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# An Evaluation of a Volunteer Tutorial Program for Primary School Children from Low Income Families

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# AN EVALUATION OF A VOLUNTEER TUTORIAL PROGRAM FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES

by

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VITA

The author, Robin S. Turpin, is the daughter of Howard A. Turpin and Shirley L. Turpin. She was born May 27, 1957 in Chicago, Illinois.

Her elementary and secondary education was obtained in the public schools of Hoffman Estates, Illinois, and she subsequently graduated from James B. Conant High School in 1975.

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# INTRODUCTION

Fifteen years ago, employees at the corporate headquarters of a national retail/catalog firm began a small, experimental tutorial program for primary school children living in a nearby public housing project. It was well-known that these children scored very low on standardized city-wide achievement tests. This program was and is still staffed entirely by volunteers, utilizing the firm's cafeteria for the weekly tutoring sessions. The children work with individual tutors on educational basics, including reading, spelling, and math, but there is plenty of time for games and parties too. The program currently utilizes volunteer tutors from both the original corporation and a nearby university, has its own small office, a part-time secretary, and several closets packed with educational materials. There are approximately 150 children currently participating in the program. Upon entering the program, the average child is behind city norms in both reading (2.3 grade levels) and math (1.5 grade levels).

The program directors have never evaluated the effectiveness of the program. They felt they had neither the skill nor the time to do so. Yet they did have a strong desire to have their program evaluated. They wanted to know if the philosophy behind their program was valid, how the children felt about the program, and ultimately, if participation in the program improved the reading and math scores of the children involved. The present thesis is an evaluation designed to answer

these questions.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### A Conceptual Framework

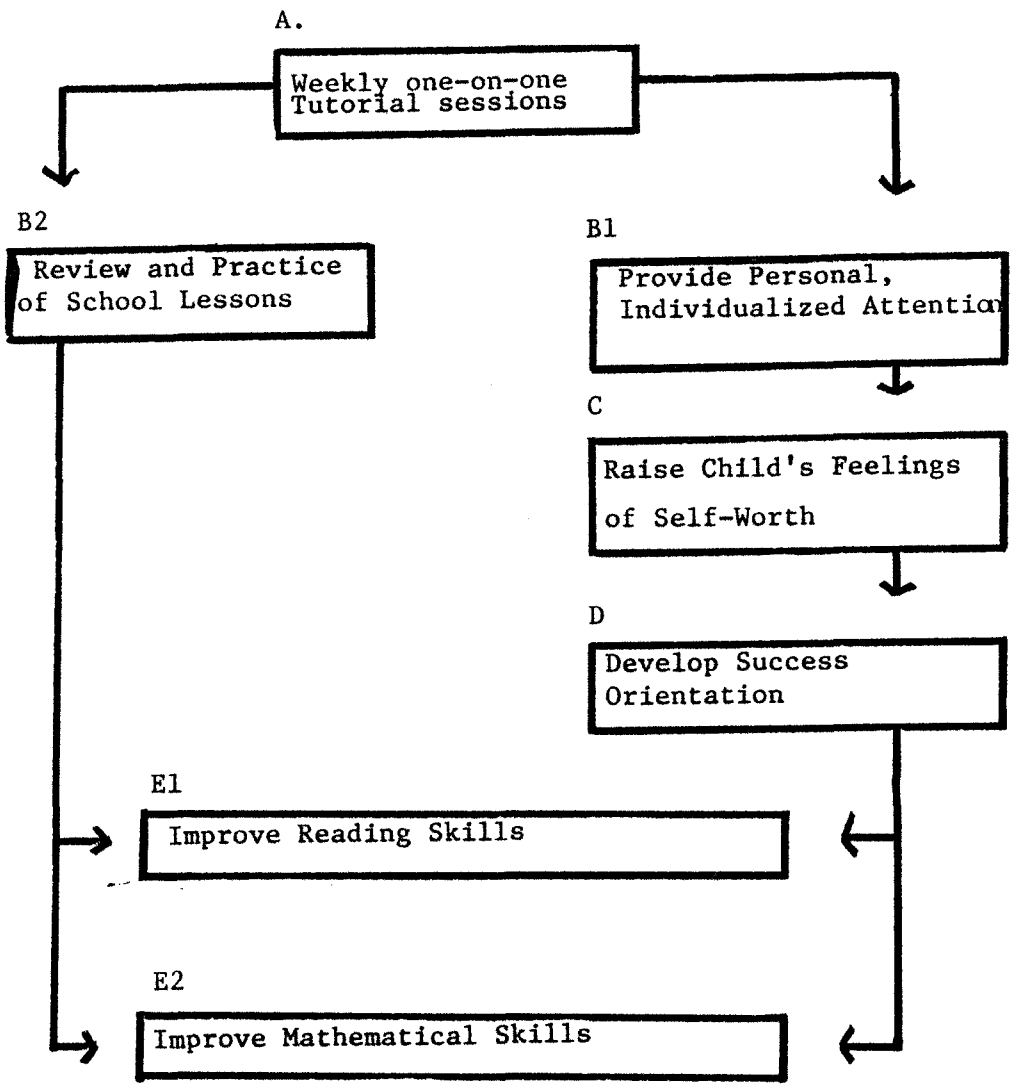
The tutorial program rests its psychological orientation on a complex set of assumptions (see Figure 1). The children who participate are assumed to possess a background that is economically, socially, and/or intellectually lacking, resulting in poor academic skills, low self-esteem and feelings of helplessness towards successes and failures. Therefore, the program assumptions are aimed towards improving this resulting condition. Based on these commonsense assumptions, four goals, two short term and two long term, are to be attained.

The short term goals of the program are to provide each child with an individual tutor to give him or her review and practice of school lessons (B1), and individual, personal attention (B2) during the weekly tutoring sessions and special program events. Through the fulfillment of these goals, the program assumes participants will attain the long term goals of increased reading (E1) and math (E2) skills.

Through review and practice of materials similar to those taught in the classroom (B1), the program assumes that the children's reading (E1) and mathematical skills (E2) are improved. This is a real world application of the old adage "practice makes perfect." Yet, is one hour and fifteen minutes per week, the extent of the tutorial sessions, enough "practice" to produce "perfection" in either of these two areas

FIGURE 1

Conceptual Basis of the Tutoring Program



of study? It is highly doubtful. If this were the case, a complete revolution of the current educational system would be in order. Therefore, this program is also designed to increase reading and mathematical skills through a route different from mere "practice."

The program relies on a second process, individual and personal attention (B1) to instill a more permanent internalization of the learning process within the participants. As illustrated in Figure 1, this approach assumes the attentions of a caring adult (B2) will raise the child's feelings of self-worth and self-esteem (C). Once the child views himself or herself as possessing some greater value, as evidenced by help at tutoring sessions, it is expected that he or she will strive to learn. The children will realize that they can learn more if they try, and that their school successes are not due merely to luck, but to effort. Therefore, the children will develop a success orientation (D) described as an internal locus of control for success, and an external locus of control for failures, in lieu of a failure orientation, or external locus of control for both success and failures. These concepts and their development will be discussed in greater detail in the literature section. Through this indirect route to learning, it is assumed that these children additionally improve their reading (E1) and mathematical skills (E2).

## Program Participants

The participants were 150 elementary school children. The tutors who work with the children on a one-on-one basis, are volunteers from

a large corporation and from a university located near a major low-income housing project. The program was initiated by employees at Montgomery Ward Corporate Headquarters and it is both financed by and housed at the facilities of Montgomery Ward.

