

**Dugsi - An Academic Tutoring Project for Somali Youth:
Project Development,
the Volunteer Tutor Training Workshop,
and Materials Development**

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June, 1997**

*Accepted as a Double Plan B Paper
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6/23/97*

A Double Plan B Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Master of Arts degree in English as a Second Language.

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Introduction

In March, 1996, Dr. Michael Metcalf, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Director of the Institute of International Studies and Programs (ISP), was approached by several elders of the Somali community in the Twin Cities. The elders came to their meeting with a plea for help. Their message was one of desperation; they felt that they were losing their children. They were looking for any type of services that would assist the young people in the Somali community with English skills needed to “make it” in the world after high school. As spring approached, they were nearly certain that a small group of Somali youth would graduate from high school in the Twin Cities. The group would be “firsts”, groundbreakers. The elders were nearly as certain that the graduates’ skills in English would be insufficient to allow them to go on to any kind of higher education, and even doubted that their abilities would be adequate in helping them to find meaningful employment. This call for resources and help, made over one year ago, sparked the program that has come to be known as “The Dugsi Project”.

Dr. Metcalf’s initial response to the Somali elders was to call on various departments at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus, and neighboring community groups, looking for resources and advice. Some of the departments and groups represented in those early bimonthly meetings were the Office of Special Learning Opportunities (OSLO), the Program for Teaching English as a Second Language, the Minnesota English Center (MEC), and the Brian Coyle Community Center, which is part of Pillsbury Neighborhood Services. Abdi Samatar, a Somali professor from the Geography Department, rounded out the group.

The two Somali elders in attendance were each bilingual teachers at Roosevelt High School (RHS). RHS had begun a bilingual Somali studies program during the 1992-93 school year, and was designated as a Somali magnet school shortly thereafter. The teachers were witnessing an explosion in the number of Somali students at Roosevelt, with new arrivals being added to ESL classes daily. These men expressed their fears that even when students passed through various levels of ESL classes, progressed to the bilingual content courses, and even were mainstreamed into regular classes, their English was still not adequate for their future needs. Thus, these early exploratory discussions focused on what the needs of the students were, more details on what the elders were looking for, and what the various individuals and groups might be able to offer.

I was first invited to attend the April 3, 1996 meeting of the group by Professor Elaine Tarone, Director of Graduate Studies in the Program for Teaching English as a Second Language, who felt that I might be able to serve the Somali community while working on a required Plan B paper. At that early April meeting, and in two others on the 17th and the 24th, a number of crucial decisions were made. It was determined that the students needed some type of continuing work in English as a Second Language (ESL), perhaps with a focus on skills they would need for higher education. The elders felt that the work should be done with as many students as possible, but given limitations their strong preference was that the focus be on the seniors, who had only a short time left to gain as much as they could before being graduated out of the school. In addition, and again assuming limited resources, they felt that any work should focus on those who were determined to be "the most likely to succeed" rather than those who needed the most help to improve their skills. Further, the group consensus seemed to be growing that some kind of tutoring program

would be the best way to give the students what they needed within tight time constraints, and that in all likelihood the tutoring would need to be done by volunteers.

In light of these decisions, the request was made that I spend the last month of the school year visiting RHS, speaking with administrators, ESL teachers and Somali students, and observing classes. At the end of this time period I was to report back to the group with information about the ESL needs of the students, and ideas about what the tutoring program might focus on. Further, it was hoped that I would then be able to design and implement a training program for volunteer tutors (VTs) to equip them for the work they would do with the Somali youth. In this way, the original focus of this paper was set in place: a curriculum project in which I would first design and develop a tutor training curriculum and then report on the training of the volunteer tutors. Later, the additional task of designing a set of materials both for use by the tutors and students, and to serve the tutors as models for their own materials selection and development was added.

A Brief History of Somalia

Before beginning my visits to Roosevelt High School, I felt it was important to learn something about the history of Somalia in order to better understand the past and perspectives of the students I would be observing. Knowledge of the young people's past would likewise be a critical element for the tutors to have, and would need to be integrated into the tutor training as well. In addition, I have found that a base in Somali history aided me in my sensitivity and viewpoint as I developed materials for the tutors to use with the students.

The Horn of Africa was populated for centuries by nomadic herders and pastoralists. In fact, it is believed that the area was populated by the Samaal by 100 C.E. at the latest, and that the culture and lifestyle exhibited in the late 1970's (prior to the war) had not changed significantly from the eighteenth century (Metz 1993). The Arab world had introduced Islam to the area in the eighth or ninth century, and maintained a political presence there as well until European colonizers moved in in the early 1800s. After a period of exploration and competition, British, Italian and French forces each established portions of the region for themselves. The people dominated by these forces were highly homogeneous -- 95-98% of the population was Somali (Culturgram 1997), Sunni Muslims, with their society being divided into six large, extended family-based clans. Somali was spoken by everyone, Arabic by many, and the elite were educated in English or Italian. While loyalty to one's family and then one's clan came before loyalty to one's "country", by 1960 the area was sufficiently organized in its opposition to the colonizers to be able to declare independence. The Somalis were aided in their efforts by some of the results of World War II, such as the 1941 occupation by the British of the Italian portions of Somalia, and a 1950 vote by the United Nations stating that Somalia ought to be granted independence.

A parliamentary, civilian government was established, but never firmly took control of the newly "united" Somalia, mainly due to clan rivalries. In October 1969, military leaders undertook a successful coup, killing the current president, and establishing Major General Mahammed Siad Barre as the new president. Subsequently, the constitution was suspended, and Somalia was declared a "scientific socialist" state, built on both Marxist and Islamic principles. The country received large amounts of funding from the Soviet Union. As Marxism denounced distinctions in society based on class, and sought

liberation from such distinctions, so the new Somali government denounced distinctions based on lineage group affiliation (Metz 1993). Siad Barre urged the people of his country to set aside clan loyalties, and to adhere to his new perspectives on society. Tribalism was denounced as a "disease" which would impede national unity and obstruct development, Somalis were instructed to refer to one another as "jaalle" (comrade) without concern for which clan the person was from, and, finally, the government "also sought to change the function of the clans and lineages by abolishing the title of *elder* and replacing it with *peacekeeper*," (Metz 1993, pg. 85).

At the same time, despite the verbal message being publicized, in practice clan alliance seemed to take on even greater importance than it had had before. As Metz puts it:

Despite government encouragement of change, clan and lineage remained important throughout Siad Barre's rule, and Siad Barre remained in power by manipulating clans and clan leaders. In fact, soon after the revolution, kinship considerations and nepotism were evident at the highest levels of the regime. (pg. 58)

One of Siad Barre's movements was to establish a Somali script based on the Roman alphabet and a national literacy campaign. Basic elementary education, once available to only the elite, was now provided for free to a far larger percentage of the population (Aliaga 1996). Literacy rates before the campaign were estimated to be as low as 5% of the population. Government and technical positions in the country had been available only to this small slice of the citizens. Even after independence, from 1960 to 1969, education in schools was carried out in English or Italian, or in Arabic in Islamic schools. In 1973 and 1974, Siad Barre recruited up to 20,000 teachers from among government employees and educators in the school systems, sending them out to urban and rural areas, to both the sedentary and nomadic populations, for

three month sessions, with the literacy education being done in Somali (Metz 1993). After the campaign, literacy rate estimates increased, from a 1975 Somali government statement of 55%, to a United Nations finding of 24% in 1990 (Putnam 1993).

In 1976 Siad Barre established the Somali Revolutionary Socialist party, which supported efforts in 1977 to gain control of portions of Ethiopia where many Somalis lived. The military efforts were unsuccessful, and since the Soviet Union had supported Ethiopia in the conflict, all Soviets were expelled from Somalia. The United States and other Western nations moved in quickly with aid, both humanitarian and military, and hopes for influence.

Throughout the 1980's armed opposition to the military government grew, led by various clan-based groups. Eventually, in 1991 the militia groups reached the capital and on January 27, 1991 Siad Barre left the country. The clan-led rebel groups now became rivals -- chaos and anarchy ruled Somalia in lieu of a central government (Schwab 1993). Education systems, interrupted and piecemeal since 1977, ceased altogether.

Statistics from the early 1990's are so staggering they are hard to take in. Before the civil war, the population of Somalia was about 7.7 million (Putnam 1993). War and violence, famine and disease caused the displacement of almost half of the country's population, put 1.5 million people in danger of starvation, and by the beginning of 1993 caused the deaths of 50% of Somali children under five years of age (Putnam and Noor 1993). Fresh water sources were purposefully poisoned, women and children were raped, food was unobtainable. United Nations attempts to assist with emergency aid and peace keeping efforts from 1992 to 1995 were met with resistance by the militias, and all United Nations personnel had left by March of 1995 (Culturgram 1997).

As of one year ago, the civil war in Somalia had caused the internal displacement of approximately two million people, half a million deaths, and one million refugees, whose first location of asylum were camps in Ethiopia, Yemen, Djibouti, Kenya and Egypt (Aliaga 1996). There are some reports of lessening conflict and slowly returning refugees; however, high unemployment is now a major deterrent in repatriation efforts (Redmond 1996).

A Brief History of Somalis in Minnesota

This then is the background of the Somali refugees who are arriving in Minnesota. As of the early 1990s there were an estimated 50 Somalis living in Minnesota. By March 1995 that number had grown to 2,500 (Chin 1995). As of March 1997 the number of Somalis residing in Minnesota is thought to be approximately 7,000 to 10,000, with 6,000 - 7,000 in Hennepin County alone (Mohammed 1997). Indeed, these numbers have not stabilized, but continue to increase. A recent estimate put the number of new arrivals expected in 1997 - 1998 at an additional 7000. The Minnesota education system is joined by refugee resettlement groups, social service providers, health care providers, and a host of other systems and agencies in their efforts to - quickly - learn and grow in their abilities and efforts to meet the needs of these new members of our community.

The bilingual program and magnet school status of Roosevelt High School is one step in this effort. When I first began to visit Roosevelt in May 1996 there were about 300 Somali students at the school. Currently, there are almost 500, with Somali students composing 35% of the student body. Approximately 3 to 5 new Somali students are added weekly. Edison High School has recently become a second Somali magnet school, but so far this

has not slowed the number of weekly new arrivals at Roosevelt. Many of the students at Roosevelt are so-called "second wave" refugees; that is, they left Somalia, resided perhaps in refugee camps in Africa (sometimes for as long as two to three years), relocated to the United States (often the East or West coast), and after a year or more in the U.S. are now choosing to take up residence in Minnesota. Attractions to the Twin Cities area include a fairly strong employment environment, and an active, supportive Somali community.

