I were least reflective and least useful. Billy
pointed out that, rather than a hierarchy, these levels represented a progression, a progression he often followed in writing a journal segment. Billy also suggested that perhaps Level IV was not always best. He gave the example of an experienced tutor who may only need to identify a goal for working with a student. Once the goal is established, the course of action may be obvious to the tutor so any further writing would not show reflection.

Judging journals. The tutors felt that journals should not be judged as less or more useful by the trainer. They felt that if journals are to be for the tutor's own benefit, they should have free rein to discuss whatever they choose at whatever level of reflection they feel comfortable with. They discussed uses for journals outside the trainer's goals. These included personal uses for journal writing such as helping tutors develop their skills as students and their confidence. Ann suggested that such alternate uses were productive for tutoring because they provided "a springboard" for thinking about tutoring even if they did not focus on tutoring itself. She and others felt that these reflections affected tutoring but that the effects may be long-term rather than immediate.

Controlling journals. Generally, tutors felt that the freer journals are, the more useful they are. They felt that if the trainer places controls on what tutors write about, it is more difficult for the tutors to own the task. If the trainer does not place controls on journal writing, it is easier for
tutors to see it as for their own purposes. As a result, the journal writing is more productive.

The threat of journal writing. All tutors felt that journal writing was threatening because it required the tutor to expose their weaknesses to another person. The fact that the reader was the boss made it doubly threatening. Most tutors felt that journal writing was most threatening for them when they were new tutors. At that point, they were less confident about their skills and less secure in the job. As new tutors, they also didn't really know what was expected in a journal. Billy felt differently. He found that at the beginning he was not worried about exposing his weaknesses because he felt it was acceptable to make mistakes when he had just begun the job. As time went on, he felt that he shouldn't be making mistakes any more so was more reluctant to show his weaknesses.

Emphasis on weaknesses. In discussing journal writing, the tutors put a lot of emphasis on the issue of writing about their weaknesses despite the fact that they recognized they could learn from writing about strengths. Some felt that writing about weaknesses was more productive; they learned more from it. Others felt that the emphasis on weaknesses made the task more threatening. When asked what the trainer could do to reduce the emphasis on weaknesses, they suggested two possibilities. First, Ann suggested that the trainer's use of the word "critical" and "critically reflect" in the guidelines may have been taken by tutors with its negative connotation of
'find fault with' as opposed to a more neutral or academic connotation. Others suggested that giving new tutors examples of tutor journals showing reflection on both strengths and weaknesses would help by both reducing the threat of journal writing for new tutors and by showing how looking at positive aspects could be achieved.

**Benefits of journal writing worth time spent.** In general, tutors felt that journal writing was well worth the time spent on it. Some saw both journal writing and attending staff meetings as useful training activities which complimented one another. Others thought that journal writing was more useful than staff meetings because journals dealt with issues that were important to the individual tutor. They found that the issues dealt with in staff meetings were often not pertinent to their needs. They did not find fault with the trainer in this. Instead, they felt that learning needs of tutors were so individualized that the meetings could not address the needs of all tutors. Felicia felt that sometimes her journal writing was worth the time spent on it. When she used her journals for her own growth they were well worth the time, but when she wrote them simply to satisfy Tom's requirement they were not worth the time.

**Writing better than discussion.** All tutors present preferred writing about their experiences to discussing them orally. They felt writing helped them clarify their ideas. They also felt writing was less anxiety producing than speaking with
the trainer. In the initial data collection, only Christopher mentioned this benefit of the task being written, but all tutors at the meeting agreed that it was a major benefit of the task. They found writing gave them time to think through their ideas. It should be noted that Krista, who was most uncomfortable with reflecting in writing, was not present at the meeting.

**Diary writing vs. reflective writing.** Some tutors felt that journal writing would be equally productive or more productive if they were just asked to write a log or diary of their tutoring experiences. They felt that in writing a log, they would naturally reflect on issues that came up. Because the task would be less threatening, they felt they would be more free to reflect naturally and therefore gain more. Billy suggested that such an approach might work with experienced journal writers but that new tutors might see the task as a mechanical one and not reflect on their experiences.