The children typically test below the city norms on standardized reading and mathematical achievement scales. Though low achievement in low income areas is quite common, causes of this low achievement in these children can only be hypothesized.

In the tutors' introductory handbook, some possible causes are hypothesized. For some of the children, the differences in language they must use in school and the language they have learned from family and friends form a language barrier that is believed to cause them to fall behind in their studies. Some children have emotional problems and troubled home lives. Perhaps they fail because they have little in common with regular school experiences; the world they live in is a totally different experience from their classroom. Some children are believed to have a need for immediate results and have trouble seeing the long-term benefits of studying. More importantly, all these children are assumed to possess two very important, very common characteristics. The children all appear to hold negative self-concepts and experience repeated failure at school. This program is aimed at these assumed problems.

The children range in age from grades 2 through 6 and participate voluntarily. Because the program is popular both among the students and the community, and most children participate in the program for several years, the typical tutee begins the program as a second grader after one year on the waiting list.

It is difficult to make generalizations about the tutors. Occupationally, they range from college student to secretary to corporate executive. Age, sex, and racial composition are varied. The program requests at least a one year commitment to insure that as many tutor/tutee pairs will remain intact over the year as possible so that a trusting, caring relationship will develop. Some tutors have participated for several years and ideally, the tutor/tutee pairs would remain together over several years, but this decision is dependent upon the wishes of the pair.

Program Organization

The tutoring sessions are held one evening each week for one hour and fifteen minutes and usually include writing, reading, and workbook exercises as well as a game. In addition to the regular sessions, the program sponsors additional weekend activities such as group trips to the circus, museums, zoos, amusement parks, and airports; organizes Halloween and Christmas parties; and holds a graduation ceremony and party for sixth graders. Individual tutors are further encouraged to take their children on occasional individual

outings to further develop the trusting and caring relationship between tutor and child.

Evaluation Goals

The program is organized completely by volunteers. As such, there is little time or skill available for evaluation. In the past, the program has been evaluated solely on the basis of the tutor's and children's attendance records. It was assumed that if attendance was good, the program was good. At best, this is a very rough estimate of the program's popularity. The only data collected have been a form which teachers of the children being tutored receive from the program staff in the beginning of the school year. This form requests standard reading and math level scores as well as a description of the child's general attitude towards school and the other children. This information is used by the tutor for the year and had not been used to assess program effects. For this evaluation, this information provided the bulk of the data assessing goals E1 (Improve Reading Scores) and E2 (Improve Math Scores).

The program evaluation assesses each assumption of the program illustrated in Figure 1. This was necessary in order to determine the validity of each assumption and the fulfillment of each goal. In this way, improvements are addressed to the specific problems of the program's psychological assumptions. Therefore, the quality of individual attention received; children's self-worth, self-esteem, and internalization of learning; and change levels of reading and mathematical

skills during years in the program were each assessed to determine the validity of the program assumptions.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## The Scope of the Problem

According to program records as received from the teachers of participating children, the children in this tutoring program are all low achievers in reading and/or math. Causes for this low achievement among the program children are not known, and this presents a problem for a literature review. Tutoring programs or related studies throughout the literature identify the cause of low achievement for their subject populations most often as a learning disability. By definition, learning disability describes a child who, despite having intelligence within the normal range, shows retardation in one or more subject areas (Bryan & Pearl, 1979). By definition, then, the program children may be classified as learning disabled, although they have never been formally diagnosed as such. The direction the literature review takes therefore will treat the program children as if they are learning disabled. This method is appropriate because the relevant research base connects learning disabilities to low school scores. Therefore, it is assumed that the relevant issues identified will be useful in understanding the process of which the intervention is aimed.

## Overview of the Causes of Learning Disabilities

There are many presumed causes of learning disabilities. These causes may include organic, perceptual, and psychological difficulties, but the child's situation is most often brought to attention because

of low school achievement.

One common cause thought to lead to learning disabilities is hyperactivity (Farnham-Diggory, 1978). Hyperactive children are unable to adapt to the normal sedentary learning environment. Because of this, they lose valuable learning opportunities and fall behind in their studies. Chances for success in school are reduced, and grades fall below normal. Consequently, these children are labeled learning disabled.

Dyslexic children are similarily low achievers. Dyslexic children are thought to process perceptual information more slowly than normal children, at least on some tasks. They are often unable to coordinate processing of letters and the syllables that produce a word, resulting in an impairment in reading ability. These children too are labeled learning disabled (Farnham-Diggory, 1978).

Finally, there are children whose low achievement is psychologically based. Perhaps because of a deprived early childhood, emotionally turbulent home life, or any one of a number of psychological mishaps, these children do not succeed at a normal rate in school. Possibly due to lack of motivation, frequent absenteeism, or other causes, these children fall behind in their studies. In many low income areas troubles such as these are the norm. Is it any wonder that schools in these areas are filled with "learning disabled" children whose causes of low achievement are so different from hyperactive or dyslexic children?

Yet despite the apparent lack of commonality in causes among these children, it is a widely held view that they have two common characteristics: (a) feelings of low self-esteem and self-worth and (b) the belief that their successes in school are due to luck or other people, and not to their own effort (Serifica & Harway, 1979; White & Simmons, 1974). Their low achievement appears to covary with these variables, independent of cause. Each of these characteristics will be developed in greater detail in the following sections.

Self-Esteem and Self-Worth

The tutoring program in this evaluation assumes that the program children have lower levels of self-worth and self-esteem than normal children. Whether low school achievement or environmental difficulties are possible causes is not determined. What is assumed, however, is that low-esteem covaries with low school achievement. Several studies dealing with low achieving children appear to show a trend for these low achievers to possess self-esteem levels lower than their normal achieving counterparts.

Using an adaptation of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEN) Larsen, Parker, and Jorjorian (1973) found significantly greater discrepancies between "real self" (what the children felt they were really like) and "ideal self" (what they would ideally like to be) Q-Sorts for learning disabled (LD) children than for non-learning disabled (non-LD) children. This occurred at both the third and fourth grade level. Hence, the LD children are thought to experience a

greater "gap" in self-image, resulting in lower self-esteem. In other Q-Sort research (Rosser, 1974) it was found that language used by LD children expresses a lower self-concept than that used by non-LD children at the fourth grade level.

Leviton and Kiraly (1975) correlated reading, vocabulary, reading comprehension and arithmetic problem solving with self-concept measures. For normal children there generally appears to be a positive relationship between academic achievement and self-concept. Among the LD children tested, however, no relationship between these variables was found.

Black (1974), using the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), the WISC, and the Piers-Harris Childrens Self-Concept Scale, compared self-esteem of LD and non-LD children. All children had been referred to a hospital following school failure. Black then divided the children into LD and non-LD groups using WRAT scores. According to WISC and Piers-Harris scores, school problems were related to self-concept in both groups, whereas intelligence levels were not. Furthermore, of the two groups of problem children, the LD children had significantly lower self-concepts.

These results appear to make a common point. Learning Disabled children, independent of the cause of their disability, generally possess feelings of self-worth and self-esteem different from non-LD children.