Needs Assessment at Roosevelt High School

Background

Having increased my knowledge of the situation in Somalia with a week-long crash course in Somali history, I now felt better prepared to assess the needs of Somali students at Roosevelt High School (RHS). I would have one month to visit the school before classes got out for the summer break. During that month, I was able to observe two of the three bilingual content course teachers in their classrooms, and four out of five of the ESL teachers. In addition to observing them in the classroom, I had an opportunity to speak with each of these professionals about their assessment of their Somali students' needs. I spoke at length on several occasions with the ESL Department Chair, and met with the Assistant Principal who oversees the schools' Somali efforts. Along with this interaction with the RHS staff, I was able to interact with Somali youth as well, to help them as they struggled with computer problems, to look over papers they had written and give them suggestions, to read through worksheet and test answers they had come up with, and to simply watch them as they functioned in the classroom and outside of it.

After my first visit, my initial response to the situation at Roosevelt was that it was daunting at best, and hopeless at worst. RHS had begun the '95-'96

school year feeling well staffed, with three Somali bilingual teachers, and four ESL teachers, whose classes contained Southeast Asians, Mexicans, Ethiopians, etc. in addition to their Somali students. The ESL Department Chair would also be called on to teach ESL classes along with her administrative duties. As the year began, the approximate figures for the Somali student body were: 24 seniors, 59 juniors, 49 sophomores and 35 freshman. (Figures are approximate because they tended to change so quickly.) However, from October '95 to May 22, 1996, **140** new Somali students were enrolled at Roosevelt High School! The administration struggled just to keep up with the paper work, while class sizes bulged. New students were literally still being added during the final days of the school year.

Of the 140 new students, all but 15 entered as freshman, with the remainder entering as sophomores. (According to state law, any refugee arriving and enrolling in high school prior to their 21st birthday will be allowed four years of public education. Many of the newly arriving Somali students at RHS fall into this category, with passports listing their age to be twenty years old.) New students exhibit a wide variance in their levels of skills and previous education. Some students arrive with no literacy skills at all, and are placed in pre-literate classes where they are first taught how to hold a pencil and form letters on a page. Other students state that they had two to three years of English in refugee camps in Kenya, or perhaps attended a year or two of school in another state in the U.S. Still others, often from a more elite background, are literate in Somali.

Faced with such a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, ESL classes were forced to accommodate the differences. A new bilingual aide (a woman, all three of the bilingual teachers being men) was hired part way through the year in an effort to provide increased support for the overburdened teachers

and to assist those students with the lowest abilities. My sense in May was that the ESL and bilingual staff were operating in crisis mode, and had been for quite some time. In some cases their classes had over forty students. Any day when they arrived to a particular period there might be a new student who needed to be integrated in. Because of the huge class sizes and the fact that teachers were teaching five classes per day, individual attention to a particular student's needs was a rare luxury. Indeed, this type of teaching environment put tremendous constraints on the types of activities that were even plausible options for the classroom. However, my overwhelming impression was that, in the midst of constant change and expansion, most of the teachers cared deeply about their students and were putting forth nearly herculean efforts to ensure that learning continued in the classroom. Furthermore, they were, to a person, encouraging of any outside help the students might be able to receive, and willing to provide advice and information to me in trying to establish that help.

Each time I entered Roosevelt, I was instantly reminded of the large numbers of Somali students in attendance there. Somali young men blend in rather easily, wearing the latest fashions in casual American style clothing. Many young women, however, are noticed immediately, wearing long skirts and sandals, along with a long cloth that covers the head, surrounds the face and continues to the knees. The material for this style of clothing varies greatly, from heavy to light, from solid browns and greens, to colorful floral prints, with veil and skirt sometimes "matching" and sometimes not. Interestingly, I did observe over the month that in beginning level ESL classes there were rarely any female students not wearing this style of clothing. At higher level ESL classes there were several Somali girls with adjustments in their clothing, perhaps a lighter, smaller scarf only partially covering their hair and allowed to fall down occasionally, or loose floral slacks to replace the skirt. In the bilingual classes I

saw girls wearing traditional clothing, but no head covering, or jeans and a sweatshirt along with a head covering. Clearly, clothing is part of culture, and these young women are experimenting with the new along with the old.

I noticed a similar process of adjustment in the variety of seating arrangements in the various classes. In the basic level ESL class the girls were all sitting on one side of the room and the boys on the other, with an empty space between them. In an intermediate ESL class and in several of the bilingual classes, the girls sat in the front of the room, and the boys in the back, with a small cluster of boys and girls sitting next to each other (and interacting with each other) in the middle. In one upper level ESL class which took place in a large auditorium style space and in which teacher attention was minimal, some of the girls sat in front on one side, some of the boys a bit farther back on the other side, while a cluster of boys and girls sat in the back, changing seats frequently and interacting with each other quite freely.

Somali young people are being faced with living in a country where the culture and customs are very different from their own. They seem to be experimenting with their choices and options, even in this limited way in their clothing and seating choices in the classroom. It will be profoundly important for the tutors to realize that these processes and adjustments are going on, just as they would be in a more limited sense for any adolescent. However, this will not affect some of the basic structures of the tutoring program, which will rest on traditional Somali mores. For example, a male tutor may work with a group of female students, but will not be allowed to work one-on-one unless it is with a male student, and vice versa with a female tutor working with male students. In addition, tutors will be taught about the importance of modesty in dress in the Somali culture, and encouraged to dress appropriately for one in a teacher/mentor role.

The Bilingual Component

About two-thirds of the Somali students who enter RHS as freshmen spend two years, and sometimes up to three years, in the bilingual program. While a student is in the bilingual program, a typical course load is three bilingual content classes, two ESL classes and one elective, which may be a mainstream class. Bilingual content classes are taught in math, science, social studies and health. Courses are run on a trimester basis, with each trimester lasting for 12 weeks. The specific focus of content courses shifts each trimester. Textbooks used are the same as for mainstream high school classes for that particular content area, and the attempt is made to keep the curriculum as similar as possible between the two types of classes. Handouts and worksheets are likewise in English. Teachers, however, may choose to rework and adapt portions of the text, or comprehension and critical thinking questions found at the end of a reading in the text. The teacher also may lecture on the content area in Somali, and explain portions of the text in Somali.

The first class that I observed at RHS was a bilingual social studies class with the trimester focus being World Cultures. It was taught by Mohamed Osman, a member of the tutoring project team. After arriving in the United States from Somalia, Osman had lived with his wife and children in Philadelphia. Over time, he began to feel that he was losing influence over his children, and that they were losing their Somali culture. Determined to find a place where his children would be more influenced by a vital Somali community, Osman moved his family to Minneapolis in 1993. Since that time, he had been an elder in the local community, and a strong influence for organizing and finding ways to meet the needs of local Somalis. After six months of difficult negotiations with members of various local clans, he had

been successful in organizing The Confederation of the Somali Community in Minnesota. The Confederation, including representatives from nearly all the Somali clans living in Minnesota, serves as a social service and political action group for these clans. Mohamed Osman is the chairperson of the board for the Confederation. In addition to his outside activities related to the Somali community, Osman works full time as a bilingual teacher at Roosevelt High School. His concern for the futures of Somali young people living in the Twin Cities is evident at every turn. In the classroom he urges them on, and outside of the classroom he organizes on their behalf.

In the final trimester of that year, Osman was teaching three periods of Civics and two periods of World Culture. Osman estimates that, while all of the printed material in the classroom is in English, he speaks Somali about 60-70% of the time in the classroom. In the first class that I observed, the students were working on a portion of the textbook entitled "Patterns of Early Civilizations". They had read the article over several days at home, and then discussed it previously with the entire class, focusing mainly on unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts. They were now given a worksheet with a series of comprehension and critical thinking questions about the article, which they worked on during this class period. Students worked mainly independently, pausing occasionally to look at one another's answers or to ask another student for help. While the worksheet questions were in English and the answers the students wrote were in English, their verbal interaction in class was all in Somali. Osman circulated around the classroom, fielding questions, looking at answers and pointing out pertinent portions of the text. He spoke mainly Somali, with an occasional word or sentence in English. There were no dictionaries being used in the classroom.

As the students worked, I looked at worksheets they had turned in previously for a Civics class and later looked at the answers they had written on the Early Civilizations text. Since I also had a copy of the text, I was able to see that many of their answers were copied directly out of the text. It was difficult to ascertain if they had understood the meaning of what they had read and copied. Sometimes the portion was an appropriate answer to the question, and sometimes it was not. The answers written for the Civics course handout were shorter, often just one sentence or a portion of a sentence. Based on the grammar, these answers did not seem to be directly copied from a text, although phrases within an answer may have been. My first impression in looking at answers on these worksheets was that the grammar seemed, in general, to be at about an upper intermediate ESL level, and that the tutors might need to work with students on the skills of paraphrasing and summarizing. In other bilingual classes that I observed over the month of May I was able to see further examples of written work on worksheets and tests, and my first impressions were continually reaffirmed. It might also be noted that many of the questions themselves on the worksheets contained errors in both grammar and mechanics. In some cases these errors were such that they would have affected the comprehensibility of the question for a native speaker of English. This was also the case on handouts I saw throughout my visits, and on at least one unit final exam.

Over the weeks, as I observed other bilingual classes I saw a variety of classroom activities and skills. For example, on one occasion the students were watching the video "Eyes on the Prize", and were directed to take notes as they watched. While I did not have a chance to collect student's notes or look at them closely, the students did not really seem to be writing down many notes at all. Most students that I observed had only a few random words in English

written on their page at the end of the segment. Of course, the constant struggle with observing bilingual classes was that I do not speak Somali, and so I was never entirely clear what specific instructions were given to the students, what the goals of the activity communicated to them were, how much previous practice they had had with the skill, etc. However, based on the results of this activity, and the fact that I never saw the students taking notes when their bilingual teachers lectured (even when the teachers wrote words on the board), it seemed that the students might need further work in the area of note-taking skills.