**Talking about journals.** All tutors felt that talking about their journals with me had been very useful. It had focused them again on their experiences, and my questions had prompted them to reflect more deeply. In the semester since I had completed the initial data collection, Tom had given tutors opportunities to read each others' journals and comment on them. However, tutors felt that talking about their own journals was more useful and encouraged more reflection than reading and talking about the journals of others.
Final Trainer Interview

Following the collaborative tutor meeting, I met with Tom for a final interview. Prior to the interview, I had provided him with the profiles of all tutors and a summary of key findings in the collaborative tutor meeting. In preparation for the interview, I asked him to read the profiles and the summary and consider what new insights he had gained concerning how to best approach journal writing in the learning centre. The interview, which lasted for about an hour, was focused on his developing understandings. However, I also made suggestions about some of the implications I saw in the research. I audiotaped and later transcribed the interview.

**Final Trainer Interview: Findings**

Below, I describe Tom’s perspective on issues raised in the profiles and the collaborative tutor meeting.

Tom’s perspective was that journals worked well for some tutors. However, for other tutors they seemed less useful. He felt a key issue was how to make the task more useful for those who did not take to the approach easily. Noting the differences between tutors evident in the journal profiles, Tom felt that some degree of individualization was needed. He felt tutors should have more choice of when to hand journals in and how to do them.

A major concern of Tom’s was how to give tutors internal motivation for journal writing. He suggested that this might be achieved through how journal writing was introduced and how
journals were used after completion.

Tom felt the guidelines he had used for journal writing needed adaptation. He felt they should be simpler and use language that was "not so heavy". He thought that the existing guidelines confused tutors and that an adapted version should be much shorter, just identifying a few key questions.

He also suggested other strategies that he felt would introduce journal writing in a more fruitful way. He suggested that a key issue was to represent journal writing as "an opportunity for growth" rather than "a way to improve" (I-T-Apr.26). He felt his previous emphasis on improvement had encouraged tutors to focus on weakness and had rendered the task negative for some tutors. Another point he raised was the importance of training tutors to do journal writing. He felt it would be useful to provide new tutors with a range of examples of previous tutor journals. These journals could show tutors the potential benefits of journal writing as well as give them models on which to base their initial journals. He also felt that giving tutors the hierarchy of levels of reflection would be useful. He felt tutors should write at whatever level they wanted but that they could use the hierarchy to measure their own reflectivity. This strategy would maximize choice and encourage tutors to be reflective about their own journal writing. Hopefully, it would increase tutors' internal motivation for journal writing.

Tom felt that journals should be used after they were
written. One way he felt they should be used was as a focus for discussion between the tutor/journal writer and the trainer. Particularly for those tutors who seemed to gain little from journal writing, he thought if he interviewed tutors about their journals that he could push them to higher levels of reflection. He noted the benefits that tutors had gained from the process of being interviewed for my research. One concern he had about this approach was the heavy demand it would place on his time.

Tom also felt that journals should be shared among tutors. He had done a bit of that the previous semester and he felt that it was productive. Also, if it were done systematically he felt that tutors could be motivated by the opportunity to share their ideas. He did have concerns, however, that some tutors might use their journals more to show off than to reflect.

I suggested to Tom an idea of my own about how journals could be used effectively in the learning centre context. Basing my argument on the benefits of my interviewing tutors about their journals, I suggested that tutors might benefit most from talking about their own journals as opposed to discussing those of others. One of the other focuses of tutor training was teaching tutors to question students about their papers in a way that the students and not the tutor provided the ideas. I suggested that tutors could tell about issues in their journals and that other tutors could question them with the goal of helping them think more deeply about the issues.
Tom was enthusiastic about this idea. He suggested that during initial training for journal writing it might be useful for tutors to revise their journals after talking about them. This would give them experience both with more reflective journal writing and with incorporating new ideas into a piece of writing, something that their students frequently had to do following tutoring sessions. He felt that once this initial phase was over, the revision phase of the task could be dropped.