Locus of Control

As discussed above, measures of self-worth and self-esteem reflect how children feel about themselves. Locus of control, the second common characteristic, is a concept concerned with the causal explanations individuals attribute to their successes and failures. A belief in external control indicates that the child believes his successes or failures are due to luck, task difficulty, or the influence of others. Internal control is the child's belief that the outcome is attributed to his or her own effort or ability. A success orientation assumes normal children will attribute success to internal causes and failures to external causes, an ego saving device (Fincham & Barling, 1978). A failure orientation would be a response different from the expected success response. Children in the tutoring program are assumed to possess this failure orientation. Most commonly it is expected that their successes and failures will be interpreted to be the result of external influence. Furthermore, the cause of this orientation is assumed to stem from the aforementioned lack of self-esteem.

Several studies have shown that LD children do indeed differ from non-LD children with respect to locus of control. Finchman and Barling (1978) using a measure of generalized locus of control, found that 9 and 10 year old LD children in special classes had a lower internal locus of control than normal children. The LD children believed that their successes were more likely due to external factors. Normal children are more likely to attribute successes to internal sources of effort. Both LD and non-LD children, however, attribute failure to

external causes. Simply put, LD children attribute both failures and successes to external sources. Hence, LD children feel they have a very limited control over their lives.

Dweck and Reppie (1973) examined in detail LD children's causal attributions of ability, task difficulty, and luck to their successes and failures. The children who believe their failures are due to lack of ability rather than a lack of effort are more likely to exhibit learned helplessness after experiencing a failure. Specifically, these LD children gave up - even when capable of achieving a success. Dweck and Reppie found that LD children were more likely to believe that success occurs because tasks were easy and failure occurs because tasks were difficult. Normal children felt that the difficulty of task had an equal effect on their successes and failures. In addition, non-LD children were more likely to surrender control over their lives, both for successes and failures, than non-LD children.

In conclusion, research on the psychological aspects between LD and non-LD children has found significant differences. LD children, no matter what the original cause of their disability, have lower self-worth and self-esteem in comparison to non-LD children. In addition, while normal children generally possess internal locus of control for their successes, LD children have an external locus of control for this outcome. Both sets of children generally possess an external locus of control for failures. While this can act as an ego defense for the non-LD children, the LD child is thrown into a state of helplessness, and gives up without really trying.

The program children, while not diagnosed as learning disabled, do share a characteristic of LD children, low achievement. This is substantiated by program records. In addition, the program assumes that tutees share the secondary characteristics of LD children: low self-esteem and a failure orientation. The program is aimed towards improving this situation. This evaluation is designed to assess whether the program is effective in moving towards these goals of increased self esteem, a success orientation in lieu of a failure orientation, and improved academic achievement.

# METHOD

## General Overview

The individualized nature of this tutorial program requires a flexible method of evaluation. Therefore, the approach utilized for this evaluation combines both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.

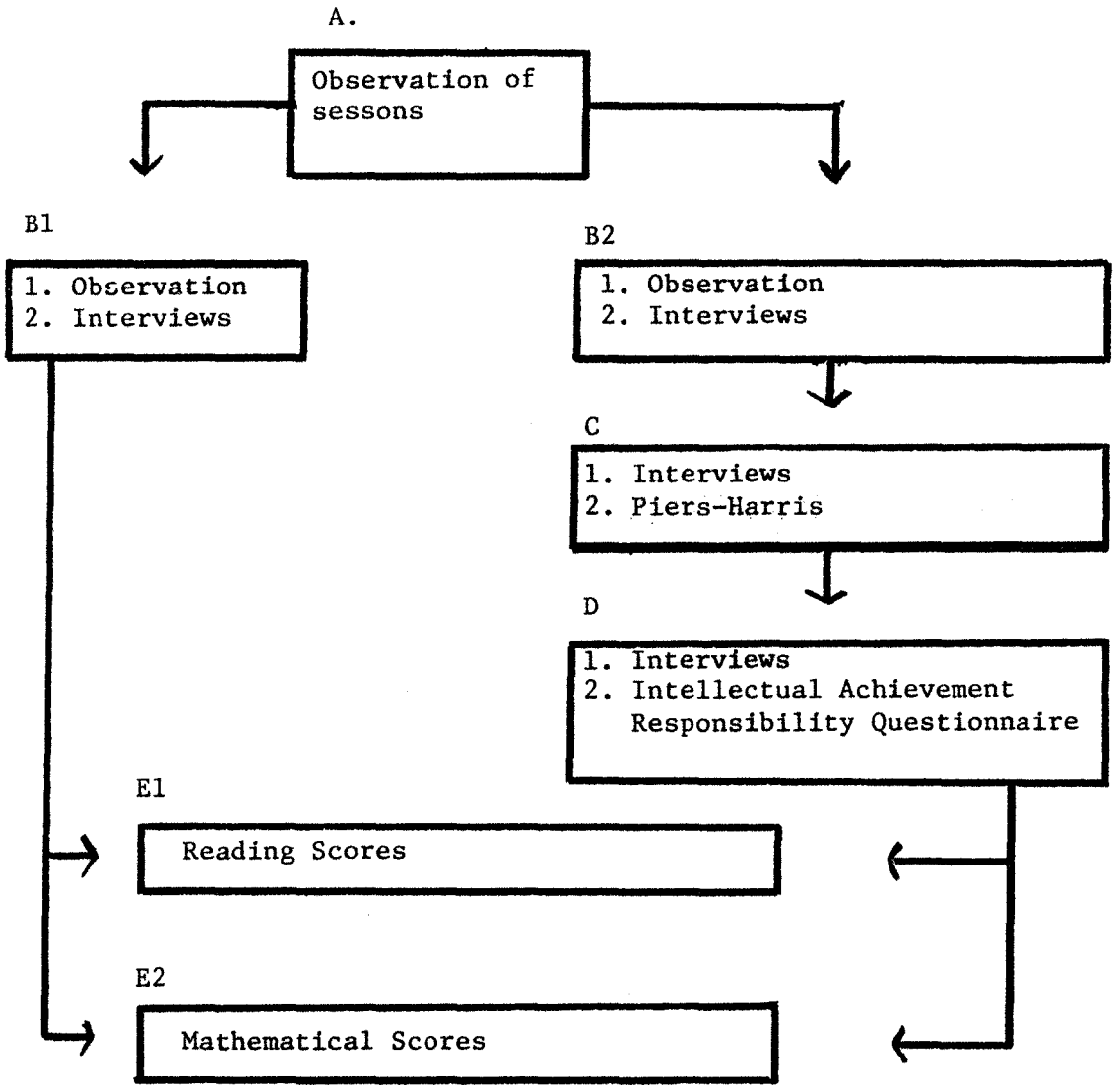
Qualitative methods, such as interviews of an open-ended nature, provide a wealth of information not attainable through limited choice questionnaires and tests. The interviewer and the child develop a rapport which enables the interviewer to probe the child for hidden thoughts and feelings, adding depth and dimension to limited choice questions. In addition, qualitative methods may identify discrepancies in the research theory. This enables the researcher to shift the evaluation focus to more relevant areas of interest.

Achievement scores and paper and pencil psychological tests are quantitative methods of research. By requiring standardized administration in the research situation, these "hard" data are less susceptable to interviewer biases and prejudices, but remain less flexible. Each goal and assumption is illustrated in Figure 1 was assessed in order to determine the individual validities by either one or both of these methods.

As illustrated in Figure 2, four basic techniques were utilized, combining these two methodological approaches. Open-ended interview

FIGURE 2

Conceptual Basis of the Research Design



questions were collected and content analyzed. The Piers-Harris and Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire, and the archival reading and math scores are all quantitative data which were collected in a standardized manner. Finally, individual tutoring sessions were observed to cross check the aforementioned data.

