

A Case Study of a Community-Based Tutoring and Mentoring Program

by

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Abstract

Portuguese-Canadians have historically faced disadvantages in the Canadian education system (Coelho, 1973, 1977; Fonseca, 2010; Morgado, 2009; Noivo, 1997; Nunes, 1999; Ornstein, 2000, 2006; Santos, 2006). While there have been studies conducted into this phenomenon, these disadvantages remain relatively unexplored by the research community and unknown to mainstream society. Furthermore, many of those studies have focused primarily on the various manifestations of the problem of educational disadvantage and have not explored the specific programs or practices adopted by the community to address these issues. Community-based educational organizations have been shown to assist in the cultural adjustment process of immigrant youth. These organizations provide youth with the necessary cultural capital to allow them to construct high academic and vocational aspirations, and to cope with the various discouraging experiences they may have in schools (Bielenberg, n.d; James, 2005; James & Haig-Brown, 2001; Zhou, 2005).

The purpose of this study was to describe a community-based tutoring and mentoring program and to examine the stakeholders' perceptions of the program's impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students whom it serves, to respond to the educational disadvantages this group faces. This program was established by members of the Portuguese-Canadian community in Toronto as a reaction to data outlining this group's educational disadvantages. Document and transcript analysis provided a rich description of the program and revealed how the program impacted the students whom it served. Specifically, this program supports its students during transitions, helps to address negative schooling experiences, and fosters their acquisition of English. This ultimately results in improvements in these students' academics, social skills, and self-esteem and is having an overall positively impact on their attitudes and perceptions of education.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In my second year as an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto, my colleague and I were discussing our aspirations of becoming teachers. I expressed interest in volunteer opportunities. My colleague told me about a community-based tutoring and mentoring program, *Ready, Set, Learn* [pseudonym] in which he worked. I was intrigued when he mentioned that it served Portuguese-Canadian students; yet I wondered why the program was exclusive to this demographic.

Although I am of partial Portuguese-Canadian heritage, I did not grow up in the 'Little Portugal' area of Toronto nor was I very involved in the rich cultural activities of the community. Instead, I attended school in a middle-class suburb north of Toronto which, although very diverse, did not have many students of Portuguese-Canadian heritage. However, because I spent most of my childhood being raised by my grandparents, who were immigrants from Portugal, I have always had an appreciation for the Portuguese language and culture. Accordingly after being relatively isolated from it, I was determined to get involved in the Portuguese-Canadian community in Toronto and to try to instil my love of learning to its students.

Working as a tutor in this program introduced me to the educational disadvantages faced by Portuguese-Canadians. It was here that I learned of the severity of the dropout rates and the low rates of post-secondary enrolment. My involvement in the program helped me to take a critical look at my own experience of being the first person in my family to attend university. I also began to be aware of how under-represented the Portuguese-Canadian community was at the post-secondary level. These experiences were further enhanced during my practicum in my teacher education program. I was placed at a school in Toronto with a high proportion of

students of Portuguese-Canadian heritage and realized that educational disadvantages were still prevalent. I noticed that these students comprised the majority of those who were failing, were at risk of dropping out, were identified as having learning disabilities, and were being serviced by Special Education programs. I also noticed that negative teacher attitudes towards these students were common and I overheard a number of discriminatory comments made by some teachers in regard to the competencies of Portuguese-Canadian students.

I began to further educate myself on issues related to the educational disadvantages confronting Portuguese-Canadians. I had many questions regarding the causes of this phenomenon and was inspired to attend graduate school at Queen's University in the hopes of finding answers. As I progressed in my studies, I realized that this issue was very complex and that the research surrounding it lacked one important focus – an examination of what the community itself was doing to address the problem. I was therefore inspired to conduct a study on the same program which first helped me not only in recognizing the educational disadvantages, but also in appreciating the work that the Portuguese-Canadian community was doing to address them.

The Context of the Case Study

Canada has been defined as a multicultural society, shaped by the contributions of the various ethnocultural groups that make up its population. These diverse groups choose to call Canada their home because Canadian society is seen as being welcoming, inclusive, and providing opportunities for success. A commonly held belief is that economic and social success requires educational achievement. Fortunately, a quality education is guaranteed to all Canadian citizens no matter their race, culture or religion. However, certain ethnocultural groups have been shown to deal with disadvantages in the education system, particularly Portuguese-Canadians

(Abada, Hou, & Ram, 2008; Ornstein, 2000, 2006). These disadvantages are characterized by the high dropout rates of Portuguese-Canadian youth in Ontario, as well as the low rates of participation in post-secondary study. These disadvantages result in severe challenges for the Portuguese-Canadian community, particularly the disproportionate number of youth who are heading into the same marginalized socioeconomic situations as their parents. Because many Portuguese-Canadian youth are neither pursuing an education nor acquiring marketable skills, the community is becoming increasingly ill-prepared for the economic challenges of the future (Nunes, 1999).

An example of how the Portuguese-Canadian community of Toronto has responded to this challenge is by creating a non-profit tutoring and mentoring program. In two analyses of Canadian census data, Ornstein (2000, 2006) sought to identify the ethno-racial groups experiencing significant disadvantages in education, employment, and income. In both studies, Portuguese-Canadian youth were shown to be particularly at risk of dropping out of high school and not participating in any form of post-secondary education. In a reaction to Ornstein's first study in 2000, as well as the dissemination of the *Every Secondary Student Survey* conducted by the Toronto District School Board in 2006, a tutoring and mentoring program was created (Project Diploma, 2006). This program is geared towards students of Portuguese-Canadian descent and serves students of all grades who are at lower levels of academic achievement. This includes students who are in elementary school lagging behind in literacy and numeracy standards as well as students at the secondary level who are at risk of dropping out and who need encouragement and support to achieve their post-secondary goals.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the community-based tutoring and mentoring program and to examine the stakeholders' perceptions of the program's impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students whom it serves, to respond to the educational disadvantages this group faces.

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

- What are the nature, functions, and mandates of this community-based education program and how have they evolved over time?
- What are the perceptions of the stakeholders directly involved in the program surrounding how the tutoring and mentoring program has impacted Portuguese-Canadian students?
- How have Portuguese-Canadian students' attitudes toward secondary and post-secondary education been shaped by their participation in the program?

Rationale

Portuguese-Canadians have made valuable contributions to the building of Canada, and represent a strong and resilient ethnocultural group who have overcome barriers through courage and community solidarity (Burney, 2003). Like many people, they chose to immigrate to Canada to obtain security and economic success. The hope among many immigrant families, Portuguese-Canadian and otherwise, is that they and their children can successfully assimilate both culturally and economically into the mainstream society (Fernandez-Kelly & Portes, 2008). Despite their efforts however, Portuguese-Canadians continue to be faced with disadvantages in the Canadian education system and society in general.

Most of the disadvantages confronting the Portuguese-Canadian community in regards to education stem from social reproduction. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) defined social

reproduction as the process by which each generation fulfills their inherited social, educational and economical traditions, leaving the group essentially unchanged. In regards to the Portuguese-Canadian community, Nunes (1999) expanded upon this definition by discussing how social reproduction is a trend whereby the second-generation adopts the same socioeconomic roles as their parents. He ultimately discovered that this phenomenon was no longer able to provide financial security. Nunes concluded that this has essentially led Portuguese-Canadians to become a marginalized group, excluded from the various social, political, cultural, economic, and educational expressions of Canadian society.

This exclusion has been expressed particularly in early school leaving. Although there is no universally accepted definition, early school leaving has been recognized as the process of departing secondary school without a diploma (Fonseca, 2010). Early school leavers are often students who were formally considered to be at risk. In the document entitled *Building pathways to success: Final report of the program pathways for students at risk work group*, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2003) defined at risk students in a number of ways:

At risk students can be elementary students who perform below grade expectations, or secondary students who perform significantly below the provincial standard, earning marks in the 50s and low 60s. At risk students can also be those who are disengaged for a variety of reasons, which tend to be reflected in their very poor school attendance (p. 14).

In his demographic and socio-economic analysis of ethnoracial groups in Toronto, Ornstein (2006) found that among Portuguese-Canadians aged 25 to 34, thirty-three percent had not completed high school. This was twice the average for all other European groups.

Furthermore,

22.5 percent of Portuguese between 18 and 24 are not in school full-time and have not completed high school and just 37.9 percent are in school full-time... Among members of the 48 European ethno-racial groups between the ages of 25 and 34, the Portuguese and Bosnian groups have the lowest proportions of university graduates, 11.6 and 9.4 percent respectively. (p. 50)

Ornstein concluded that the lower income of Portuguese-Canadians could be explained by their low level of educational attainment as well as their low representation in professional jobs.

Similarly, a study on the 2002 Statistics Canada Ethnic Diversity Survey showed that second-generation Portuguese-Canadians had one of the lowest university completion rates. The authors suggested that this disadvantage in university completion rates was a product of demographic factors, parental education, and group human capital (Abada, Hou, & Ram, 2008).

These disadvantages remain relatively unexplored by the research community and unknown to mainstream society. This is partially due to the Portuguese-Canadian population constituting an 'invisible minority' (Santos, 2006). Being a predominantly white, European minority, Portuguese-Canadians are often not identified as a separate target group in many government research and policy documents. Instead, data on the Portuguese-Canadian community are often amalgamated under headings of 'European', 'Southern European' or 'White'. Therefore, the community's issues are neither highlighted nor discussed and remain hidden from the attention of mainstream society (Nunes, 2008). Furthermore, despite their low educational achievement, Portuguese-Canadians have historically been hardworking and able to support themselves, frequently becoming economically successful as reflected in their high home-ownership rates (Anderson & Higgs, 1976). This has also contributed to their invisible status, as past economic prosperity has essentially hidden the problem of educational disadvantage.

However, these disadvantages have resulted in severe systemic barriers to Portuguese-Canadian's full integration into Canadian society (Nunes, 2008). This remains a serious challenge for educators in Canada who strive to be inclusive and ensure that students from all ethnic groups have an opportunity to succeed academically.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it documents a community-based tutoring and mentoring program, identifies and showcases the experiences of stakeholders involved in this program, and explores the perceptions of the impact of this program on the Portuguese-Canadian students whom it serves. This study therefore contributes to the literature on the educational experiences of Portuguese-Canadians, especially because previous studies have tended to focus on the manifestations of the problem of educational disadvantage and have not explored in-depth the specific programs or practices adopted by the Portuguese-Canadian community to address these issues. This study is also meant to be a resource for all members of the educational field. In uncovering the perceived impact of a community-based educational program on its students, this study, although focusing specifically on Portuguese-Canadians, has wider implications for all immigrant students considered to be at-risk. The study may provide a means by which to investigate how other ethno-cultural groups who experience educational disadvantage can address these issues through community organizing.

Definition of Terms

At risk. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2003) has defined the term at risk in a number of ways. At risk students can be those at the elementary level who perform below grade expectations, or those at the secondary level who perform significantly below the provincial standard, earning marks in the 50s and low 60s. At risk students can also be those who are

disengaged for a variety of reasons, which tend to be reflected in their very poor school attendance. Early school leavers are often students who were formally considered to be at risk.

Community-based education. This term has a variety of definitions and has been used to refer to the following concepts: partnerships between schools, students, and their surrounding communities, programs or organizations; community ownership of schools through the provision of services; activities which engage youth in authentic experiences within the public domain that result in learning experiences for students and a product or service for the community; experiences in which communities and community-based organizations are used as sites for vital learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; Smith & Sobel, 2010; Tompkins, 2005).

Cultural capital. This term has been defined as referring to an array of possessions or 'goods' individuals inherit which can be translated into different forms of value as they move through the institutional world (Lareau, 2003). Specifically, it can refer to an individual's cultural knowledge, educational credentials, access to resources, and their understanding of the workings of the larger society and their place in that working order (Fonseca, 2010; Ogbu, 1991). It is highly dependent on socio-economic status and affects individual educational attainment (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1997).

Early school leaving. Although there is no universally accepted definition, early school leaving has been recognized as the process of departing secondary school without a diploma (Fonseca, 2010). It has colloquially been referred to as 'dropping out'. Early school leavers are often students who were formally considered to be at risk.

Educational disadvantage. This term can refer to the continued challenges faced by students with the educational system and its detrimental effect on their academic achievement. These challenges are affected by schooling practices, such as irrelevant curriculum, the use of

culturally-biased assessment procedures, streaming and ability grouping, low teachers' expectations, and the concentration of inferior vocational schools and programmes in working-class areas (Barlow & Robertson, 1994; Nunes, 2003). These challenges also result from students' social context such as socio-economic status, experiences of marginalization, and lack of cultural capital in the form of knowledge of the benefits of education (Fonseca, 2010; Santos, 2006). In regards to the Portuguese-Canadian community, these educational disadvantages have resulted in severe systemic barriers to this population's full integration into Canadian society (Nunes, 2008).

Social reproduction. Bordieu and Passerson (1997) have defined social reproduction as the result of the transmission of cultural capital which ensures that possessors of cultural capital and their descendants continue to monopolize that capital. It is the process by which each generation fulfills their inherited social, educational and economical traditions, leaving the group essentially unchanged. In regards to the Portuguese-Canadian community, Nunes (1999) defined social reproduction as the trend whereby the second-generation adopts the same socioeconomic roles as their parents. He ultimately discovered that this phenomenon was no longer able to provide financial security.

Socio-economic status. The standard definition of this term refers to the relative position of individuals or families within a hierarchical social structure, based on their ability to acquire or control wealth, prestige, and power (Mueller & Parcel, 1981). It is often measured using variables such as parental education, occupation, and income. Socio-economic status is highly correlated to educational achievement and research has shown that academic achievement is lower among students from low socio-economic status families. These students are particularly at risk of becoming early school leavers (Caro, 2009)

Second generation. This term is broadly applied to refer to children of immigrants, usually when one or both parents are foreign-born. However, this term is also applied to children who immigrated at a very early age and have therefore grown up acculturated to their host society. In Canada, there is evidence that second-generation youth do not see themselves as being 'fully Canadian', and this can have an impact on their familial, societal, and educational experiences (Ali, 2008).

Thesis Overview

In this chapter, I have explained my interest in studying the educational disadvantages faced by Portuguese-Canadians. I have provided a context to this case study and listed my purpose and research questions. I have also outlined the rationale of this study and its significance to the field of education as well as defined terms I use frequently in this thesis. The remainder of this thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter Two is a review of the literature that frames this study. I explore the conceptual frameworks of cultural models, cultural capital, and their transmission, and relate these theories to the experiences of immigrant groups in North America, particularly Portuguese-Canadians. I then examine the literature showcasing the role of community-based education as a remedy to educational disadvantage. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the experiences of Portuguese-Canadians in organizing and bringing awareness to issues of educational disadvantage. Chapter Three outlines the methodological approaches that structure this study. In this section, I provide a description of the qualitative approach to research, and outline my methods of document analysis and interviews. Chapter Four presents the findings from this research, and offers an analysis of the transcripts and the various documents collected to describe *Ready, Set, Learn*. This chapter also reports on the experiences and perceptions of the impact of the tutoring and mentoring program on the

Portuguese-Canadian students it serves. Chapter Five discusses the findings in relation to the literature while also providing a critical analysis of the data. It also presents the limitations of the study, recommendations and implications for theory, methodology, policy, practice, and further research. A reflection discussing my journey as a researcher concludes this section.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The current chapter is a review of literature examining the conceptual frameworks of this study, with a focus on the strengths and challenges surrounding existing studies (Boote & Beile, 2005). I begin with an overview of the negative experiences faced by immigrants and children of immigrants in the educational systems of North America. These negative experiences stem from the lack of cultural capital and low socioeconomic status that characterizes many immigrant groups. I explore the research on immigrant encounters with educational challenges, specifically on the experiences of Portuguese-Canadians. Interwoven in this analysis are Ogbu's (1991) discussion of cultural models, Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theories of cultural capital and social reproduction as well as Lareau's (2003) analysis of the child-rearing practices of concerted cultivation and the accomplishment of natural growth. Next, I explore theories which argue how community-based educational organizations can be a remedy to experiences of educational disadvantage. I apply Freire's notion of *conscientização*, a term which refers to "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 35) to the philosophy of community-based education, particularly to the case under study. These sections constitute the basis of my literature review and will underscore the importance of undertaking a study examining a Portuguese-Canadian community's attempts to address the educational disadvantages faced by its students, in the specific form of a tutoring and mentoring program.

Cultural Models, Cultural Capital, and their Transmission

Culture has been defined as a particular way of life that includes knowledge, values, artefacts, beliefs, and other aspects of human endeavour typical to any group or groups of people (Williams, 1976). Immigrants to North America bring with them a particular cultural identity, a social construct which involves aspects of a person's individual personality and existence (Adler, 1977). Ogbu (1991) has explored the effects of cultural identity on the different patterns of adaptation and acculturation among immigrant minorities. Acculturation refers to a process of cultural and psychological change that involves learning to live in new social and cultural contexts after one has become socialized into an earlier one. It is a mutual and continuous process that involves everyone who lives in culturally diverse societies (Berry, 2008).

In regards to education, Ogbu argued that the cultural model of each immigrant group exists to provide group members with a framework for interpreting educational experiences which then guide behaviour in the schooling context. As different cultures have different models, and as these different models provoke different behaviours, the cultural model of a particular group is connected to the degree of relative academic success or failure among its members. Essentially, more academically successful minorities tend to have an understanding of the workings of the larger society and of their place as minorities in that working order (Ogbu, 1991). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) referred to this understanding as cultural capital and argued that groups who possess it have greater chances of succeeding academically and socially.

According to Giles (2002), culture and ethnicity intersect with socio-economic status and can become the dominant form of organization among many immigrant groups. This results when the cultural model of a particular ethnic group inhibits the acquisition of cultural capital and can lead to lack of access in employment, education, and language and skills training. She

highlighted the case of Portuguese immigrants to Canada, whose experiences of exclusion led them to develop a working-class identity which often overshadowed their Portuguese ethnic identity.

Cultural capital, or lack thereof, is transmitted from parents to their children by different family pedagogic actions and is highly dependent on socio-economic status. This transmission results in social reproduction, ensuring that possessors of cultural capital and their descendants continue to monopolize that capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Lareau (2003) has explored these transmissions in her study of child-rearing practices of middle- and working-class families in the United States. She found that relations among middle-class family members were characterized by discussions between parents and children and a wide array of organized activities for children selected by their parents. This led to these middle-class children developing greater verbal agility, larger vocabularies, more comfort with authority figures, and more familiarity with abstract concepts. By making sure their children had these experiences, middle-class parents engaged in a process Lareau termed concerted cultivation. This led to a robust sense of entitlement among middle-class children which played an important role in their interactions in institutional settings, particularly the schooling system. These children learned to question adults and address them as relative equals and shift interactions to suit their preferences. They essentially were trained in the 'rules of the game' and knew how to make these rules work in their favour.

The childhood experiences of working-class children in the study differed substantially from those of middle-class children. Working-class children experienced long stretches of leisure time, child-initiated play, clear boundaries between the adult and child world, and daily interactions with extended family members. They essentially had more 'childlike' lives; Lareau

termed this form of child-rearing the accomplishment of natural growth. Unfortunately, this cultural logic of child rearing was incompatible with the standards of institutions. As a result, working-class children tended to gain an emerging sense of distance, distrust, and constraint in their institutional experiences. In regards to the schooling system, working-class parents typically were deferential rather than demanding toward school personnel, they tended to seek guidance from educators rather than giving advice to them, and they tried to maintain a separation between the school and the home. The teachers in this study wanted these parents to be more assertive – essentially they wanted these parents to engage in forms of concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2003).

This view is in line with the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2007) promotion of parental involvement. The document *Many Roots, Many Voices* indicated that parental involvement was a critical component of children's success in school. The Ministry recognized, however, that in serving culturally diverse communities, not all parents share the same ideas about how, where, and when they should be involved in their child's schooling. Furthermore, challenges that these parents face were also recognized, such as sparse time or limited proficiency in English. While the Ministry called on educators to be sensitive to these issues in their work with parents and communities, that document still appeared to emphasize the importance of physical parental involvement in schooling, therefore subtly promoting the child-rearing model of concerted cultivation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007).

Immigrants' experiences in the North American educational context. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2002) spoke to the lack of cultural capital among many immigrant groups in regards to the schooling system. They argued that many cultures perceive a rigid social boundary which separates the realm of school from the realm of the home. As a result, many immigrant

parents in their study believed that it was not their business to micromanage the schooling of their children or second-guess teachers' decisions and practices regarding their child's education. These beliefs tended to be compounded by the fact that immigrants, as social outsiders, felt less secure about questioning the judgement of school authorities. This was particularly true if immigrant parents and their children had little formal schooling and were unfamiliar with the language of instruction.

This unfamiliarity stems from a lack of cultural capital and results in a shifted set of priorities among immigrant families. Waters (1997) explored the immigrant ethos of hard work and saving and argued that the prevailing ethos can cause difficulties which undermine the ability of the second generation to succeed. In his study, many immigrant parents worked long hours at low-paying jobs and children were usually left alone. Clear boundaries were therefore set between the world of adults and the world of children. As a result, these children received little social support at home and often failed to live up to the academic and social expectations their parents had for them. The parents often expressed dismay, anger, and bewilderment that their children did not achieve these expectations. They saw it as their children's lack of appreciation of the sacrifices which had been made for them. Waters (1997) argued that these children needed parental interaction and support more than they needed the material goods that their parents were striving for, which is similar to Lareau's (2003) later discussion of the importance of concerted cultivation.

Zhou (1997) also explored the negative impact of overworked parents on their children's academic success. She found that immigrant parents were very concerned about their children's schooling but, because of their low socio-economic status and subsequent need to support their families, they had to work long hours, often at multiple jobs. As a result, they had very little time

to be physically involved, such as attending meetings with teachers, and other school events. Furthermore, Zhou found that the contact between the schools and parents was minimal, not because parents did not want to get involved, but because they could not find time and their English was not proficient. Similar to Walters' discussion of the immigrant ethos, many immigrant parents struggled for survival in the hope that their children would appreciate their hard work and repay them by doing well in school. Zhou (1997) concluded that this often came at the risk of overlooking the specific emotional needs of their children.

Azmitia, Cooper, García, and Dunbar (1996) discussed immigrant families in regards to parental aspirations and guidance strategies for their children's educational development. While children of immigrants in this study received support at home in regards to homework completion, it was often in the form of encouragement and monitoring. This was in contrast to the support given by the more educated, American-born parents who practiced intentional teaching, as they were more familiar with their child's school system and the curriculum. Furthermore, almost all parents in the study held high educational, vocational, and moral aspirations for their children. However, parents from the immigrant groups had less cultural capital and were therefore less knowledgeable about the link between schooling and careers. Overwhelmingly, these parents underestimated the amount of schooling required for the career aspirations of their children. For example, they expressed the hope that their children would become doctors and lawyers but did not consider it necessary for them to attend graduate school.

McLoyd (2005) explored this lack of familiarity with the schooling and vocational system in his discussion of the environments in which immigrant children and children of immigrants grow. He argued that these children experienced relatively high rates of childhood poverty and comparatively low rates of enrolment in early childhood programs. Their parents

had low levels of education, did not speak English at home, often relied on their children to act as translators, and were unfamiliar and uncomfortable with strategies used by schools to facilitate parental involvement. What resulted was an undermining of traditional parental authority, parent-child relations, children's psychological well-being, and ultimately, children's educational achievement.

The conclusions which can be drawn from the above literature are that immigrant groups have unique cultural models which guide members in their interactions with institutional settings in their host country. Yet for many immigrant groups, this model lacks cultural capital and therefore contributes to their low socio-economic status. This in turn is reflected in the child-rearing strategies of working-class immigrant groups and contributes to the disadvantages these children face in school systems across North America.