Writing the Study

I wrote the study using the profiles instead of the complete body of data. This had both benefits and limitations. One benefit was that I was working from an organized body of data. The process of writing the study became one of amalgamating the data from the profiles and theorizing on the basis of the amalgamation. Another benefit was that the individual profiles helped me to retain the voices of all participants. Opie (1992) asserts that in order to avoid appropriation:

the writer should consciously attempt to move away from a uniform textual surface which represents only the researcher's voice, to the creation of a report which is more fissured, that is, one in which different and often competing voices within a society are recognized. (p. 58)

The profiles helped me avoid the tendency to lose sight of individual differences and dissenting data. The major
limitation of the approach was that some data that would have aptly supported my lines of thinking was unavailable to me. However, I feel this did not have a major impact on the study.

The collaborative tutor meeting and the final tutor interview also provided data for the study. However, a crucial aspect of these meetings was the differing perspectives they introduced to the data as a whole. These perspectives assisted me in my analysis. For example, Billy’s comment that perhaps higher levels of reflection are not always the most useful for all tutors encouraged me to reconsider the instrumentality of reflection as opposed to its positioning in terms of levels of reflection.

Conclusion

Roman and Apple (1990) assert that:
valid research must use a methodology that (1) resonates with the lived experiences of the group being researched, (2) enables members of the group to comprehend and transform their experiences of subordination, (3) reduces the divide between the researcher's intellectual work and group members' ordinary ways of describing and understanding their experiences, and (4) allows the researcher's prior theoretical and political commitments to be informed and transformed by understandings derived from the group’s experiences. (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p. 652-3)

Although Roman and Apple work within the criticalist tradition,
their standards for validity are appropriate for all research with emancipatory goals. In doing this research, I have attempted to meet these goals.

Eisenhart and Howe (1992) suggest that one standard for valid educational research is the external and internal value constraints of the research. By internal value constraints they mean the value of the research for improving educational practice. This study, by elucidating the perspectives of journal writers on their journal writing practices, enables practitioners to approach journal writing with a more complete understanding of the possible effects of their practice on their students. By internal value constraints, Eisenhart and Howe refer to research ethics. In this study, not only did I make every attempt to provide participants with the opportunity to refuse to participate in the study and to remove data from the study, but I also attempted to make their participation of value to them. There is ample evidence in the study that this aspect of the research was highly successful.
In this chapter, I discuss some findings of the study and link those findings to those of other researchers. I discuss the content and levels of reflection in tutor journals and the role of journal writing in reflection. From these, I draw implications of the study for educators and researchers.

Findings

Content and Levels of Reflection of Journals

In the study, tutors' choices of content and types of reflection were affected by a number of factors. These factors are discussed below.

Understanding of the task. Tutors' understandings of the journal writing task affected their choices. For example, early in the study tutors understood the task to be one of reporting and so reflected little at higher levels. After Tom had provided the guidelines, tutors changed their perceptions of the task. Specific aspects of the guidelines then seemed to impact tutors in their choices of what and how to write. For example, a key question in the guidelines was "What have you learned?". Christopher took this to mean he could discuss his own learning without specific reference to tutoring practice. However, that was not the intention of the trainer. Specific word choices in the guidelines were cited by both the trainer and the tutors as effecting a negative, weakness-oriented approach to journal writing. Tom saw "become a better tutor"
and Ann saw the term "critical" as encouraging tutors to see journal writing as a way of mending something that was originally flawed. The negative orientation of the journal writing prompt may have encouraged tutors to see journal writing as a remedial rather than a growth-oriented task. Furthermore, Tom suggested that the journal writing guidelines may have been too complicated and therefore were hard for tutors to understand. Krista certainly appeared to have some difficulty understanding the prompt. Once she had clarified her understanding of the task, she began to write more reflectively. These findings would seem to support the contention of Wedman and Martin (1986) that lack of reflection on the part of students may be due in part to weaknesses in the journal writing prompt.