Data Collection

Review and practice of school lessons ($B_1$) was assessed by observing tutoring sessions in order to determine if the tutoring pairs actually study during the sessions. In addition, two questions included on the interview schedule (see Appendix A) were designed to assess this assumed occurrence. Questions 44, "Do you think tutoring is helping you in school;" and 46, "What would you change about tutoring," tapped the children's feelings about whether they received enough actual help on school lessons and if, subsequently, this has helped them in school. If the children suggest additional lesson practice time because they are not being helped in school, this is an implication that either the tutoring method is ineffective, or is not taking place.

Providing personal, individualized attention ($B_2$) was also assessed through observation in order to determine if the sessions were conducted on a one-on-one basis. The interview Questions 36, "Do you like to come to tutoring," and 42, "Do you like your tutor," were designed to assess whether the child received the personal attention the program directors believe is needed in order for him or her to feel special, the presumed preliminary to higher self-esteem.

The child's self-esteem (C) was assessed primarily by 44 items chosen randomly from the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. Interview time constraints would not allow the use of the complete, and lengthy, Piers-Harris Scale. In addition, interview question 20, "How do you feel when you answer questions or read out loud in class," provided some measure of the children's self-esteem in an academic situation.

Developing a success orientation (D) was also assessed by two measures. The Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire, a measurement of children's internal/external locus of control was scored for each child interviewed. Again, as with the Piers-Harris, time constraints would not allow for the complete interview to be used. In addition, five interview questions were designed to assess the internalization of the benefits of learning. Question 15, "What do you usually do after school or on weekends," number 16, "What subject do you like the most" and question 17, "What subject do you like the least," tapped whether or not the children prefer learning type activities, such as reading, to play activities. Question 18, "How do you feel about school," and 21, "Do you like to read," assessed whether the children enjoy intellectual activities.

Finally, reading ($E_1$) and math ($E_2$) scores as received from the tutees' teachers for the past three years were compared to norms of all schools in the city, and to the schools which the program children attend.

Other questions found on the interview schedules, such as "What is your favorite book" which were not used in the program assessment were asked in order for the interviewer to develop a rapport with the children. This is considered necessary as some of the questions, for example, "I can be trusted," can be very threatening for a child to respond to honestly in front of a seemingly aloof adult. Therefore, a friendly open atmosphere is encouraged by the inclusions of such questions (Turpin, 1981).

Interviews with the control children to be described in the Research Design section lasted an average of 15-20 minutes each. The tutor children each received two interviews of 15-20 minutes each. Splitting the tutor children interview was necessary for several reasons. First, the tutoring children cannot be expected to remain interested and attentive for a 40 minute interview. In addition, the tutoring sessions are only 75 minutes in length. It would have been extremely inconvenient for the program to have a child removed from his or her tutor for more than half the weekly session. Finally, a better rapport is developed with repeated interviews (Turpin, 1981).

Research Design

In order to determine if changes in the children were produced by the program instead of normal maturation effects as the children age, a control group of children who did not participate in the program were interviewed. Obviously, this comparison would be the most valid if this second group of children differed from the program

children. Often however, in evaluation research, such a control group is not possible, and a nonequivalent control group or group that is not necessarily drawn from the same population is necessary. Great care must be taken in interpreting results when a nonequivalent control group is used, as the groups may differ on more variables than merely program participation.

For this evaluation a nonequivalent control group was utilized. A control group of children from a similar background was considered an impossibility due to the danger involved in visiting low income housing projects to obtain interviews. The nonequivalent group chosen was made up of students at an average level school in the same city, but in a neighborhood considered safe for strangers.

According to program records, second grade children are almost exclusively first year tutoring students. In a similar manner, third graders are generally in their second tutor year, and fourth graders are in their third year. As the older records of the fifth and sixth grade tutoring children are incomplete or missing, second, third, and fourth graders only were compared to second, third, and fourth grade control children for interview data. Changes in reading and math scores for all children in the tutor program were compared to changes in scores for both city norms and norms for the schools which the tutor children attend.

## RESULTS

### Review and Practice of School Lessons - Goal $B_1$

Table 1, Children's Ideas for Possible Changes to the Program, illustrates the childrens' suggestions for possible changes. Many of the responding children (62%) feel that lesson changes are most important. What these specific lesson changes were depended on the interests of the child. If the child preferred reading, he or she requested more reading time during lessons. Expanded mathematics time was suggested if math was preferred. Organizational changes (57%), such as making the books more accessible, were mentioned as second most important by several children. Several children mentioned behavior changes (36%), such as stopping the kids from running around, as an improvement to the program. In general, most children feel that enough time is devoted to tutoring weekly, and that there are enough outside activities. There does not appear to be any trends indicated differing ages with response to these questions.

Question 44, "Do you think tutoring is helping you in school," received an unanimous consensus among the children in all three grades. Every child interviewed feels that tutoring is helping them, in some way, at school.

### Providing Personal, Individualized Attention - Goal $B_2$

Table 2, reflects questions illustrating Personal, Individualized

TABLE 1

CHILDREN'S IDEAS FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM

("WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT TUTORING?")

| Suggested Changes* | Grade Level 2 N(%) | 3 N(%) | 4 N(%) | Total N(%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Behavior Change (stop the kids from running around, etc.) | 1 (25) | 2 (40) | 2 (40) | 5 (36) |
| Lesson Change (more reading, more math, etc.) | 2 (50) | 3 (60) | 4 (80) | 9 (62) |
| Organization Change (make books more accessible, ect.) | 1 (25) | 2 (40) | 5 (100) | 8 (57) |
| More time (per week) | 1 (25) | | | 1 (7) |
| More Outside Activities | | 1 (20) | | 1 (7) |
| Total | 4 | 5 | 5 | 14 |

*some children gave more than one response

TABLE 2

QUESTIONS ILLUSTRATING PERSONAL, INDIVIDUALIZED ATTENTION

| Question | Grade Level 2 N(%) | 3 N(%) | 4 N(%) | Total N(%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of children who like to come to tutoring. ("Do you like to come to tutoring?") | 5 (83) | 5 (100) | 7 (100) | 17 (94) |
| Percentage of children who prefer learning activities to fun activities during tutoring. ("What's the part you like most about tutoring?") | 5 (83) | 3 (60) | 3 (43) | 11 (61) |
| Percentage of children who like their tutors. ("Do you like your tutor?") | 6 (100) | 4 (80) | 6 (83) | 16 (89) |
| Total | 6 | 5 | 7 | 18 |

Attention. Responses to question 36, "Do you like to come to tutoring?" clearly state that nearly every child (94%) enjoys the tutoring sessions. Question 37, answering "What's the part you like most about tutoring?" shows that many children (average, 61%), especially the second grade tutees (83%), enjoy learning activities, such as reading, to some of the more entertaining activities the program plans. In addition, Table 2 illustrates that almost every tutor child (89%) likes their tutor.

Raise Self-Worth - Goal C

As shown in Table 3, responses to question 21, "How do you feel when you answer questions or read aloud in class?" reflects a trend for both the tutor and the control groups to respond in a higher self-esteem manner ("I feel proud") as they matured. Responses of 60% of the second grade tutor children and 63% of the control children reflect high self-esteem. By fourth grade, high self-esteem responses jumped to 83% and 89%, respectively.