Impact on educational experiences of Portuguese-Canadians. Portuguese-Canadians constitute an immigrant group who experiences disadvantages in the Canadian school system. Anderson and Higgs (1976) described the low educational attainment of the first-generation immigrants and how their aspirations of economic security, defined by them as home ownership, led them to encourage their children, the second-generation, to leave school in order to work and contribute to paying off the family's mortgage. They argued that, among Portuguese-Canadians, it was not generally believed that extensive education was necessary to adjust to life in Canada and live comfortably. However, Portuguese-Canadians recognized education as being connected to social mobility and wanted their descendants to be provided with a good education in order to move upward out of the working-class.

Although Portuguese-Canadians had high educational and economic aspirations, their cultural model created conflicts in regards to the adjustment and acculturation of their

descendants in Canadian schools. Coelho (1973) highlighted a rural mentality, a high regard for tradition, and a lack of formal schooling as constituting the cultural model of the early Portuguese immigrants. She argued that their lack of familiarity with English and their difficulty in adjusting to the local social and cultural systems slowed down their integration. This caused problems for the Canadian-born second generation. Not only did the second generation lack cultural capital and the knowledge necessary to navigate social and cultural institutions, but also, conflicts resulted between the more traditional first generation parents and their second-generation children who wanted to assimilate to the Canadian way of life. This had a negative impact on the school life of the second-generation and contributed to the trend of early school leaving (Coelho, 1977).

Almeida-Medeiros (1978) also spoke to the lack of cultural capital within the Portuguese-Canadian community. In her exploration of streaming in secondary education in Toronto, she questioned parents concerning their aspirations for their children's future, their involvement with their child's education, and their knowledge of the structure of the Ontario school system. She found that parents were often unfamiliar with what kind of school program their children were enrolled in or how many years it took. The reasons cited for this lack of knowledge included difficulties speaking English, and therefore difficulties in communicating with their children and their children's teachers. Furthermore, the lack of the schools and school boards in providing information and materials in Portuguese was also discussed. Similar to the later findings of Azmitia et al. (1996), Almeida-Medeiros emphasized that these parents held very high aspirations for their children. However, these aspirations were often unrealistic due to the school program in which their children had been placed.

Cultural conflicts, adjustment difficulties, and educational disadvantage were also explored by Noivo (1997) in her study of three generations of Portuguese-Canadian families. She discussed the experiences of the second-generation having to contribute to the household income and its subsequent effect on their low educational attainment. The second-generation did not want their children, the third-generation, to have to make similar sacrifices and therefore satisfied their children's material wishes in order to ensure that they would have time to study and eventually acquire a professional job. They followed the immigrant ethos discussed by Waters (1997): they held high academic aspirations for their children and worked hard to provide them with the necessary material goods. However, Noivo argued that this led to the third generation of Portuguese-Canadians being able to enjoy social and material conditions atypical of their class but not having to work particularly hard, like the previous two generations. Furthermore, the material prosperity of the previous two immigrant generations became distorted by the third generation and misled them into thinking their own economic prospects were good. They were not acquiring higher education or marketable skills. Accordingly, Noivo concluded that a decline in the socio-economic standing of the third-generation was imminent.

Santos (2006) examined the third generation of Portuguese-Canadians, focusing his study on the population residing in Vancouver. He utilized the Canadian census data to provide a statistical profile and then conducted focus groups to identify some of the key challenges participants faced throughout their time in school. The findings showed that many Portuguese-Canadian students were still lacking cultural capital in the form of knowledge of the benefits of education. Lack of parental involvement in education were also highlighted, and this could be reflective of a practice of the child rearing strategy of the accomplishment of natural growth, as Portuguese-Canadian parents in this study appeared to practiced constraint in their institutional

experiences (Lareau, 2003). Furthermore, Portuguese-Canadian students were overwhelmingly employed part-time while attending school and comprised a high proportion of early school leavers. Santos' recommendations to the educational challenges were in the form of targeted programs such as community tutoring programs and heritage language training working with not-for-profit organizations to provide services to the Portuguese-Canadian community.

Similar findings were reported by the *Every Secondary Student Survey*, an initiative conducted in 2006 by the Toronto District School Board. The results were aggregated by student ethnicity and it was found that Portuguese-Canadian students spent an extra four hours per week on part-time jobs than average and that these jobs were disproportionately skewed towards waiting staff and labourers. As a result, these students spent less time on their homework than average and this could account for the disproportionately low number of Portuguese-Canadian students placed in advanced study or enrichment programs. Furthermore, these students reported that they felt that their schools did not give them enough help with career planning and that they were forced to make vocational decisions on their own. Consequently, only 57% of the Portuguese-Canadian students polled planned to pursue post-secondary education, with a very low number of these aspiring to the more popular professional careers such as accountants, lawyers, engineers, and doctors (Project Diploma, 2006).

The findings of Santos (2006) and Project Diploma (2006) were echoed in Morgado's (2009) exploration of the educational experiences of second-generation Portuguese-Canadian youth. Her participants discussed issues such as the influences of part-time work on schooling, parental involvement in education, and the dropout problem. However, these participants appeared to have the necessary cultural capital to understand how to navigate the schooling institution to become academically successful. Furthermore, they spoke to positive experiences

with their educators and the educational system in general, and planned to pursue post-secondary study. She recommended the need for further research with Portuguese-Canadian students, particularly those struggling in the education system, and underscored the importance of community-based programs to assist these students.

In a more recent study, Fonseca (2010) found that educational disadvantages were still being faced by four Portuguese-Canadian males who had dropped out of high school. Her research was conducted in Toronto, and her participants spoke of the challenges they faced within the education system. These challenges further expanded on the findings by Santos (2006) and Project Diploma (2006), but brought more specific issues to light. For example, Fonseca's participants pointed to irrelevant curriculum, disaffection and disengagement in the classroom, their low socio-economic status, and social context as having an effect on their educational experiences and subsequent early school leaving. She also discussed social reproduction through examining how her participants internalized the occupational roles of the older generation. She recommended that successful Portuguese-Canadians act as tutors, mentors, and role models, offering educational support for younger community members experiencing academic difficulties. She argued that these tutors, mentors, and role models could transmit cultural capital to younger community members by illustrating to them how to aspire to educational and vocational goals. Fonseca concluded by emphasizing the need for community-based programs to facilitate this transmission.

In a participatory research based study conducted by Nunes (1999), specific educational issues faced by Portuguese-Canadians were revealed in the form of a national needs assessment. His findings showed that Portuguese-Canadians had substantially lower education and average income levels compared to other immigrant groups. Participants in the study identified

educational issues as having greatest importance for their community, particularly the lack of English or French language skills, and the academic underachievement of their youth. He also discovered that Portuguese-Canadians were educationally, economically, socially, culturally, and politically marginalized and that this further exacerbated their underachievement problems.

Nunes' (1999) work was essentially a presentation of the problem and did not explore the specific programs or practices adopted by the Portuguese-Canadian community to combat the educational disadvantages they faced. In his discussion of the need to address these issues, he argued that the only process which would be able to generate solutions for educational disadvantages would be one which directly involved the community members in reflecting and acting upon their perceptions of the realities which limit their lives (Nunes, 1999). As Freire (1970) pointed out, an emphasis on the community and its role in the education of its members is of the utmost importance, as the success of any education program depends on a dialogical search for solutions with the people to whom it pertains.

Community-Based Education

The emphasis on community, explored in the literature on Portuguese-Canadians and their educational experiences, indicates that research highlighting the impact of a community-based tutoring and mentoring program is both necessary and important. *Community-based education* seeks to heighten the role communities play in education. Smith and Sobel (2010) defined community-based education as educational experiences in which communities are used as sites for vital learning. At the core of this approach is the belief that students learn best when the wall between classroom and community has become permeable and when students are integrated and interactive within society. Essentially, by using communities as learning sites and by engaging more partners in the task of preparing children for adulthood, the resources brought

to bear on students' development can be significantly enhanced, strengthening both the students themselves and the communities which will eventually depend on them.

Heath and McLaughlin (1991) emphasized the importance of community-based education and described the factors which make community-based educational organizations successful. They argued that the most effective organizations have a view of students that differed from the common institutional conception. These organizations saw students as resources to be developed instead of problems to be managed. This view generated activities that respected the views and abilities which students brought with them, that were attuned to their developmental needs and cultural differences, and that strove to provide academic support. The authors looked at homework sessions and tutoring programs in particular and contended that their success stemmed from the openness with which they operated. These programs let students talk freely about problems and successes in school and encouraged them to stay in school, keep up attendance, and try harder with schoolwork.

Tompkins (2005) spoke to the importance of community-based education but viewed it more as a partnership between students and their communities, instead of as organizations which were completely separate from the realm of school. He argued that community-based educational activities engaged youth in authentic experiences within the public domain that resulted in meaningful learning experiences for students and a product or service for the community. He concluded that these experiences had the potential to influence the extent and manner in which students would participate in their communities as adults.

This view of schools and their communities forming a partnership is also expressed by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2007) in the document *Many Roots, Many Voices*. The Ministry recognized that ethnocultural communities in particular represent substantial resources

that schools could draw on to assist students and to enrich the school's cultural environment. The document encouraged educators to foster community ownership of schools, particularly by providing or locating appropriate counselling and referral services that may not be available to newly-arrived immigrants through the school board. The document also mentioned that community groups might be able to contribute resources for use in the classrooms, such as cultural artefacts, guest speakers, or interpreters to assist in communicating with parents. Overall, *Many Roots, Many Voices* contends that connecting schools to their surrounding communities and encouraging partnerships can create a richer learning environment for all students and can benefit the wider society.

Negative schooling practices. Partnerships between students, their communities, and community-based organizations are necessary because despite their efforts, many schools have been unable to fully address issues of disadvantage, particularly where it concerns immigrant groups.

Streaming. One prominent example of disadvantage is the *streaming* of immigrant students with language difficulties. Barlow and Robertson (1994) defined streaming as the practice of creating different clusters of subjects at assorted levels of difficulty for various groups of students. They argued that the widespread enrolment of immigrant students in the least demanding and least competitive classes excluded them from post-secondary schooling. In the past, well-paying manufacturing jobs allowed blue-collar workers, including many immigrants, to secure middle-class lifestyles without much formal education. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2002) said that this was no longer the case and emphasized how formal schooling was seen to be immigrants' only ticket out of poverty. However, lack of understanding about the school system, a sense of constraint in regards to questioning teachers' judgements and the

subsequent streaming of immigrant students have disadvantaged them from continuing their education, denying them cultural capital, and depriving them of hope for a better future.

Curtis, Livingstone, and Smaller (1992) and Barlow and Robertson (1994) expanded on this by tying the practice of streaming to social class. They similarly found that children whose parents were in unskilled occupations were about ten times as likely as those from professional families to end up in the basic level programs. Furthermore, lower-class children overwhelmingly predominated in the slow-learner, behavioural, and learning disabilities classes. The authors argued that no reputable scientific evidence confirmed that working-class children had less innate ability than their dominant-class peers. Therefore, no social justification exists for the practice of streaming based on class background (Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992). Yet as Barlow and Robertson pointed out, streaming is quite prevalent in Canada. They found that while streaming existed formally as education policy only in some provinces, the practice thrived in most schools and at every grade level even where no formal policy existed.

More recent studies on streaming by Krahn and Taylor (2007) and Caro (2009) found that social background continues to play a significant role in the course-selection choices made by high school students. Specifically, these students' academic placement in Grade 10 math, science, and English courses was found to be strongly related to their parents' education and family income. Students from higher socio-economic status families were more likely than those from lower socio-economic families to be taking the type of math, science, and English courses that would keep all their postsecondary options open (Krahn & Taylor, 2007). Echoing Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2002), Krahn and Taylor found that streaming and ability grouping continues to recreate social inequality, and attributed the continuation of these practices to

parents' lack of knowledge of the school system and post-secondary options, fewer learning resources in the home, and fewer role models in the family or community.

James (2005) also pointed to the practice of streaming as a social, educational, and financial barrier to immigrant students. He argued that, in spite of their socioeconomic situations, many of the students in his study expected to attend university or aspire to careers that required postsecondary education. However, they were often put into educational streams or levels that did not qualify them to enter postsecondary institutions. Overall, the practice of streaming and its consequence of a disproportionate number of working-class and immigrant students in less demanding academic paths all contribute to these students not receiving the cultural capital necessary for higher education and subsequent social mobility.

Discrimination of immigrant and working class students. School practices are not neutral in their treatment of students of varying socio-economic backgrounds and therefore tend to produce a widening gap. There is an inherent recognition and reward of cultural resources of students from advantaged backgrounds and subsequent discrimination and devaluation of students from less privileged families, leading to increasing inequalities between high and low socio-economic status students. Caro (2009) said that schools recreate the dominant social order and this allows students to recognize how society's opportunity structure operates. Students from low socio-economic status families therefore become conscious of the fact that they are likely to be excluded from desirable jobs. This leads to them become disillusioned, less motivated, and subsequently placing less effort into their academic activities. Caro also touched on the costs of further education and how finances can act as a further hindrance for low socio-economic status students to continue their schooling.

García Coll, Szalacha, and Palacios (2005) and McLaren (1986) also spoke to the role of the schools in the reproduction of the dominant social order and blocking the transmission of cultural capital to working-class, immigrant students. García Coll et al. (2005) investigated the schooling experiences of children of Dominican, Portuguese, and Cambodian immigrant descent. They discussed how classroom segregation by language skills had the potential of isolating immigrant students from their mainstream peers and preventing them from acquiring important cultural capital. McLaren's (1986) study consisted of observations of an elementary school in Toronto with a predominantly Portuguese-Canadian, working-class student body. He argued that the practice of streaming and negative teacher attitudes, which was widespread in the school under observation, victimized immigrant students by reinforcing the perception among educators that these students were 'dysfunctional' and 'culturally deprived'. Furthermore, he found that educators unwittingly subscribed to a dominant cultural capital in their classroom that actively silenced the working-class immigrant students who did not share its ideology. He concluded that the educational system was unable to bridge the chasm of opportunity between the social classes. As a result, many of the Portuguese-Canadian students in his study had little hope for a better future; subsequently they dropped out.

The failure on behalf of Toronto schools to address issues of educational disadvantages was also explored by Nunes (2003). He argued that marginalization, social reproduction, and academic underachievement of Portuguese-Canadians were partially the result of negative schooling policies and practices. These included the devaluation of Portuguese-Canadian students and their culture, the use of culturally-biased assessment procedures, low teachers' expectations, the cultural irrelevance of the curriculum, and the concentration of inferior vocational schools and programmes in working-class areas. He also pointed to the practice of

streaming and ability grouping as being discriminatory towards Portuguese-Canadian students. Connecting these findings with reports commissioned by the Ontario government, Nunes found that streaming and ability grouping discriminated against minorities and were counterproductive to the aims of the education system (Nunes, 2003).

The positive impact of communities. It has been shown that schools have not only failed to address issues of disadvantage but have also practiced discriminatory actions against immigrant and minority students. Communities and the resources they provide are therefore necessary for these students to navigate the complex and often constraining schooling institution. James (2005) explored this in his analysis of the support that community networks and resources provided to visible minority students from working class, immigrant backgrounds in Toronto. He challenged the assumption that these students lacked the experience, aspirations, and social and cultural capital needed to pursue postsecondary education. He said that with the support of their parents and communities, these students could develop the incentive, knowledge, determination, and commitment that make high educational and occupational goals possible. James discussed many organizations which assisted in the cultural adjustment process of immigrant students by providing them with the information, support, and encouragement that they needed to construct high aspirations and cope with the various discouraging experiences they had in schools. Furthermore, he said that community involvement could play a significant role in how these students reflected on their educational and occupational aspirations. For the most part, the support of these community networks and resources allowed students to cultivate attitudes, values, and behaviours that helped them to break through barriers, resulting in upward social mobility. This in turn equipped them with the resources to 'give back' to their communities, thereby enhancing the opportunities of its younger members.

The importance of communities in serving immigrant and minority children was also examined by Zhou (2005) in her analysis of community-based organizations. She found that when an ethnic group was constrained by structural disadvantages, effective community organizing could mobilize resources to counter the negative effects members faced in mainstream society. Moreover, community-based organizations could furnish a protective social environment and a cultural core which would prevent an ethnic enclave from ghettoization. In regards to education, Zhou (2005) said that community-based organizations helped to instil cultural capital. Her study found that immigrant parents were usually too busy working and lacked the cultural capital necessary to give their children specific directions in regards to their educational and career plans. This left a gap between high expectations and realistically feasible means of meeting these expectations. Community-based organizations filled this gap by helping young people become more aware of their choices and helping them to find realistic means of moving up socioeconomically into mainstream society. She pointed to after-school programs, tutor services, and test preparation centres as examples of organizations which facilitated this.

Bielenberg (n.d.) discussed a specific community resource in the form of *UC Links*, a community-based educational organization with a predominantly technological focus. A state-wide initiative in California, it employed volunteer undergraduates and high school students from the local community to work with economically disadvantaged elementary school children in an after-school setting. His findings described the positive impact this community-based educational organization had on both the older and younger students. The older students learned about child development and built patience and understanding for the students they mentored. The elementary students not only improved academically, acquiring skills in math and literacy, but also learned valuable life skills. The use of technology allowed children in the program to

take control of their own learning and become more self-directed. Bielenberg concluded that these students felt empowered, acquired a sense of their own agency and as a result, became motivated to learn both within the school and outside of it.

James and Haig-Brown (2001) described the *University Path Program* as another example of a community-based educational organization which catered to economically disadvantaged students, particularly those from working-class, immigrant, and minority backgrounds. The program involved a partnership between high schools in Toronto and York University and helped students initially conceive of the possibilities of postsecondary education, and then maintain that sense throughout their high school careers. The program extended into university, making the experience more accessible to students and providing them with the support they needed to negotiate a program of study which reflected their desires and interests.

The *University Path Program* was created to address the shortcomings of local schools, which were failing to deal with the cultural and systemic limitations many students were encountering, particularly in the form of low teacher expectations and linguistic and cultural barriers. The program recognized that students' failures were due not only to their individual efforts and social situations but also to educational and social contexts and structural barriers. It was ultimately successful in changing students' attitudes and expectations, motivating them to conceive of the possibilities of postsecondary education, and giving them the confidence and encouragement to succeed academically. Furthermore, many of the students who had participated in the *University Path Program* saw their university experience as something to not only fulfill their own personal, educational, and career aspirations but to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to work in their communities. They were inspired by the program and aspired to become activists within their communities. Overall, because of the help their

communities provided in allowing these students to achieve success academically, these students were instilled with a sense of responsibility to positively contribute to the growth and development of their communities (James & Haig-Brown, 2001).

The Portuguese-Canadian community and *conscientização*. Freire (1970) has coined the term *conscientização* to refer to a collective perception of social, political, and economic contradictions and organization against the oppressive elements of reality. The Portuguese-Canadian community has recognized the educational disadvantages their younger members face and have organized to bring awareness to these issues. Nunes (2003) discussed the Toronto Portuguese Parents' Association as being the first grassroots community group who confronted the Toronto Public School board about the high proportion of Portuguese-Canadian students who were failing subjects. Formed in 1981, it did much to advocate for Portuguese-Canadian students, many of whom were streamed into lower academic ranks, effectively compromising their access to post-secondary education. The Toronto Portuguese Parents' Association was instrumental in raising awareness about the issues of educational disadvantage. Specifically, volunteers from this organization accomplished the following: bilingual guides providing information on streaming and parent-teacher interviews, statements, motions, and recommendations to the Toronto Board of Education, numerous parent forums, and intensive use of the Portuguese-language media to alert the community to these issues (Januário, Marujo, & Nunes, n.d.).

The executive of the Toronto Portuguese Parents' Association sought to enlarge its scope beyond the group of public school parents, particularly after the media dissemination of the *Every Secondary Student Survey* (2006). As a result, the Portuguese-Canadian Coalition for Better Education was formed as a volunteer group comprising of Portuguese-Canadian

community organizations and associations, parents, educators, and university students (Januário, Marujo, & Nunes, n.d.). The Coalition set up ongoing working groups with school boards in order to look for ways to reverse the trends of educational disadvantage. They acted as a mouthpiece of the Portuguese-Canadian community, voicing their concerns of social reproduction and the marginalization of their youth (Nunes, 2008). The work of the Coalition revolved primarily around issues such as assessment and placement of low-achieving students in Special Education programmes, the role of Portuguese as an International Language in the primary curriculum, parental involvement in the school system, teacher, parent, and school board social worker expectations, and development of best practices in target area schools. The Coalition worked primarily with Toronto school boards, Portuguese-Canadian institutions, and the Ministry of Education as a lobbying and advocacy group (Januário, 2003).

Although the Portuguese-Canadian Coalition for Better Education dissolved in 2004, their partner institutions were numerous and wide-ranging and in many cases continue to operate today in their support of educational initiatives. The Portuguese Interagency Network is a community-based organization dedicated to the provision of services to Portuguese-speaking Canadians in Ontario. It was founded in 1978 by social service workers who recognized the need for action in the areas of research, community development, and public education within the Portuguese-Canadian community. The Portuguese Interagency Network was instrumental in producing studies, audio-visual materials, reports on the community, and public education campaigns as well as acting as a consulting and resource body to government, organizations, and individuals (Portuguese Interagency Network, 2000).

The Portuguese-Canadian National Congress was also a partner institution to the Portuguese-Canadian Coalition for Better Education, and represents Portuguese-Canadians on a

national scale. Founded in 1993, their network of directors, delegates, and local representatives speak on issues affecting the Portuguese-Canadian community by engaging in dialogue with all levels of government. Specifically, they participate in the Canadian Ethnocultural Council and engage in community education and mobilization campaigns. These include the preservation of international languages, support for ethnic minority television programming, the fight against racism and discrimination, support for and improvement of the health-care system, and lobbying for amnesty for undocumented immigrants. The Portuguese-Canadian National Congress has also created the Celebrating Outstanding Portuguese-Canadian Achievement or COPA Awards which honour the achievements of Portuguese-Canadians in benefiting their communities and Canadian society as a whole. These awards are intended to celebrate the successes of the community and offer inspiration to younger generations of Portuguese-Canadians (Portuguese Canadian National Congress, 2012).

This Congress administers a number of committees including both the Portuguese-Canadian Educators Network and Parents for Student Success. Both of these groups aim to improve the academic success and educational outcomes of Portuguese-Canadians. The Portuguese-Canadian Educators Network is comprised of teachers across Canada who are concerned about the educational disadvantages facing Portuguese-Canadians and offer support to communities in addressing education-related community concerns. Parents for Student Success aimed to increase the capacity of Portuguese-Canadian parents to become more involved in their children's education. It was based primarily in the communities of Toronto, Hamilton, and Kitchener-Waterloo until 2007 and raised awareness of the importance of parental involvement in education. It sought to provide cultural capital to Portuguese-Canadian parents by increasing

knowledge of the education system, parental rights, and highlighting opportunities for involvement at the local school level (Portuguese Canadian National Congress, 2012).

The Federation of Portuguese-Canadian Business and Professionals was another partner organization to the Portuguese-Canadian Coalition for Better Education, but it seeks to improve the Portuguese-Canadian community through business development. Through partnering with community groups they seek to foster professionalism, develop networking opportunities, and encourage academic excellence among Portuguese-Canadian youth. This is accomplished primarily by awarding scholarships to students completing post-secondary and graduate degrees. In addition to providing financial assistance, these scholarships seek to promote leadership and community involvement, as well as providing opportunities for overseas internships and study (Federation of Portuguese-Canadian Business and Professionals, 2012).