Impetus for journal writing. Tutors who found their own purposes for journal writing seemed to reflect more on their practice and reflect at higher levels. Those who did the task only because it was required by the trainer wrote less reflectively. This supports LaBoskey's (1993) finding that more reflective students had internal motivation whereas less reflective students were externally motivated. One factor which seemed to affect some tutors' motivation was their perception of the locus of control. At least one tutor perceived the journal writing guidelines as taking away her control. This suggests that for some tutors a journal writing prompt which introduces expectations of the trainer may encourage journal
writers to see the task as externally motivated and controlled. It may also be that tutors who are new to tutoring have a more instrumental need for reflection whereas some of those who have more experience may find it more difficult to find internal motivation for reflection.

**Feelings of vulnerability.** Hatton and Smith (1995) suggest that feelings of vulnerability may cause tutors to self-blame for their perceived inadequacies, particularly when the locus of control is seen as external to themselves. Tutors in the study who were most externally motivated, also tended to be those tutors who were anxious to avoid revealing their weaknesses to the trainer. This led them to avoid writing about issues they saw as reflecting negatively on their abilities. It also seemed to lead tutors to choose what to write about with an eye both to bolstering their flagging confidence and to making a good impression on the trainer.

**Personal history.** Tutors' varied backgrounds seemed to affect choices about what to write and how to write about it. In Christopher's case, his cultural background, his own language learning experience and his teacher training and experience affected his choices. In Krista's case, her feelings of being exploited in her previous work experiences encouraged her to focus on issues of how to work with students without being "used" by them. Particularly new tutors who had experienced related roles such as those of teacher, private tutor, fellow student, language learner and professional editor
tended to explore the tutor role in relation to those more familiar roles. Kennedy (1991; cited in Freeman, 1993) notes that learners "interpret new content through their existing understandings and modify and reinterpret new ideas on the basis of what they already know and believe" (p. 495). Both content and reflection are affected by tutors' prior knowledge and beliefs. As LaBoskey (1993) shows, these prior understandings affect how readily and in what way students undertake reflective tasks.

Tutoring experience. Tutors' prior and current experience of tutoring also affected their journals. For example, new tutors seemed to focus their journals more on their roles as tutors whereas experienced tutors tended to focus more on their reactions to tutoring experiences. Two of the more experienced tutors also tended to have difficulty in coming up with things to write about that they felt were worthy of reflection. Some degree of cognitive dissonance and ambiguity has been seen as needed for reflective opportunities to lead to growth (McAlpine, 1992; Gipe & Richards, 1992; Pape & Smith, 1991). This study would seem to support this contention. Two of the more experienced tutors had difficulty deciding what to write about in their journals because everything seemed so much the same. This was particularly true of Felicia, many of whose students were working on papers for one course. She regarded her tutoring sessions as not worthy of reflection because they were all the same. Current tutoring experience also affected
choices of what to write and how to write about it. Christopher, for example, who did little writing tutoring, wrote less about writing tutoring than the other tutors. In Christopher's case, however, this lack of practice also affected how he wrote about writing tutoring. He wrote about writing tutoring on a more abstract level than the other tutors.

**Time.** Many of the tutors in the study had heavy workloads. The two tutors who had the most time, Ann and Billy, were the most reflective in their journal writing. This would seem to support the contention of Wedman et al. (1990) that time is a crucial factor in the ability to reflect. LaBoskey (1993) also found that having a lot of distractions seemed to detract from the ability to reflect.

**Preference for writing as a mode of learning.** Most tutors in the study liked reflecting in writing. It should be noted, however, that tutors were hired in part on the strength of their writing abilities. They found that writing allowed them to clarify and think through their ideas before passing them on to the trainer. They found the recursive and self-paced aspects of journal writing helped them reflect. These benefits of reflection through writing support Emig's (1977) description of the ways in which writing fosters learning which I described in Chapter Two. Krista, however, did not find writing a comfortable mode for reflection. This supports Fulwiler's (1982; cited in Carswell, 1988) contention that journal writing
is not for everyone.