With both the bilingual and the ESL classes, the times when I had the greatest opportunities to interact directly with the students were in the computer lab. Many ESL classes use the computer lab at least once a week, utilizing software called "SuccessMaker". This software, designed specifically for students with limited English proficiency (LEP), allows the students to work independently, choosing from among activities such as Spelling Skills, Readers Workshop, Reading Investigations, and Language Arts Strands. Bilingual math classes use the computer lab in a similar fashion, using software with which students can practice word problems, basic algebra, percentages, etc. Due to the large class sizes, there were not enough computers in the computer lab for every student to be able to work alone on a computer for the entire class period. Some teachers dealt with this by doubling up some students and allowing them to work as a pair. Other teachers rotated students, directing those without a computer to work on homework that had been assigned, or even allowing them to do homework for other classes. During computer lab time, teachers generally circulated around the room, answering questions, troubleshooting computer snafus and encouraging the learners in their tasks. I was able to follow suit, and learned a great deal in the process.

In fact, it was during my second day observing the Somali students at RHS, and my first visit to the computer lab that I made an important (albeit previously well-researched by others) discovery. On my first visit to the school I had hung back, trying to not be noticed as I gathered first impressions and figured out how things functioned in general in the school, a bit overwhelmed as I've said by the fast paced sense of chaos and my growing awareness of the difficult situation the staff and students were in. On this second visit I was eager for involvement, for interaction. In general the students seemed somewhat oblivious to my presence, glancing at me only briefly when I was introduced to the class. As the students settled into computers in the computer lab, chose programs and began to work, I left my corner chair and imitated the teacher as he circulated around the room, looking over student's shoulders as they worked. While most students were silent, I noticed that one woman was persistently mumbling to herself. Dressed in traditional style clothing, her long olive green head covering draped down to her waist, while her sandaled feet peeked out from under her skirt, showing traditional decorative patterns in henna. I was curious about her mumbling, and leaned closer to hear what she was saying. "Sh-t! Sh-t!" she exclaimed, struggling with a computer glitch that wouldn't allow her access to the activity she wanted to enter. Apparently, this Somali student was learning appropriate uses of "social" language fairly quickly.

Later, in a higher level ESL class I noticed other instances of the use of social, informal English. A small group of Somali young men and women were sitting in the back of the room, chatting, looking at photographs and exchanging notes and papers while the teacher was distracted with several other students for an extended length of time in the front of the room. Much of the discourse of the group was in Somali, but their conversation was laced with chunks of

English, all of it quite informal such as “Shhhh, be quiet.”, “Get the h-ll out of my way.”, and “See ya later.” Likewise, in the verbal exchanges that I had with the Somali students during my visits I found that I had little trouble being understood, or understanding the meaning of what they were trying to convey. Students were often missing key vocabulary, but had good compensation strategies which they used to communicate their message. The Somali students may be helped in their oral skills by their culture. Somali culture places high value on oral adeptness, and rewards forthright expression. Many of the ESL classes I observed counted on and received active and energetic oral participation from the students. For example, the use of a particular preposition or a type of question formation might be taught and modeled, and then other examples sought. These other examples were often provided by many different students, without the teacher having to call on them individually.

In contrast, reading and writing skills presented more of a problem. In an advanced ESL class I observed, students had previously been working with the short story “After Twenty Years” by O’Henry. The teacher appeared frustrated by time limits, a large class, and lack of progress on the students’ part. During this class period she had put up an overhead with an outline of the story including some of the main ideas and subpoints. The entire class period was spent with the students copying down the one page outline into their notebooks, with the instructions that the test would be during the next class period “on these notes, not on the book.” It would be difficult to ascertain how much, if anything, the students had comprehended from their reading of the story. In an intermediate ESL class students read aloud myths they had written down from their culture. While the spoken products sounded conversational and appropriate, the written products were very difficult to read due to errors in grammar and mechanics, and poor handwriting.

These observations meshed with the advice I was to be given over and over again during my continuing visits to RHS, from the ESL staff, from the bilingual staff and especially from the ESL Program Chair. With one voice these professionals urged us to focus on reading and writing for academic purposes in the tutoring program. They expressed the belief that the students were acquiring oral proficiency more rapidly than skills in reading and writing, and would need a considerable amount of support in the latter. One of the ESL teachers, Wanda McCay, was the teacher with the second longest record for ESL teaching in the Minneapolis school district. She taught not only with experience, but with confidence, energy, cheerfulness, and creativity. I enjoyed watching her teach, enjoyed the controlled but active atmosphere in her classroom. Along with her colleagues, McCay stated unequivocally that even the best students at the highest levels needed more attention to reading and writing than they were able to receive at Roosevelt. While none of these teachers mentioned BICS versus CALP, their advice would have been predicted by the research work of Jim Cummins and Virginia Collier which will be discussed below.

Throughout the process of setting up times and places to observe classes with Somali students, I had been greatly assisted by the supportive help of the ESL Department Chair, Dawn Alberts. Although she was nearly overwhelmed with the constant flow of new students to be placed and year-end paper work duties, all of this in addition to her regular teaching load, Alberts frequently made time to answer my questions, ask me questions of her own, and discuss the issues of the Somali students. In addition, on several occasions we had extended meetings in which I was able to interview her at length. Alberts was a candid informant, and a strong proponent of the idea that the best role the tutoring program could play would be in providing work with

reading and writing skills. She lamented the fact that in all probability the majority of the Somali students with senior status would graduate, although she felt that many of them were “unable to write a complete sentence.” Alberts related that in order to graduate all seniors at RHS must write a final paper. Teacher assistance is allowed, and staff had spent hours of time in and out of class taking the Somali students’ very rough first attempts and turning them into acceptable final products. Sadly, by the end of the process many of the staff felt the papers showed more of the teachers’ abilities than of the students’.

Alberts further stated that of the nearly 300 Somali students at RHS, twenty to twenty-five of them were taking only mainstream classes at the time of my visits in May, and it appeared that forty students would be fully mainstreamed for the beginning of the ‘96 - ‘97 school year. Feedback from the mainstream teachers to the ESL/bilingual program was that the students definitely needed more work in reading and writing. Alberts felt that in terms of reading, even if the students could make it through a high school level story or article, they were not really comprehending large portions of it and were unable to approach what they had read with any critical thinking skills. While she had attempted to focus on these issues in her ESL classroom, she believed that the students needed more individualized attention to really grasp the concepts and skills. Alberts briefly referred to the difficult stumbling block that lack of background knowledge was for the Somali young people in her program, and how little education many of them had ever received in their first language.

Significantly, Alberts reiterated time and time again that the Somali students operate under the strong perception that in the United States it is a natural progression for one to graduate from high school and then go on to further education at a university or college. Even if their own parents have had no higher education, the young people consider it the norm here. Both male

and female Somali students consistently confirm their plans to go on for further schooling after they graduate. The staff at Roosevelt have tried to walk a fine line, encouraging these aspirations while stressing that a student must have strong skills, abilities and motivation in order to be accepted and achieve success in post secondary educational settings. Alberts was worried that they had not been firm or clear enough, since many of the seniors seemed to feel that they would be ready for college, while the staff did not.

When asked if she thought that the students, not sensing a need for tutoring, would not want to participate in a tutoring program, Alberts was adamant that that would not happen. Indeed, her response was an emphatic, "I KNOW they would go!" As a teacher and a director, she had found many of the students to be extremely hard working and motivated, willing to take advantage of opportunities made available to them. Knowing that students did work hard in their studies outside of class, Alberts felt that they would be willing to get involved in a skills oriented tutoring program, and that they would benefit greatly from it.

A final area that I discussed at length with Alberts had to do with the focus of the tutoring. If the tutoring program focused on academic skills, ought they to be oriented toward assisting the students to graduate from RHS, or ought they to be oriented towards preparing the students for future academic work? It was perhaps a fine distinction in theory, but in reality it would drive the choice of themes and materials used in the tutoring. Through our discussions it became clear that there were already options available for students needing extra help with their work at Roosevelt. Several homework-help type tutoring programs operated at libraries and community centers in the students' neighborhoods, for example. Likewise, there was an after-school program that operated in RHS itself and an additional program could actually be chosen as an elective so that

the student could receive senior credits toward graduation while they received remedial help with their school work. Clearly, the gap to be filled did not involve mere homework help or skills needed to graduate, but rather skills that would ensure successful completion of academic assignments at institutions chosen after graduation.

Indeed, for the '96 - '97 school year staff at Roosevelt have agreed to provide additional after school hours homework assistance to the students. Further, true to predictions Lyle Abeln, Assistant Principal at RHS, had made during my visit with him in May of 1996, there were other changes made to the ESL/bilingual program for the '96-'97 school year. Significantly, new staff were hired, so that currently there are thirteen ESL and LEP teachers, six Somali bilingual teachers and two Somali bilingual aids. ESL courses are now conducted in nine different levels of classes to cover the wide range of abilities. New students are placed in an Orientation class where they are taught culture and pragmatic aspects of English. In the past, staff had struggled with cultural dilemmas in which students were perceived to be quite demanding, requiring constant attention. This new Orientation class, along with evening classes being taught at RHS on Somali culture and language, has been started in an effort to overcome some of these differences. Similarly to last year, new Somali students do continue to arrive weekly, and administrators struggle to maintain acceptably low class sizes.

From Dawn Alberts I had learned that prior to the '95-'96 school year there had been two Somali students who had graduated from Roosevelt. Twin brothers, they were the sons of a bilingual teacher at Wilder Fundamentals Elementary School. I was able to contact these two graduates, and to interview them along with their father, Mohammed Farid. Hussein and Hassan (traditional names for male twins in Somalia) were twenty years old when I

visited with them in July, 1996. Hussein had been taking academic courses at Minneapolis Community College (MCC) since Fall 1995, with a focus on premed. He hoped to go on to study medicine at a university or medical college. Hassan had been at Minneapolis Technical College (MTC) since Fall 1995 and was hoping to study architecture. They expressed that English was not their only problem; they were also frustrated with their lack of background knowledge. Teachers and other students often assumed they had knowledge about things (both academic and nonacademic) which they did not. They stated that both their class work and their understanding of the social atmosphere were affected by this lack of background knowledge.

Without revealing the feedback I had received at RHS, I asked Hussein and Hassan to speak from their experience and to comment on what support they thought students at Roosevelt needed, but weren't getting. Both the sons and the father indicated that they needed more help with reading and writing. As Farid stated, "Reading and writing are number one."