Overall, the activities of the Portuguese-Canadian Coalition for Better Education had lasting impact and cemented the Portuguese-Canadian community's involvement in educational issues. This was achieved especially through its partnering with Project Diploma, another community-based effort to make education more prevalent in the Portuguese-Canadian community. Project Diploma was successful in creating contests, fundraising events, partnering with local Universities, and providing information and resources to Portuguese-Canadian students in regards to academics. It was also vital in the dissemination of the *Every Secondary Student Survey* to the Portuguese-Canadian community. Because this *Survey* as well as the findings by Ornstein (2000) showed that Portuguese-Canadian students were continuing to experience educational disadvantages, the members of Project Diploma felt that a concrete response was needed to address this issue. *Ready, Set, Learn* [pseudonym] the community-based tutoring and mentoring program which is the basis of this study, was therefore created. It was

managed successfully by Project Diploma until responsibility was taken over by the *New Horizons Community Centre* [pseudonym] in 2006 (Project Diploma, 2006).

Summary

This review of the literature identified the importance of understanding how cultural models, cultural capital, and social reproduction affect the educational attainment of immigrant groups, particularly Portuguese-Canadians. This chapter also explored how community-based education has remedied educational disadvantage among marginalized groups as well as outlining a brief history of the Portuguese-Canadian community's efforts in combating educational disadvantage. In the following chapter, I outline my research methodology and the methods used to collect and analyze data.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological underpinnings of the study and the methods used to collect and analyze data. A qualitative approach to research structured this study. In this chapter, I begin with a description of the research design. Following this, I discuss the research method in depth, providing an overview of participant recruitment and participants' backgrounds. This section also contains details of the procedures I followed to gain ethics clearance. Next, I describe the process of document selection, and then discuss the organization and analysis of documents and transcripts. I conclude with a discussion of the methods used to enhance research trustworthiness.

Research Design

The purpose of this research study was to describe a community-based tutoring and mentoring program and to examine the stakeholders' perceptions of the program's impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students whom it serves, to respond to the educational disadvantages this group faces. Therefore, a qualitative methodology was deemed most appropriate as it refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things (Berg, 2009). It essentially involves "an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, pp. 3-4). Furthermore, qualitative research emphasizes the importance of acquiring information directly from the source, and this is done by spending a considerable amount of time in direct interaction with the settings and participants being studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Ready, Set, Learn was examined in depth in order to gain a better understanding of its nature, functions, mandates, and their evolution over time, and the program's perceived impact on the students it serves. Therefore, this research took the form of a case study—an empirical inquiry which investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1989). Specifically, the research was an intrinsic case study, as it concentrated on a single program to uncover the manifest interactions of significant factors characteristic to it. This method allowed various nuances, patterns, and latent elements to be captured by focusing on holistic description and explanation. It focused on a particular case, undertaken because of its uniqueness, with the intent of better understanding the fundamental aspects of the case (Berg, 2009). This method resulted in an understanding of what was important about this particular case within its own world and developed the case's own issues, contexts, and interpretations (Stake, 2005). Essentially, a case study design was appropriate for conducting exploratory and discovery-oriented research. There has been little prior research into the phenomena of Portuguese-Canadians' educational disadvantage and none examining the perceived impact of a specific community-based program in addressing it. Also, as this research was intended to describe one specific accommodation program, a case study was deemed appropriate. This design allows for further inquiry and may even contribute to policy formulation, implementation, and modification (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Since the research study focused on the perceived impact of the program, it also took on the form of an Appreciative Inquiry. This is a form of research which mobilizes investigation by focusing on the root causes of success within an organization. It highlights the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them

through the art and practice of asking positive-focused questions (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). Using this method, positive responses are elicited which gain new perspectives and heighten potential (Gaddis & Williams, 2008).

Appreciative Inquiry is built upon a philosophical foundation that views human nature and the act of human organizing as inherently positive. This foundation understands that organizations are human social systems which exist only in language and act as sources of unlimited relational capacity. Individually and collectively, the people in organizations contribute unique gifts and skills and once these are articulated they have the potential to guide action (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, & Cooperrider, 2010). Through the practice of Appreciative Inquiry, groups of people recognize themselves as the core of their organization or community. They are empowered in the recognition that they are capable of mobilizing a unique core of strengths, assets, resources, and competencies and this fosters in them a sense of belonging (Whitney, 2004). The philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry ties in well with Freire's (1970) emphasis on community action and his promotion of *praxis*: reflection and action leading to transformation. Overall, by dialoguing with a variety of actors within *Ready, Set, Learn*, I attempted to shed light on this positive core and gain a deep understanding of the nature, functions, and mandates of the program as well as the factors which have contributed to the impact of this program on its students. This was ultimately in accordance with the program's goal of addressing the educational disadvantages faced by Portuguese-Canadian students.

Research Method

As case studies involve in-depth examination, I attempted to describe the program and then to uncover its perceived impact through collecting and analyzing data from the stakeholders directly involved in the program, specifically, the students, parents, tutors, and program

coordinators. Therefore, the study was comprised of a participant-oriented investigation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Participant recruitment. *Ready, Set, Learn* services over 250 students, and recruits over 160 tutors according to the most recent enrolment statistics, collected in 2010. Two program coordinators are responsible for the program's operation, as well as countless parents and guardians who participate. In regards to my selection of participants, I adhered to the sampling strategies of qualitative research, with the ultimate goal of obtaining participants who were information-rich cases, knowledgeable and informative about the program, and who could be studied in depth (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As this study also adheres to the philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry, participant samples were not randomly generated. Instead, strategic decisions were made about who to invite to take part in the study, depending upon the experience, knowledge, and understanding they appeared to have (Reed, 2007). This sampling strategy was purposive as I used my knowledge of the group to ensure that certain types of individuals or persons displaying certain attributes were included in the study (Berg, 2009). Due to the fact that I required the assistance of the program coordinator in selecting potential participants, the sampling strategy also took on forms of snowball sampling, as I obtained knowledge of potential cases from people who knew people who met research needs (Glesne, 2010).

I met with a program coordinator of *Ready, Set, Learn* on November 4, 2011 in order to gain her assistance in directing me to potential cases. I provided her with the following criteria: I was interested in interviewing students who were in grades six, seven, eight or nine, who were of Portuguese-Canadian descent, who had been serviced by the program for at least one year, and

who would be knowledgeable about the program and willing and able to discuss their experiences.

In regards to tutors, I only wanted to interview tutors who had been involved in the program for at least one year, who would be knowledgeable about the program and able and willing to discuss their experiences. These tutors did not necessarily have to be all of Portuguese-Canadian heritage, as I was interested in seeing whether cultural capital could be transferred and connections could be made between students and tutors of different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, it has been shown that regards to facilitating their acculturation, it is important for immigrant students to have meaningful and positive interactions with members of the dominant culture (Cummins, Chow, & Schechter, 2006).

In regards to parents, I was interested in interviewing those who had at least one child who had been serviced by the program for at least one year and who would be willing and able to discuss their experiences. Using her knowledge of the stakeholders, the program coordinator compiled lists of potential parents and students, which included names and contact information. Using this information, I emailed parents introducing myself and the study and requesting their participation and/or their child's participation in one-on-one interviews. Where emailing proved ineffective, I resorted to telephone calls or face-to-face discussions before and after tutoring sessions. In regards to the recruitment of tutors, an email which I had written was sent out by the program coordinator on the *Ready, Set, Learn* listserv introducing myself and the study and requesting participation from tutors who met the indicated criteria.

As I wanted participants who were genuinely interested in sharing their experiences and perceptions for the study, I left a considerable time frame open for recruitment. I gave potential participants a two-month time frame to contact me about participation in the study. Tutors were

the most responsive stakeholder group and appeared to be the most eager to discuss their experiences and perceptions. Recruitment of parents was somewhat difficult, many of them citing lack of time and a language barrier for not wanting to participate in the study. Recruiting students also proved to be challenging. Some of them discussed how their parents did not want them participating in interviews, others appeared to express interest but did not follow up, and others appeared to be shy and uncomfortable at the prospect of discussing their experiences and perceptions with someone they were unfamiliar with.

Despite these difficulties, however, my recruitment methods resulted in three tutors, two parents, and five students expressing interest and subsequently participating in one-on-one interviews. The program coordinator had previously expressed interest in participating in the study, bringing the total number of participants to eleven. These sampling and recruitment strategies ensured that confidentiality and anonymity of all participants was maintained. For example, although the program coordinator had knowledge of the participants who could potentially have been involved in the study, she did not know who specifically expressed interest and who ended up being interviewed. Furthermore, no accidental implicit coercion occurred as stakeholders were reminded that their participation was voluntary and if they chose to decline to participate, it would have no negative consequence on their involvement in *Ready, Set, Learn*. Parents and students who were invited to participate and chose to decline simply informed me of their decision via email, telephone, or in person. Tutors who chose to decline were those who did not respond to the listserv recruitment email.

Participant backgrounds. As one purpose of this research study was to examine the stakeholders' perceptions of the program's impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students whom it serves, my participants were stakeholders in the program. As no research to date has studied this

program in-depth, this study attempts to fill this gap by providing an investigation into this program as experienced by the stakeholders consisting of students, parents, tutors, and program coordinators. Below is an outline of each of the stakeholder groups as well as the participants recruited from each group. All names are pseudonyms.

Program coordinators. This stakeholder group consists of two members who are responsible for the overall operation of the *Ready, Set, Learn* program (one of them participated in the study). One program coordinator had been working closely with me during the initial design of my study and had expressed an interest in being interviewed. At the time of the interview she had held her position at *Ready, Set, Learn* for eight years but had previously been actively involved in *New Horizons Community Centre*. She also sits on the Steering Committee of *Ready, Set, Learn*. As she is of Portuguese-Canadian descent, she is concerned about the educational disadvantages faced by this community and uses her role to help address these issues.

Tutors. This stakeholder group consists of over 160 volunteers from both within and outside the Portuguese-Canadian community. They are most often post-secondary students who have an interest in education or social issues and volunteer their time to gain experience and make a positive contribution to their communities. Three tutors participated in the study.

Beth. At the time of the interview, Beth was working towards her Ph.D. She had been a tutor at *Ready, Set, Learn* for three years and originally got involved to gain teaching experience. Although she was not of Portuguese-Canadian heritage, she expressed interest in the age group and demographic of the students that the program served. Her goals were to help students gain an understanding of the English language and to learn teaching strategies which would help her in

her role as a Teaching Assistant. She had tutored five students ranging from grades three to eight, some for multiple years.

Manuel. Manuel was completing a B.A degree. He had been a tutor at *Ready, Set, Learn* for over one year and initially became involved because the program served Portuguese-Canadian students. As someone of Portuguese-Canadian heritage who spoke the language, identified with the culture, and who had faced negative experiences with his own schooling, he was inspired to become involved in the program to mentor students as well as give-back to the community.

Kevin. Kevin was working towards obtaining a B.A degree. Although he was only of partial Portuguese heritage, he spoke the language well and was inspired to become involved in the program because of his skills and experiences working with children. He had been a tutor at *Ready, Set, Learn* for two years, working with students in the primary grades. His experiences as a tutor in the program have inspired him to become an elementary school teacher.

Students. This stakeholder group consists of over 250 students who are of Portuguese- or Spanish-speaking descent. They are students from grades one to twelve who face difficulties in school, particularly in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and language acquisition. For the purposes of this study, the stakeholders recruited were all of at least partial Portuguese-Canadian heritage and were in grades six to eight. Five students participated in the study.

Marco. Marco was in Grade 7 and had been involved with the program on and off for approximately five years. He was born in Portugal and had moved back and forth between Portugal and Canada throughout his childhood. He had been in Canada for the past two years and identified himself as an English Language Learner, which was also the primary reason why he signed up for the program. He came from a working-class background with his father working as

a labourer and his mother working in retail. He was unsure how many years of schooling his parents had completed. He spoke many experiences as a Portuguese-Canadian and a student of *Ready, Set, Learn*.

Tatiana. Tatiana was in Grade 8 and had been a student at *Ready, Set, Learn* for three years. She is of Portuguese-Canadian heritage on her mother's side and signed up in the program to get help with reading and math. She comes from a working-class, single-parent family; her mother, Sylvia, was also a participant in this study, and was able to explain and expand upon Tatiana's experiences. Tatiana had plans to attend high school the following year and hopes to go on to college to become an early childhood educator.

Jessie. Jessie was a Grade 6 student who had been with the program for five years. Jessie explicitly requested not to have gender identified and chose a gender-neutral pseudonym. Jessie was of partial Portuguese-Canadian heritage and came from a working-class, single-parent family. Jessie was unsure how many years of schooling their mother had completed and indicated that their mother was currently unemployed. Jessie's primary reason for coming to the program was to get help in school subjects, particularly math, although Jessie expressed a general dislike and disengagement in regards to their schooling experiences.

Celia. Celia was a student in Grade 7 who had been with the program for four years. She is a second-generation Portuguese-Canadian who cited additional help with math as her motivation to attend *Ready, Set, Learn*. Both her parents were born in Portugal and immigrated to Canada when they were teenagers. Neither of them attended college or university and both held working-class jobs, her father being a labourer and her mother working at a factory.

Bella. Bella was a Grade 6 student who had been involved in the program for two years, initially registering to get help with grammar. She is of Portuguese-Canadian heritage on her

mother's side, her mother having emigrated from Portugal when the mother was a teenager. Her mother only completed some high school and was working in a factory at the time of the interview. Her father was born in Canada, also did not finish high school, and worked as a caretaker. Bella was excited to eventually attend high school and had aspirations to become either a veterinarian or an artist.

Parents. This stakeholder group represents hundreds of Portuguese- and Spanish-Canadian parents and guardians who express a deep concern about their children's educational and vocational futures and have actively involved them in the *Ready, Set, Learn* program. Two parents participated in the study.

Conceição. Conceição's daughter was a student of *Ready, Set, Learn*, and had been involved in the program for about nine years. Conceição and her family had emigrated from Portugal ten years ago. She placed her daughter in the program both to help her with language acquisition, and in the hopes of countering some of the negative experiences she was facing in school. Conceição continued her own education when she came to Canada and holds a middle-class job. Her daughter, who was in Grade 12 at the time of the interview, has plans to attend university to study drama. Conceição considers herself to be very involved in and concerned with her daughter's education.

Sylvia. Sylvia's daughter, Tatiana, had been involved in the program for three years. Sylvia was born and raised in Canada, as her parents had emigrated from Portugal shortly before. She completed some college courses and currently works in administration. She registered Tatiana in *Ready, Set, Learn* because she was struggling with her schooling. Sylvia is very concerned about her daughter's education, particularly with getting her identified for an

Individual Education Plan. Furthermore, she was able to offer additional insight into Tatiana's discussion of her schooling experiences and those at *Ready, Set, Learn*.

Together, the above individuals, the program coordinator, Beth, Manuel, Kevin, Marco, Tatiana, Jessie, Celia, Bella, Conceição, and Sylvia were my key participants. Their interview responses offered multifaceted insights into their experiences as participants in the *Ready, Set, Learn* program. The responses of these participants are compared with and complemented by experiences discussed by other stakeholders in the program which were uncovered during the document analysis process.

Ethical guidelines. As this study involved collecting data from human participants, I educated myself on the importance of maintaining confidentiality and respect throughout the study. I did this through my completion of the *Course in Human Research Participant Protection*, which successfully prepared me to conduct research with the people involved in the program.

Furthermore, I submitted a detailed description of my research to the *Education Research Ethics Board*, which was then forwarded to the *General Research Ethics Board* at Queen's University. The ethics clearance was granted to this study on July 26, 2011 (Appendix A) and was renewed on June 27, 2012. I also received a letter from the executive director of *New Horizons*, the community centre which operates *Ready, Set, Learn*, granting me full permission to conduct research on site. This ensured that all participants, including myself, were protected throughout the course of my study. In order to guarantee confidentiality and protect the identities of my participants, I provided them with a Letter of Information (Appendix B) about the study as well as a Consent Form (Appendix C). I had them read and sign the forms, as well as get parental or guardian permission if they were students, prior to being interviewed. Before beginning each

interview, the participant was notified of their legal right to decline to answer questions that they found objectionable. They were also notified of their being assigned a pseudonym in order to guarantee their privacy. Furthermore only my thesis committee and I had access to the interview data, which was kept secure in a password protected file on my computer at all times during the course of the study.

Data Collection

As the Appreciative Inquiry method has a community-centred philosophy, my research involved the stakeholders of the program, particularly the program coordinator, in designing and conducting the study. We worked together collaboratively to plan the study, select participants, and explore and discuss the perceived impact of the program (Reed, 2007).

Document collection. I designed this study to include a document analysis component, because this form of data collection had never been undertaken with *Ready, Set, Learn*. The program had previously conducted its own research, primarily to get feedback from its stakeholders, but this was only in the form of surveys, questionnaires, program evaluations, and focus groups. Document collection therefore included data from these previous research methods in order to get a well-rounded understanding of the program. These documents served to provide background information as well as historical insight into *Ready, Set, Learn* and helped me understand the conditions that influence the programs operation (Bowen, 2009).

As many Appreciative Inquiry studies make use of contextual information, I began my data collection by investigating documents which pertain to the *Ready, Set, Learn* program (Reed, 2007). Prior (2003) defines documents as social products which are constructed in accordance with rules. They express a structure, are nestled within a specific discourse and their creation depends on collective, organized action. Official documents are abundant in organizations and

take many forms, particularly internal documents, used by the members of the organization, and documents used for external communication, produced for public consumption (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

I began my document collection on July 4, 2011 at *New Horizons*. I was given access to a computer which contained all the files pertaining to the *Ready, Set, Learn* program. The documents I examined were diverse and wide ranging and included the following: agendas and minutes from administrative meetings; recruitment, registration, and information forms; samples of certificates of completion; pamphlets, articles, newsletters, advertisements, and other media promoting the program; student and tutor evaluation forms, surveys, registration packages, and orientation guides; program evaluations; fundraising and donation applications and letters; program budgets; yearly enrolment statistics and summaries; outreach information; and data on participating schools and collaboration with other institutions. These were reflective of the variety of forms that documents in organizational files can take, according to Bowen (2009). In order to ensure confidentiality, I did not use any documents which contained information regarding specific students, tutors, or parents. A list of documents quoted in this study can be found in Appendix D.

Interviews. My data collection was supplemented with semi-structured, audio-recorded, one-on-one interviews. This type of interview involved asking a number of predetermined questions on specific topics. These questions were typically asked of each participant in a systematic and consistent order, but I allowed myself ample freedom to digress when participants brought up new and interesting topics (Berg, 2009). As Yin (1989) stated, interviews are often critical to the success of a case study, and most case study interviews are of an open-ended nature, in which the researcher asks participants for the facts of a matter as well as for their own

opinions about events. In some situations, the researcher may even ask participants to propose their own insights into certain occurrences and may use such propositions as the basis for further inquiry. These open-ended tactics were utilized in my interviews as much as possible, as this data collection method is particularly important in Appreciative Inquiry studies. Essentially, Appreciative Inquiry interviews are encouraged to consist of a conversation about the issues and phenomena in the program (Reed, 2007). Overall, this method of data collection had merit primarily because of its flexibility. It allowed me to ask regularly structured questions, permitting comparisons across interviews, as well as to pursue areas spontaneously initiated by the participant, resulting in a much more textured set of accounts (Berg, 2009).

The first interview was conducted on November 13, 2011 and subsequent ones were scheduled on average twice per week. The final interview took place on December 27, 2011. These interviews took place at a variety of sites including *New Horizons*, empty and open classrooms at one school which operates the program, and local libraries and cafes. The objectives of the interviews were to obtain rich data on each participant around the topic of their experiences with and perceptions of the *Ready, Set, Learn*, program.

To assist me in this objective, I created a different set of questions for each stakeholder group (Appendix E). These interview questions were developed following the initial collection of documents, which allowed me to create questions that would discover the perceived impact of *Ready, Set, Learn* on its students. These interview questions were also reflective of the literature surrounding educational disadvantages of Portuguese-Canadians and community-based education, and later helped me to structure my etic codes. I received feedback on these questions from my thesis committee and made necessary revisions. These questions were subsequently field tested on three personal contacts of mine. One of these contacts had served as a tutor at

Ready, Set, Learn for the 2007-2008 school year, another was a Portuguese-Canadian student in grade 9, and a third was a parent of Portuguese-Canadian heritage. Following these field tests, I modified them accordingly to ensure that they were clear and that they would elicit detailed responses from my participants.

I also took detailed notes in my reflexive journal as I interviewed each participant, focusing on their responses and non-verbal communication. This helped me to gauge their comfort levels and reliability, as well as to add further description to the participant and setting. The interviews were all conducted in English. They ranged in length from ten minutes to seventy minutes and were reflective of participants' age, experience, and ability to articulate. For example, the student interviews tended to be the shortest in length and the interview with the program coordinator was the longest.

These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. In order to easily organize and retrieve these data, each transcript was titled according to participant and page numbers were inserted. After transcribing each interview, I re-listened to each recorded interview while concurrently correcting errors within the transcript. This enhanced transcript trustworthiness as it limited misinterpretations and allowed for readability. For example, when pauses occurred during the interview process, I referenced these with ellipses. In addition, some omissions, pause fillers, and lack in fluency, as well as false starts were omitted from the clean copy of the transcripts. A copy of the transcription was given to individual participants, either via email or in person; so that they could verify that a valid account had been collected. Follow-up interviews were not necessary; however, I did utilize email and informal conversations to add detail to the participants' backgrounds and the interview data when necessary. Email

correspondence and information and reflections on informal conversations were recorded in my reflexive journal.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the documents and transcripts began concurrently with the data collection. This provided opportunities for me to examine my data and generate strategies for collecting new and better quality data when they were needed. This was the most creative stage in the research process as it allowed me to give meaning to the findings obtained from the data collection (Berg, 2009).

Document analysis. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating both printed and electronic material. This method is particularly suited to qualitative research, and requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). The documents collected from *Ready, Set, Learn* were analyzed through an adaptive approach, specifically using the framework of organization theory (Hodge, Anthony, & Gales, 2003). The eight themes of a) *purpose and goals*, b) *governance and decision-making*, c) *structure and design*, c) *activities*, d) *financing*, e) *collaboration*, f) *outreach*, and g) *size, growth and change* were applied to analyze the selected documents. This ensured that a rich description would be provided of the nature, functions, and mandates of this community-based program and how these have evolved over time.

I ensured that the process of document analysis was as rigorous and transparent as possible. My role as a researcher was to determine the existence, accessibility, and usefulness of particular documents. In addition I had to consider the original purpose of each document, the context in which it was produced, and the intended audience (Bowen, 2009). I began this process

by sorting through the folders and sub-folders of the collected documents and deleting those which were irrelevant or contained duplicate or very limited information. Notes were made of the general features of each document including the title, type of document, and year of publication. When necessary, I re-named documents or folders and changed their locations to provide ease of access. After repeating this process several times, and ensuring that I was satisfied with the amount and relevancy of information remaining, I used Visual Understanding Environment (VUE) software to construct a concept map. This concept map represented an outline of all the documents. Nodes and pathways were created to correspond to the documents location in a particular folder or sub-folder. The documents were then read again and coded to uncover the eight themes corresponding to organization theory (Hodge et al., 2003). Each code was given a colour and each document or section of a document which corresponded to the particular code was given the same colour node in the VUE concept map. A list of the documents directly referenced can be found in Appendix D.

Once this initial analysis was complete, the documents were organized into separate files by code, and were titled according to the eight themes. For each session of organization, I chose one of the eight organizational theory themes as a general focus, and analyzed the documents accordingly. This was instrumental in allowing me to construct the description of the program which is outlined in Chapter 4. A separate file was created to store documents which spoke to the impact of this program on its students, and the participants' perceptions of their experiences in schools and in the *Ready, Set, Learn* program. This file was then added to the folder with the transcript data, which was analyzed later.