**Multiplicity of purposes for journal writing.** Although journal writing was portrayed by the trainer as having the sole purpose of helping tutors better their tutoring practices, all participants in the study used journals for other purposes as well. For example, tutors used their journals to communicate with the trainer, to make a good impression on the trainer and to create a record of tutoring for accountability purposes. The trainer used journals as a tool for needs assessment and for supervision. This multiplicity of purposes had outcomes in tutor choices about what to put in their journals. Journal segments that were least reflective were often seen as fulfilling purposes other than reflection on practice.

**Role of Journal Writing in Reflection**

As in other studies (e.g. Ho & Richards, 1993; Jarvis, 1992; Carswell, 1988), most tutors felt that journal writing assisted them in reflecting on their practice. Krista was the only tutor who was ambiguous about the benefits of journal writing. All other tutors ranged from positive to very positive about the benefits of the journal writing task. The trainer was more sceptical. He felt that journal writing was very beneficial to Billy and Ann but that the benefits to the other tutors were less clear.

This difference in perception of the benefits of journal writing between the trainer and the tutors can be attributed, at least in part, to the differing levels of access of the
trainer and the tutors to the benefits of journal writing. The trainer based his understanding of the benefits of journal writing on the journals themselves whereas the tutors were aware of benefits that were not apparent from studying the journals.

The journals provided imperfect evidence of the reflection the journal writing task initiated. This study has identified a number of factors which confounded accurate representation of tutor thinking initiated by journal writing. These included reporting of prior reflection, incomplete representation of reflection and use of rhetorical devices which masked reflection. Rhetorical issues may be particularly important factors in assessing journals written by second language writers. A further confounding factor was that tutors often continued to reflect after completing their journals. Continued reflection after the completion of journal writing was often focused on the application of reflection to tutoring practice. This instrumental impetus for journal writing seemed to be important in encouraging further reflection. These findings tend to confirm the assumption (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Jarvis, 1992) that journal writing encourages more reflection than is evident from the journals themselves.

Besides naturally reflecting further on issues, tutors also reached higher levels of reflection when they discussed their thinking about journal segments in interviews for the
study. This outcome suggests that follow-up to journal writing should focus on tutors telling about their thinking. Benefits of revisiting issues written about in journals were increased when tutors were asked probing questions geared to push them to higher levels of reflection. Such probing questions may have provided the moderate levels of cognitive dissonance which are recommended by researchers (McAlpine, 1992; Gipe & Richards, 1992; Pape & Smith, 1991). This is also in keeping with Pultorak’s (1993) findings that situations in which an interviewer asked questions geared to increase higher order reflection pushed students to reflect at higher levels.

Implications of the Study

The goal of this study was to explore the perceptions of journal writers in order to better understand the role of journal writing in tutors’ reflections on their tutoring experiences. Due to the limited number of participants and the context-bound nature of the journal writing task, caution is needed in ascribing these perceptions to other journal writers in other situations. However, this study suggests a number of issues which have implications for tutor trainers, teacher educators and researchers.

Implications for Tutor Trainers and Teacher Educators

The study suggests a number of issues which may be useful for teacher educators and tutor trainers to consider in developing their approaches to journal writing. These issues may be particularly apt for those working with practicum-
journals and other practice-oriented journals.

First, construction of the journal writing prompt should include consideration of the following issues:

1. What implicit attitudes to learning through reflection does the prompt convey: remedial or growth-oriented? A growth-oriented approach may discourage the tendency for journal writers to focus on weaknesses.

2. Does the prompt make explicit the content areas deemed by the educator to be appropriate for reflection? Tutors in this study argued that they should be free to reflect on whatever aspects of the experience they felt were worthwhile. However, if educators have specific content areas which they want students to focus on, the prompt should be explicit about what those areas are.

3. Does the prompt make the purpose of journal writing clear? A clear understanding of the purpose of journal writing appears to assist students to reflect on their practice.

4. Are there other purposes for journal writing which are unacknowledged but which may affect journal writing? Non-reflective purposes, stated or unstated, may encourage non-reflective writing.