BICS versus CALP

The results of this brief needs assessment undertaken at Roosevelt High School were perhaps predictable based on the ideas of Cummins (1981), who found that children who arrive in a new country learn certain kinds of language much faster than other kinds of language. Cummins differentiates between two types of language proficiency. The first type, basic interpersonal communications skills or BICS, refers to language skills needed for oral fluency and sociolinguistic competence. These skills are often used in situations which are rich in context, and not cognitively demanding. In contrast, the second type of language proficiency, cognitive/academic language proficiency or CALP,

refers to language skills needed for academic work. These skills are often used in situations which are context-reduced and cognitively demanding.

Much research has been done involving the concepts of BICS and CALP. According to studies by Collier (1987) and Collier and Thomas (1988), for students who arrive in the new country as adolescents (such as most of the Roosevelt High Somali students), the amount of time required to acquire BICS may be about 3 to 4 years. However, the time needed for these students to perform at the average level of achievement of native speakers on standardized tests (an indicator of CALP) may be as long as 7 to 10 years. Sadly the RHS students simply do not have this long in the public school system. As Collier (1989) puts it:

Adolescent arrivals who have had no L2 exposure and who are not able to continue academic work in their first language while they are acquiring their second language do not have enough time left in high school to make up the lost years of academic instruction. Without special assistance, these students may never reach the 50th NCE (normal curve equivalent) or may drop out before completing high school. This is true both for adolescents with a good academic background and for those whose schooling has been limited or interrupted. (pg. 527)

Bilingual content classes are one way that the Somali students at RHS receive "special assistance", though the bilingual teachers were the first to realize that even more input was needed.

Significantly, for the state of Minnesota the current definition of an LEP student includes all those individuals who are nonnative speakers of English and who fall one standard deviation below the norm for their grade level on national standardized test scores. Any individual within that category, by definition, is eligible for resources allocated for LEP students. However, according to Dr. Bounlieng Phommasouvanh, Area Director and LEP Education Specialist for the MN Department of Children, Families, and Learning, in only

about 25% of the cases throughout the state are these the criteria actually used for exiting a student out of an LEP program. In fact, in 75% of the cases a student's oral skills and the teacher's judgment are used as the exit criteria. Thus, while CALP takes far longer to obtain than BICS, BICS is used 3/4 of the time to determine that a young person in the MN public education system is "ready" for mainstream academic classes.

In addition, the research on CALP has looked at how the development of CALP in the second language (L2) is related to the development of CALP in the first language (L1). Collier (1989) explains that L1 cognitive development and language acquisition generally extends through about age 12 for a typical child, and that if that L1 development is interrupted before it is completed, it may cause negative cognitive effects in L2 development. This may be the case for many of the Somali students due to the disruption of their lives and education over the past ten years.

Focusing the Tutoring Project

Armed with my observation of students and classes at Roosevelt High School, interviews of teachers and other staff, feedback from the two Somali graduates and the conclusions of research on literacy, I took my findings back to the team of people meeting to form the tutoring project. Based on my findings, I recommended that the tutoring should focus on reading and writing for academic purposes. Further, I stressed that the tutoring should highlight skills and strategies the students would need for post-secondary education, and not be a homework-help project.

As a group, the members decided to accept my recommendations. This would be considered a pilot, or test project, and the numbers were to be kept

small. Twenty of the top Somali seniors would be invited to join. They would be tutored twice a week for an hour and a half per session. Volunteers would be asked to tutor twice a week, but it was understood that many of them might only be able to agree to once a week. Ideally each tutor would work with one student; again we understood that tutors might have to work with up to three students each. Therefore, we would need to recruit and train somewhere between ten and forty volunteers to tutor the twenty Somali students. In a July, 1996 meeting, it was agreed that overseeing the program and all of its volunteers was too large a job for any single member of our team, and would be too confusing to do as a group. Thus, a staff person would need to be hired to coordinate the project which would require funding. While the remaining members of the group began to investigate grant opportunities, both within the University of Minnesota and outside, I was given the title of Curriculum Developer/Tutor Trainer and sent out to develop a training program to train the volunteer tutors.

The Tutor Training Workshop

The Minnesota Literacy Council Tutor Training Workshop

Initially it was assumed by our team that our volunteer tutors (VTs) would first be trained by the Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC), and then attend some shorter, follow-up training specifically designed for our program. The MLC is a statewide nonprofit social service agency which acts to improve literacy skills for native and nonnative speakers of English in Minnesota. Celebrating their 25th anniversary this year, they have many years of experience with tutor training. The MLC acts as an umbrella organization, providing consultation services and linking potential tutors and learners with 115 different "learning centers", or

community based organizations, around the state. Tutors are required to attend a twelve hour training workshop put on by the MLC. After receiving this training, volunteer tutors are awarded with a certificate, and introduced to an individual needing tutoring, often a refugee recently settled in Minnesota. Tutors are supported by access to resource libraries and the learning center, which loosely tracks their work and the progress of the student. However, in most situations individual tutors have a great deal of autonomy in terms of lesson plans and materials used, and the training they receive takes this into account. While there is no doubt that many of the tutors do provide valuable lessons in English, another important aspect of their role is as mentor, friend and cultural liaison for their student.

It was our hope that we would be able to find tutors for our program and send them to the MLC training, where they would receive both knowledge of skills and actual materials. I predicted that we would need to do a short follow-up workshop, focusing perhaps on the culture, needs and interest of our 20 students and how to use the MLC materials and ideas in the particular context of our program. With this plan in mind, I began with a review of their training program to find out what gaps it contained that I would need to fill.

In reviewing the MLC training curriculum and tutor manual used by workshop instructors, I found that it would be entirely inadequate for our tutors. In general, the focus of the MLC twelve-hour workshop is tutoring in survival English, with an emphasis on situations (bank, supermarket, job, children's school) and functions (filling out forms like apartment and job applications, reading signs and bus schedules, calling to make an appointment, etc.) Moreover, there is heavy emphasis on the skills of listening and speaking. I quickly realized that the MLC training program contained only limited portions

which might benefit our VTs, and large sections which would not serve their needs.

The training manual Table of Contents includes the following sections:

- A. Introduction
- B. Adult Second Language Learners
- C. Culture
- D. Goals and Assessment
- E. Listening and Speaking
- F. Pronunciation
- G. Literacy
- H. Grammar
- I. Vocabulary and Spelling
- J. Lesson Planning
- K. Resources

What is most notable about this list is that there is no reading and writing section, the focus of our tutoring program. The portion on Literacy deals with issues such as forming letters on the page and learning the alphabet. Of the mere eight pages in chapter I, Vocabulary and Spelling, five and a half are made up of a list of "Survival Vocabulary". Thus, the MLC workshop teaches tutors how to work with a low level student who is just beginning to make language and cultural adjustments to being in the United States. It would be entirely insufficient preparation for tutoring in academic reading and writing skills, and the activities, exercises and materials presented would, for the most part, be well below the skill level of the learners and therefore not applicable.

Sections A through D, and section J include some information that might be useful for the tutors. However, even these portions could be dealt with more efficiently through our own program where we can focus specifically on the needs and culture of Somali students at Roosevelt and lesson planning for this group, rather than the broad generalities the MLC program must deal with. Clearly, while previous training by the MLC and experience with being a

volunteer tutor through their networked learning centers would be a strong selling point for anyone applying to be a volunteer tutor with our program, to require our tutors to attend their training would be a mistake.

Other Programs for English for Academic Purposes

Since the MLC tutor training program would not serve our needs, my next step was to attempt to contact other tutoring programs in the Twin Cities to find out if they had a training program in place which our tutors could attend, or a training curriculum which we could make use of. Simply finding other tutoring programs focusing on academic skills turned out to be a difficult task. After a series of unsuccessful phone calls to University of Minnesota departments, I called the United Way's First Call for Help. They were not able to find any tutor training programs in their computer base, but did provide me with phone numbers for several city agencies and services that offer tutoring. Unfortunately these tutoring programs turned out to be for homework help, career training, etc., but not reading and writing for academic purposes. In addition, training for these tutoring programs seemed to be either informal, or specifically geared to that program.

Developing a Tutor Training Program - The Outline

Unable to find any adequate tutor training program already in place which we could use, or any curriculum which could be utilized as a base starting place, I set out to design a tutor training program specifically for our project. I began in the place where I had begun my ESL training -- with my textbook and notes from the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Methods course, taught in Fall 1994 by Dr. Elaine Tarone. The textbook for the course was *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, Second*

Edition , edited by Marianne Celce-Murcia. Each chapter of the text was written by a different individual, experts in the area being considered. I began then, by considering what broad areas the profession dictated that a teacher of ESL needed knowledge in, and then filtering out any of these categories which would not be pertinent for a tutor of ESL focusing on reading and writing for academic purposes.

What remained were four broad categories: reading, writing, ESL teaching methods and lesson planning. The sections on reading and writing were obviously necessary since these were the skills we would be focusing on. Some rudimentary knowledge of some of the basics of teaching methods and lesson planning were likewise essential because the individual would be working independently for the most part, without a great deal of supervision or intervention by an ESL professional. Some knowledge in these two areas would serve at least two functions. First, it would make the tutors' job easier, giving them both a starting place and boundaries in terms of what to teach and how to teach it. Second, it would afford some protection to the student, giving at least a minimal amount of field expertise to their instructor. So, for example, while the tutors might have learned a second language themselves based on drills (audiolingual approach) used by a series of grammatically perfectionist teachers, discussing the communicative approach and the importance of content and organization would open their perspective and soften their own teaching styles.

In addition, I hoped that training in these two categories would serve the third role of broadening the tutors' vision. If they had assumed that ESL teaching could be based on intuition and the fact that "Well, I speak English so it shouldn't be too hard," I wanted to shake them in that perspective. My hope was that by being made aware of some of the professional issues in the field,

and the range of perspectives and research, the tutors would become better at asking questions about their tutoring, better at asking for support and advice, better at looking for new ways to approach a task.

The next step in developing the training workshop was to set time parameters. Since many of the volunteer tutors for the program would be recruited from among University of Minnesota students, and students are notoriously busy with complicated daily schedules, the team stressed that the training should be kept to a minimum number of hours. On the other hand, I was concerned that if we spread the training out over several evenings and days some trainees would come to certain portions and others to other portions, so that we would end up with many partially trained volunteers. I thought we might have better success if we set up an all day Saturday workshop. Attendance would be required as a prerequisite for all volunteers; it would be an all or nothing proposition. Thus, in its present form the tutor training workshop is to be held on a Saturday, beginning with registration and coffee at 8:30 a.m., and ending by 5:00 p.m.