Transcript analysis. As documents can provide data on the context in which research participants operate, the document analysis helped to inform the transcript analysis process

(Bowen, 2009). Qualitative analysis is defined as “a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 346). As I was interested in studying each participant's experiences and perceptions of *Ready, Set, Learn*, the units of analysis were the participants answers to my questions. I began my coding by parsing these utterances according to the eight different themes of organization theory. This allowed me to include interview data with the descriptive component of the research study. The theme of 'feedback and results' contained the most data and I began secondary coding by scanning the transcripts for additional themes that arose in the units of analysis. These themes addressed the perceptions of how the tutoring and mentoring program had impacted its Portuguese-Canadian students, and how these students' attitudes toward education had been shaped by their participation in the program. As I read and re-read the transcripts, I made notes of these themes, and this allowed me to develop a coding scheme.

The interview data were coded in two ways. First, *etic codes* were utilized, which were derived from existing literature on areas such as the theories of cultural capital, child-rearing, parental involvement, and academic and career aspirations. These etic codes also helped to initially structure my interview questions. Following the application of etic codes to the transcripts, the data was coded a second time using emic codes. Emic codes were created from themes that although I had not explored in my literature review, were nonetheless introduced by participants. These included bullying, family structure, transitions, and the mentoring component. These emic codes emerged from my numerous readings of the transcripts and represented the participants' views, beliefs, perceptions, and experiences.

After developing a coding scheme, I once again re-read each individual transcript. When an utterance corresponded to a specific code, I highlighted the segment and wrote the code in the

margin of the passage. After establishing the codes, all codes across interviews were compared so as to find patterns within the data sets. This allowed me to understand the connections between various aspects of people's situations, mental processes, beliefs, and actions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Comparing codes also enabled me to determine which themes were most important to the participants. I organized these themes into definitional files on Microsoft Word™ documents. The documents were then titled according to the respective codes and contained all the participants' data segments pertinent to the particular code. The process was repeated until all codes had a corresponding definitional file. These themes allowed me to establish the basis of the feedback and results section of Chapter 4 as well as my discussion in Chapter 5.

Presentation of the Data

The description of the program is based primarily on the findings from the document analysis. Documents and transcripts were analyzed using organizational theory framework (Hodge et al., 2003) to provide a rich description of the nature, functions, and mandates of the community-based tutoring and mentoring program, and how these have evolved over time. Appendix D outlines how these documents are referenced, noting the name, the folder it was categorized into, the year it was published, and Hodge et al.'s (2003) organizational theory frameworks which corresponds to the document. To differentiate these documents from published literature, I have referenced them using their title, folder location, and year.

The discussion of stakeholder experiences and perceptions is based mainly on findings from transcript analysis. Thick descriptions are provided in order to report the participants' experiences. For the most part, the participants' stories inform the findings, which are presented to reflect the etic and emic codes and themes discussed in interviews. Appendix F represents the

frequency of codes among participants and participant groups. This chart does not report the respective weight of the impact of these themes, but it does show how often these themes came up in the participants' conversations. This chart helped me to structure the units of analysis by code as well as help me to frame my findings in chapter 4. I discovered which codes would best help me answer my research questions as well as discover which topics were not relevant to all participants, all participant groups, or to the study in general.

In discussing stakeholder experiences, attention is also drawn to findings from the document analysis. These include written reflections on behalf of parents, students, and tutors regarding their experiences with *Ready, Set, Learn* and are an example of the internal feedback and reporting methods that the program utilizes. For clarity I utilized both paraphrasing and direct quotations from participants. I have referenced these using the participants' pseudonyms and the page number where the quote is located in the transcript. Connections are also made between stakeholders' stories and existing literature, in order to offer a deeper interpretation of the interview findings.

Establishing Research Trustworthiness

My role as a researcher in this case study was that of both an insider and an outsider, and each role had its advantages and disadvantages. My personal biases as a person of Portuguese-Canadian heritage as well as someone who had previously been involved in the program could be seen as potential threat to validity. However, I addressed this through distancing myself as much as possible from the program and its stakeholders. Despite my past involvement with the community centre and the program, during the course of this study my social relationship with all participants was that of an outsider. Except for the program coordinator, I was unfamiliar to all my participants and they had not known me prior to our interviews. However, coming from

partial Portuguese-Canadian heritage, and having an understanding of the language and culture, I also had the role of an insider. I found that I was able to empathize with the participants, relate to their experiences, and make them feel comfortable and secure (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Reflexive journal. I addressed researcher bias by continuously exploring my own subjectivity through the use of a reflexive journal throughout the data collection and analysis process (Glesne, 2010). *Reflexivity* is described as the recognition of self-personal self-awareness. This involves letting the participants truly speak for themselves as well as the transcendence of the researcher from his or her own subjectivity and cultural context (Pillow, 2003). This journal was constantly employed to ensure that my research was legitimate and valid and contained continuous records of the decisions made during the emergent design and rationale as well as assessments of the trustworthiness of each dataset (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Specifically, this journal allowed me to record, justify, modify, and trace my personal reactions to the research as well as to my participants. The robust amount of data collected from documents required me to substantiate my research procedure (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, I kept notes on my reflections and observations on the process, detailing any tentative conclusions. For example, the notes I made on the initial categorization of these documents by *Ready, Set, Learn* later influenced my adaptive approach of structuring these documents according to Hodge et al.'s (2003) organization theory framework.

Furthermore, during the interviews and transcription process, notes were taken for each participant to capture ideas and document themes in the data. Prior to interviews, I made notes on my feelings, mood, and any biases or intuitions I had about the upcoming interviews. During the interviews, I kept detailed notes about the participants' responses, non-verbal communication and any potential links to literature and data from other interviews. Following each interview, I

recorded my opinions of how the interview was conducted as well as made notes of any tentative interpretations. In addition, I also documented my personal interactions on a continuous basis with individuals both within and outside of *Ready, Set, Learn* as the topic of my research came up in conversation. These notes and journal entries acted as a reference tool and facilitated the coding and analysis process because it gave preliminary information on how each participant's accounts reflected existing literature on themes such as cultural capital, immigrant experiences with education, child rearing, socio-economic status, and community-based education. Overall, it allowed me to recognize my own feelings, attitudes, and beliefs and provided an opportunity for catharsis and reflection on my study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Triangulation of the data. Other potential threats to the validity of this research study include a short time frame in which data were collected, a limited population available from which to collect data, and the fact that the data are not all-encompassing – what is reported in the findings is not wholly reflective of every stakeholder, nor every stakeholder group in *Ready, Set, Learn*. These threats to validity were minimized as much as possible using a variety of strategies. I utilized document analysis and transcription analysis as my data collection strategies as well as kept a reflexive journal, which included a section for interview notes, throughout the data collection and analysis process. These strategies are multiple and allowed for triangulation of the data. Triangulation is a means of investigation through mutual confirmation of measures and validation of findings in an attempt to relate them so as to counteract threats to validity found in each (Berg, 2009).

Furthermore, in collecting and presenting the data, I have given verbatim accounts from the participants in quotes in this thesis. Member checking has been conducted by allowing the participants to revisit the interview transcripts to ensure that their thoughts, ideas, and feelings

have been accurately transcribed and represented. These strategies have enhanced the validity and the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of this case study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Overall, these potential limitations have been overcome as much as possible in order to ensure that a trustworthy and accurate depiction of *Ready, Set, Learn* is presented and that the stakeholders' perceptions of the impact this program is having on Portuguese-Canadian students are showcased.

Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed account of the methodological underpinnings of my study as well as the approaches I used to collect and analyze data. I discussed a qualitative methodology and described the research design highlighting participant recruitment, participant descriptions, ethical clearance, and document selection. I also described the structure and analysis of the data and outlined the methods used to enhance research trustworthiness. The following chapter presents the findings resulting from the analysis.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

The purpose of this research study is to describe a community-based tutoring and mentoring program and to examine the stakeholders' perceptions of the program's impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students whom it serves, to respond to the educational disadvantages this group faces. This chapter presents findings from the document and transcript analysis of my investigation and is organized into two sections. First, the Program Description section gives a detailed narrative of *Ready, Set, Learn*, based primarily on findings from the document analysis. Some interview data and literature have been included in this section to highlight and expand upon the information presented in the documents.

Second, the Stakeholders' Experiences and Perceptions section contains the participants' responses regarding the impact of *Ready, Set, Learn* on Portuguese-Canadian students, as well as outlining how students' attitudes toward education have been shaped by their participation in the program. This section describes the experiences of the stakeholders in both the school system and in the program itself. It is structured into the thematic areas of schooling experiences and student impact, with sub-themes emerging from the stories of the stakeholder groups.

Program Description

To help me describe *Ready, Set, Learn*, the overall goal of document analysis was to gain a deeper understanding of the nature, functions, and mandates of the program, and how it has changed and evolved throughout its ten-year history. The eight themes of purpose and goals; governance and decision-making; structure and design; activities; financing; collaboration; outreach; and size, growth and change were applied to analyze and structure the selected data

from the documents. This understanding facilitated the construction of a rich description of the program, which is outlined below.

Purpose and goals. Organizations are comprised of people with different roles and responsibilities, who share a common desire to achieve goals and objectives (Hodge et al., 2003). The official goal of *Ready, Set, Learn* is to provide Portuguese and Spanish-speaking students with focused, fun, and free tutoring in a supportive environment. The program also aims to provide its students with the ongoing support necessary to succeed in school and to look positively toward post-secondary education and career options. *Ready, Set, Learn* also aims to encourage the parents of these students to enhance their participation in their children's educational endeavours as well as encouraging tutors to appreciate and understand the diversity, complexities and challenges surrounding the Portuguese and Spanish-speaking communities in Toronto (New Horizons Community Centre, Operations, 2011).

Governance and decision-making. Officially, organizations have formal and explicit means of establishing goals as well as guidance as to their achievement through the organizations structure and operations (Hodge et al., 2003). *New Horizons* has a board of directors which plays the primary role in the control and governance of the community centre. Its members are selected by a vote of stakeholders and they are charged with responsibilities such as establishing policies and objectives of the community centre, developing strategic plans to secure funding, and delegating powers and responsibilities to others.

Because *New Horizons* operates a wide variety of programs and services, it grants governance and decision-making responsibilities to committees. The Steering Committee directly shapes and influences the direction and growth of *Ready, Set, Learn*. It is responsible for overseeing and developing the program, guaranteeing its success and sustainability, and ensuring

that it meets the criteria requirements of its various funders. It oversees the project staff of *Ready, Set, Learn* and conducts regular reviews of the program's framework, outreach and reporting methods (Steering Committee, Committees, 2005). The Steering Committee acts as the administration of *Ready, Set, Learn*, working with and through other people in the program to achieve goals.

In terms of making and implementing organizational decisions, the Steering Committee does so through consensus or voting. The decision-making tools it utilizes are in the form of cost-benefit analyses and the availability of funding. However, information presented in sustainability plans, such as lists of program needs and resource requirements in regards to the development, coordination, and expansion of the program, provide additional information to decision-makers. For example, resource requirements outlined the need to use ministry guidelines to determine if students were working below grade level and requested acquisition of Ontario Ministry of Education documents (Sustainability Plan, Administrative, 2001; Program Needs, Evaluation, 2007). Yearly Program Evaluations were also utilized as information sources by the Steering Committee to provide feedback on the functioning of the program and to make decisions regarding its future operations.

Structure and design. The stakeholders of *Ready, Set, Learn* are categorized into different roles, and when all of these roles are synchronized, the goal of providing free tutoring and mentoring to at-risk students is realized. The formal organization chart for *Ready, Set, Learn* outlines this structure and can be found in Appendix G. It displays the authority relationships and formal communication channels. Each of these roles and responsibilities are discussed.

Executive director. The executive director manages the *New Horizons Community Centre* and oversees the various projects which the community centre runs. These projects focus

primarily on settlement services for immigrants including language instruction, counselling, and employment and education services (Community Centre Overview, New Horizons, 2010). The executive director is indirectly responsible for the development, implementation, and maintenance of projects, ensuring that communication regarding program outcomes is regularly maintained with donors, sponsors, other stakeholders, and the community at large. The executive director also oversees strategic plans which focus on the maintenance of the community centre's projects through the acquisition of funding (Steering Committee Notes, Committees, 2004). The executive director manages, coordinates, and integrates the various activities of the community centre.

Program coordinators. The program coordinators oversee the day-to-day operation of the *Ready, Set, Learn* program. During the summer months, when no tutoring sessions occur, they are responsible for registering new and returning students for the program. In addition, they screen and interview potential volunteers for the tutor and site supervisor roles and match students with tutors in an effort to reduce the programs waiting list. They establish a schedule of when and where tutoring sessions will occur and communicate this to volunteers and students before the yearly start of the program. They also maintain communication with staff at participating schools to discuss the logistics of the programs operation in the schools in the upcoming school year (Steering Committee Notes, Committees, 2004). Once *Ready, Set, Learn* begins for the school year one or both program coordinators will attend the initial tutoring sessions to ensure that they are operating effectively. Once all volunteers, parents, and students are comfortable and familiar with the procedures of the sessions, this responsibility is taken over by the site supervisors.

The program coordinators also act as important references for other stakeholders and are responsible for all communication about *Ready, Set, Learn* to these stakeholder groups. For example, if sessions are to be cancelled due to a student absence, it is the program coordinator's responsibility to notify the tutor and site supervisors. They also have the responsibility of maintaining the project binder, which contains all information pertinent to the program and also update and safeguard student and volunteer information. The program coordinators are also responsible for outreach, whether in regard to recruitment of new students and volunteers, or in aiding the executive director in securing additional sources of funding. Responsibility for planning activities as well as collaborating with contacts in schools, universities, and other community programs, also falls under the program coordinators' role. They also oversee the yearly evaluation of *Ready, Set, Learn*, and are responsible for getting regular feedback on the program, whether in the form of tutor evaluations, or parent and student surveys. The responsibilities of the program coordinators are multifaceted and diverse, but are vital to the success of the program (Steering Committee Notes, Committees, 2004).

Site supervisors. The main role of the site supervisors at *Ready, Set, Learn* are to support the tutors, students, and parents, and to ensure that the tutoring and mentoring sessions are running as smoothly as possible. Specifically, their responsibilities include acting as liaisons between the school personnel and the program coordinator, maintaining and collecting records of attendance, and updating the resource box and ensuring it is accessible to students and tutors. After each session, site supervisors are responsible following up with absent tutors or students, and updating the program coordinators regarding absences, incidents, or other ongoing concerns. They also act as a resource to the tutors on site by helping with the management of their students, providing them with assistance, and acting as a back-up tutor upon request. In regards to their

relationship with parents, they are responsible for introducing tutors to the parents of their students and assisting with any communication, such as translating, if necessary. Overall, they are responsible for overseeing the sessions and ensuring that they are successful and benefit both students and tutors (Tutor and Supervisor Manual, Orientation, 2011).

Tutors. Tutors for the *Ready, Set, Learn* program act as role models, instructors, teachers, and mentors for their students, and they are responsible for building friendships and relationships based upon mutual respect and trust. If the student has homework, the tutor is responsible for focusing primarily on areas of academic difficulty, ensuring that the student can work towards improving. If the student does not have homework, tutors are responsible for planning lessons and activities by using the resource box or the students' textbooks. Tatiana, a student, recalls how her tutor helped her and what materials were used. "We get our books and I'll start my homework and if I need help, I'll ask my tutor and...she'll tell me to tell her what we're doing...Or we go down and we get worksheets from the resource box" (Tatiana, p. 1). Tutors are expected to reinforce material as well as provide an overview to the student as to what was covered during the session to bring everything into perspective. During the last 15 minutes of a session, tutors are encouraged to play a game with students, read a book together, or simply have an informal conversation. This ensures that the mentoring goal is also being met and rewards students for work completion and good behaviour. Beth, a tutor, recalls the types of activities that occurred at the end of her tutoring sessions: "I would usually do something together with them, like hangman...I would play cards or something" (Beth, p. 3).

Tutors are also encouraged to keep their own attendance records and make reflective notes on each session to track their students' progress and assess which areas need more work. They are to discuss any concerns about their students to site supervisors or program coordinators.

Tutors are also expected to engage in regular dialogue with the parents at the beginning or at the end of each session, answering questions and addressing any concerns. The role of the tutor is fundamental in ensuring the success of the program and can be the deciding factor as to whether or not the students experience benefits (Tutor and Supervisor Manual, Orientation, 2011).

Overview of policies and procedures. As the tasks of the various stakeholders of *Ready, Set, Learn* are highly differentiated and complex, the coordination of these activities is necessary. This is done through the program's implementation of formal rules, policies, and procedures in order to ensure coordination, consistency, and ultimately foster the program's success.

Qualifications. In regards to the students who are serviced by *Ready, Set, Learn*, they must be of Portuguese-speaking descent. This includes students who have one or both parents or grandparents originating from Portuguese-speaking countries such as Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, and Cape Verde. As of 2008, the program expanded its services to include students of Spanish-speaking descent as well. All student members of the program must be enrolled full time in school in grades one through twelve, and have shown to be experiencing academic difficulties (Tutor and Supervisor Manual, Orientation, 2011). These include students who are failing subjects, have marks in the 50s and low 60s, are struggling with literacy and numeracy or struggling with acquisition of the English language. To ensure that only students who truly need help are served, a teacher referral is used which outlines the student's area of difficulty and provides recommendations and strategies to help the student overcome these challenges (Teacher Memo, Schools, 2010). Students also need to be enrolled by their parents or guardians, who complete and sign a registration form. Once registered, the student must commit to arriving to the sessions on time, and to be picked up from the sessions by a parent or guardian.

Tutors and site supervisors can be from within or outside of the Portuguese- or Spanish-speaking community. They are eligible to volunteer with the program after completing an application form, undergoing an interview with a program coordinator, and successfully passing a police reference check. They must commit to meeting with a student for a minimum of one and a half hours per week and commit to the full school year. When they begin with the program, volunteers are given training and an extensive orientation package which outlines their specific roles and responsibilities, as well as outlining the formalized rules such as behavioural expectations and safety policies (Tutor and Supervisor Manual, Orientation, 2011).

Expectations and guidelines. Volunteers are expected to behave in a professional manner and treat all students, parents, school staff, and other volunteers with respect. They are to refrain from having physical contact with a student that is beyond the limits of friendship, and refrain from engaging in any outside contact with the students. Volunteers who fail to perform their assignments satisfactorily or who engage in any misconduct are subject to dismissal (Tutor and Supervisor Manual, Orientation, 2011).

Volunteers are responsible for ensuring a safe environment for their students and this is mandated through prevention and intervention strategies. Tutors and site supervisors must ensure that there is adequate supervision of students at all times and this results when there is ample communication. Tutors must get a site supervisor to watch their students if they need to leave the session for any reason, and they must communicate any absences or late arrivals. Students must also be escorted by volunteers when arriving at or leaving from their tutoring sessions as well as when they need to leave the classroom (Tutor and Supervisor Manual, Orientation, 2011).

Basic first aid guidelines are also outlined, as well as the procedures to be followed in the event of serious injuries occurring. *Ready, Set, Learn* adheres to the principles of the Ontario

Human Rights Code and has a policy of non-tolerance of racism, discrimination, or harassment in any form; it provides a copy of the Code to its volunteers. Volunteers also have a duty to report if they suspect that any of their students is suffering from child abuse. Section 37 of the Child and Family Services act is also provided to volunteers as well as the steps they must take in reporting (Tutor and Supervisor Manual, Orientation, 2011). Manuel, a tutor, seemed to be well aware of these guidelines and gave an example of how he adhered to the duty to report requirement:

There was one child that had...sensitivity issues around him and there were markings on him and I brought it up to...the coordinator. Apparently the child had a problem with *drawing* on himself but I didn't perceive it that way...I took all the precautions right? Because we are vulnerable sector screened and we have to be very careful...how we deal with children. (Manuel, p. 5)

By engaging in the practices of division and integration, through assigning responsibilities through roles and job titles, and then coordinating these roles using policies and procedures, *Ready, Set, Learn* successfully structures its operations so that the achievement of its goals are facilitated.

Activities. As *Ready, Set, Learn* became established in the community as a provider of support for Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking students, it began to diversify in how it delivered services to these groups. While the founding structure of the weekly one-on-one tutoring and mentoring sessions has been maintained, *Ready, Set, Learn* has engaged in other activities to promote education not only to the students in the program, but to all Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking students in the local community. These have been in the form of the annual *Shadow-a-Student* [pseudonym] day, parent and student workshops, and the year-end graduation.

Shadow-a-student day. This event allows Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking students in grades 11 and 12 to spend a day with a university student. To host this event, *Ready, Set, Learn* collaborates with student associations at three universities in Toronto. As the program coordinator outlined, "We partner with the different Portuguese associations, and now recently Spanish associations at the universities and *they* are in charge of recruiting the university students...who then become the mentors." (Program coordinator, p. 14) This event gives students a glimpse into the lifestyle they could be leading after graduation and is ultimately in line with the program's goal of making education more accessible to, and prevalent in the Portuguese-Canadian community (Community Centre Overview, *New Horizons*, 2010).

This event is open to all students in the Portuguese- and Spanish-Canadian communities, regardless if they attend the *Ready, Set, Learn* tutoring sessions or not. Therefore, the role of local teachers in promoting this event is vital. Teachers are asked to discuss this event with students whom they feel would receive the most benefit, including: those who are not doing well academically but can be inspired to improve their performance; students who intend or have given thought to pursuing post-secondary education; and students who have the potential to pursue higher education, but are unsure about their abilities or are nervous about what awaits them in university. Overall, this event aims to link these students with role models and expose them to the post-secondary lifestyle (Information for Students, *Shadow-a-Student Day*, 2010).

After filling out an application form and a parental consent form, students choose which university they would like to visit. On the day of the event, *New Horizons* provides transportation to and from the university. When students arrive at their chosen university, there is an introductory session which usually includes a welcome address by a professor, a brief description of the university, and a discussion of the importance of higher education. Students

are then introduced to their mentors, who are university students from both within and outside the Portuguese- or Spanish- students association. Students are then taken on a tour of the facilities and then accompany their mentors to a lecture, to gain an understanding of the difference between university and high school classroom instruction. Students also have the opportunity to discuss various aspects of university life. These typically include: the application process; a typical day at university; an introduction to various clubs, sports, and other aspects of social life; course options and programs of study; financing post-secondary education and working while studying; note-taking strategies; post-graduate programs; career opportunities; and resources available such as writing centres and career counselling (Information for Students, Shadow-a-Student Day, 2010). Overall, through providing this information, *Shadow-a-Student Day* helps students establish a support network at the school even before officially attending it.

Workshops. *Ready, Set, Learn* also provides information and support through the workshops they host for students and parents in the community. They are aimed primarily at students in grades 7 to 12 in an attempt to facilitate the transition from elementary school to high school or from high school to post-secondary education. These workshops provide advice and support for both students and their parents (End of Year Articles, Outreach, 2009).

The youth workshop provides grade 7 and 8 students with information on how to prepare for high school and how to make the transition into grade 9. It introduces them to their options regarding choosing a high school and advises them about the different types of courses and streams available and how these will determine future career paths. It also provides information regarding the structure of high schools as well as offering students guidance in dealing with and adjusting to a new schooling environment.

For students who are already in high school, the workshop emphasizes the importance of creating an education plan and dialoguing with teachers and guidance counselors. It provides general descriptions of apprenticeship, college, and university programs and the admission requirements of each while showcasing the importance of post-secondary education in general. Students are also provided with ample resources, such as links to community programs, counselors and mentors networks, student planners, career quizzes, academic help, as well as information on post-secondary applications, financing, scholarships, grants, and loans.

Both workshops feature special guests in the form of professionals from the Portuguese community and university students who act as outreach coordinators. The program coordinator provided a brief description of how the workshops operate:

We have guest speakers from different positions. We've had graphic designer come in, a lawyer come in... We break off the students into smaller groups, and they each have a facilitator and they just talk about some of their fears, their concerns, their questions and about what to expect. (Program coordinator, p. 12)

The small group setting of these workshops allow for ample discussion and provide emotional as well as academic support for students in their transition years.