Mean self-esteem scores obtained through administration of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale are recorded in Table 4. The scale is designed so that the higher the percentile score, the higher the measured self-esteem. There appears to be a trend for the control children to rise in their self-esteem as they move from 64% in second grade to 84% in fourth grade. This trend is not evident for the tutor children who begin second grade at 73% and fourth grade at 69%.

TABLE 3

CHILDREN WHO RESPONDED IN A HIGH SELF-ESTEEM* MANNER WHEN ASKED THE QUESTION "HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU ANSWER QUESTIONS OR READ ALOUD IN CLASS?"

| | Grades | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | 2<br>N(%) | 3<br>N(%) | 4<br>N(%) | Total<br>N(%) |
| Tutor children | 3 (60) | 2 (50) | 5 (83) | 10 (67) |
| Control children | 5 (63) | 1 (20) | 8 (89) | 14 (64) |

*High esteem is defined as a response that indicates that the child feels proud, happy, great, etc. when reading aloud in class. Feeling bad, silly, stupid, etc. were regarded as indicating low self-esteem.

TABLE 4

PIERS-HARRIS CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPT SCALE

MEAN PERCENTILE SCORES

| Group | Grades | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2<br>N(%ile) | 3<br>N(%ile) | 4<br>N(%ile) | Average<br>N(%ile) |
| Tutor children | 6 (73) | 5 (85) | 8 (69) | 19 (75) |
| Control | 9 (64) | 7 (73) | 6 (84) | 22 (73) |
| Average | 15 (68) | 12 (78) | 14 (75) | 41 (74) |

Develop Success Orientation - Goal D

Both tutor and control children are most favorable toward fun activities according to responses to question 12, "What they usually do after school or on weekends" (Table 5). It is apparent that both tutor children (100%) and control children (95%) like to have fun (play, watch television, etc.) once school is over. According to question 16, "What subject do you like the most? (your favorite part of school) there appears to be a trend for both tutor and control groups to prefer learning subjects, such as reading or math, over fun subjects, such as gym or art, as the children grow older. Yet, from question 17 illustrating "What subject do you like least in school (your least favorite part of school)" there also appears to be a trend for children to not prefer learning subjects as they matured. While the results appear contradictory at first, it must be noted that specific subjects are not identified in the data; therefore, these likes and dislikes depend on individual tastes. For example, one child may love reading and not like math, while another may have opposite tastes in subject likes and dislikes. Thus, contradictory results are reported. There does not appear to be any differences between tutor and control groups for questions 12, 16, and 17. Trends appear to be evident only across ages, and not across groups.

Table 6, with responses to question 15, "How do you feel about school" shows a trend for tutor children (100 to 57%) to answer in a positive manner less often as they matured. It appears that as they grow older, the tutor children like school less. The opposite is true

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO PREFER FUN* ACTIVITIES AFTER SCHOOL AND AS SUBJECTS IN SCHOOL

| Question | Grade Level 2 N(%) | 3 N(%) | 4 N(%) | Total N(%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| "What do you usually do after school and on weekends?" | | | | |
| Tutor Children | 6 (100) | 5 (100) | 7 (100) | 18 (100) |
| Control Children | 7 (89) | 7 (100) | 6 (100) | 20 (95) |
| "What subject do you like the most at school?" | | | | |
| Tutor Children | 5 (83) | 0 (0) | 2 (33) | 7 (41) |
| Control Children | 8 (78) | 2 (29) | 1 (17) | 11 (50) |
| "What subject do you like the least at school?" | | | | |
| Tutor Children | 3 (67) | 1 (25) | 0 (0) | 4 (29) |
| Control Children | 1 (20) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (7) |

*Fun activities include playing and watching TV as afterschool activities, and art, music, recess, etc., as school subjects.

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN RESPONDING IN A POSITIVE MANNER TO QUESTIONS REGARDING SCHOOL AND READING

| Group | Grade Level 2 N(%) | 3 N(%) | 4 N(%) | Total N(%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| "How do you feel about school?" | | | | |
| Tutor Group | 6 (100) | 4 (80) | 4 (57) | 14 (78) |
| Control Group | 4 (44) | 4 (57) | 4 (67) | 12 (50) |
| "Do you like to read?" | | | | |
| Tutor Group | 5 (83) | 5 (100) | 7 (100) | 17 (94) |
| Control | 8 (89) | 5 (71) | 5 (83) | 18 (75) |

for the control children. As the control children grow older (44 to 67%), there is a slight tendency for them to like school to a greater extent. Yet, overall the tutor children (78%) show a more favorable attitude towards school than the control children (50%). Question 21, "Do you like to read," reflects the likelihood for tutor children (94%) to enjoy reading more than the control children (75%).

The Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire results are illustrated in Figures 3 and 4. According to items used in the IARQ, six items are keyed to extract the expected external response reflecting negative or failure experiences. Four items are keyed to produce internal responses to positive or successful experiences. Accordingly, the expected move of the tutor children towards the "success" orientation would reflect a move towards a score of 6 for external responses and a score of 4 for internal responses. However, neither control or tutor groups approached what is hypothesized as the normal "success orientation" response according to previous research as reviewed in the literature section. There does not appear to be any trends for these data for either group.

Reading and Mathematics Level Scores - Goals $E_1$ and $E_2$

Reading ($E_1$) and math ($E_2$) scores are illustrated in Figures 5 and 6. Results from reading scores are fairly clearcut. Tutor children begin second grade reading more than 1 school grade below their classmates. Yet by the sixth grade they have surpassed these same schoolmates, although both tutor children and classmate groups

FIGURE 3

Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire

External Responses

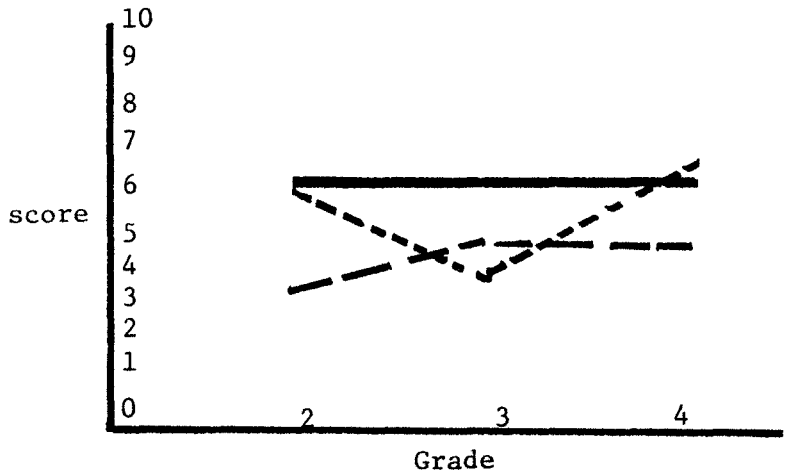
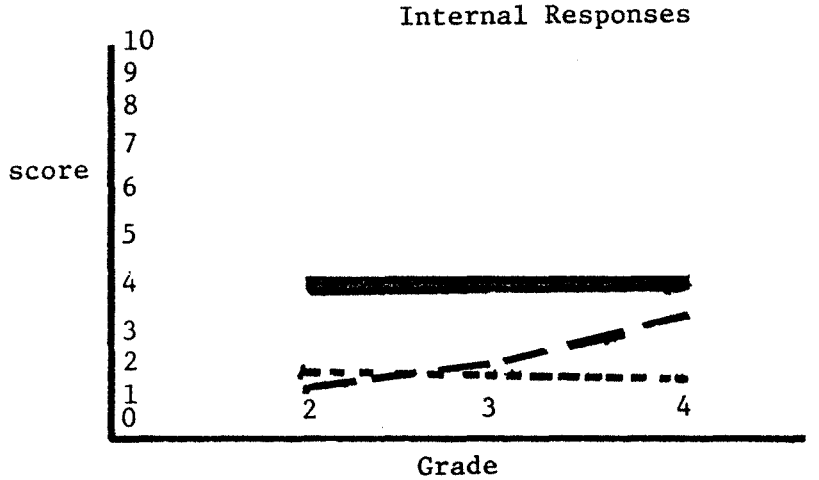