The team and I had agreed throughout the process that a crucial piece to the tutor training would be an orientation to Somali culture. We all believed that the more the VTs understood about the history and background of the students, the more successful they would be as teachers and as mentors. With only one Saturday to work with and much ESL material to cover, there was concern that the cultural component would receive short shrift, a situation that nobody was satisfied with. This problem was solved by agreeing that in addition to the Saturday workshop, VTs would attend an evening cultural orientation organized and hosted by the Somali students to be tutored, their parents, and the Somali elders. Somali food would be served, and presentations and cultural introductions made. In this informal, informative environment, the tutors,

students and parents would have the opportunity to meet and begin to form relationships. So, while the workshop would include a portion on "Who Are the Students?", it would only be a brief appetizer, wetting appetites for the more in depth evening cultural orientation.

Along with the importance of the cultural orientation for the tutors, the Somali elders had expressed their strong hope that the tutors would serve as mentors to the students, especially in terms of their experience with higher education. In response to their convictions, this was added as an element of the workshop. After training in the four ESL categories, tutors would be introduced to their role as "higher education information providers". The workshop would establish this as a credible theme for a lesson plan, and provide ideas for other resources the tutors could access to support their own personal experience in this area.

In this way, the outline of the workshop began to take shape. Added to the four broad ESL categories, the workshop would need to provide time for several other functions. An introduction to the project history and mission, to Roosevelt High School and the Somali students (in theory, not in physical presence) would come early in the workshop. Time would also be provided to introduce the idea of the tutors' role as higher education mentors. There would need to be space to look at actual materials available for use, and to find out about what support resources were available to the tutors, and for any concluding housekeeping tasks and questions. The result of combining these pieces is the following workshop outline:

- Registration (8:30 a.m. to 9:00)
- I. Introduction (9:00 to 9:30)
- II. Who Are the Students (9:30 to 10:00)
- III. ESL Tutoring Methods (10:00 to 11:00)
- IV. Reading Instruction (11:00 to 12:00)
- Lunch 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

- V. Writing Instruction (1:00 to 2:30)
- VI. Lesson Planning (2:30 to 4:00)
- VII. Resources
- VIII. Role as Mentor and Information Provider
- IX. Conclusion (Sections VII through IX from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.)

Adding Details

With an outline in hand, the next task was to determine the specific issues and details to be discussed in each of the available sections. Factors to be kept in mind during this decision making process were: the vision and goals of the program which were based on the needs of the students, the background of the tutors, time constraints, the culture of the students and the voice of the ESL profession. An effort would be made to keep the workshop consistently focused on reading and writing for academic purposes for Somali students in Minneapolis, so that the tutors would understand how each portion was pertinent and useful. It would be assumed that the volunteers had no previous training or experience in tutoring ESL. Time would be limited, although certain areas of secondary importance could be highlighted in follow-up training hours throughout the year. Information about the culture of the students would be integrated into the workshop as often as possible. For example, one component of the Somali culture is the value placed on oral skills. According to Metz:

Facility with language is highly valued in Somali society; the capability of a suitor, a warrior, or a political or religious leader is judged in part by his verbal adroitness. In such a society, oral poetry becomes an art, and one's ability to compose verse in one or more of its several forms enhances one's status. Speakers in political or religious assemblies and litigants in courts traditionally were expected to use poetry or poetic proverbs. Even everyday talk tended to have a terse, vivid, poetic style, characterized by carefully chosen words, condensed meaning, and alliteration. (pg. 105)

Putnam supports this, stating:

Somali has a rich tradition of proverbs, passed on from previous generations and embellished by individual speakers. Proverbs play a very important role in everyday speech...This is one area where Somalis find English impoverished. Some will go to great effort to learn English sayings and use them far too frequently; others may translate literally from the Somali and hope for the best. (pg. 27)

A portion of Unity!, The Newsletter of the Somali Community in

Minnesota likewise refers to this emphasis on the importance of poetry and verbal skills:

The Somali wedding ceremony never concludes without a poetic praise for the bride, her parents and family. The poet at the Cedar-Riverside wedding described the Somali bride in Minnesota as a glittering jewel, her eyes as beautiful as those of a deer, her face as radiant as a full moon, and her hair as dark as night. He described her parents as a respectable couple, of noble origin, and known for their generosity and decency. He said her brothers and uncles were brave men and the warriors of their clan. Poetry stirs the sentiments and feelings of the Somalis and the praise showered on the Somali bride in Minnesota consoled the family for agreeing to pay the exorbitant dowry of 25 camels. Despite adherence to their cultural values, Somalis are adaptable people who can assimilate other societies' values without abandoning their own culture's values, heritage, or their love for poetry. (pg. 3)

While the tutoring sessions will be used to teach reading and writing skills and strategies, it will be important for tutors to recognize, refer to, and take advantage of the high value Somalis place on speaking, and therefore this component of culture, among others, will be integrated into the training workshop. For example, throughout the workshop tutors will hear various American proverbs used, and will thereby grow in their awareness of our use of sayings. This awareness will serve to make VTs more adept at using such sayings in their tutoring sessions with Somali students.

In determining the specific issues and details to include in the initial training workshop and in follow-up training memos and meetings, the final and

highly significant factor was the voice of the ESL profession. As I had done in determining what major categories to include in the training, I returned to my ESL Methods course notes and textbook (edited by Celce-Murcia). Keeping in mind the other determining factors for the workshop (needs and culture of the students, lack of prior training or experience of the volunteers, and time constraints) I began to make lists and choices. Obviously, each item was chosen for inclusion in a section based on its perceived importance for the tutors. Although it is understood that this one day workshop and follow-up will not make experts out of the tutors, there are eight hours (plus) available to increase their awareness of certain issues. In the following section I will attempt to briefly justify why each item selected was deemed "Important". I will then explain further how these points will be presented to the volunteers.

ESL Tutoring Methods

1. Communicative method. It is a truism that teachers tend to teach as they were taught. Since the volunteers might well have received second language instruction based on a variety of approaches other than the communicative approach, and since I am aware of the strengths of the communicative approach and believe it is a valuable method for the tutoring program to stand by, I felt it was important to give them some instruction in this area. Instruction in the communicative method would, at the very least, serve to emphasize the aims and goals of the program (see Course Statement of Goals, Appendix).
2. Needs and interests assessment. The great strength of a tutoring program instead of a classroom teaching environment is the vast amount of personal attention and direction that can be provided in every aspect, from content choices and timing, to skills building and practice, to correction. Each of these aspects require a keen cognizance of the needs and the interests of the

students being tutored. While the visits to Roosevelt had served as an initial needs assessment, each tutor would be best off doing a personal and ongoing needs and interests assessment with each student, to maximize the individualization and benefits of the tutoring.

3. BICS versus CALP. Since the distinction between these two types of language proficiency, and the clear problems caused by them to LEP students, is in many ways the basis for this tutoring project, it seemed crucial to make the tutors aware of the body of research and its practical applications.

4. Integration of the four modalities of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Because we would be spending so much time talking about the modalities of reading and writing, I was concerned that the tutors would begin to feel they needed to avoid all speaking and listening activities with the students. I did not want them to overextend the focus in this way for two crucial reasons. First of all, as we have already seen, the Somalis greatly value oral skill. It seemed that making use of this value and building on it, rather than being a deterrent, could be used to build bridges and enhance written communication. Secondly, in his book *Academic Competence, Theory and Classroom Practice: Preparing ESL Students for Content Courses*, H.D. Adamson has pointed out that, "A lack of background knowledge sufficient to follow the American school curriculum is a major obstacle to ESL students' academic success." (pg. 108) Significantly, Hassan and Hussein had made this same point in our interview. For this reason, it is highly important for students to feel free to ask tutors verbal questions that get at background knowledge they are missing, and for tutors to feel free to answer those questions. Using speaking and listening activities, the students' schemas can be sparked and built up, helping them to be better readers and writers.

5. The integration of reading and writing using a theme or topic that interests the student. Why recommend that the tutors focus on a theme, rather than speech acts, functions, literature, grammar points or one of the other methods of structuring lesson plans and materials? Basically, to make the tutors' job easier. Most of the upper intermediate to advanced level ESL reading and writing materials that are available for selection and use by the tutors operate on a theme or topic basis. Indeed, the materials which I later developed for the tutors to both use and to view as a model are skills and strategies practice built around a theme of interest. And again, the advantage of a tutoring situation is that the specific interests of the student can be catered to. Integrating the two skills allows for the schema that has been built up through reading, to be utilized and reinforced through writing projects.

6. Lesson objectives. Tutors with little experience may expect fast, dramatic results. The inclusion of this section is a reminder to take ESL instruction and learning "one step at a time" and to plan lessons that are focused and "do-able".

7. Student centered sessions versus tutor centered sessions. Krashen (1982) has strongly influenced the field of ESL with his ideas about language acquisition. In part, he writes that language will be acquired through motivated, true use, and not artificial practice. This use will engender negotiation of meaning, the testing and verifying of hypotheses about language use, and thus, further acquisition. Tutors will need to be reminded that they have many chances to speak English throughout the day, but students may not. In fact, the tutoring session may be one of only limited opportunities that a student has during the week to utilize their English in extended turns.

8. Inductive learning versus deductive learning. Much has been written by Handscombe and others (1974) about the fact that different individuals have different learning styles, and the best way for a person to learn is via their

learning style. One of the learning style factors that is fairly easy to teach and use is the inductive approach versus the deductive approach. Once tutors are made aware of these differences, they will be able to vary their style of presentation to accommodate the student(s) they are tutoring.

9. Rules and skills presentation and practice (controlled, semi-controlled and free). Again, tutors may be anxious for their students to do well and to learn quickly. Emphasis needs to be placed on the fact that learning is a process, and students can not be expected to perform a task which they have not been taught, developed and practiced. Tutoring will be both more useful and more interesting as tutors grow in their awareness of the variety of types of activities available to them.

10. Recycling. Language learning requires repetition. Ideally, the more aware of this the tutors are, the more they will plan repetition of ideas, vocabulary and skills into their lessons, improving the students opportunities for learning and decreasing the likelihood of the tutor becoming frustrated by lack of progress.