Ready, Set, Learn also conducts workshops that introduce parents to practical tools for supporting their children's learning (End of Year Articles, Outreach, 2009). This includes helping them gain an understanding of the school system, the curriculum, and methods to facilitate their child's learning process (Program Description Write Up, Operations, 2008). At a deeper level, parents are challenged to identify some of the attitudes and value systems they have about the Ontario school system and their role in their children's education. These workshops are

interactive and are offered two to three times during the school year in English, Portuguese, and Spanish (Community Centre Overview, New Horizons, 2010).

These workshops also feature guest speakers and utilize working groups and discussion to explore various aspects of education and the parents' experiences with it. Parents also have the opportunity to ask questions, and are provided with ample materials to help them facilitate their children's academic experiences. These materials include: school guides, homework tips, reading and writing strategies, high school diploma requirements, guides to report cards and parent-teacher interviews, and school board trustees contact information. Parents are also linked to other community resources such as family literacy centres and advocacy groups (Workshops, Parents, 2009). Overall, these workshops facilitate parental involvement in education and provide parents with the resources they need to ensure that their children can be successful.

Graduation. Open to the wider community, this event celebrates the yearly progress made by students in the *Ready, Set, Learn* program. It is an opportunity to showcase the program itself and the students involved in it. The ceremony begins with an introduction by the program coordinators and highlights events and accomplishments that occurred over the year. Guest speakers are also welcomed who speak of their own schooling experiences and encourage the students of *Ready, Set, Learn* to continue working towards achieving their goals. The executive director also acknowledges the contributions of trustees and donors and those present receive recognition (Graduation, Events, 2011).

The focus of the graduation then turns to the students themselves. They are called up one by one to receive their certificates, shake hands with and be congratulated by the program coordinator, the executive director, and the other guests, as well as have their pictures taken. In recent years, students who have received various scholarships and grants are also publically

recognized and congratulated. They are often nominated for these scholarships by their tutors, who introduce the student by outlining their academic improvements and accomplishments. In addition, the post-secondary plans of many grade 11 and 12 students are shared with the audience, as an additional way of showcasing the programs commitment to higher education. Following this, all tutors in the program come onstage to be thanked and applauded for their hard work and contributions to the program. A reception is held after the ceremony, where the guests can ask questions and gain additional insight into the program (Graduation, Events, 2011).

Financing. The goal of any organization is to be sustainable, and this depends on the amounts of revenue generated by the organization, or the amount of funding available to it. Whenever *Ready, Set, Learn* could not accomplish its goals it was usually a result of underestimating the resources needed for the work and other financial constraints (Program Evaluation Reports, Administrative, 2004).

Ontario Trillium funding. During the first three years of the programs existence, *Ready, Set, Learn* received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, a government agency which invests in community-based initiatives in the form of grants (Ontario Trillium Foundation, 2011). A stipulation of this grant required *Ready, Set, Learn* to provide yearly program evaluation reports to the Ontario Trillium Foundation. These reports provided details as to the programs budget, the number and types of events held, its impact in terms of volunteer recruitment and number of people served, an overview of its activities related to grant conditions, and an analysis of the progress made in achieving goals and results (Program Evaluation Reports, Administrative, 2004).

Another stipulation of receiving the Ontario Trillium Grant was to acknowledge this support in all publications and promotional materials of *Ready, Set, Learn*. Overall, the program

benefited from the Ontario Trillium Grant by enhancing the capacity to deliver the program and increase the number of partnerships and networks formed in the community. In the initial three years of operation, the membership in *Ready, Set, Learn* grew and became more active.

Furthermore, staff training was improved, organizational structure and activity planning was facilitated and the program was able to secure alternate sources of funding as described below (Program Evaluation Reports, Administrative, 2004).

Corporate and private donations. As the Ontario Trillium Grant was only intended as start-up funding to help the program launch, additional sources of funding were eventually needed. *Ready, Set, Learn* organized many events designed to secure funding, most of which came from the Portuguese-speaking community in Toronto. The largest and most successful fundraising event was the annual *Mayor's Gala* [pseudonym] which raised almost \$25,000 each year from both corporate sponsorships and individual donations. The *Gala* was attended by parents, students, and tutors of the program and also included other honourable guests, such as the former Minister of Education and members from the Portuguese Consul in Toronto. The Mayor offered his support of the program by speaking to its effectiveness and appealing to the community to provide financial support and consider becoming volunteers themselves. Hundreds of people attended each year, and this financial support immensely contributed to the sustainability of the program (Mayor's Gala Dinner, Events, 2007).

Ready, Set, Learn also hosted smaller fundraising events throughout the years and continued to canvass for donations. In their letters to community members and potential donors, the program coordinators asked for financial contributions to the program, or to be made beneficiaries of certain events. Utilizing mainstream media also helped to increase the visibility of the program and also secure additional donations and resources (Program Evaluation Reports,

Administrative, 2004). Although these forms of donations are still welcomed, *Ready, Set, Learn* required more sustained funding commitments to plan their future activities. Therefore, a more long-term source was required.

Funding from school boards. The publically-funded school boards in Toronto supported *Ready, Set, Learn* from the outset through the provision of resources to operate the program. This was primarily in the form of space, as local schools allowed *Ready, Set, Learn* to utilize classrooms, libraries, and cafeterias after school hours to run the program. Recently, however, both school boards have begun to provide monetary support as well. These boards place a priority on the success of all students and emphasize programs and services that address the needs of students deemed at-risk. Therefore, as the goals of *Ready, Set, Learn* were in line with the goals of achievement and equity promoted by both boards, an official partnership was formed (Partnership Agreement School Boards, Administrative, 2008).

The general terms of the partnership stated that that *Ready, Set, Learn* would continue to provide tutoring and mentoring to support student achievement and promote student engagement. Furthermore, *Ready, Set, Learn* would now also be responsible for reporting program statistics to the school board as well as providing an annual review, projected budget, and evaluation of the program (Partnership Agreement School Boards). Both boards provide support through school administration, particularly between school personal and tutors regarding work plans suited to student needs. The boards would also assist with school and student identification and provide space and resources. Most importantly, they would provide a total of over \$140,000 per year from a community equity fund to assist in the programs operation (Partnership Agreement School Boards, Administrative, 2008).

Collaboration. Because organizations operate in wider environmental contexts, they must constantly adjust to conditions that exist in those environments. *Ready, Set, Learn* does this through collaborating with other organizations and programs. Because it is a part of a wider educational environment, these partnerships help *Ready, Set, Learn* continue to improve the way in which it delivers its programs and services, as well as promote itself to the wider community.

School board partnerships. As part of the school board partnership agreements, mention is also given to the provision of support and training of tutors. Sessions are held throughout the year in which teachers in the school board train *Ready, Set, Learn* tutors on various aspects of literacy. They begin by providing tutors with an overview of the language curriculum, taking them through the expectations and the stages students are expected to progress through. Tutors are then provided with word solving strategies for decoding, comprehension, and higher level thinking questions. In addition to these training sessions, these literacy teachers also visit the tutoring sites for one-on-one training with tutors and their students. Tutors gain immense knowledge about literacy and are able to apply what they learn at their tutoring sessions, thereby enhancing and improving their students' literacy skills (Information Package, Outreach, 2011).

Partnerships with other educational agencies. *Ready, Set, Learn* has also partnered with other community-based educational organizations to enhance the quality of their program. They have partnered with *Service Hub* [pseudonym] since the inception of *Ready, Set, Learn* in 2001. *Service Hub* provides free volunteer training for tutors as well as organizing events such as homework clubs and networking workshops in which tutors from various community programs can collaborate and share experiences and ideas. As many students who attend the program also struggle with numeracy, *Ready, Set, Learn* has also partnered with *Mathletes* [pseudonym], a charitable organization based in Toronto. *Mathletes* strives to encourage students to excel at

math and believes that all children have the ability to think mathematically. They provide *Ready, Set, Learn* tutors with material resources and training to help them reach all students. As a result of these training sessions, tutors gain immense knowledge and apply this to their weekly sessions (Information Package, Outreach, 2011).

University partnerships. As part of their Bachelor of Education Certification program, teacher candidates at one university in Toronto have partnered with *Ready, Set, Learn* and volunteer regularly with the program. This university has a strong commitment to social justice and has recognized that the changing reality of large urban communities in Canada make it necessary for teacher candidates to understand the complexities of the communities that students come from, as well as the many factors that impact upon learning and school experience (Community Field Work Description, Teacher Candidates, 2011). To respond to this, the Faculty of Education created seminar sessions focusing on schools and their surrounding communities. Through this seminar, teacher candidates make connections to the communities served by the education system and gain an understanding of knowledge construction within formal and informal educational contexts. This is accomplished through a 50 hour field experience placement with a community organization or education related non-governmental organization (Placement Description, Teacher Candidates, 2007).

The teacher candidates who work with *Ready, Set, Learn* begin each placement at *New Horizons* and then move to a tutoring site, where they act primarily in the site supervisor role. In order to gain experience directly related to teaching, they work closely with tutors to develop lesson plans suited for each individual student. They also aid in filling out student feedback forms to give to parents and teachers, which help to determine any progress made and further areas of help needed. Teacher candidates are also expected to assist with the other events and

activities that *Ready, Set, Learn* engages in, such as the *Shadow-a-Student Day*, and parent and student workshops. At the end of their placement, teacher candidates are asked to evaluate *Ready, Set, Learn* regarding the program's effectiveness. They are also asked how they think the program can improve, and what additional resources are needed (Placement Description, Teacher Candidates, 2007).

Outreach. A large part of the continuation, expansion, and ability of *Ready, Set, Learn* to achieve its goals depend upon its ability to showcase itself to the wider community. It promotes itself and garners attention primarily through its use of media outlets and word-of-mouth.

Media outlets. As part of its goal of becoming a permanent fixture in the community and serving as many students as possible, *Ready, Set, Learn* promotes itself extensively, usually through various media forms. The program coordinator summarized the various tools used to promote the program:

We have also done articles in the...local Portuguese newspapers. Also Portuguese media, OMNI Television is a supporter of the program...They've come to the various events *Ready, Set, Learn* has had over the years. We've done interviews with OMNI, CERV FM, CHIN... (p. 3)

While articles tend to be written about the program itself, a significant number of publications focus on its events and other activities. Summary articles highlighting fundraising events as well as various partnerships were published in community newsletters and on the *New Horizons* website. Similarly, radio shows usually feature a question and answer format in which the program is described, the need for it is discussed, and examples of how it has been successful are showcased. This media is also used to advertise for upcoming program events, such as the workshops or the *Mayor's Gala Dinner* (Mayor's Gala Dinner, Events, 2007).

Posters and flyers for *Ready, Set, Learn* and its events are also placed around the community, sent out on listservs, and volunteers are recruited through community boards as well as in local newspapers and magazines. Brochures which detail the program, its history, goals, statistics and feedback from its stakeholders are also widely available. A promotional DVD has also been made about the program which features commentary by a program coordinator, tutors, students, and parents about the program and its achievements (Promotions, Advertising, 2007). *Ready, Set, Learn* has also been able to receive attention from the mainstream media which have published articles showcasing the program and outlining its impact on the community (Program Evaluation Reports, Administrative, 2004).

Word-of-mouth. As a result of *Ready, Set, Learns* partnership with local schools, teachers and administrators have been instrumental in verbally recommending this program to their students. Celia, a student, described how her teacher was responsible for introducing her to the program: "In fourth grade my teacher, she thought I was having trouble in math, so she gave me a form, and she says for my parents to look it over" (Celia, p. 1). As a result of her teachers' intervention, Celia got started in the program and has since made marked improvement.

Outreach also occurs through informal conversations between parents, students and other community members. Bella, another student, got started at *Ready, Set, Learn* because her cousins were in the program: ""Well...my cousins live downtown...and...they kind of told us that there's a tutoring program there...cause me and my sister kind of need some help with that. So we went for it" (Bella, p. 2). Overall, word-of-mouth discussions are an effective and cost-free form of advertising for *Ready, Set, Learn*. Through its informal nature, it welcomes people to discover the program on their own. As a result many people have called the community centre or dropped in to discuss educational issues. This has led to more inquiries about the program, either on

behalf of students or for volunteer tutor positions (Program Evaluation Reports, Administrative, 2005). The varied outreach strategies have increased the visibility of *Ready, Set, Learn* and also helped to increase its student enrollment, garner volunteers, and acquire donors and partners (Program Evaluation Reports, Administrative, 2004).

Size, growth, and change. Organizational size tends to be measured by focusing on the number of people in the organization (Hodge et al., 2003). In the case of *Ready, Set, Learn*, its size and growth over time are measured by focusing on the number of students enrolled as well as the volunteer tutors who serve them. The graph in Appendix H outlines the size and growth of *Ready, Set, Learn* over time. This includes the expansion of the program to the Spanish-speaking community beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. This expansion was ultimately in line with the goal of providing tutoring and mentoring to at-risk students, but required *Ready, Set, Learn* to broaden its target group from only students of Portuguese-speaking descent, to include students of Spanish-speaking descent as well. From its inception in 2001 until 2010, *Ready, Set, Learn* continues to grow and serve more students. This is ultimately an indicator of its success.

The description of *Ready, Set, Learn* provided an overview of the programs purposes and goals and how these set the structure and overall operation of the program. Specific functions of the program, particularly its activities, financing, collaborative partnerships, and outreach methods were also discussed to showcase how the program has operated and sustained itself. Concluding this section was a focus on the growth of *Ready, Set, Learn* over time and the changes necessary to undertake this growth. The effectiveness of this program will now be explored in depth by focusing on the feedback received from stakeholders.

Stakeholders' Experiences and Perceptions

This section of the investigation reports on the perceptions of the stakeholders comprised of tutors, parents, students, and a program coordinator, about how *Ready, Set, Learn* has impacted Portuguese-Canadian students. As well, it outlines how students' attitudes toward education have been shaped by their participation in the program. The thematic area of schooling experiences is explored first to provide context and a benchmark with which to compare the experiences that participants faced during their involvement with *Ready, Set, Learn*. Second, the theme of student impact is discussed to discover the effect that involvement in *Ready, Set, Learn* has had on its students and how these students' attitudes toward secondary and post-secondary education have been shaped by the program.

Schooling experiences. All participant groups spoke to negative and positive interactions in schooling institutions. The negative experiences dealt with disengagement, bullying, and lack of school support. This is reflective of literature which discusses how many schools have been unable to fully address issues of disadvantage, particularly where it concerns immigrant groups. However, participants also spoke to some positive experiences with schools, particularly in regards to a supportive school climate and quality teaching.

Disengagement. Most of the student and tutor participants had experienced some form of disengagement in traditional classrooms. They reflected upon, reacted to, and utilized their experiences with disengagement in different ways.

Tutors. Manuel's negative experiences in a traditional public school led to his becoming an early school leaver. However, he later received his OSSD and college credits through a transition program and was able to use these to apply to university. He spoke frequently of this experience to his students as being extremely difficult, and motivated them to utilize the

traditional schooling structure to achieve success. His experiences resulted in very mixed feelings about school, and this seemed to influence his students "I *hate* school when I'm in there, but I *miss* it to death when I'm outside!..I think my students have that same syndrome!" (Manuel, p. 12). While he was a proponent of post-secondary education, his experiences with his own schooling seemed to have coloured his perception of the institution. Kevin also spoke briefly to the fact that his schooling experiences were not ideal. Interestingly however, he stated that he never shared that information with his students because he did not want to discourage them (Kevin, p. 6). This may have been due to the fact that his students were younger and therefore more easily influenced.

Students. Both Jessie and Tatiana expressed the sentiment that they found school to be boring. Jessie discussed their gradual disengagement from school, outlining that as the workload got heavier and the subjects got harder, they began to have a negative attitude. "I liked it cause there wasn't really much things to do. And then I hated it" (Jessie, p. 5). Similarly, in regards to school, Tatiana expressed that "sometimes it's just boring" (Tatiana, p. 3). Disengagement and lack of motivation has been shown to have a negative impact on students' academic achievement in school. Echoing this, many documents contain references to stakeholder experiences in which students suffer from a lack of engagement. In regards to the experience of one student, "he thought he was stupid. He acted out his frustration in class...He spoke of quitting school as soon as he could" (Stakeholder Experiences, Stakeholder Experiences, 2009).

Lack of school support. Both parents whom I interviewed spoke to the negative experience their children faced in school and their perceptions of the unhelpful treatment they received when attempting to address these issues. They perceived negative teacher attitudes and an overall unsupportive school climate. Student stakeholders' experiences with a lack of school

support were discovered in both the interviews, and in the analysis of the stakeholder experiences documents.

Parents. Conceição discussed the problems her daughter experienced with one particular teacher. Her daughter had requested to sit at the front of the classroom where she could see the blackboard more clearly. Her teacher constantly moved her to the back of the class and then got upset when she would get out of her seat to see what he had written. Even when Conceição intervened, she felt that the results were not successful, "One day I ask him to put her at the front. He put her at the front, just for three days. After three days she came to the back again. And again, she was back and forth...all the time" (Conceição, p. 3). As a result this teacher told Conceição that her daughter had psychological problems and should get tested for Attention Deficit Disorder (Conceição, p. 3). She thought that this 'suggestion' was more of an insult as the problem clearly was her daughters need for glasses.

Sylvia also discussed how she felt that Tatiana's teachers did not really care about her academic success. They had labelled her as a 'good girl' and a quiet student. Sylvia was worried that she was getting lost in the crowd and not receiving the attention she needed (Sylvia, p. 5). Because Tatiana was passing, her teachers were not concerned about her progress. Sylvia was concerned however. She wanted her daughter not just to pass, but to excel in order to ensure that school would not be even more difficult for her the next year (Sylvia, p. 5). Sylvia attempted to address these issues by trying to keep a constant dialogue with the teachers, but she said that this seemed to be one-way. While she had contacted Tatiana's teacher to discuss her progress, she had not gotten any updates from the teachers and she spoke to how it took teachers a long time to return her phone calls (Sylvia, p. 7).

She also spoke to how teachers seemed to be unwilling and unable to provide her with information and advice with regards to alternative programs or supports for Tatiana:

Teachers want the parents to do everything but it's hard... It's like, well give me advice like give me something!...Put me to the right path type thing you know what I mean? And then I'll do the rest but ah...sometimes...it's a struggle. Teachers are nice but...I don't think they do enough. Not like they used to. (Sylvia, p. 5)

Overall, Sylvia articulated that she felt that Tatiana's teachers were not doing all they could to ensure her daughter's success. This ultimately put more pressure on Sylvia and resulted in her having to take a more proactive role.

When negative teacher attitudes become common among the staff of a school, it can lead to a negative school climate where parents and students feel unsupported. When Conceição took her concerns about a teacher to the administration, she got the impression that they did not care. "I went there and honestly, I didn't have...too much support from them" (Conceição, p. 9). This eventually led to Conceição not wanting to rely on the schools and may have further contributed to her personal involvement in her daughter's education, not trusting that the school would have her daughter's best interests in mind.

Sylvia also spoke to the lack of support from her daughter's school. Because of Tatiana's academic struggles, Sylvia had requested testing for an Individual Education Plan; however this process was taking a long time, further aggravating Tatiana's difficulties:

She's supposed to be tested...She's been on the waiting list for *years*! And...I haven't heard anything! And I keep asking the teacher and I'm like 'So when is she going to be tested?' Like you know, if there is a problem I want it identified *now*. Not when she goes...to high school. (Sylvia, p. 5)

Sylvia expressed a concern that the school was not making her daughters success a priority, and felt frustrated and alienated as a result. This sentiment was also expressed when she discussed the math and reading programs Tatiana was involved in. She spoke of how Tatiana was pulled out of her regular math class to get more one-on-one attention. While this led to her marks improving slightly, she was removed from the program the next year to make room for another student (Sylvia, p. 7). This also happened with the reading program, despite the fact that Sylvia believed her daughter still required support (Sylvia, p. 8). While these actions can be possibly explained as the school's attempt to be equitable and inclusive to all students, it seemed as though pulling students out of these programs after only slight improvement could be detrimental to some students' overall success.

Students. The lack of information and advice being provided to students from their schools was reflected the most by Bella's encounters and in the stakeholder experiences documents. Bella mentioned how she rarely received homework from her teachers (Bella, p. 3). Her parents also voiced this concern to me and Bella's tutor and were worried that this reflected a lack of emphasis on academics at her particular school and lack of support on the part of her teacher. This lack of support was also reflected in the case of one student who struggled academically before coming to *Ready, Set, Learn*. Although his mother noticed early on that he was falling behind his peers, and voiced her concerns to the teachers and school staff, she felt largely ignored. His academic progress got worse and this led to his teachers becoming increasingly frustrated with him (Stakeholder Experiences, Stakeholder Experiences, 2008).

Bullying. Parents, students, and the program coordinator spoke to their experiences with bullying and how this had impacted themselves, their children, and students in the program.

Parents. Conceição spoke to her daughter's negative experiences with bullying at one particular school (Conceição, p. 10). She lamented how her daughter suffered and expressed relief that the school she was currently attending seemed to have a zero-tolerance policy with regards to bullying. "There is no bullying at all, that's the first one that bullied the other one, he goes out...straight away" (Conceição, p. 11). Her daughter's negative experiences appeared to inspire Conceição to speak out against bullying. She recalled recently having seen a video online that showed a student at a local school being bullied.

Actually, there was a movie on the internet...from a guy that they were bullying...and...I just... send this movie to the...School Board...with the text 'Oh you think this is right?

This is happening this such and such school, with the kids'. Two days after the movie was not on the internet anymore. I don't know what's going on...I think I did my part.

(Conceição, pp. 11-12)

Having suffered through this negative schooling experience with her daughter, Conceição acted as an advocate and was inspired to speak out against bullying.

Students. Marco discussed his experience with bullying, its frequency and how he attempted to deal with it. "Since I got there. Bullying. Every day...I got used to it. It doesn't bother me anymore" (Marco, p. 8). When I asked him if he discussed this issue with his teacher or a principal, he seemed to avoid directly answering, "They stopped like for a little while and then they start again...Is actually doesn't matter anymore. They stopped a little. Now it's just like...a little thing like nothing" (Marco, p. 8). Not wanting to make him feel uncomfortable, I did not pursue the issue, but it nonetheless reflects a negative school experience which could potentially be detrimental to his academic and social success.

Program coordinator. The program coordinator discussed experiences with bullying and how it could impact students' self-esteem and academic achievement. Recalling a student who was made fun of for his reading abilities, the program coordinator spoke to the difficulties involved in getting him to read aloud to his tutor. While he eventually became comfortable with oral reading, his previous experiences traumatized him and prevented him from initially connecting with his tutor (Program coordinator, p. 18). She also spoke to another situation which involved bullying in which the child and his parents felt isolated due to a language barrier. Fortunately, the child's tutor was able to intervene and act as a translator, helping the family voice their concerns to the school's administration (Program coordinator, p. 9).

Transitions. Most students were somewhat apprehensive about making the shift from elementary to high school. They discussed their uncertainties and these experiences were echoed by the program coordinator in reference to students. She also discussed how *Ready, Set, Learn* attempted to prepare them for their transitions.

Students. Marco seemed somewhat nervous about transitioning into high school, particularly because he thought his experiences with bullying would continue, only on a more frequent and violent scale (Marco, p. 8). Tatiana and Celia also felt apprehensive about attending high school, particularly because this would be the first time either of them had attended a new school. Tatiana never had the experience of going to different schools and meeting new friends, and her mother was worried that her shy demeanor would prevent her from transitioning well (Sylvia, p. 5). Celia was also worried she would have trouble adjusting to the different environment

I'm not really *that* excited cause I don't know what it's going to be like. So, I'm a little bit worried...It's going to be different, and I'm going to have to get used to the new way.

Cause I'm sort of used to how my school is now... it's going to be hard for me to get used to it. (Celia, p. 6)

These apprehensions could reflect a lack of preparedness on behalf of students and a feeling that they may not be supported enough by their schools in making this shift.