FIGURE 4

Internal Responses




Tutor children

Control children

Expected "success" orientation

FIGURE 5

Median Reading Scores

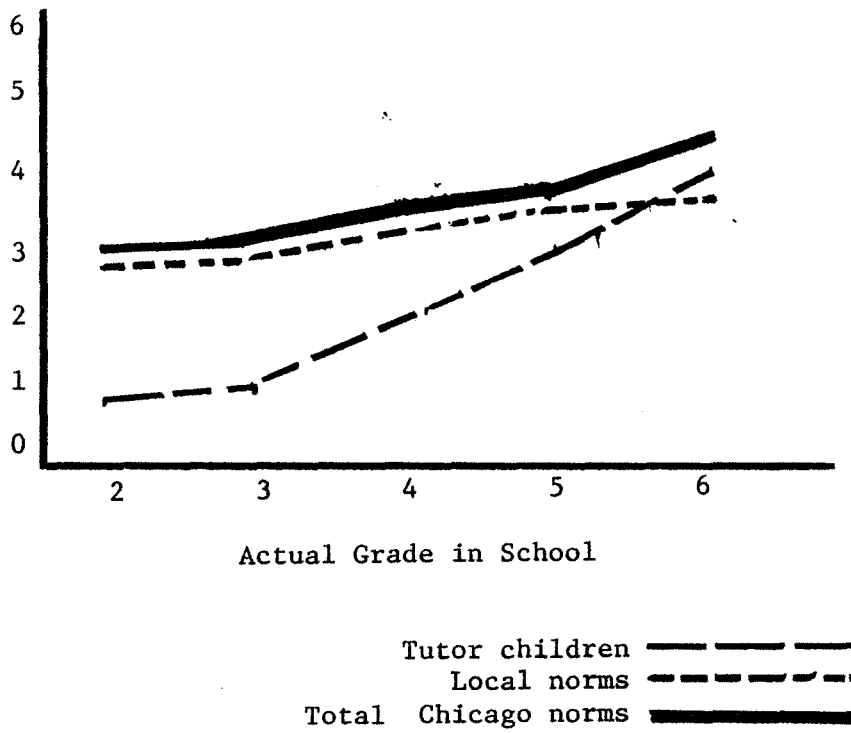
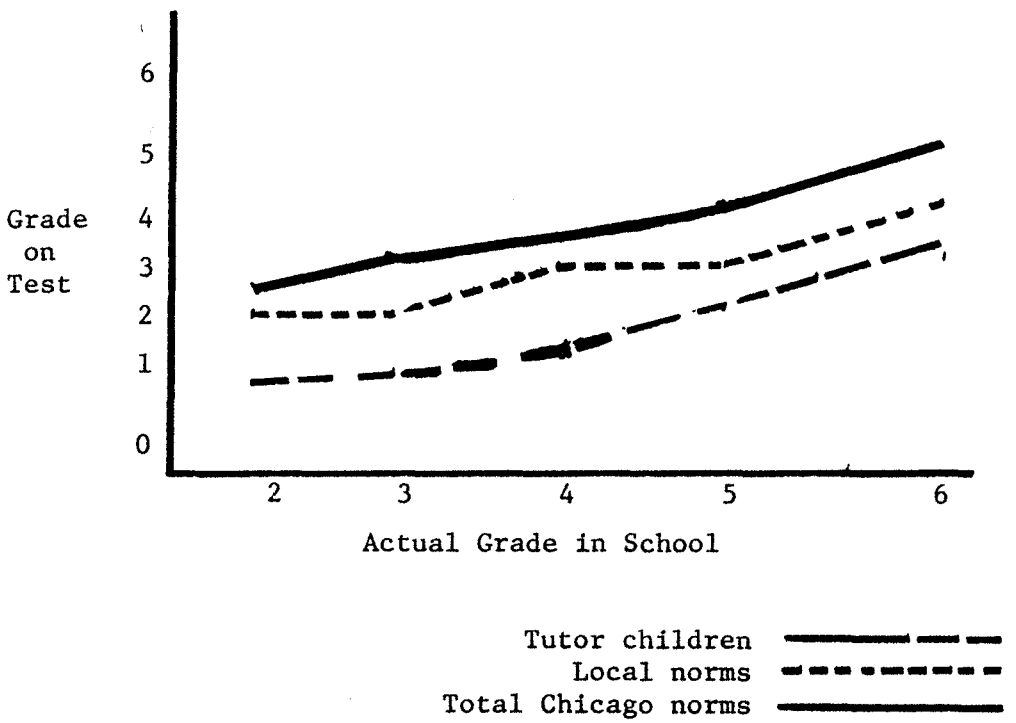


FIGURE 6

Median Mathematics Scores



are below city norms at all age levels. The same trend for math scores appears evident until sixth grade, when progress is halted for the tutor children. The net result is that the tutor children have not reached the level of their classmates in mathematical skills. Again, neither tutor children nor their classmates possess math skills at the level of city norms.

Interaction

The Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) procedure was used to determine if interactions among the multiple dependent variables exist. In this way, age and group were compared with several of the independent variables, including academic scores, self-esteem and locus of control. This enables interactive effects to be determined for these data. No trends at any level approaching significance were found. Therefore, there does not appear to be any measurable interaction between independent and dependent variables.

Several additional analyses were employed to test for possible interactionary effects. Because the improvement in reading scores is so dramatic as the children participate in the program, the differences between second and fourth grade program children's reading ability was compared to the differences between second and fourth grade reading norms. This analysis answered whether they program children approached normality in reading as they aged. In answering this question, no significant differences were found with the unfortunately small ns involved at each age level.

Finally, through correlations of self-esteem with locus of control, and locus of control with reading and math scores it is possible to distinguish between theory failure of the program's philosophy and failure of the program to carry out this philosophy. These correlations of self-esteem and locus of control (.09), locus of control with reading (-.11) and locus of control with math (-.06) are non-significant and each approach a zero correlation. This suggests that theory failure is inherent, rendering the philosphical approach utilizing Goals $B_2$, C, and D (see Figure 1) nonvalid.

## DISCUSSION

### Implications

Interviewer: Do you like to come to tutoring?
Child: Yes
Interviewer: What's the part you like most about tutoring?
Child: Reading
Interviewer: What's the part you like least about tutoring?
Child: I like everything
Interviewer: How does tutoring make you feel?
Child: Proud
Interviewer: Proud? Why do you feel proud?
Child: Proud 'cause I'm learn'
Interviewer: Do you think that tutoring is helping you in school?
Child: Yes
Interviewer: In what way?
Child: I get 100's on my papers and tests

This excerpt from an interview with a second grade child in the tutoring program clearly illustrates how nearly every child feels about the program. With few exceptions, the children said that they enjoy tutoring and like their tutors. Very few suggested improvements, though this might be due either to inexperience with this type of question, their young age, or to no perceived need for a change. This suggests that the children, although perhaps limited in insight, are satisfied with the program.