11. Grammar and vocabulary presentation in a context, and particularly in a context that is meaningful to the student. It should be noted that while the tutors will not be expected to be experts on grammar, and the focus of the tutoring is not grammar oriented, it is likely that grammatical questions will come up which the tutors will attempt to answer. In this case, and when presenting or explaining vocabulary questions, it is critical for the tutors to have been introduced to the concept of presentation in a context. In my own experience, this technique has often made the difference between a student who was totally lost by my lengthy explanation, and a student who caught on right away to what I was trying to explain. I consider this easy but key method of presentation to be one of the most useful I have learned in my ESL training.

12. English for real (authentic) communication. As has been discussed, this concept fits with Krashen's ideas about language acquisition. Likewise, it dovetails quite well with the advantages discussed above of tutor-based learning in place of classroom instruction.

13. Schema building. According to Adamson (1993) lack of background knowledge or schema is a major frustration and stumbling block to success for LEP students. Tutors must be made aware of the tremendous assumptions we can not afford to make with the Somali students, both so that the students do not become frustrated, and so that the tutors, sensitive to gaps in knowledge, can serve the function of cultural and academic informants.

14. Cooperative learning. Due to the often independent nature of the education system in the United States, the tutors will need to be reassured that individual performance will not always be the measuring stick for success in the tutoring program. The point will be made that some individuals, based on their learning styles, may learn more by a non-competitive, sharing oriented learning situation.

15. Various learning styles and the use of a variety of activities and exercises.

This section will piggyback with information provided in several other sections above, and will be used to encourage and assure the VTs that there is no one right way to present or address a lesson, but rather there are many good ways.

16. Correction and feedback, and pause times. Based on my experience as a new teacher, and working with new teachers, I believe that the tutors will have many questions about the area of correction and feedback, and that it will be beneficial for them to have some guidelines in their notes to refer to about when and how to correct. The Celce-Murcia text provides ideas about when and how to give correction and feedback, both verbally and on writing

assignments, which may be discussed. I will address the issue of written feedback on papers in more detail in the writing section.

Reading

1. Reading for meaning (both decoding and creating meaning). It will be important to begin with this rather ethereal idea, in order to expand the participants' thinking and allow them to grow in their awareness that reading is not an easy, straightforward task. Once they are fully cognizant of how confusing reading can be, they will be receptive to the hope provided by the teaching of certain skills.
2. Prereading. A brief activity used in this section will convey the message that a reading is much easier to understand, and more likely to be remembered, if it is read after one's schema is already activated. Tutors will be given ideas about what kinds of activities and materials can serve for prereading.
3. Different types of reading, such as skimming, scanning, comprehensive reading and critical reading. It is likely that the tutors have never thought much about the process of reading, or the variety of ways that we read depending on our goals and purposes. If the tutors have never thought about or practiced these various types of reading, they will be unprepared to present them to the students. Conversely, I believe that equipped with increased awareness, this is an area in which the tutors can be capable and eager informants for the learners, whose reading ability will benefit greatly from knowledge of these different reading options.
4. SQ3R. A well-tested technique for increasing reading comprehension of textbooks and technical writing, SQ3R is taught to native speakers of English as well as non-native speakers. It is a valuable tool for breaking down a text into

manageable chunks, which the students can use on their own throughout their academic and even professional careers.

5. Main ideas versus details. A basic building block for comprehending a text and for choosing what to focus on, intermediate to advanced ESL students need ongoing work with distinguishing main ideas from details in the material they are reading.

6. Guessing the meaning of vocabulary from the context and from grammatical clues. Students in an academic program often have large amounts of reading needed for each class each week. The resultant time constraints strip the learners of the luxury of being able to look up every word they are unsure of in the dictionary. Students need to be taught to find clues in the context around the word they are not sure of to understand the meaning of that word.

7. Dictionary use. While at Roosevelt High School, I saw students attempting to use a dictionary on very few occasions. However, during each of those attempts the word was found only after a great deal of time and struggle. Students need training in how to use a dictionary effectively, including work with the alphabet, explanation of symbols, help with deciding which definition to choose, etc.

8. Postreading questions, and comprehension versus memory issues. Second language acquisition research suggests that a teacher's intuition is not always the best guide for good teaching. It is important that tutors evaluate if a student has comprehended the message of a text, but without simply testing the student's short-term memory abilities. Once tutors are aware of comprehension of text versus memory factors, they can be more careful in their evaluation methods. It will be valuable for the tutors to become adept at using a variety of types of questions to get at whether the learners understood what they read or not, especially since they will be bringing in and/or developing much of their

own materials and they will need to determine if the level of comprehensibility is appropriate or not.

9. The ability to paraphrase, summarize and outline. The students are being tutored to improve their ability to do well in academic classes. Many academic classes demand that the students exhibit these skills, either verbally in answering the instructor's questions or in discussion groups with other students, or in writing in the form of worksheets, lab reports, and short answer and essay tests. These skills are also vital in incorporating information from other sources in an academic paper.

10. Recognizing fact versus opinion. While our culture may view written material with a good deal of skepticism, many people in Somalia have had very little contact with written material and may, therefore, hold it in unmerited high esteem. Direct teaching needs to be done about what clues are available to determine if a statement is fact or opinion.

11. Inferences (generalizing, cause and effect, etc.). Academic classes often seem to require that students go beyond what has been clearly stated, or demonstrated, and infer consequences or results. Many cultures do not encourage this freedom in moving beyond what the experts have written, while American academic culture may see it as a vital part of critical thinking. Students need to be taught that this will be expected of them, and given practice in its appropriate use.

12. Reference. Reference (this, these, his, hers, etc.) can be a trouble spot for students, especially if its importance has never been pointed out before. Looking carefully at the use of reference in texts being read may also prepare the students to use it well in their own writing.

13. Affixes. This is another area which, because it is grammatical in nature, may never have been pointed out to the students before. Depending on their

learning styles, some students may be particularly attracted to the use of affixes in analyzing the meaning of unknown vocabulary and understanding text.

14. Outside reading. There is a growing body of research that indicates that extensive reading (as opposed to intensive, many of the aspects of which are outlined above) may be equally or more beneficial to students in their acquisition of English, than direct classroom instruction. For this reason, students will be encouraged to read, as often and as much as they can.

Writing

1. The integration of writing with reading. Tutors will need to be made aware that integrating their writing practice and requirements within the same content area as the reading texts they are working with, will make their lesson planning simpler and will reinforce the growing schema in that area for the student.

2. Awareness of the audience and the goals for writing. Students may be used to writing for an ESL instructor, bilingual teacher, or other teacher who is sympathetic to their position as a learner of English, and therefore they may be given great latitude in what and how they write. They may never have really considered how the content, level of formality, etc. might need to change for a different audience, or how they will need to make careful choices in those areas based on the goals of the assignment. This will be important in an academic setting where they may be asked to do extensive amounts of writing, but with a wide variety of purposes and requirements for attention to detail.

3. Journal writing. Because the body of research seems to show that extensive writing is necessary for becoming a good writer, tutors will be encouraged to keep informal written dialog journals going with their student(s). Journals will not be corrected, but rather will be a place for the students to try out vocabulary

and structures, and for the tutors to model good uses of those and other items in their responses.

4. Writing as a process, including prewriting, revision and editing. It is likely that students will want to complete an assignment, and then move on to something else since this is the typical route for a high school assignment. Tutors will need to educate students about the new criteria for quality work which they will face in postsecondary education systems, and emphasize the view of writing as a process to achieve success in their academic writing. Students will need to learn that seeing writing as a process of constant revision and editing is the norm in academic and literary settings for native speakers of English as well.

5. Ways to prewrite. There are at least five standard ways to prewrite, and the different methods seem to appeal to individuals with different learning styles. It will be helpful for students to learn and practice a variety of techniques, so that they are then able to choose the one or two ways they prefer to continue using in their future writing on their own.

6. Thesis statements and topic sentences. Careful consideration of the tools of thesis statements and topic sentences can be an excellent way to begin to think about the goals of a writing assignment in an organized way. They are crucial to laying out the type of linear organization which an American academic audience will most often expect.

7. Content and organization versus grammar and mechanics. Tutors will need to become cognizant of the vital difference between these two realms. Tutors may be tempted to begin their review of a paper with a word or level sentence assessment of errors. Instead, they will need to be trained to begin their review by looking at the overall organization of the paper, and the general content it contains. Problems in these areas must be addressed first, since they

are the most important in communicating a clear message, and since there is no reason to fix up a sentence that has no place in an essay to begin with.

Furthermore, because the volunteers will not be expected to be experts in grammar, it may be quite reassuring to them to be able to focus first and foremost on an area of the writing that is not entirely dependent on grammar.

8. Types of discourse. Because the goals of the tutoring program are to improve the students' abilities in reading and writing for postsecondary work, tutors will need to begin to reflect on the types of writing required in those contexts. After we have focused on this issue as a group, tutors will be better equipped to thoughtfully translate their own experiences into the type of assignments they work on with their students.

9. Short essay answers versus compositions. Again, tutors will need to reflect on their own experiences with the differences in requirements between these two areas, so that they can better communicate those differences to the learners.

10. Responding to tutor feedback. Since research indicates that when students do not understand teacher feedback they tend to ignore it or remove the portion in question all together, tutors will need to be careful in the way they word and write their feedback. Knowing this, they will also be better prepared with how to deal with the situation if their feedback is ignored.

11. Reformulation. Tutors will need to be reassured that it is perfectly all right, and even positive, to model written language for the students and give them options for how to phrase both shorter and longer portions of their papers.

12. Making writing "interesting and good". This is another area where the tutors will be led through a brainstorming and reflecting process so that they are better prepared to deal with students' questions and difficulties. Many of the volunteers will already have hazy ideas about what makes a written product

well done, but they may need the time to think the question through, and the terms to use to “name” their ideas in order to present them clearly to the Somali youth.

13. Note taking skills. Note taking seems to be integral to success in a postsecondary education setting, and a difficult task for a learner of English to accomplish. There are keys for improving note taking skills, and while this will involve listening as well as reading and writing, it may have a tremendous benefit for the students in their level of preparedness for written tests and assignments.

14. Standard graduation tests. Because new rules will soon require all students to have passed standard tests in reading, writing and math in order to graduate from high school, the tutoring program may be used to teach to these tests, or to the skills required by the tests.