5. How can journal writers be encouraged to find internal motivation for journal writing? It may be that a task prompt which provides flexibility and which encourages journal writers to evaluate their own journal writing can increase internal motivation. Wedman et al. (1990) suggest that students should
learn to recognize the difference between routine and reflective thoughts. The trainer in this study also felt that the ability to assess levels of reflection would aid tutors in reaching higher levels of reflection and encourage them to find internal motivation for journal writing.

Second, it must be assumed that journals do not provide access for the trainer to all the reflective thinking that the journal writing task engenders. If a purpose of journal writing is to in some way measure levels of reflection of journal writers, journal writing may not be a useful task. Any attempt to measure the usefulness of the task should include collaboration with journal writers. If, however, the goal is to encourage journal writers to reflect on and learn from their experiences, journal writing may be a very useful task even though all the benefits of the task may not be apparent to the trainer.

Third, journal writing may best be approached as a process rather than as the creation of products. Anderson (1993) notes that he does not mark journals for syntactic and usage problems because he regards journal writing as writing that is "in process" (p. 305). This study suggests that Anderson’s approach to surface features of journals is equally appropriate for issues of content and levels of reflection. Yinger (1990; cited in Copeland et al., 1993) describes reflection as "an ongoing conversation of practice" (p. 349). Reflections engendered by journal writing may be increased through opportunities for
further reflection on issues written about in journals. The study suggests that one way to increase the potential of journal writing for initiating reflective thought is to use journals as the focus of discussion. Journal writers expand on ideas they have begun to develop in journal writing as a result of refocusing on the issues. Questions designed to push journal writers to higher levels of reflection may increase the benefits of the task. Some researchers (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Hoover, 1994) suggest that collaborative approaches to reflection encourage students to problematize their practice.

Implications for Research

The study attempted to fill two gaps in the literature. First, literature on tutor training and journal writing is scarce. This study helps to build a foundation for further research in this area. Second, the study contributes to the literature of journal writing in education by examining journal writing from the perspectives of journal writers.

Yinger and Clark (1985) assert that an apt metaphor for journals is that they are "a window" (p. 28) on the thinking of journal writers. This study provides evidence in support of Yinger and Clark's assertion. However, it also suggests that the window is imperfect in a number of ways. First, the window is often small compared to the size of the room. In fact, through the window it is impossible to tell whether the room is large or small. For example, in this study, one of the most reflective journal writers had a large window; his journals
gave a fairly accurate picture of the thinking he did as a result of the journal writing task. The other highly reflective journal writer had a large window on an even larger room. Her journals represented only a small portion of the reflective thinking the journal writing task engendered. Second, journal writers often obscure the window. Sometimes they pull the curtain to achieve privacy. This may be because they are unready to share their thinking or because they feel sharing their thinking may put them at risk. Other times they display things in the window that serve to obscure things behind. For example, they write to please the teacher and thereby avoid writing about problems. On other occasions, they inadvertently hide a clear view of the room. Their thinking is masked by their rhetorical choices.

Researchers have used journals to measure journal writers' proclivity and ability to reflect on their practice. This study calls into question any measure of reflectivity based solely on the evidence of journals. It suggests that collaboration with journal writers may be needed if researchers are to access the reflections of journal writers engendered by the journal writing task.

Yinger and Clark (1985) acknowledge that journal writing "is an imperfect instrument for learning about human thought" (p. 28). However, they assert that using journals to understand the thinking of journal writers involves little danger of serious error. This may be true in most cases. However, I
assert that using journals to understand the effects of journal writing on reflectivity can lead to serious error. Publication of studies which assume that journals provide an accurate measure of the reflections engendered by the task may lead practitioners to abandon the use of journal writing as a task for encouraging reflection on practice. This study provides evidence that journal writing can be much more useful for encouraging reflection than journals themselves indicate. Researchers must be careful in how they present data about journals so as not to mislead readers. The limitations of journals for measuring reflection must be acknowledged.