As indicated by unanimous consensus to Question 44, the children feel that tutoring is helping them in school. In addition, the tutees appear to prefer learning activities to entertainment activities during tutoring sessions. In general, these results seem to imply that the

children are getting the review/practice of school lessons ($B_1$) and personal, individualized attention ($B_2$) the program is designed to give. At the very least, the children do enjoy the program, and feel they are gaining from it.

There is little evidence to substantiate the assumption that personal attention will raise self-esteem (C) as hypothesized by program structure. While there is only a slight trend for tutor children to feel better when speaking in front of the class as they matured according to Table 3, the control children experienced the same raise in self-esteem. Therefore, this trend could very likely be due to maturing effects of the children, and not the effects of the program. Without significant differences in the Piers-Harris Scale, there is little evidence which indicates that this self-esteem assumption is valid.

Tutor children like school and reading better than control children. These were the only trends that give evidence to the assumption that success orientation (D) leads to better academic scores. The remaining three questions pertaining to this assumption and which ask subjects preferred least and most, and afterschool activities, reflect no differences between groups or ages. Because the control group reflects the same results, it appears that the program has no effect in these areas.

Results of the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire show that neither the data of the control nor the tutor group reflects the expected "successful" (internal locus of control for successes, external locus of control for failures) orientation hypothesized in the literature section. However, this may be due to either the questionable validity of the assumption, or the questionable validity of the measure for this situation. Therefore, it appears that the program assumption that a success orientation is necessary for increased academic ability, is not substantiated by the evidence available.

Reading scores ($E_1$) give powerful evidence that the tutoring program is influencing the children. While the tutoring children began at a level far below their classmates, by the sixth grade they had surpassed these same classmates. However, it must be noted that the tutor children might be merely "catching up" or be more highly motivated to perform than their classmates. While this does not detract from the findings, confounding variables may have caused the differences, instead of being caused by the program effects.

Mathematics scores ($E_2$) are not as clearcut an example of an improvement. Until the fifth grade, the tutor children showed excellent improvement. Yet why the sixth grade math scores should not improve over the last year is difficult to explain. The result may be due to an error in testing or program records, or tutors or children may not be interested in studying the subject. However, it should be noted

that up until this last year, improvement in math was similar to reading score improvement. Thus, reading and math scores were improved, sometimes dramatically, through participation in the program, although confounding variables are not completely ruled out.

The apparent theory failure as implied by the very low correlation between self-esteem and locus of control ($r = .09$), and locus of control with reading ($r = -.11$) and math ($r = -.06$) scores suggest implications for understanding the process of the intervention. The process connecting self-esteem with locus of control, and locus of control with improved academic scores was not validated, yet children who participate in the program do improve academically from second grade to sixth grade.

As illustrated in Figure 1, this suggested three stage theoretical process is only one way in which the program is designed to improve academic scores. The other method is through direct practice of academic skills. Therefore, while the theory behind the three stage process may fail, there is evidence to suggest practice as a means to higher academic achievement. The improved academic scores of the participants serve to support the ultimate goals of the program, implying that although the theory behind the three stage process is not valid, the program itself is successful.

The implications of these findings are twofold. First, the program does appear to affect the academic progress of its participants.

Whether this is due to the suggested alternative method of direct practice, or unknown factors influencing the scores such as invalid measurement instruments, or instruments that measure too gross a difference among children is not emphatically known. Program directors have assumed that direct practice will influence academic scores in addition to the influence of the three stage theoretical process.

Secondly, since the program does appear to be successful despite apparent theoretical failure, there may be no need to adjust the actual program, the only adjustment needed may be in the theoretical aspects of the program. Further discussion of this point may be found in the recommendation section.

In general, it appears that the children enjoy the program. They feel that they receive personal attention and the program helps them in school. From the test scores, it appears that this claim is valid. This is despite apparent theory failure with no apparent validity in assumptions C (self-esteem) and D (locus of control - success orientation). Therefore, either the improved scores are the direct result of practice and personal attention, unknown factors influencing the scores are involved, or the measurement instruments were not valid for this study.

Limitations of the Study

Dealing with a pre-existing program produces severe limitations and restrictions to the study. This study dealt with a highly specialized population, and there is little research dealing with similar studies therefore, the results will not be easily generalizable to different populations or programs.

In addition, the study was difficult to conduct in terms of research design. The program was pre-existing and randomization was impossible therefore, a nonequivalent control group was necessary. Comparisons across the tutor and control children could have been made with more confidence if a more similar control group could have been used.

The structure of the program would not allow for comparing older children who have been in the program for several years with children new to the program but at the same grade level. If this had been possible, maturity effects could have been examined. Therefore, improvements such as self-esteem changes over four years time, might reflect the effects of the program or of the effect of maturation. Perhaps the tutor children, though lower in self-esteem than their peers in second grade, would have "caught up" on their own by sixth grade. However, the nonequivalent control group, though not as accurate as a randomized control group would be, was a measurement generated to reflect this type of error. The control groups steadily rising self-esteem as they matured (see Table 4), reflects a comparison of the

tutor children's data.

Finally, data with a small subject population may not be as accurate as data from a larger population. Time factors, most important of which was the end of the program for the year, would not allow for the collection of more data. This is a problem inherent in research dealing with small subject populations, therefore, variance and standard deviations have been carefully noted in each table where applicable.

Recommendations

The data do not support the assumptions that self-esteem and a success orientation are influenced by the current tutoring program. Yet there are data to indicate assumptions $B_1$, children's review and practice of school lessons, and $B_2$, personal and individualized attention are valid, and that the children are receiving these attentions. In addition, reading skills ($E_1$) and mathematics skills ($E_2$) of children improved, for some children dramatically. Therefore, while both short term goals $B_1$ and $B_2$ and long term goals $E_1$ and $E_2$ are being met, there are no data to indicate that reading and math scores are improved by any route other than direct practice and review of school lessons.

The program does meet its long term, and most important goals, those of increased academic skills. Therefore, it is recommended that the program continue very much the same.

As the program is currently structured, self-esteem and locus of control are not significantly affected. Should affecting self-esteem and locus of control continue to be an important goal of the program, it is suggested that tutor training in these areas be expanded. However, it is doubtful that one hour and fifteen minutes of contact time each week is enough to affect the self-esteem and locus of control for these children. Some of the children mentioned several recommendations of their own. It appears from their suggestions that they would like more input of how they spend time during tutoring sessions.

The children all enjoyed being interviewed and many stated that they felt happy and proud that their opinions were considered important and necessary. Therefore, it is recommended that each year the children be asked for this input. This would be easily accomplished by an adult (not the tutor) asking the children individually several questions dealing with program improvement and the childrens' interests. The data could all be collected in one session by switching tutors and children 15 minutes before the end of the session. In this way, the program would be easily updated to the childrens' interests and needs.

The program director's three evaluation objectives were met by this study. Through observation, interviews, and program records, they found that first, the children enjoy the program and feel that it is beneficial to them. Secondly, the philosophy behind their program does not appear to be valid. Third, and most important, it was found that children who participate in the program have improved reading scores by the sixth grade.