15. Summarizing and paraphrasing versus plagiarism. This is an area that children in the United States are taught little by little beginning at a young age. Having had little contact with written texts, and having great respect for the texts which were available, Somalis may be unfamiliar with these skills. Because plagiarism is looked at quite negatively at upper levels of education in this country, this will be an important area to emphasize and practice.

Lesson Planning

1. Initial and ongoing student needs assessment. Tutors will need to be reminded to always keep in mind the needs of the students. One of the benefits of tutoring, as opposed to a classroom setting, is that tutoring is conducive to focused, individualized attention to specific needs. Tutors will be instructed, both in the workshop and in follow-up memos, to hone their tutoring to their

particular students. Ongoing support will also be provided to the tutors to assist them as they discover their students' needs.

2. Long term and short term goals and objectives. Tutors will be encouraged to make their goals specific and reasonable in order to protect both tutors and learners from frustration and discouragement, and to keep the tutoring sessions motivated and directed. Thinking about the goals and objectives for their tutoring will also greatly help the tutors when they begin to develop their own materials and activities.

3. Modular format syllabus. Because the students need to increase both their reading and writing skills, and their cultural background knowledge, a modular format syllabus seems ideal for the Dugsi Project. By learning about and following this style of syllabus, these semi-trained tutors will be able to follow a fairly simple series of steps:

a) Ascertain the specific areas of interest (topics, fields of study, hobbies, etc.) for their student(s)

b) Use and grow comfortable with the materials I have developed for them

c) Develop similar materials and activities around the areas of interest for their student(s).

In this way reading and writing skills will be recycled, practiced and built on using a series of themes and topics of interest to the learner.

4. Selecting materials. Tutors will need to become aware of how to find, create or adapt appropriate materials because after they have used the set of materials I have created, they will have primary responsibility for this task. While ESL professionals may be available for ongoing consultation, at a minimum the tutors will need to bring in samples and ideas for feedback.

5. Sequencing what skill to work on when. The sequencing of many skills will be demonstrated for the volunteers in the model materials, but they will need to continue and build on the process in future lessons.

6. For each lesson, planning and keeping record of:

- aims, goals and objectives
- supplies and materials need
- motivation hook
- main body of lesson/activity/task
- conclusion

Teaching the VTs these steps may provide them with a structure to work within both to make the task of lesson planning more manageable and to make their lessons more interesting and well organized. Further, if one tutor stops volunteering and a new VT begins, the project coordinator will have a written record of what has been accomplished up to that point with each student.

7. Keeping a record of the student response, how the lesson went and follow up that is needed. Again, if tutors keep record of these types of issues on their lesson plan, the project coordinator can more easily track what further needs a student might have.

8. Contingency plans. Tutors will be reminded that equipment fails, that students will not always bring their completed assignment as asked, etc. A reminder in this area may avert frustration and wasted time during the limited tutoring session time.

9. Recycling. Because language learning requires frequent repetition, this will be a vital area to discuss with the VTs. Tutors will need to be reassured that students will not find recycling boring or unnecessary, but rather it will be critical to acquiring academic skills.

10. The use of situations where the student has a need to know what they are learning. Tutoring will be a considerable time investment for the students as well as the tutors, so there is a need to keep the material and its presentation constantly relevant.

11. Looking at and creating lesson plans in small groups. Tutors will spend quite a bit of time involved in hands on activities where they will be able to practice using the information they have learned throughout the workshop, including seeing what several examples of lesson plans might look like, and working on creating some of their own.

Summary

This then, is a brief review as to why certain points were selected as being important to the tutors being trained. The appendix to this paper includes a copy of the workshop outline, along with a brief description of what might be communicated to the volunteers about each of the items above. This script-like description provides further details about what the tutors could be told, and what rationale could be provided to them for why an item is being taught.

The description goes one step further as well. In addition to determining that these were the items which were most important for presentation in the training, in a more global sense I wanted to use the time to model certain teaching techniques. For example, I wanted to make the training workshop interactive, with volunteers being given frequent chances to participate and to learn by doing in a variety of ways. My intent was to use activities where the participants would actually practice the skills they would later need to teach to the students. My hope was that if they experienced the process of learning the skills, they would be more aware of potential pitfalls in their tutoring, and if they experienced a variety of types of pair and group work, and activities, they would

be better prepared to use those in their tutoring. I also planned to use both the deductive and the inductive approach at various junctures, and to point out what I was doing, so that tutors would become more aware of their differences and potential uses.

Further, I wanted to use real examples related to Somalis and the tutoring of this group in particular throughout the workshop, so that it would always feel pertinent to the learners. Since the workshop would be long and intense, I hoped to hold the volunteers' interest and make the time worthwhile by keeping all of the material as relevant as possible rather than theoretical. Thus, the bilingual teachers at RHS had agreed to obtain unassisted writing samples from the students they chose for the tutoring program with the understanding that I would use these during the training workshop. Similarly, I wanted the lesson plans that the group looked at to be lesson plans they might actually be able to use, the readings to be readings they might use, etc. Many of these ideas for activities and presentation methods are incorporated into the description in the appendix. However, it still seemed that the presentation of items was too "list-like", that the list itself was too long, and that the training workshop needed honing in its organization. Developing materials specifically to be used by the Dugsi Project proved to be the solution to this problem.

Materials Development

Background

While I was working on developing the tutor training workshop, the team of people committed to the project continued to meet on a regular basis, applying for grants, discussing the details of how the project would function, and

staying abreast of the Somali community and the situation at Roosevelt. During this time we agreed on an official name for the program -- The Dugsi Project: Academic Tutoring for Somali Youth. *Dugsi* is a Somali word, having the dual meaning of shelter and school.

As we received one grant rejection after another, I became concerned that without funding Dugsi would certainly be unable to purchase readers or writing textbooks for the students and tutors to use, and would even have a very limited materials resource library available to the tutors. Alongside our low budget, under-funded program, the students to be tutored are themselves currently living in low income conditions. Families are often large, and incomes from jobs and entitlements are small. Thus, neither the program nor the students had funds for textbooks. In addition, I realized it would be useful to have some materials developed that could be used during the tutor training as examples and models to build the workshop around. Rather than just referring to an idea, or showing samples out of published books, I wanted to show the tutors the types of typical materials they could come up with on their own which would be closely linked with the Somali students needs and interests. Therefore, I set out to develop a unit of materials which could be used to serve the following functions: during the tutor training as examples; by the tutors at the early stages of tutoring to get them started, establish some early skills building for the students and serve as a model for future materials development by the tutors; and, interesting and helpful for the students, and thus useful even if funding was provided for the purchase of texts.

I was influenced and guided by several different experiences as I began to develop the materials. I had taught both the lower and the upper intermediate (210 and 220) Reading/Composition courses in the English Program for International Students (EPIS) at the Minnesota English Center. I

had experience with reading and writing skills presentation and practice at these levels, and with the texts used by these classes. Based on my observations at Roosevelt, I believed that the Somali students to be tutored would be approximately at the upper intermediate to advanced level of ESL in general, and yet since they had had little individualized attention, they could benefit greatly from the clear presentation of reading and writing skills. Therefore, I used the texts used at the 220 level, *Readers Choice* and *Transitions*, as models for many of the activities I developed. At the same time, I was taking a TESL course in Materials, and was able to receive guidance from the text for the course, *Course Design* by Dubin and Olshtain.

Lastly, I was influenced by two books I had read which showed the power of ESL materials. *Alien Winds, The Reeducation of America's Indochinese Refugees* by James W. Tollefson, is an in depth look at the United States refugee education program established in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines in 1980 by the U.S. State Department. Used to educate and process refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos who were on their way to the United States, the program used officially prepared ESL materials and was meant to teach the refugees what they would need to know in order to successfully resettle in the United States. As Tollefson puts it, "Clearly, education plays a significant role in offering opportunity for -- or limiting -- social and economic advancement. By preparing students to carry out specific tasks in society, schools function as one of the main agents for maintaining economic and political divisions or for changing them." (pg. 65). In examining the content of the ESL materials used in the program, Tollefson comes to this troublesome but informative conclusion:

In its promise to help refugees, the curriculum of the U.S. refugee program proclaims a lofty goal: to prepare refugees for successful

living in the United States. Yet the curriculum does not address the massive social, psychological, and economic problems that continue to plague resettled refugees long after their arrival in the United States. The program claims to provide realistic information, but instead it presents the myths and dreams of an ideology of individual self-sufficiency that fewer and fewer Americans believe fully themselves. Though it claims to prepare refugees for self-sufficiency, it teaches the language of powerlessness. Though it claims to respect the traditional cultures of Indochina, in virtually every lesson it seeks to convince the refugees that their native cultures are the source of their resettlement problems. Though it claims to meet the refugees' economic needs, its solution is to assume that the refugees themselves are the source of their own inability to find jobs. Taken together, the official assumptions behind the program suggest that the underlying goal is to replace the refugees' ties to culture and community with an isolated struggle for individual material wealth. Americans who are themselves losing faith in individualism, seek to instill its principles in the newest Americans. (pg. 84-85)

After reading Tollefson's findings, I approached materials development with sober reflection, realizing how easy it is to embed a social or political stance into the content of ESL materials.

The second book that I read which influenced my thoughts on ESL materials for reading and writing, was *"My Trouble Is my English": Asian Students and the American Dream* by Danling Fu. In the book, Fu joins her own personal experience with an intriguing year long research project, to draw conclusions that relate to the teaching of reading and writing in high schools. Fu's project was to observe four Laotian adolescents, siblings in the Savang family, as they adjust to a new culture and a new language in the United States. Fu's particular focus is on their reading and writing instruction, both in LEP and mainstream classes. She finds that during the school day and in their homework these four learners have little chance to express themselves in English. Much of the work they do is mechanical and without context. On the other hand, the author also observes and relates more positive examples of reading and writing instruction in the siblings' academic year, such as projects and activities that allow them to be engaged as learners, to use creative

thinking, and to express themselves and their histories. Fu finds that such things as free writing, journal writing, or drawing and writing descriptions of the pictures, give the students their own voice, and the results are beneficial to students, teachers and tutors alike. Thus she urges teaching techniques that reach out to a variety of learning styles and cultural backgrounds, including methods that give students more individual freedom in trying out different ways to learn and express themselves.