Program coordinator. The program coordinator reflected upon her discussions with students and echoed some of the concerns they had about starting high school or moving on to post-secondary. She spoke to how students and their parents were often not made aware of their options. For example, some students thought they all had to follow their classmates from feeder schools into the high school in their neighbourhood. The program coordinator spoke to how the student workshops attempted to provide students with information regarding these issues.

Students were able to discuss their fears and concerns in a small group setting with a facilitator who was knowledgeable about both the high school and post-secondary structure (Program coordinator, p. 12). The program coordinator felt that these workshops empowered the students and gave them confidence that they would find a school or program that suited their abilities, needs, and interests.

Supportive school climate. Both the student participant group and the program coordinator had positive things to say about their experiences with schools, particularly in regards to effective teaching strategies, and its support of the *Ready, Set, Learn* program.

Students. Both Tatiana and Celia discussed how helpful educators and their teaching strategies had a positive impact on their perceptions of school. Tatiana stated that she liked her teachers because "They're fun and they're not like...strict, mean or anything" (Tatiana, p. 3). Her mother Sylvia elaborated on this by recalling how when one of Tatiana's former teachers retired, she continued to provide support for Tatiana by tutoring her (Sylvia, p. 2).

She would go for an hour and a half, once a week, and just to get that extra help. And it was amazing you know...*and* I was lucky that she didn't charge me a lot right. So it was like, I pretty much had her for nothing! (Sylvia, p. 8)

This arrangement proved to be very successful until Tatiana got into the higher grades and needed more specialized help. Celia also emphasized a positive perception of her teachers, particularly in regards to their instruction methods. "I like with the way they teach cause some teachers they don't really give examples of stuff and *they* do. And they go through the whole lesson with us" (Celia, p. 4). Having supportive teachers who utilize effective instruction methods appeared to help these participants achieve academic success and gave them an overall positive impression of school.

Marco, Jessie, and Celia spoke about being introduced to the program through supportive educators. Due to his experiences travelling back and forth between Portugal and Canada, and the resulting interruptions in his education, Marco was approached by his principal to sign up with *Ready, Set, Learn* (Marco, p. 10). Similarly, Jessie and Celia were made aware of the program through teachers at their school, and signed up to get additional academic help (Jessie, p. 2; Celia, p. 1). This supportive climate resulted in Celia having an overall positive impression of her school, and was happy to attend (Celia, p. 4). Despite her academic difficulties, this climate allowed her to feel safe and motivated her to strive for success. "I still liked going cause I would try to like...*learn* more about stuff so I would know better" (Celia, p. 4). Bella reflected this sentiment also, saying how she enjoyed going to school, and despite her academic difficulties there wasn't ever a time when she didn't want to be there (Bella, p. 5). Having an inclusive and supportive environment where students are inspired to overcome their difficulties appears to be necessary for them to feel empowered and work toward their academic goals.

Program coordinator. For the most part, local schools seemed to have welcomed the *Ready, Set, Learn* program and offered its students and tutors ample support. The program coordinator mentioned how particular schools were recruited to run the program after hours, due to their high populations of Portuguese-Speaking students. These schools were happy to host the program and had since maintained a consistent dialogue with the program coordinators (Program coordinator, p. 3). She also talked about the support she had received from staff and administration:

Principals are the ones I think that push can push forward the program. They do take that lead and then encourage their staff to also become familiar with the program, to talk to the parents about the program, to those students that need it. (Program coordinator, p. 4)

Having principals and teachers who support and are actively involved in *Ready, Set, Learn* appeared to foster a positive school climate and greatly facilitated the programs operation.

The program coordinator also discussed the support individual teachers have given to the *Ready, Set, Learn* program. She recalled how teachers often visit the tutoring session and dialogue directly with the tutor.

The teacher is able to communicate *exactly* what to focus on for the next week or two, review this test or you know focus on multiplication, don't go too far ahead yet, he's not ready yet. That's always beneficial to the tutor. (Program coordinator, p. 6)

The program coordinator mentioned how she felt that ample communication between the student, tutor, parent, and teacher can create a support structure that is ultimately beneficial for the student and contributes to their success.

Overall, while all participant groups spoke to both positive and negative schooling experiences, the negative aspects of the schooling environment, in conjunction with experiences

of academic difficulties, appeared to be a driving force behind attending *Ready, Set, Learn*.

Tutors mentioned negative schooling experiences and how these impacted their perceptions of the schooling structure and influenced their tutoring sessions. Students and their parents wanted to become involved in *Ready, Set, Learn* in the hopes of countering some of the difficulties they were facing with the traditional schooling structure. The program coordinator also referenced negative schooling experiences, but discussed how positive aspects of schools, particularly support for *Ready, Set, Learn*, can benefit the students and parents who are experiencing difficulties. The specific ways in which these benefits manifest are explored in the following section.

Student impact. The participant groups all outlined their perceptions of the impact of *Ready, Set, Learn* on its students. With varying depth, participants spoke to an improvement in academics, social skills, and self-esteem as well as how the program helped to improve students' English. The stakeholders also discussed the impact this program has had on students' perceptions of school and their academic and career aspirations.

Improvements in academics, social skills, and self-esteem. One purpose of *Ready, Set, Learn* is to provide focused, fun, and free tutoring in a supportive environment. All participant groups mentioned how their participation in the program led to students increasing their academic potential, improving their social skills, and building up their self-esteem.

Tutors. Beth spoke to how she utilized drama and oral reading techniques and the positive impact this had on her students' reading skills.

I really noticed especially with Julia, her reading aloud really improved from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. She was becoming more competent and it didn't take her so long. She was very halting at first. (Beth, p. 4)

She also mentioned how any halting and stumbling in pronunciation had significantly lessened by the end of the year. She said that drama got students more involved in their reading and really made a difference in helping them to speak English out loud (Beth, p. 5).

Manuel recalled a student who was initially lacking in motivation with his school work. He noticed that this significantly improved toward the end of the year as he "became more interested and started thinking about writing" (Manuel, p. 10). Kevin also discussed improvements in the students he tutored, despite their relatively young ages. One of his students initially had trouble concentrating on school work, but throughout the year he steadily improved. Kevin was able to eventually get him to pay attention to what he was saying and as a result the student was focusing better and becoming more engaged (Kevin, p. 9). Kevin also recalled a student who was very shy, and how it appeared to be having a negative effect on his teachers' perception of his intelligence level. As a result of being exposed to Kevin as well as another student in the tutoring session, his social skills had improved. This other student pushed him to talk more and Kevin expressed that it was "really beneficial that there's someone else there that can really help him to kind of get out of his shell" (Kevin, p. 7).

The experiences of Beth, Manuel, and Kevin seem to echo the experiences of other tutors in the program. From the documents outlining stakeholder experiences, one tutor spoke to their biggest accomplishment, in which their student brought in a test in which he had received an 'A'. This tutor emphasized how rewarding this experience was because they and their student had both prepared hard for the test. "It gave me a sense that I was doing something good and that I really did help him. I was able to see my students grow and accomplish new things as the school year went on" (Stakeholder Experiences, Stakeholder Experiences, 2010). Overall, these

experiences show that *Ready, Set, Learn* has impacted its students, and subsequently its tutors, in many positive ways.

Parents. Conceição recalled how upon first arriving in Canada, her daughter was not interested in school. As a result of being at *Ready, Set, Learn* for over six years, however "She got more interested in studying, in doing the homework, in doing...everything that she has to do. A lot more" (Conceição, p. 14). Sylvia also discussed academic improvements. She spoke to how the tutoring seemed to have helped Tatiana in improve her reading and writing skills (Sylvia, p. 18). Both Conceição and Sylvia also discussed how having a tutor as a mentor and role-model had helped their daughters overcome their shyness. "Before she was worse. She was shy, and she doesn't go with other people, she didn't talk with others... But right now she's more comfortable talking" (Conceição, p. 14). Sylvia also said that Tatiana's social skills were slowly coming out and how her daughter was starting to put herself "a little more out there" (Sylvia, p. 11).

The documents also highlight these improvements, by referencing feedback received from parents. Many parents had noted self-esteem as being their child's greatest improvement as well as an improvement in their attitude (Principals Letter, Fundraising, 2007). They also mentioned how because of *Ready, Set, Learn*, children were completing homework more regularly and this was resulting in higher overall grades, and in some cases placement on the honour roll. Other parents spoke to how their children appeared to be more comfortable and confident in doing their homework, because of the extra help they were receiving. "Many shared this experience and said that prior to the tutoring their child was not able to complete homework on their own and would often feel discouraged and frustrated, which affected their self-esteem" (Assessment of Benefit of Program, Evaluation, 2010). Parents quoted in these documents

praised tutors for being positive mentors and the program as a whole for its success in providing useful and relevant academic assistance to their children (Principals Letter, Fundraising, 2007).

Students. Marco, Celia, and Bella spoke the most of their perceptions of their academic improvements. Marco discussed the techniques his tutor used and how it had helped him improve. "Been getting good grades in this year. Like As and A+s. I've been getting better in spelling." (Marco, p. 10). Celia recalled her struggles with math and how the program had helped her. "I think I've progressed in some things like math a little bit...I used to like be really bad at it but I think I'm getting a little bit better at it" (Celia, p. 7). Bella also discussed her experiences with math and the impact of attending *Ready, Set, Learn*. Speaking of her tutor, she stated, "I needed help with math, I wasn't too good and my grades weren't the best. So she kind of helped me and she showed me like ways to do... multiplication and time tables and stuff" (Bella, p. 8). Consequently Bella also noticed improvements in her math marks.

These impacts were also echoed in the documents on student experiences. One particular student had been involved with *Ready, Set, Learn* for four years and discussed their improvement in academics. They credited the program with helping them to understand their homework and this had resulted in their being placed on the honour roll as well as receiving a subject award in Grade 9 for having the highest mark in their class (Stakeholder Experiences, Stakeholder Experiences, 2010).

As a result of these improvements, both Celia and Bella discussed recommending *Ready, Set, Learn* to their friends at school. Celia recalled a conversation she had with her friend about the program,

I've actually recommended it to them before because they're like 'Oh my gosh I don't like science or math or something' I'm like 'well if you have trouble with it, I go to a program so you can go to it too'. (Celia, p. 8)

Similarly, Bella mentioned how she recommended it to her friend, "I said that like that it really helped me and I told them they should maybe try it. Cause it's free" (Bella, p. 9). This willingness to discuss the benefits of *Ready, Set, Learn* and promote it to other students further reflects the positive impact it has had on its students.

Program coordinator. In regards to academic improvements, the program coordinator recalled one particular student who came into the program with an Individual Education Plan. She spoke to her opinions of the IEP, stating that she perceived its purpose was to provide accommodations and modifications to students who were having academic difficulties. She felt that it should be a temporary intervention however, and that ideally, students would not always need it.

We have had one particular student and I'm sure there have been more, that no longer needed it, with the additional tutoring support, they were able to get back on track, and back up to their grade level. (Program coordinator, p. 17)

Other academic improvements were also explored, particularly how some students have begun to participate more in class and perform better on their tests (Program coordinator, p. 19).

In regards to social skills and self-esteem, the program coordinator also discussed her opinions that involvement in *Ready, Set, Learn* improved students' self-motivation. She discussed how students "become much more self-motivated to do their homework once they understand the work, their self-confidence increases" (Program coordinator, p. 15). The program coordinator spoke to how this had resulted in many students feeling more confident about

participating in a class discussion or giving a presentation because their tutor helped them prepare and gave them positive reinforcement (Program coordinator, p. 15). She also discussed the mentoring component, exploring how this impacted one particular student's self-esteem:

We had a student who was getting involved, from what we understood from the parent, with the wrong crowd of friends...with being with his tutor, with the mentoring aspect, I think it helped him...focus on school a little bit more...the tutor instilled that responsibility in him. (Program coordinator, p. 17)

Ready, Set, Learn had many positive impacts on its students, and this was reflected in students' desire to attend the program. The program coordinator said how despite the sessions being right after school or early on Saturday mornings, for the most part, most students genuinely *wanted* to attend. The program appeared to instill in its students a desire to achieve academically and these students were inspired to take the initiative to do so. They wanted the additional help and support and had confidence that they would receive it at *Ready, Set, Learn* (Program coordinator, p. 20)

Facilitating language acquisition. While it does not promote itself as an English-as-a-Second-Language program, many stakeholder groups discussed how involvement in the program helped to foster and improve students' knowledge and usage of the English language. This ultimately contributed to their academic and social success.

Tutors. Beth spoke to the theme of language acquisition when she recalled one of the students she had tutored, who was struggling with English (Beth, p. 3). She outlined how she used reading aloud and drama techniques to allow her students to work figuratively with the English language to discover how it worked. This not only helped the student improve his spoken English, but also instilled in him an interest in drama. Manuel also discussed language acquisition as being important to student success, but focused also on the importance of parental

language acquisition. He discussed how many of his students' parents did not speak English as a first language and how he encouraged them to improve their own language skills so that they could further support their children (Manuel, p. 6). Kevin outlined the importance of language acquisition when he spoke to the main focus of his tutoring sessions, which revolved around building vocabulary, grammar, and spelling. His students were younger and had parents who had difficulties with the English language – he said that it was his responsibility to ensure that they acquired this vital skill (Kevin, p. 10).

Students. In discussing his motivation for joining the program, Marco indicated that growing up in Portugal and being a new student to Canada, "I didn't know any English and things" (Marco, p. 4) and so joined *Ready, Set, Learn* to improve his language skills. Marco's experience is especially unique as a great deal of his childhood was spent moving back and forth between Canada and Portugal, no doubt interrupting his schooling and the language acquisition processes. However, due to the support he received from his tutor and the *Ready, Set, Learn* program as a whole, his knowledge of English had greatly improved. At the time of the interview, he said he felt more than comfortable participating in a sustained English conversation and even spoke with a Canadian accent. Marco's experiences echo a segment in the program document *Assessment of Benefit of Program to Children*:

In cases where the child was a recent immigrant to Canada, the program had a huge impact on their confidence. Prior to the program the child would be scared to go to school because of both the cultural and language barriers. As a result of having extra help, the child was able to develop English communication skills which improved their confidence and made them feel more comfortable about going to school. (Assessment of Benefit of Program to Children, Evaluation, 2010)

Exposure to role models who possessed knowledge of the English language helped these students become comfortable with using English in school and this facilitated their academic achievement.

Program coordinator. The program coordinator also recognized the necessity of language acquisition to be successful in school and Canadian society as a whole. She discussed how lack of parental English skills can be a barrier as parents may not understand or be aware of issues and events going on in their child's school, "Any forms that are sent to the home, when they're *only* sent in English and the parent doesn't read English, it's difficult for them to feel a part of what's going on in the school" (Program coordinator, p. 10). She also discussed how parents recognize the necessity of acquiring English language skills, and how that has been a motivation for some parents to place their child in the program (Program coordinator, p. 3). Through regular interactions with tutors, many of whom shared a cultural background with their students and also possessed knowledge of the English language, students felt comfortable and more open to learn and improve upon their English skills.

Academic and career aspirations. *Ready, Set, Learn* also aims to provide its students with the ongoing support necessary to succeed in school and to look positively toward post-secondary education and career options. All participant groups spoke to how the program had impacted students by helping them make decisions about their academic and career options.

Tutors. For the most part, the tutors discussed how their students did not really speak about their academic and career aspirations, as their particular students were relatively young and this type of discussion did not seem relevant. However, the tutors emphasized how being involved in *Ready, Set, Learn* allowed students to find out what they were interested in and what they excelled at, which would eventually be necessary for deciding their career path. Beth spoke

of one of her students and his flair for drama. She recalled how she got him to think about being on stage and cultivated his interest in acting (Beth, p. 15). Manuel recalled how one student really enjoyed puzzles and wanted to design them. Manuel therefore encouraged this student's analytical nature and aptitude in math and got him to think about how he could apply these skills in the future (Manuel, p. 8).

Parents. Conceição spoke to a constant dialogue with her daughter in regards to her education and career path. She discussed how she gave her daughter suggestions and advice, but also allowed her the freedom to pursue what interested her. "She would like to be an actress. But I think she's not one hundred percent sure that it is what she wants" (Conceição, p. 12). Because her daughter always had aspirations to go to university Conceição encouraged her to study drama at the post-secondary level. Sylvia also mentioned how she wanted to guide her daughter into her chosen career path, and made it a point to research the requirements. She was happy that Tatiana had plans to attend college and become an early childhood educator "She loves to work with children and she's actually very good. Very kind...hearted. So I can see her doing that" (Sylvia, p. 9). Both parents took an active role in their daughters' educations and encouraged and helped them to foster academic and career goals.

Conceição and Sylvia's experiences seemed to be reflective of other parents with children in the program. According to the document *Assessment of Benefit of Program to Children*, many parents discussed their children having career ambitions that involved university or college. Furthermore, many students who began the program during its first years of operation had since moved on to college and university and had become highly ambitious young people with clear career goals (Assessment of Benefit of Program, Evaluation, 2010). Overall, due to the mentoring component of *Ready, Set, Learn* as well as the information provided to parents and

students through the various workshops, parents reported that their children began to seriously consider their academic and vocational goals.

Students. All student participants had unique and interesting ideas about what they wanted to be when they grew up. While many students did not know the exact school path they would need to follow to achieve these aspirations, they had a sense that academic success would lead to more choice in regards to their careers. Marco discussed how he wanted to become a pilot (Marco, p. 6). When questioned about what he would have to do in school to attain this job he stated, "I have to practice...A pilot you need to know math...A lot of math...but I don't know what else...Work...learn....Get good grades...Go to the good college" (Marco, pp. 6-7). Celia spoke to her goal of becoming a veterinarian, due to her love of animals. She said that she had already looked into the academic requirements somewhat and knew that she would have to take a lot of science courses in high school (Celia, p. 5). While these students had career goals and for the most part expressed a desire to continue their education, their relative lack of knowledge about the specific requirements could probably be attributed to their younger ages, and the fact that many of them had not yet attended the workshops hosted by *Ready, Set, Learn*.

The documents also mentioned academic and career aspirations of students involved in *Ready, Set, Learn*, focusing primarily on high school students. *Shadow-a-Student Day* was particularly instrumental in helping students plan their educational and career paths. It introduced them to university life, and got them to think critically about continuing their education and finding the post-secondary program that best fit their interests and abilities. They also discussed specific steps they would have to take to realize their goals, namely, attending school regularly and putting more emphasis into their homework completion so that they could get the grades to

be accepted into their program of choice (Information for Students, Shadow-a-Student Day, 2010).

Program coordinator. The program coordinator also spoke to the academic and career goals of some of the students who attend *Ready, Set, Learn*, and how these had been cultivated by the tutors. She recalled an instance of how one student's only career aspiration was to become a soccer player and his tutor, while supportive of that goal, also encouraged him to come up with an alternative plan. They started discussing possible university programs after discovering that the student was very interested in geography and performed well in that subject. The program coordinator mentioned how she felt that these conversations were important in encouraging students to think long-term and start considering career plans (Program coordinator, p. 20). The mentoring aspect, as well as the information provided by the workshops was vital for students to plan goals and work towards achieving them. Overall, students needed to be aware of their options as early as possible so that if their goals and plans changed, they would have the knowledge necessary to embrace that change and continue to strive for success (Program coordinator, p. 21).

All participant groups discussed the impact of *Ready, Set, Learn* on its students. The impact appeared to involve mainly positive benefits such as improvements in academics, confidence, and perceptions of education. While many student participants were not fully aware of the structures and processes in secondary and post-secondary education, they all expressed an understanding of the importance of education, and a desire to continue it. Speaking of their children and students, parents, tutors, and the program coordinator echoed this sentiment, confirming that students' attitudes toward secondary and post-secondary education have been positively impacted by their involvement in *Ready, Set, Learn*.

Summary

This chapter reported on the findings from the document and transcript analysis of my investigation. An in-depth description of *Ready, Set, Learn* was provided based upon the findings from the document analysis and supplemented with findings from the participant interviews. Following this, the experiences, perceptions, and impact of the program on its stakeholders were reported using findings from the transcript analysis and supplemented with references to documents. The following chapter expands upon the major themes which emerged in the documents and the interviews. Their significance will be discussed in relation to the existing literature and themes explored in the conceptual framework.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusion, and Implications

This chapter provides further analysis of the findings and connects them to the themes and conceptual framework presented in the literature. New literature exploring the themes discovered in the document and transcript analyses are also showcased. The narrative description of *Ready, Set, Learn* will be analyzed to uncover its nature, functions, and mandates, and how these have evolved over time. The stakeholders' and participants' experiences and perceptions of how *Ready, Set, Learn* has impacted its students are then explored, as well as how these students' attitudes toward education have been shaped. The limitations of this study will then be discussed along with implications and recommendations for theory, methodology, policy, practice, and further research. A reflection describing my research journey will conclude this chapter.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to describe a community-based tutoring and mentoring program and to examine the stakeholders' perceptions of the programs impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students whom it serves, to respond to the educational disadvantages this group faces. The following research questions guided my study:

- What are the nature, functions, and mandates of this community-based education program and how have they evolved over time?
- What are the perceptions of the stakeholders directly involved in the program surrounding how the tutoring and mentoring program has impacted Portuguese-Canadian students?
- How have Portuguese-Canadian students' attitudes toward secondary and post-secondary education been shaped by their participation in the program?

To answer these questions, I used a qualitative case study approach to research. This study also took on aspects of Appreciative Inquiry, as it attempted to involve the stakeholders in the study as much as possible and aimed to inquire into the successes and impact of this program.

As many case studies and appreciative inquires utilize contextual information, data collection began with an investigation of documents which pertained to all aspects of the *Ready, Set, Learn* program (Reed, 2007). These documents were analyzed according to Hodge et al.'s (2003) organization theory framework in order to discover the programs nature, functions, and mandates, and how these have evolved over time. Data collection also took on the form of semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with 11 stakeholders in the program, consisting of a program coordinator, parents, students, and tutors. These participants were information-rich cases, chosen using the selection strategy of purposive sampling, were knowledgeable about the program and able to articulate their experiences and perceptions. Interviews with these participants were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analyzed through a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpretation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). With the purposes of studying the stakeholders' perceptions of the programs impact and how the program has shaped Portuguese-Canadians students' attitudes toward education, the units of analysis also included the participants. The initial coding began by analyzing the interview data and parsing utterances according to the themes that arose in the units of analysis. A coding theme was then developed and all codes across interviews were compared so as to find patterns within the data sets. I explored and reflected upon these patterns in my reflexive journal and this helped me discover of the connections between various aspects of people's situations, mental processes, beliefs, and actions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). These discoveries will now be discussed.

Program Description

This section describes and analyzes the evolution of the nature, functions, and mandates of the community-based education program under study by revisiting organization theory framework (Hodge et al., 2003). It offers an in-depth analysis of the mandates of *Ready, Set, Learn*, in the form of its purpose and goals. It explores the nature of this community-based education program through analyzing its governing structure and the design of the program as a whole. It also outlines its functions, particularly activities, financing, collaboration, and outreach. Finally, the evolution of the program will be uncovered through focusing on its size, growth, and change over time. Interspersed in this description are connections to the theoretical framework and literature on community-based education and non-profit organizations.

Mandates. A mandate can be defined as an authorization to act in a particular way, particularly in the provision of services, and is usually imposed in a top-down fashion from an authority group. In regards to *Ready, Set, Learn*, mandates are reflective of the purposes and goals that have been set out by its founding members. The *Ready, Set, Learn* initiative was started by members of the Portuguese-Canadian community, including staff at *New Horizons*, local school boards, the *Portuguese-Canadian Coalition for Better Education*, and outreach programs of Portuguese student associations at local universities (Januário, 2003). The experiences and backgrounds of these founding members reflect Freireian philosophy in that "the oppressed must be their own examples in the struggle for their redemption" (Freire, 1970, p. 54). The need for the creation of *Ready, Set, Learn* is reflective of the inability of educational institutions to adequately serve communities (President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1990).