The study also suggests some areas for further research. These include:

**Strategies for increasing internal motivation of journal writers.** In this study, lack of internal motivation was seen as an important factor leading to lower reflectivity in tutor journals. Various strategies for increasing internal motivation were suggested. These included reducing the control provided by the journal writing prompt, challenging assumptions of tutors through feedback or discussion and giving tutors the role of evaluating their own journals for reflectivity. The ethnographic approach and limited time duration of this study did not allow for an assessment of the usefulness of these various approaches. Studies of the effects of these approaches would contribute information valuable to practitioners.
The effects of various collaborative approaches as follow up to journal writing. This study shows that tutors can further their thinking about journal writing issues by talking about their thinking after they have completed their journals. My interviews with tutors gave them this opportunity. Previous studies and participants in this study suggest that tutors' sharing of their ideas about tutoring with each other would be beneficial. Further research into the ability of peers to push journal writers to higher levels of reflection would develop the understandings gained through this study. Furthermore, the co-worker relationship among tutors in this study may affect tutors' ability or proclivity to cooperate with one another. As fellow students, teachers-in-training may react differently to collaborative opportunities. Thus, studies examining the effects of collaborating for further reflection should be carried out with both tutors and teachers-in-training.

The role of journal writing in encouraging reflection on non-practice-oriented issues. In this study, the instrumental value of journal writing appeared to encourage tutors to reflect further on their practice. Journals which are not focused on practice may not initiate as much further reflection as was evident in the study. Studies examining the perceptions and thinking around journal writing of writers of other types of reflective journals such as academic journals would serve to clarify the importance of the motivation of on-going practice in initiating further reflection on journal writing issues.
Conclusion

This collaborative study of tutor perceptions of the journal writing task and the role of journal writing in encouraging reflection on practice was important to me, but it also positively affected the outcomes of the journal writing task in the learning centre. The tutor trainer benefited through the opportunity to reflect on his purposes in using the journal writing task and his clarification of the relative value of different types of tutor reflections in their journals. Tutors benefited through increasing their understanding of the constraints on their journal writing and through furthering their thinking on journal writing issues. I have attempted to write this thesis in such a way that participants will continue to gain from their participation by having access to the results of their collaboration.

The participation of the trainer and the tutors not only in providing the data for the study but also in contributing to the analysis of that data strengthened the study. Their contributions to the analysis served to highlight issues which I otherwise might have overlooked or which I might have seen as less important. This experience underlines for me the importance of a collaborative approach in research purporting to explore perceptions of participants.
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Research on Teaching.


Appendix 1: Subject Consent Form

Dear:

I am currently doing research for my thesis toward my Master of Arts degree in Language Education. In my research project, entitled "Staff Journal Writing in a Learning Centre", I am examining the use of journal writing as an in-service training technique for staff in the Learning Centre. My research is being supervised by Prof. Margaret Early, a faculty member in the Department of Language Education. I would like your permission to use information about you in my research.

If you agree to participate in the research, I will interview you for 20 minutes a week for the rest of this semester. In the interviews, I will ask you about your journal writing, about your skills and about your experiences as a worker and as a student. I will analyze the information you give me and discuss my analysis with you. Our discussions will take about 5 hours of your time during and immediately following the semester. I will also observe you participating in tutor training.

The information I gather in doing my research will be held in strictest confidence. I will use pseudonyms for you, the College and any students you mention. You may change your mind and withdraw from the research at any time before, during or after participating without penalty.

You will have an opportunity to check anything I say about you and withdraw that information from the research for any reason. After I have collected the information, interested participants will have an opportunity to participate in analyzing the information collected. I think you will find this an interesting process that gives you valuable experience with research. You will also be given an opportunity to read and critique my thesis.

If you decide not to participate in the research, your employment status at the college will be unaffected. You will continue to write journals because they are requirements of your employment, but your journals will not be released to me and I will not interview or observe you.

If you have any questions about the research I am doing, please call me at 873-4725 or my research supervisor, Prof. Margaret Early, at 822-5231.
Your signature below signifies your giving permission for me to have access to your journals and to interview and observe you in the Learning Centre.

Thank you,

Julia Robinson

I, __________________, give my permission for Julia Robinson to have access to my Learning Centre journals and to interview and observe me as described above. I have received a copy of this consent form (two pages) for my own records.

_________________________  ___________________
signature                  date