While Dugsi is a tutoring program for academic reading and writing skills, and these skills might seem to be rather rigid and proscribed by academia, Fu's points were well taken. In addition, there is research indicating that even when a professor assigns a particular writing assignment, stretching that assignment to incorporate areas an international student is personally familiar with can be a positive coping strategy (). The materials to be developed, therefore, should teach skills and strategies, be about a theme of interest and importance to the students without dictating what the students' response to that theme ought to be, and also allow places for personal expression and voice in English.

The Materials

For the subject matter or theme of the materials, I chose to use several articles that had appeared in The Minneapolis Star and Tribune over the previous six months about Somalis in Minnesota. The topic would be one for which the students already had well developed background knowledge, both through their personal experience as Somalis, and through a recent month long African American History Month theme at Roosevelt where they had discussed issues such as racism and race relations. In fact, in a sense the student (rather than the tutor) could be the "expert" while working with this theme. I also believed it was a topic the students would find interesting. I have often found

International students and refugees to be both intrigued and highly opinionated about the media coverage their community or home country receives, and I have experienced a similar reaction when I have been overseas. Additionally, the VTs would grow in their awareness of some elements of the situation and obstacles facing the Somali community in Minnesota. Thus, this theme could be one more valuable element as tutors and learners get to know one another and establish rapport.

While ideally each student would work individually with a single tutor, the Dugsi team was aware that we might not be able to recruit or retain that many volunteers, and so we might be forced to cluster two or even three students with a single VT. As I designed the materials, I attempted to make them usable whether there was one student or up to three in a group. Since I was designing these materials to be usable in the beginning stages of the tutoring process, I began by writing a Student Information Sheet for the students to complete. This information sheet is in essence a needs analysis and interests survey which should provide the tutor with valuable clues about the student or students they will be working with. It will also provide food for discussion in the initial meeting between the parties, as they struggle to get to know and grow comfortable with one another. Keeping in mind the admonishments of Fu and the strong voice of the ESL community in favor of journaling, the second element I developed was a handout for the students on journals: what they are, how to write in them, what to write about and how often to write. It would be valuable for the students to begin to write in their journal right away, quickly establishing the importance of frequent informal writing as a way to improve writing and to dialog with the tutor.

After this brief introduction to informal writing, the next step was to introduce and practice some fundamental reading skills that could then be

referred to and used throughout the year of tutoring. For this section I provide the students with a handout outlining the skills of skimming, scanning, reading for thorough comprehension, and critical reading. I then provide the tutors with a model lesson to practice these four types of reading based on a section of the Friday Minneapolis Star and Tribune titled "This Weekend". I make clear that the questions may be used "as is", but that it would be preferable to use an issue of "This Weekend" that is current during the week the lesson is being taught. Tutors may use many of the same questions, but will need to adapt and adjust others to coincide with actual events taking place at that time.

Introducing the next section with an American proverb, "Don't believe everything you read.", I next developed a handout for the students on identifying fact versus opinion. The handout is supported by an activity which the tutors may photocopy in which the learner sorts sentences on slips of paper into two piles, one for facts and one for opinions. Several of the sentences are "gray areas", opening the door for a discussion of this problem. Tutors may continue the activity by asking students to change fact sentence slips so that they are opinions, and vice versa. Further activity suggestions are provided as well, such as having the learners watch television advertisements and report back on facts/opinions in them, and a discussion of the presence of facts and opinions in the newspaper.

This latter activity is essential as a part of the prereading element prior to reading the first article related to Somalis in Minnesota. Other prereading questions will relate to the job of a journalist, and predictions about what the topic might be if an article were found in the newspaper about Somalis. In fact, both the first and second articles the groups will read and work with are related to several incidents of violence between whites and Somalis in Rochester (Meryhew 1996, 1997). I have developed several handouts for the students

which take them through the process of utilizing various of the reading skills they learned and practiced using these two articles. From prereading the readers will move to skimming the article for the main ideas, and then to a more careful reading in order to comprehend the details and deal with critical reading questions. The handouts also introduce the learners to the practice of guessing at the meaning of a vocabulary word based on the context of the rest of the sentence and the article, and provide time for discussion of the article and incidents, modeling for the tutors the integration of speaking activities while teaching reading and writing skills. The handouts then encourage the reconsideration of fact versus opinion in the context of these articles, and call for a journal entry as a personal reaction and response. Lastly, the students begin to practice fact finding and continue with the fact/opinion thread by interviewing other Somalis about their prior knowledge and attitudes about these incidents.

In the materials developed, the students now go through the process of prereading questions, reading, and postreading activities and questions with a third article about Somalis in Minnesota. This third article focuses on the religious observance of Ramadan, a time of fasting for Muslims, and also refers to some of the recent historical events in Somalia. When this process is complete, the students will move to a form of writing which is less informal than journal writing, but shorter and perhaps less formal than essay writing; they will work with the other student or students in their group to write a letter to the editor. After first looking at a handout about the purpose and style of letters to the editor, and looking at examples of the genre, this group writing project will respond in some fashion to one or all of the following questions: What is your opinion about how the Somalis are being represented in the newspaper? How should they be represented? What other information should the readers have about the Somali community or Somalis? The groups will be given a wide

latitude in how they respond, and the focus of the assignment will be on content rather than grammar. The students in the group may choose to send in their letters, or not, but they will be experimenting with personal voice and the potential power of expressing their points of view in culturally acceptable ways and places.

The next writing task in the unit will be a more formal one to two page paper. Many ESL reading and writing teachers advocate that early writing assignments should be personal narrative in nature, rather than expository, argumentative, or other styles, because a narrative is thought to be easier to write. With this in mind, the students will receive a handout explaining the assignment as a personal narrative related to the articles they have read in one of the following ways: A Somali Cultural Event I Attended, My Experience with Ramadan, or My (or My Relative's) Experience with Discrimination. However, before beginning the actual writing assignment, the students will be taught a variety of helpful skills and components frequently used in western style writing. For example, they will receive a handout on "Paragraph Basics" which outlines what a paragraph is, what topic sentences are, how to ensure paragraph format and unity, and audience awareness. Further, the handout moves into the realm of essays by discussing combining paragraphs and thesis statements. The students will also work through a series of activities with their tutor for each of the areas discussed in the informational handout. After working with these components, the students will receive another handout which goes through the rationale for and the steps in process writing. Significantly, they will be taught the prewriting technique of brainstorming, and after reading about it and looking at an example, they will use brainstorming to gather ideas for their paper assignment. The learners will continue to refer to this handout on the writing

process as they move with their tutor through the drafting steps in developing a strong paper.

The final section in this unit focuses on strengthening writing by the use of descriptive details. This activity, once again outlined in a handout designed for use by the students (and tutors), involves thinking about what is involved in concrete details and then practicing these techniques in a trip to the Weisman Art Museum. Students will choose a favorite piece of art and write a detailed description of it during their visit. The description will then be used by the tutor or another student in the group in an effort to identify the piece that has been described.

In review, this unit of materials (see Appendix), revolving around a topic of interest to the Somali students, could be used at the beginning of the tutoring cycle to give the tutors a model for lessons and ideas, and time to adjust to their student(s) and tutoring before they would be required to find or develop their own materials and lessons. The handouts, activities, and skills incorporated into the materials unit (see Appendix) were all to be reviewed and explained during the tutor training workshop, both to serve as examples for concepts being discussed and also to better prepare the tutors to use them. In addition, I would be available during the weeks that the tutors were using them with the students to answer any questions or provide further guidance. After hearing tutor feedback in the training workshop, and observing their actual use in tutoring, I would be able to make any needed revisions to the materials to improve and clarify them for future tutors.

The Materials and the Workshop

With the materials completed, and knowing that they would be utilized and presented in the workshop, it became clear that there would not be time to

cover all the items originally chosen and found in the initial description. Instead, some items might simply be referred to briefly while others would not be brought up in the first workshop at all. Nevertheless, any of the items which were removed from the top priority list could be (and should be) presented in the future to the volunteers. For example, they might be addressed in an "Ongoing Training" column in a weekly newsletter, in occasional training memos or in follow-up training seminars or in-service sessions. Thus, at registration for the training volunteers would be given an outline of the workshop to follow throughout the day. This outline (see Appendix) includes the main categories to be covered, along with the materials pertinent to that section and key vocabulary and concepts to listen for. The outline also includes a section of secondary vocabulary and concepts which, time allowing, would be mentioned in the workshop and would be further focused on through follow-up training methods.

Funding for a VISTA Volunteer

I had now completed work on an initial unit of materials for the tutors and students to use, had a revised training outline based on these materials, and was ready to provide a training workshop for an eager group of volunteers. Meanwhile, the team had been granted permission to find a VISTA volunteer who would serve as the Project Coordinator. VISTA is the "in-house" version of the Peace Corps. Volunteers are paid poverty level wages (\$695 per month) to work in community service positions in the United States, although they are offered full medical coverage and an education stipend as well. They are taught that they are not being hired for a job, but rather are signing up for a

service commitment, since they are considered to be on twenty-four hour call to the community they are serving, in this case the Somali community.

After several weeks of interviewing by the Dugsi committee, Stacy Gustafson was hired on April 4th to fill the role of Project Coordinator. Stacy attended a VISTA training conference in Chicago, and returned to set up her office in OSLO space; it had been agreed by the committee that she would be housed by OSLO and supervised by Diane Rubright, a Dugsi Project member and a Coordinator at OSLO. Finally, in a committee meeting in early May, the committee was able to set a date of June 28th for the first volunteer tutor training workshop. It was agreed that we would use the summer as a "pilot to the pilot", training volunteers who would work with some of the approximately 50 Somali students graduating from Roosevelt in early June. These graduates would receive tutoring from July through September. In early October we would then hope to train a new set of volunteers who would commit to working throughout the academic year with the top 20 or 30 Somali seniors from RHS.

Conclusion

Thus, after more than a year of meetings, needs assessment, searching for funding, and planning, the actual tutoring of Somali young people will begin in July, 1997. For the initial volunteer tutor training workshop the list of ideas of items to be covered found in this paper has been shortened; the outline to be used by the volunteers in the training workshop is found in the Appendix. It is my hope that the volunteers will benefit from the training, and enjoy their experience as ESL tutors. It is my even stronger desire that the Somali community will be served and strengthened through the Dugsi Project, as the youth are provided a brighter future.