Official goals. The desire to reverse the cycle of disadvantage within the Portuguese-Canadian community served to structure the creation of *Ready, Set, Learn* and its goals. *Ready,*

Set, Learns mandates adhere to Hodge et al.'s (2003) discussion of the official goals of organizations. *Ready, Set, Learn* sets as its guidelines the provision of support to Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking students, intending to increase academic achievement among this group. The standards to measure the performance of *Ready, Set, Learn* in achieving this goal have primarily been in the form of program evaluations, informal feedback from various internal and external stakeholders, as well as through the administration of surveys and questionnaires. This official goal endeavours to create a structure and a guiding culture in *Ready, Set, Learn* that will facilitate in its accomplishment. This is similar to Heath and McLaughlin's (1991) effectiveness framework of community-based educational organizations.

Operative goals. Official goals are achieved by creating operative goals which are more specific. Operative goals also take on various forms, such as market goals, as reflected in the expansion of *Ready, Set, Learn* to the Spanish community; resource goals, evidenced by the programs desire for obtaining external financial, physical, and human resources; and goals regarding employee attitudes, as seen in descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of volunteers in *Ready, Set, Learn*.

Short term and long term goals. Organizations set operative goals based on projected timelines; short-term goals are those which the organization hopes to accomplish within a specific accounting cycle. When *Ready, Set, Learn* was first established its yearly goals had to do with the acquisition of resources and finances, facilitating the expansion of the program into new schools, and the recruitment of more students, particularly those at the high school level. As the program became more established, its short-term goals became even more specific, for example improving partnerships between parents, community, and schools through facilitating communication and referrals to appropriate services. The desire to achieve self-sustainment and

become a permanent fixture in the community with a consistent funding source is an example of a long-term goal that *Ready, Set, Learn* had at the outset which has provided the overall direction for the organization. Since it is currently an established program, its long-term goal continues to be working towards the reversal of the trends of educational disadvantage within the Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking communities. These short- and long-term goals give direction to an organization and help them plan how they will achieve their official goals.

Nature. The combination of essential qualities belonging to an organization represents its overall nature. It is how an organization identifies itself and the structures it uses to create a system of existence. In the case of *Ready, Set, Learn*, its nature can best be represented by its structure, which includes governance, and design of the program as a whole.

Governance and decision-making. Organizational goals and mandates influence the governance and decision-making structures in organizations. Both the Board of Directors and the Steering Committee at *Ready, Set, Learn* are charged with the responsibilities of advising, counselling, and critically listening to reports made by management, as well as assessing performance and suggesting means for improving the organization. This governing system is reflective of Wallis and Dollery's (2006) core attributes of non-profit organizations. It also adheres to Owens' (2004) discussion on participative organizational decision making, which contributes to enhancing organizational development. Since organizations also act as information processors, decisions are made on the basis of the quality and quantity of information available (Hodge et al., 2003). In order to ensure that the *Ready, Set, Learn* program was functioning sustainably and efficiently, the Steering Committee was continually provided with information that was plentiful and diverse. This included yearly program evaluation reports, resource and funding needs, and parent and student surveys.

Structure and design. Organizations establish and achieve goals through their structure and operations. This is done primarily by dividing up work into many smaller tasks and allocating these tasks among the organizations members. This was seen in the outlines mandating the various roles and responsibilities of members of *New Horizons* and *Ready, Set, Learn*. As the tasks of these various stakeholders are highly differentiated and complex, their coordination is necessary. According to Wallis and Dollery (2006):

Without coordination and control some workers may intentionally or unintentionally engage in activities that do not contribute to the organization's goals or that may interfere with them...Some operations within organizations may require precise timing or scheduling so that actions of different workers or departments fit together. (p. 10)

Coordination and control is accomplished through the program's implementation of formal rules, policies, and procedures (Hodge et al., 2003). *Ready, Set, Learn* places a heavy reliance on these documents and works to ensure that all stakeholders adhere to them.

The physical structures which the *Ready, Set, Learn* program inhabits also reflect the need for these mandates as the activities of this program are dispersed among several locations and at many different times. As a result, flexibility has to be given to the stakeholders so that their personal commitments, abilities, and energies are utilized to achieve the goals of the organization. This flexibility is reflective of Owens' (2004) organization theory view of human resource development in achieving coordination and ultimately facilitates *Ready, Set, Learn's* achievement of goals and effective service delivery.

Organizational integration is also achieved through the way that *Ready, Set, Learn* gathers, processes, analyzes, and reports on the information necessary to operate the organization (Hodge et al., 2003). The project binder, email, and face-to-face communication are used

extensively among various stakeholders in *Ready, Set, Learn*. These stakeholders have recognized the importance of communicative practices and how this process contributes to collaboration and sustainability, echoing Brown and Cole's (2002) study on after school learning opportunities. Overall, the information system utilized by *Ready, Set, Learn* is sophisticated and ensures that information can be provided to stakeholders in a timely basis. This also aids in the organizational goal of achieving integration and works to ensure that the overall structure is functioning effectively.

Functions. Components that need to be carried out for an organization to operate and perform its specified actions and activities are known as functions (Hodge et al., 2003). Sociology defines functions as the contribution made by a sociocultural phenomenon, using the case of *Ready, Set, Learn*, to an ongoing social system: the Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking communities (Williams, 1976). The activities, financial planning, collaboration, and outreach are all part of the functions of *Ready, Set, Learn* and help the program to achieve its goals and mandates.

Activities. The structure of weekly one-on-one tutoring and mentoring sessions is the foundation of *Ready, Set, Learn*, defines a key function of this community-based education program, and facilitates in the attainment of its goals. The freedom and flexibility given to tutors and students to structure their sessions is vital to the success of this program, and is also in line with Heath and McLaughlin's (1991) effectiveness framework of community-based organizations. Tutors spoke to letting their students talk freely about any difficulties they were experiencing, and acted as positive role models by encouraging them to stay in school and work towards achieving their academic and vocational goals.

Heath and McLaughlin (1991) also emphasized how organizations should provide multiple services that give students broad support for their identities as teenagers. *Shadow-a-Student Day* in particular was instrumental in providing information and support to Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking students. It also shows how *Ready, Set, Learn* reaches out to the community and attempts to expand their services beyond the students who are in the program. This event helps *Ready, Set, Learn* attain its goal of making education more prevalent in the Portuguese-Canadian community, as students are inspired to attend post-secondary and often return to encourage others to do likewise.

The workshops for both parents and students have also been beneficial in providing information about the schooling system, both at the secondary and post-secondary levels. This allowed these stakeholders to be provided with options to help them make informed decisions. Based on feedback, students particularly appreciated that apprenticeship programs were discussed and that the workshop "didn't just push the idea that university defines success" (Youth Workshop Feedback, Workshops, 2008). This finding is similar to James and Haig-Brown (2001). They noted the importance for students to be actively involved in negotiating their academic needs, interests, and abilities.

Financing. Because organizations are open systems are dependent on the external environment for resources, *Ready, Set, Learn*, must engage in a variety of revenue-generating activities. These have included fundraising activities such as the *Mayor's Gala Dinner*, the start-up funding received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and the funding and resources received from school boards in Toronto. These partnerships are similar to what Wallis and Dollery (2006) say about the financing of non-profit organizations. In particular, the program evaluation reports and budgets that *Ready, Set, Learn* provided to these partners are examples of

clear financial statements which indicate precisely how financial contributions are disbursed and how surplus revenue is deployed to further the achievement of goals.

Due to the non-profit categorization of *Ready, Set, Learn* as well as their mandate of free provision of services, the staffing support is modest. Site supervisors and tutors are not paid at all for their services and this has led to some turnover of volunteers (Program coordinator, p. 5). Despite Brown and Cole's (2002) findings however, the lack of payment and turnover of tutors has not contributed a lack of coordination or instability. Instead, the structure of *Ready, Set, Learn* allows for flexibility and choice, and gives volunteers in the program valuable experience which they can then use to further their own goals and ambitions. Despite the continued struggle for adequate funding, *Ready, Set, Learn* has been able to effectively and efficiently use its resources to work towards accomplishing its goals.

Collaboration. *Ready, Set, Learn* engages in boundary spanning through collaborating with other programs and institutions, particularly school boards, universities, and other educational organizations. This helps the program gather information, provide feedback, and represent *Ready, Set, Learn* to the outside world. These collaborative partnerships help *Ready, Set, Learn* continue to improve the way in which it delivers its programs and services. The partnerships *Ready, Set, Learn* has with the local school boards reflects the Ontario Ministry of Education (2007) document outlining school-community partnerships. *Ready, Set, Learn* acts as a resource to local school boards through its provision of tutoring and mentoring services and its goal of contributing to student success. In connecting with *Ready, Set, Learn* local schools are engaging in what Smith and Sobel (2010) view as community-based education.

The partnership between *Ready, Set, Learn* and the Bachelor of Education program adheres to Solomon, Manoukian, and Clarke's (2005) study on the benefits of teacher candidates'

involvement in communities. Having the additional support from teacher candidates facilitated the operation of *Ready, Set, Learn*. In particular, tutors appreciated the support provided by these teacher candidates, and *New Horizons* was able to get an early start to many of its projects. Feedback has also revolved around the importance of the enthusiasm and passion that the teacher candidates brought to their placements at *Ready, Set, Learn*, as well as the ideas and feedback about how the program can better operate to serve students. This partnership has also helped to introduce teacher candidates to challenges faced by Portuguese- and Spanish-Canadian students, and inspire them to apply what was learned in the placement to their teaching practice. This university partnership results in what Brown and Cole (2002) refer to as a general culture of collaborative learning and helps both the students and teacher candidates develop.

Outreach. A method for linking an organization with the wider community is through outreach, often in the form of advertising and public relations activities. Organizations utilize outreach methods to increase visibility and credibility, to create or modify its image, to differentiate it from competitors, and to focus on a particular market niche (Hodge et al., 2003). The various outlets that *Ready, Set, Learn* utilized to promote itself to the wider community comprise a part of its organizational information system. These outlets reported on goals, operations, activities, and impact and made this information available to the wider community in the hopes of serving more students and garnering more support. *Ready, Set, Learn* has promoted itself as a free service to improve and strengthen the Portuguese- and Spanish-Speaking communities, particularly by focusing on the academic potential of its students. The program has connected to these communities primarily by defining itself as an ethnic enclave. García Coll et al. (2005) argue that this identity allows community-based organizations to support immigrant families in particular.

Evolution. Evolution is a process of formation, growth, and development and is usually reflected in how an organization changes over time. Organizations go through stages of evolutionary development, ranging from a period of stability in which little or no change takes place, to a creative stage in which continuous change and adaptation is possible (Hodge et al., 2003).

Size, growth, and change. Planned organizational change in the case of *Ready, Set, Learn* primarily involved the expansion of the program itself. Throughout its existence, a goal of *Ready, Set, Learn* has been to service more students, recruit more volunteers, and acquire more tutoring sites. The expansion of the program to the Spanish-speaking community in 2008 was in line with the goals of providing tutoring and mentoring to at-risk students, but required *Ready, Set, Learn* to broaden its target group. This expansion was also an example of what Owens (2004) would call organizational self-renewal. He stated that effective change is the result of the organizations ability to initiate change, to have an increasing impact on its environment, and to be able to develop a capability to adapt to new conditions and solve new problems over time.

The challenges of change. The modification of organizational mandates and goals tends to be the catalyst for changing other aspects of the organization. As an organization grows, its operations and structure invariably become more difficult to manage. A challenge therefore becomes the task of balancing the advantages of size with the demands of complexity (Hodge et al., 2003). One of the greatest challenges of *Ready, Set, Learn* faced was how to support and facilitate its own future growth. This was achieved over time through acquiring additional sources of funding, expanding activities, and engaging in collaborative partnerships as outlined previously. However, with the increasing demands of a larger size, it was necessary for further specialization and delegation of responsibilities to occur. An example of this was the creation of

the site supervisor role, which became necessary when program coordinators were less able to be on site at every tutoring session.

The impetus for change. The gap between what is currently occurring and what is desired becomes the impetus for change. In the case of *Ready, Set, Learn*, these conditions also included the desire for greater efficiency and effectiveness and resulted in the introduction of the teacher referral as a requirement for students wishing to enter into the program. Beth, a tutor, recalled how the teacher referral helped to address some of the challenges of the program, especially, getting rid of the 'babysitting' component, which prevented some tutors from offering academic and mentoring help (Beth, p. 5). This is an example of the desire to change being motivated by both the need to establish legitimacy and the discovery of new knowledge (Hodge et al., 2003).

Perceptions of the Program's Impact

The achievement of goals can often result when the stakeholders of an organization benefit from its operations. In the case of *Ready, Set, Learn*, the primary beneficiaries are at-risk Portuguese- and Spanish-Canadian students. However, in serving the primary beneficiary group, organizations often satisfy secondary groups, who gain fulfilment through their relation to the primary beneficiaries, or through association with the organization (Hodge et al., 2003). Parents gain satisfaction through the accomplishments and achievements of their children, and are able to improve and expand upon their personal knowledge of the education system. Tutors also gain satisfaction through seeing their students' succeed, but also benefit from being associated with the program itself and *New Horizons* in general. Volunteering is an opportunity for tutors to realize their own personal, academic, and vocational goals. The perceptions of the stakeholders of the *Ready, Set, Learn* program regarding its impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students

whom it serves is next explored. *Ready, Set, Learn* has benefitted its students through offering them support and facilitating their acquisition of the English language.

Creating a circle of support. A vital aspect of community-based education is to increase the resources available to support and enhance students' development (Smith & Sobel, 2010). The involvement of adults in community-based educational organizations creates a social support system for students in order to maximize their potential (Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001). The program coordinator emphasizes this when she discusses the various actors that work together to offer students' support:

You have your parents, you have your tutors, you have your project coordinators, you know on you to finish high school, so I know that it benefits them...I think students being a part of this program, feel it's a great...release for them in as in terms of...frustration.

(Program coordinator, p. 15)

At *Ready, Set, Learn*, learning becomes a social activity, as many actors are involved in ensuring student success. This finding is similar to that of Bielenberg's (n.d.) in his analysis of an after school community-based education program.

Supporting students' during transitions. According to Arowosafe and Irvin (1992), students in transition periods, whether from elementary to high school or high school to post-secondary, tend to be apprehensive, stressful, and wary of the change. This period especially poses challenges for students from lower socioeconomic status families (Spencer & Dornbusch, 1990). *Ready, Set, Learn* strives to offer additional support to these students.

Parents. Both parents interviewed spoke to their involvement in the *Ready, Set, Learn* workshops and how they believed these workshops facilitated their children's understanding of their academic options. Particularly, these parents discussed how their children gained an

understanding of the structure of secondary and post-secondary schooling. Attendance at these workshops also facilitated discussion between students and parents, as they now had a clearer understanding and were better prepared to make decisions concerning their academic aspirations. This is similar to literature discussing the importance of parent-student communication (Israel et al., 2001; Lareau, 2003). Both studies argue that students are more likely to experience educational success when they discuss school matters with their parents.

Students. Instilling students with cultural capital, particularly providing them with information about how the schooling structure worked, was accomplished primarily in the workshops and *Shadow-a-Student Day*. Sylvia spoke to how attending the student workshop really helped her daughter Tatiana understand the transition process (Sylvia, p. 9). Here, Tatiana learned which courses she would need to take in high school to get into the college program of her choice to eventually become an early childhood educator.

Similar sentiments were echoed by student participants in the feedback documents from *Shadow-a-Student Day*. In providing an opportunity for high school students to experience university life, *Ready, Set, Learn* helped prepare these students for this transition. This not only encouraged these students to pursue postsecondary studies, but gave them confidence in their abilities to do so. Overall, student involvement in both the workshops and participation in *Shadow-a-Student Day* echo Akos' (2002) discussion of the importance of involving a variety of actors in a student's transition experience.

Program coordinator. The program coordinator reflected on her discussions with students regarding their concerns of starting high school or post-secondary. She discussed how the student workshops were interactive and geared toward allowing the students to discuss their fears and concerns. Her discussions of the various types of professionals that help facilitate these

workshops further emphasize the importance of connecting students to their surrounding communities (Tompkins, 2005). It underscores the importance of involving students, peers, parents, teachers, and community members in the transition process from elementary to high school (Akos, 2002). *Shadow-a-Student Day* also aids students in the transition from high school to post-secondary and gives these students access to role models who they can relate to and emulate. This is similar to the literature which discusses a need for role models in the Portuguese-Canadian community to encourage these students' post-secondary aspirations (Fonseca, 2010; Santos, 2006).

Addressing negative school experiences. All participants spoke to their perceptions of negative interactions in the schooling institution and how *Ready, Set, Learn* was able to address and counter these. The advice, support, and encouragement given to parents and students by volunteers in the program as well other activities of *Ready, Set, Learn* were vital in motivating students to overcome adversity, work toward their potential, and ultimately experience academic and social success. Countering these experiences is especially important as negative encounters in school tend to have a detrimental effect on a student's perception of society as a whole (Caro, 2009).

Tutors. Beth spoke fondly of the personal relationship she had with her students. She spoke of how many of her students were excited to come to the tutoring sessions and looked forward to telling Beth about their day (Beth, p. 12). She spoke to the importance of letting her students vent their frustrations and this is reflective of Pease-Alvarez, Angelillo, and Chavajay's (2005) findings of how students in after-school programs considered their tutors more as friends than teachers. It is also similar to Heath and McLaughlin's (1991) contention that after-school programs should allow students to talk openly about both problems and successes in school.

Kevin spoke of how one of his students perceived a negative treatment from his teacher due to his shy demeanor. However, the small group interactions that characterized Kevin's tutoring sessions, as well as the amount of time Kevin spent with this particular student allowed him to discover that this student was actually quite intelligent, and allowed Kevin to work towards building up this student's confidence. This is reflective of how community-based education programs should view their students as resources to be developed (Heath & McLaughlin, 1991). Through regular interactions with Kevin and another student in the session, this student was eventually able to improve his social skills and experience success in school.

Parents. Sylvia spoke to her perception of a lack of support both she and her daughter, Tatiana experienced in schools, especially in regards to the delayed IEP review process. Despite coming from a working-class background, Sylvia attempted to be regularly and actively involved in her daughters schooling, which seemed to be inconsistent with both Lareau's (2003) and Santos' (2006) findings. Fortunately, the perceived lack of support that Tatiana was experiencing in school was countered by her relationship with her tutor. Sylvia spoke of the bond between Tatiana and her tutor and how she 'had a way' with Tatiana which helped her not only comprehend and understand her schoolwork, but gain confidence in completing it. Tatiana's experiences reflect Bielenberg's (n.d.) discussion of after-school learning opportunities. Due to the support received from her tutor, Tatiana was able to acquire a sense of her own agency and become empowered to learn. Furthermore, the community of learners created by *Ready, Set, Learn* provided a socializing opportunity for Tatiana and was helping her to overcome her shy demeanor and increase her self esteem.

Program coordinator. The program coordinator's anecdotes of students' negative school experiences are reflective of Nunes' (1999, 2003) discussions of Portuguese-Canadian

educational disadvantages. She discussed how one student wanted to move from the applied to the academic stream and how the school appeared to be fighting this shift, a possible example of culturally-biased assessment, streaming, and general marginalization that Portuguese-Canadian students face. Fortunately, the tutor recognized this student's aptitude for math and realized that he was not being challenged enough in his applied classroom. Together with the parent and students, this tutor helped to advocate for the change and was able to convince the school to let the student move into the academic stream.

Learning English. Immigrant groups can acquire cultural capital through learning to live in new social and cultural contexts. The most important factor in achieving this is learning the language of the wider society, which will allow immigrants to correctly interpret experiences and successfully guide behaviour (Ogbu, 1991). *Ready, Set, Learn* also impacted its students by helping them to acquire sufficient knowledge of English to ensure their success in school.

Tutors. Beth's discussion of her use of drama techniques to aid her student in improving his English skills relates to Cummins et al.'s (2006) study of acculturation and language acquisition. They argue that for students to invest their identities in acquiring a new language and participating actively in their new culture, they must experience positive and affirming interactions with members of that culture. Beth's role as a tutor and her creativity in teaching her student this vital skill were examples of this positive interaction.

Similarly, Manuel and Kevin's emphasis on student and parental language acquisition shows how they recognized the importance of the parental role in transmitting cultural capital, specifically in the form of knowledge of the dominant language (Ogbu, 1991). In their roles as tutors they tried to facilitate parents' successful provision of cultural capital to their children by

focusing on the English language, especially the importance of building vocabulary, and improving grammar and spelling.

Students. Marco's experience of moving back and forth between Portugal and Canada, and his subsequent need for support in acquiring use of the English language echoes the acculturation process common among many recent immigrants (Ogbu, 1991). His ability to adapt to the wider Canadian context and understand his position as a minority was fostered through the support received by his tutor and the *Ready, Set, Learn* program as a whole. His experiences tie in well with Zhou's (2005) discussion of how community-based organizations can serve as a bridge between an immigrant community and mainstream society and help second-generation students adapt to the wider society. Overall, *Ready, Set, Learn* has been successful in aiding with the acculturation and adaptation processes of immigrant students, helping them gain confidence so that they could comfortably live in new social and cultural contexts (Berry, 2008).

Program coordinator. The program coordinator's discussion of the link between knowledge of English and parental involvement in their child's education is reflective of the experiences of Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco's (2002) and McLoyd's (2005) participants, whose unfamiliarity with English and discomfort with the communication strategies used by schools contributed to their lack of involvement in schools. However, parental involvement with *Ready, Set, Learn* highlights Nunes' (1999) findings in which Portuguese-Canadians recognize the importance of language acquisition and academic success. It also reinforces Fonseca's (2010) argument of how deeply concerned Portuguese-Canadian parents are with the education of their children.

Students' Attitudes Towards Education

With its goal of combating the educational disadvantages faced by Portuguese- and now Spanish-Canadian students, particularly in the form of high dropout rates and low rates of enrollment in post-secondary programs, *Ready, Set, Learn* ultimately seeks to improve students' attitudes towards and perceptions of education. Through offering support for students facing negative schooling experiences and anxieties about transitions, as well as facilitating their acquisition of the English language, *Ready, Set, Learn* aims to broaden the educational horizons of its students. It makes them aware of their rights, choices, and options, and makes them active participants in shaping their own futures. This not only provides them with valuable cultural capital, but also facilitates their academic success in school and motivates them to look positively toward post-secondary education. This is done through cultivating their interests and abilities and improving their understanding about academics and careers. This results in students having more positive perceptions of education and wanting to continue on an academic path.

Cultivating students' interests, abilities, and understanding. With its goal of providing tutoring and mentoring support, *Ready, Set, Learn* attempts to provide its parents and student participants with information about their rights and options. This facilitates acquisition of a main component of cultural capital: the access to resources, which can be in the form of scholastic knowledge and an understanding of the policies, procedures and supports available to students (Fonseca, 2010). Since disengagement often results from a lack of understanding and relevance, the knowledge acquired through involvement with *Ready, Set, Learn*, allowed students to think deeply about their interests and abilities and look positively to how their schooling experiences could help foster and develop them.

Tutors. For Beth, instilling cultural capital involved introducing her students to new experiences. She recalls how one student was extremely interested in reading, but had not had many opportunities to do so and Beth encouraged this interest by providing her with novels. She spoke fondly of how this student would read the books at night and give Beth a synopsis of how far she had gotten at each tutoring session. In this case, the instillation of cultural capital involved the provision of information attuned to this particular student's interests and abilities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Heath & McLaughlin, 1991). Beth outlines this when she describes how attending the tutoring sessions benefitted students. By stating how her students "were discovering some things that they liked, that they hadn't seen before" (Beth, p. 11), she mentioned how the program provides students with information and opportunities to discover and cultivate their interests.