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# APPENDIX A

Subject Number_____

TUTOR CHILDREN INTERVIEW

Name:_____ Date Interviewed:_____

Hi, my name is Robin and I just want to ask you a few questions about how you feel and think about yourself, school, and tutoring, okay? It's very important that you tell me exactly what you think and feel, even if you think that it's bad. We're trying to make the tutoring program more fun and help the kids learn more, so it's important that you tell me what you honestly think. All set?

1. Your name is_____, right?

2. And you're in the _____grade? 3. So you're_____years old then?

4. What school do you go to?_____

5. What's your teacher's name?_____

6. How many brothers and sisters do you have?_____

7. Do any of them go to the same school?_____ 8. How many?_____

9. How old are they?_____

10. Are any of them in this tutoring program?_____

11. For how long?_____

12. What do you usually do after school or on weekends?_____

_____

13. What do you like to do <u>least</u> after school or on weekends?_____

14. What do you like to do <u>most</u> after school or on weekends?_____

15. How do you feel about school?_____

16. What subject do you like the most? (your favorite part of school)

_____

17. What subject do you like the least? (your least favorite part of school)_____

18. Do you ever answer questions or read out loud in class?_____

19. Is this because the teacher calls on you, or is this because you raise your hand and volunteer?_____

20. How do you feel when you answer questions or read out loud in class?_____

21. Do you like to read very much?_____

22. What's your favorite book?_____

23. Do you have alot of books at home?_____ 24. Do you ever go to the library at school?_____ 25. How often?_____

26. Do you know where the Chicago Public Library is?_____

27. Do you have a Public Library card?_____

28. What do you think you might want to be when you grow up?_____

_____

29. Do any of the other kids at school know about tutoring?_____

30. What do they say or think about it?_____

31. Why do you think they don't come to tutoring? (join)_____

32. How do you think the teachers at your school feel about tutoring?

_____

33. Why do you come to tutoring?_____

34. How many years have you come here?_____

35. What do your parents think or say about tutoring?_____

_____

36. Do you like to come to tutoring?_____

37. What's the part you like <u>most</u> about tutoring?_____

38. What's the part you like <u>least</u> about tutoring?_____

39. How does tutoring make you feel?_____

40. What do you think the other kids here think about tutoring?_____

_____

41. Why do you think they come here?_____

42. Do you like your tutor?_____

43. How long have you had him/her for a tutor?_____

44. Do you think tutoring is helping you in school?_____

45. In what way?_____

46. Okay, just one more question. For this one, I'd like you to close your eyes and pretend you are the director of this tutoring program. You can change anything you want to make the program more fun, interesting, and help the kids learn more. Take your time and think about it for a minute, and let me know if you'd like to change anything.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional comments:

# APPENDIX B

Subject Number_____

CONTROL CHILDREN INTERVIEW

Name:_____ Date Interviewed:_____

Hi, my name is Robin and I just want to ask you a few questions about how you feel and think about yourself and school, okay? It is very important that you tell me exactly what you think and feel, even if you think that it's bad. All set?

1. Your name is_____, right?

2. And you're in the_____grade? 3. So you're____years old then?

6. How many brothers and sisters do you have?_____

7. Do any of them go to this school?_____

12. What do you usually do after school or on weekends?_____

_____

15. How do you feel about school?_____

16. What subject do you like the most? (your favorite part of school)

_____

17. What subject do you like least? (your least favorite part of school)

_____

18. Do you ever answer questions or read out loud in class?_____

19. Is this because the teacher calls on you, or is this because you raise your hand and volunteer?_____

20. How do you feel when you answer questions or read out loud in class?

_____

21. Do you like to read very much?_____

22. What's your favorite book?_____

28. What do you think you might want to be when you grow up?_____

_____

# APPENDIX C

Okay, now I'm going to ask you alot of questions quickly and I just want you to answer the first thing that pops into your head. Just answer yes or no, whatever pops into your head first. Let's just take this sample (pretend) question first. "I smile alot." Then you decide quickly whether you think that you either smile alot or not and tell me either yes or no, okay?

Let's start.

Subject number_____

SELF ESTEEM AND LOCUS OF CONTROL INTERVIEW

Name:_____ Date Interviewed:_____

1. I am a happy person. yes no
2. It is hard for me to make friends. yes no
3. I get nervous when the teacher calls on me. yes no
4. When I grow up, I will be an important person. yes no
5. I get worried when we have tests at school. yes no
6. It is usually my fault when something goes wrong. yes no
7. I have good ideas. yes no
8. I am an important member of my family. yes no
9. I give up easily. yes no
10. I am smart. yes no
11. I am good in my schoolwork. yes no
12. I do many bad things. yes no
13. I am slow in finishing my schoolwork. yes no
14. I am an important member of my class at school. yes no
15. I am nervous. yes no
16. I can give a good report in front of the class. yes no
17. In school I am a dreamer. yes no
18. My friends like my ideas. yes no
19. I am lucky. yes no
20. My parents expect too much of me. yes no
21. I like being the way I am. yes no
22. I feel left out of things. yes no

23. I often volunteer at school. yes no

24. I wish I were different. yes no

25. I am sick alot. yes no

26. My classmates in school think I have good ideas. yes no

27. I am unhappy. yes no

28. I have many friends. yes no

29. I am cheerful. yes no

30. I am dumb about most things. yes no

31. People pick on me. yes no

32. When I try to make something, everything seems to go wrong. yes no

33. I am picked on at home. yes no

34. I am a leader in games and sports. yes no

35. I forget what I learn. yes no

36. I am easy to get along with. yes no

37. I lose my temper easily. yes no

38. I am a good reader. yes no

39. I am often afraid. yes no

40. I am always dropping or breaking things. yes no

41. I can be trusted. yes no

42. I am different from other people. yes no

43. I think bad thoughts. yes no

44. I am a good person. yes no

1. Do you ever get a really good grade on a test or paper?_____

   Why do you think you do?_____

   (because you're smart or lucky)

2. Do you ever get a bad grade on a test or a paper?_____

   Why do you think you do?_____

   (because the test was too hard or you didn't study)

3. Are you good at any games that you play with your friends or family?_____

   What games?_____

   (you try hard or it's easy to play)

4. Do you sometimes have trouble understanding what your teacher says at school?_____

   Why do you think that you do?_____

   (she/he didn't explain it very well, or you weren't listening)

5. Did any of the kids ever call you names?_____

   Why do you think they called you this?_____

   (they're mad at you, or you act that way)

6. Do you sometimes have trouble with math problems?_____

   Why do you think that you do?_____

   (teacher didn't explain very well or just can't understand very well)

7. Do people ever say that you are smart?_____

   Why do you think they say this?_____

   (they like you, or because you are smart)

8. Does your teacher or do you parents every say to you that you're not doing very well with your schoolwork?_____

   Why do you think they say this?_____

   (you're not doing well, or they're in a bad mood)

9. Does it sometimes happen at school that you're not sure of an answer, and you answer anyway, and you're wrong?_____

   How does this make you feel?_____

   Do you think that your teacher is being picky, or that you should have waited before you answered?_____

10. Does your teacher ever tell you that you gave a really good answer in class?_____

    Why do you think she/he said that?_____

    (you gave a smart answer or she/he likes you)

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Robin S. Turpin has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Emil Posavac, Director
Professor, Psychology, Loyola University

Dr. Jill Nagy
Assistant Professor, Psychology, Loyola University

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

December 14, 1981
Date

Director's Signature