Manuel frequently spoke to his role as a mentor and how he wanted to give back to the community by working towards addressing the educational disadvantages that plagued it. He did this through attempting to pass on his knowledge of the schooling system and the workings of larger society to his students. Essentially, he was attempting to transmit cultural capital. Manuel used his personal experiences with the education system to tell his students of the difficulties which result from dropping out of high school, therefore giving them knowledge of 'how the system worked' so that his students could use it to their advantage (Lareau, 2003).

Parents. Conceição spoke of her daughters nine year involvement in *Ready, Set, Learn*, and how it allowed her to gain an understanding of her unique learning styles and discover exactly the type of support she needed (Conceição, p. 6). She also discussed how participation in the student workshops and *Shadow-a-Student Day* allowed her daughter to see the educational and career possibilities for her interest in drama, and use this understanding to map out an

academic path for herself. Involvement in this program has therefore allowed these students and their parents to be meaningfully involved in shaping their own futures (President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1990) as well as helping these families engage their children in developing the knowledge and skills they will need for the future (Isreal et al, 2001).

Program coordinator. The program coordinator's recollection of how one particular tutor cultivated his students' interest in geography is similar to the findings of James and Haig-Brown's (2001) as *Ready, Set, Learn* also offers its students the support they need to negotiate a program of study that reflects their needs and interests. The program coordinator spoke to this in her discussion of how this tutor opened his student's mind to the opportunities that a university degree could afford for him while still encouraging him to indulge his passion for playing soccer (Program coordinator, p. 21)

Fostering positive perceptions of secondary school. Many stakeholders in the program discussed how students seemed apprehensive about beginning secondary school, or suffered from disengagement and a general lack of support from their elementary schools. These feelings are common among many students faced with transitions into high school (Akos, 2002; Bernes et al., 2006; Arowosafe & Irvin, 1992). However, due to the unique experiences of Portuguese-Canadian students, these additional issues could potentially aggravate the educational disadvantages they already face. Therefore the support of *Ready, Set, Learn* is vital. Through mentoring relationships with tutors and activities and information provided by the program, these experiences were countered and students' perceptions of schooling became more positive.

Parents. Conceição spoke of her daughter's negative school experiences with bullying and unsupportive teachers, and the negative impact of these experiences. "She didn't care about the school! And she was...losing the programs, the marks and everything. The marks were really

low. In math, in all the subjects." Here, the negative teacher attitude she experienced left her disillusioned and disengaged, much like the participants in Fonseca's (2010) and James and Haig-Brown's (2001) study. However, her involvement in *Ready, Set, Learn* allowed her to improve academically. At the time of the interview, Conceição spoke of her daughter having a more positive outlook on education and planning to pursue a university degree. Her daughter's schooling experiences initially limited her capacity to imagine high academic aspirations, but through the support she received from *Ready, Set, Learn*, she was able to overcome this.

Students. Marco initially said 'no' when asked if he liked school and his experiences with bullying and lack of school support appeared to have shaped this perception. Larochette, Murphy, and Craig (2010) discussed how school climate plays an important role in moderating the behaviours and interactions of its students. The more positive a school's climate is, the less instances of bullying were reported. This ties in well with Marco's experiences. Although he brought this issue to his teacher and principal, the bullying continued. This lack of school support could result in bullying victims losing interest in learning and avoiding going to school (Ma, 2002). Marco's apprehensions of beginning high school because he was worried that the bullying would get worse is also reflective of the transition experiences of students in Arowosafe and Irvin's (1992) study. Fortunately, Marco had an extremely supportive tutor whom he looked up to and respected. He considered his tutor to be 'cool and fun' and enjoyed coming to the sessions. He spoke of the personal and academic support received from his tutor and he was obtaining better grades and having a more positive perception of schooling.

Program coordinator. The program coordinator spoke to how one student's experiences in the program had greatly improved his perceptions of education. This student was from a troubled family and did not have a positive male role model in his life. He was experiencing

educational disadvantages in the form of extreme disengagement, truancy, and association with a negative peer group. His mother therefore placed him in *Ready, Set, Learn*. Although he was initially hesitant to attend, he slowly began to connect with his tutor. Having a positive male role model encouraged him to be responsible, try harder with his school work, and ultimately gave him hope for the future. His test scores began to improve and this gave him further confidence in his abilities (Program coordinator, p. 17). This student's experience is similar to those of Morgado's (2009) participants, who spoke of the challenges at-risk Portuguese-Canadian students' face. However, despite coming from a broken family, this student was able to receive support from a positive role model in the form of his tutor, therefore having the potential to change his educational trajectory.

Schooling and vocational goals. *Ready, Set, Learn* aims to improve the academic achievement of its students so that they not only graduate, but have a variety of options available to them upon completing high school. Tutors in the program recognize the students' unique abilities and talents and encourage the students and their parents to think critically and carefully about post-secondary education.

Tutors. Due to the younger ages of the students of the three tutor participants, discussion about specific academic programs and careers was limited. These tutors however, focused their discussions on their students' interest, because according to Bernes, Bardick, Magnusson, and Witko (2006), students in this age group tend to only make tentative career choices. Therefore, Beth encouraged her student's interest in drama by bringing in plays to help him with his reading, but stopped short of extensively researching this career path with her student (Beth, p. 15). Similarly, Manuel cultivated one student's interest in designing puzzles but did not get into the specifics of a career choice related to these interests. These tutors recognized that in-depth

discussions of careers were irrelevant for students younger than grade six as they were still in the 'fantasy stage' of their career aspirations (Bernes et al., 2006).

Parents. Both parent participants took an active interest in their children's academic and vocational aspirations, therefore practicing concerted cultivation despite coming from different socio-economic backgrounds, differing markedly from Lareau's (2003) findings. Conceição, who held a professional career, discussed how her daughter was interested in becoming an actress, and spoke to how she and her daughter's tutor encouraged her to study drama. Sylvia was positive about Tatiana's future and cultivated her interest in becoming an early childhood educator, especially after receiving information about this from a workshop at *Ready, Set, Learn*. Because of the older ages of Sylvia's and Conceição's daughters, they had a more solid understanding of what was involved in making a career decision, and based their choices on their abilities more so than their interests (Bernes et al., 2006). These particular career choices are also representative of Mullis, Mullis, and Gerwels' (1998) study examining the influence of parental role-modelling on children's occupational interests. They found that students whose parents worked in unskilled occupations were more interested in realistic vocations, whereas students with parents who had professional occupations were more interested in vocations that were more artistic.

Students. The student participants varied in terms of their career choices and which academic paths they would follow. Because they had not yet begun high school, their career planning was still in the early stages. However, they had clear ideas of which occupations they saw themselves in and they had an understanding that academic achievement would facilitate the acquisition of these occupations. Marco and Tatiana knew that they would need to attend college to realize their respective career goals. Celia and Bella both wanted to become veterinarians, and

while Celia had some understanding of this career's connection to science courses, they were not wholly aware of the specific academic path leading to this career. Jessie, who was the youngest participant, had more of a fantasy idea of a potential future career, wanting to be a singer, director, or actor (Jessie, p. 6). These experiences are similar to those highlighted by the *Every Secondary Student Survey*: Students in this survey discussed how they felt that schools did not give them enough help with career planning and how they were forced to make vocational decisions on their own. These vocational decisions also are in line with Gottfredson's (1996) discussion of how students' vocational aspirations shift from glamour occupations to professional occupations as they mature. Students' knowledge of occupations and their rationales for selecting them also increase as grade level increases (Bernes et al., 2006).

Program coordinator. The program coordinator spoke of how one student's positive experiences in *Ready, Set, Learn* inspired him to want to become a teacher, so that he could help others the way he was helped. Findings by scholars also discuss the link between involvement in community-based education and high academic and career aspirations (James & Haig-Brown, 2001; Smith & Sobel, 2010). Through its provision of tutors, and hosting of workshops and *Shadow-a-Student Day*, *Ready, Set, Learn* emphasized the importance of setting goals and encouraged its students to make these academic and career goals as early as possible, which is in line with Bernes, et al.'s (2006) recommendation. This is ultimately adheres to the aim *Ready, Set, Learn* has to make post-secondary education more prevalent in the Portuguese- and Spanish-Canadian communities and to attempt to counter the negative manifestations of educational disadvantage (Nunes, 1999).

Conclusions

The research reported in this thesis examined the nature, functions, and mandates of *Ready, Set, Learn*, a community-based educational tutoring and mentoring program, and how these have evolved throughout the program's ten year history. Hodge et al.'s (2003) framework of organization theory provided a rich structure of this program through analyzing its purposes and goals, governance and decision-making, structure and design, activities, financing, collaboration, outreach, and size, growth and change. This thesis also explored the perceptions of tutors, students, parents, and a program coordinator, representing stakeholders directly involved in the program, to discover what the impact of this program has been on Portuguese-Canadian students. This program contributed to improvements in students' academics, their social skills and self esteem, aided in their language acquisition, and fostered their academic aspirations. Ultimately, this program has helped improve students' perceptions of education and helped students explore their own interests, and hence their future academic and vocational goals.

Implications

A number of implications and recommendations emerge from the themes and patterns uncovered by this study. Limitations are discussed in terms of the context of the case study. Implications and recommendations fall into five broad areas: theory, methodology, policy, practice, and further research.

The context of the case study. This study was conducted on a community-based tutoring and mentoring program that serves a specific ethnocultural community. Even within this community, members differ in their histories, experiences, perceptions, aspirations, and degree of identity and unity with other community members. Furthermore, this program and the stakeholders involved in it are located in the wider context of a dense, multicultural urban area

that has been shaped by the contributions of this ethnocultural community as well as many others. The results of this study may have looked very different if another ethnocultural community or program was analyzed, if experiences and perceptions of more and other stakeholders in the program were included, and if the program was located in a more rural area of Ontario, or another part of Canada.

In terms of the participants, the data collected from the interviews provided in-depth insight and explanation of stakeholders' experiences and perceptions. However, the data collected from the student participants were somewhat limited. Most students provided very simple answers to questions and did not want to expand or provide further explanation on themes that came up in these interviews. This is most likely due to the younger ages and lack of experience with relevant themes these students possessed. Furthermore, the fact that I was an outsider to these students and had not had many interactions with them prior to the interviews could have accounted for their generally shy demeanors and unwillingness on behalf of some to provide further detail.

The study could have been improved by spending more time with these particular students and at the program itself, in order to become a familiar figure and help them to feel comfortable around me. Furthermore, interviewing a broader group of stakeholders, such as site supervisors, as well as teachers and administrators who are indirectly involved in *Ready, Set, Learn*, as well as community members and educators from outside the program, could have also improved this study. Including these stakeholders and an increased sample from each group might have provided a wider range of perceptions of the impact of this program and could have counteracted the limited student responses. Fortunately though, the students' concerns were also

commented on by other stakeholders interviewed and were also present in many of the stakeholder experiences documents.

Implications for theory. This study presented an analysis of the educational disadvantages of Portuguese-Canadians through the lenses of cultural models, cultural capital, socioeconomic status, and child-rearing. One recommendation to these challenges pointed to community-based education; therefore, a case study of a community-based education program was undertaken. A description of this program was presented using eight components of an organization theory framework and an analysis of the impact of this program on its stakeholders was discovered through analyzing documents, interview transcripts, and reflecting on my thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of this research process in my reflexive journal.

The findings showed that many existing definitions of social class and socioeconomic status are not as clear-cut as many authors attest. Possession of cultural capital is said to correlate to social class; if parents have a certain amount of education, income, and/or occupational status, they are considered to be middle class and are expected to engage in specific cultural practices that will facilitate their children's educational success (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977; Lareau, 2003). The identifiers of education, income, and occupational status are relatively easy to measure and can therefore help to identify a person's socioeconomic status. However, things such as 'knowledge of the education system' and 'importance placed on academics' are not as easily measured. This makes it difficult to define whether or not one possesses cultural capital, how much of it they possess, and whether or not they are able to pass it on to their children. Furthermore, the child-rearing practices which members of different social classes supposedly engage in are not mutually exclusive. This study revealed that stakeholders who would typically be considered working-class engaged in aspects of concerted cultivation, which Lareau (2003)

argues tend to be confined mostly to members of the middle and upper classes. Also, as evidenced by many stakeholders, fewer academic credentials do not always prevent parents from being involved in their children's education. Overall, broader definition of terms such as cultural models and cultural capital need to be explored and more leeway must be allowed in their usage. Conceptualizing of these terms as being along continuums as opposed to having a rigid definition would be beneficial.

The use of Hodge et al.'s (2003) framework of organization theory was helpful in analyzing and organizing documents to provide a rich narrative description of *Ready, Set, Learn*. However, this study only explored the components of an organization theory that were directly relevant to this particular case. As a result concepts such as organizational culture, conflict, and behaviour, as well as the environment of organizations, and politics in organizations were not discussed (Hodge et al., 2003; Owens, 2004). This is due to the uniqueness of this particular program. Furthermore, as "there is no clear-cut, surefire way to comprehensively measure organizational effectiveness" (Hodge et al., 2003, p. 72); accordingly, exploring an organization's effectiveness would also merit research to enhance this study and its findings.

Implications for methodology. This study utilized both document analysis and semi-structured, one-on-one interviews to gain an understanding of the nature, functions, and mandates of *Ready, Set, Learn*, their evolution over time, as well as the stakeholder groups and the programs impact on them. The body of literature used to inform the process of document analysis was limiting in the fact that it emphasized theoretical approaches and provided no detailed or practical descriptions of all steps required to analyze collected documents. Furthermore, in most reports found in reviewed literature, there is an absence regarding the procedure followed and the outcomes of the analyses of documents (Bowen, 2009). As a result,

an adaptive approach to document analysis and maintaining a reflexive journal was necessary. This study illuminated the need for greater research in the area of document analysis, particularly how it applies to educational and organizational research.

While other forms of qualitative research emphasize taking an 'outsider' position, Appreciative Inquiry focuses on engaging participants in a study to be actively involved in the research process, as well as focusing on the successes of a particular program or organization (Reed, 2007). However, due to the need to maintain the participants' and the program's privacy and confidentiality all facets of the Appreciative Inquiry method could not be utilized. As a result, only the program coordinator was able to be actively involved in helping to plan and carry out the study. Furthermore, many coordinators and directors at *New Horizons* wanted the program's real name to be used in this final report, in the hopes that its description and impact could be showcased to the wider community. But the possibility of identification of some participants was too great. Therefore, in order to adhere to ethical standards, a pseudonym was used for the community centre, the program itself, as well as all activities and collaborative partnerships it carried out.

The positive and strengths-based analysis components of Appreciative Inquiry process were also extremely beneficial to designing and conducting this study and tied in well with the overall purposes and goals of *Ready, Set, Learn*. There had been an excess of academic criticism on Portuguese-Canadians and the educational disadvantages they face; the founders of *Ready, Set, Learn* sought instead to create a solution to them, tying in well with the solutions-oriented philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry. Furthermore, using the Appreciative Inquiry model allowed me to have ongoing discussions with stakeholders in the program and showcase the preliminary findings of my research. This will ultimately benefit the program as it will facilitate the

stakeholders of *Ready, Set, Learn* to revisit the structure and impacts of the program and become continuously engaged in making the program operate as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Implications for policy. The findings of this study cited negative schooling experiences as detrimental to educational success and pointed to how involvement in this community-based educational program helped offset these. Countering many stereotypes which painted Portuguese-Canadians as being uninvolved in education, parents in *Ready, Set, Learn* frequently mentioned their involvement in and commitment to their children's education. However, there still appears to be misunderstandings surrounding what exactly constitutes parental involvement. While the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2007) policy *Many Roots, Many Voices*, recognizes that different ethnocultural groups possess different ideas about what constitutes school involvement, a more comprehensive policy is needed. Advocating for parental involvement that is physical and limited only to schools does not take into account the importance many parents place on education within their homes or their active involvement in education outside of the traditional schooling setting.

Furthermore, the anxieties many students experience surrounding their transition into high school or post-secondary could be reflective a potential lack of preparation in elementary school. Academic and career aspirations as well as occupational explorations should begin in elementary school as students need an early start and many opportunities to learn about their interests and abilities (Bernes et al., 2006). This is especially true for students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds who may not be as knowledgeable about their options. Policies incorporating academic options and vocational opportunities should be embedded into the regular curriculum, and more support should be provided for students to prepare to enter high school and various forms of post-secondary.

The negative experiences many participants talked about involving bullying have reemphasized the need to enforce anti-bullying legislation. Fortunately, *PPM 144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention* indicates that the Ontario Ministry of Education recognizes bullying as a negative schooling experience with detrimental impact on student academic achievement. This policy has since garnered support; mechanisms do need to be in place to ensure its proper implementation as well as evaluate its effectiveness.

Many critiques of school board policies argue that they fail to account for the diversities among schools relating to language, religion, culture, ethnicity, race, and socioeconomic status. Policy approaches which assume a degree of uniformity in schools in particular areas and districts undermine the value of equity and the breadth of diversity (Januário, 2003). This has often resulted in a lack of adequate services which can improve the schooling experience and bridge the gap between the home and the school (Nunes, 2003). Sylvia, a parent, was very frustrated with the long wait list to get her daughter tested for an IEP. The need to streamline the process for this is evident, but in order to ensure the benefits of policies, more freedom should be given to local schools to consider their wider cultural context and implement these policies in a way that best serves their community.

An effective way to accomplish this is to encourage more connections between schools and community-based organizations. As has been discussed above, these organizations accomplish what the education system often fails to. They inform parents about the functioning of the education system, changes that occur, and how these parents can take action. With *Ready, Set, Learn* in particular, parents can provide more relevant assistance to their children regarding their academics and tutors can facilitate and improve the academic link between schools and the home (Januário, 2003). As a result, the Ontario Ministry of Education must encourage and

invest more in school-community partnerships such as *Ready, Set, Learn*. Families and communities must be engaged in helping youth develop the attitude, knowledge, and skills they need to function effectively in tomorrow's workplace (Israel et al., 2001), particularly during this time of high unemployment and uncertainty regarding students job prospects. Overall, it is vital that programs such as *Ready, Set, Learn* continue despite calls to cut budgets for education and limit funding for non-profit organizations.

Implications for practice. The purpose of these recommendations for practice, particularly where it concerns educators, is the need to draw connections between the directives issued in policy statements and the realities faced by teachers in the classroom and members of the community (Reed, 2007). When McLaren (1986) conducted his study of Portuguese-Canadian students in the educational system, the Portuguese-Canadian community was marked by the absence of a powerful, unified and articulate grass roots movement that could serve as a collective advocate for Portuguese equality in the school system. The community now possesses this in the form of *Ready, Set, Learn*. In order to ensure the sustainability of this program, it is imperative that its connections with local schools be maintained and enhanced. Teachers and administrators must be encouraged to continue to work closely with community-based educational organizations. This will not only facilitate parental involvement in education, but ensure that the resources brought to bear on students development can be strengthened and the community as a whole can benefit (Smith & Sobel, 2010).

The linkages between schools and their surrounding communities should begin in undergraduate courses and teacher education programs. Many universities, particularly the ones that have partnerships with *Ready, Set, Learn*, already utilize a service-learning methodology and have mandatory practica in community organizations. However, this practice should become

widespread. For example, Queen's University's usage of an alternate practica can be expanded to include involvement in community-based educational organizations. It will allow future teachers to become conscious of a community's potential, will help them to develop a culturally relevant pedagogy, and encourage civic responsibility, social justice education, and democratic schooling (Solomon et al., 2005).

As no emancipator pedagogy can remain distant from the oppressed, they must be their own examples in their struggle to combat their marginalization (Freire, 1970). Therefore schools should expand students' access to these role models, particularly within the schools themselves. Having more teachers, educational assistants, and administrators who are of Portuguese-Canadian heritage will allow students to see themselves reflected in the schooling institution and therefore make it more relevant to them, thereby encouraging them to stay in the system and continue their education. Furthermore, students should be allowed to become more involved in negotiating programs of study that reflect their personal needs and abilities, instead of being streamed in to pre-existing programs and structures that sometimes reflect the stereotypical assumptions of educators.

Implications for further research. It is imperative that more research be conducted into the educational experiences of Portuguese-Canadians. Specifically, a more up-to-date study showcasing the educational achievement and income levels of Portuguese-Canadians on a municipal, provincial, and national scale, much like Ornstein's (2000, 2006) and Nunes' (1999) works, would be beneficial to understand the extent of this ongoing issue. Research on Portuguese-Canadians will help to counter this groups 'invisible minority' status and showcase this community's struggles and achievements to the wider Canadian society. In regards to *Ready, Set, Learn*, a more evaluative analysis of the program could be undertaken to examine the

specific impact and outcomes of the program on its students. Although *Ready, Set, Learn* already engages in forms of program evaluation as part of their partnership agreements, this could be expanded to include evaluating the impact of this program on other stakeholder groups, particularly parents, tutors, site supervisors, program coordinators, and even local schools. This would further highlight the need for this program and explore the various ways it is having an impact on its surrounding community. Furthermore, a longitudinal study of the program could also be beneficial in discovering the educational trajectories of students in the program and how their educational experiences or trajectories have been shaped over time. Specifically, I suggest a study that focuses on Portuguese-Canadian students who do graduate from high school and move on to post-secondary study.

This study has wider implications for all immigrant students considered to be at-risk, and can provide an incentive for further research to investigate how other ethnocultural groups who experience educational disadvantage can address these issues through effective community organizing. Studies of other community-based organizations may serve to showcase the impact that these programs have on other communities and ethnocultural groups. Furthermore, organization theory analysis and Appreciative Inquiry studies can showcase challenges and strengths of particular organizations, explore their functions of extending education beyond traditional structures, and disseminate their strategies of sustainability and success.

This case study has attempted to oppose the idea that the cultural models, child-rearing strategies, and perceived lack of cultural capital will keep Portuguese-Canadians stuck in a perpetual cycle of educational disadvantage. Portuguese-Canadians are deeply concerned about educational issues; this is fostered and enhanced through their participation in community-based educational organizations. As the case of *Ready, Set, Learn* has shown, involvement in such an

organization provides a safe haven for both students and parents, who are often frustrated with the school system. Involvement in this program allows stakeholders to share concerns, ask questions, and gain knowledge of academic content as well as about the workings of the educational system as a whole. This ultimately encourages and fosters students' academic and vocational achievements as they are provided with role models to emulate and information which increases their options and ultimately empowers them. This results in more positive perceptions of schooling and works towards combating the educational disadvantages of disengagement, high dropout rates and low rates of enrollment in post-secondary institutions.

Concluding Thoughts

The writing of this thesis has taken me full circle, in a sense bringing me back to where I first began my practice as an educator at *Ready, Set, Learn*. While challenging, my journey has given me invaluable knowledge about not only my topic of study, but also about myself as a researcher and educator. I began this research journey in September 2010, where for the first time I left my family in Toronto, moving to Kingston to explore new educational territories. I like to contrast my experiences to those of my grandfather, who at almost the same age, left his own family in Portugal to make a new life for himself in Canada. While our lives have thus far taken radically different paths, they are profoundly connected by the culture we share, our ambition and motivation to succeed, and the sense of accomplishment we feel from working hard.

Being away from my family was one of the first challenges of conducting this research. Glesne (2010) discussed how writing about people and social processes requires you to remove yourself from the world of human beings in order to effectively concentrate. Because my nature is more introverted, I thought at this would be easy, but I soon discovered what a lonely

processes research and writing can be. Fortunately, the opportunities to travel back home to research *Ready, Set, Learn* allowed me to eventually find a balance between needing my space as a researcher and the support of my family and friends. Also, my use of a reflexive journal allowed me to reflect on these challenges in a creative way and understand them as being necessary to the research process.

Deciding on an appropriate approach to studying this community-based program was another challenge. I wanted to showcase the program and focus on its description, successes, and outcomes as much as possible without appearing to be biased. I was growing extremely disillusioned with existing literature on Portuguese-Canadians, as well as calls for top-down solutions and policies which barely involved the community members themselves. Discovering the Appreciative Inquiry approach allowed me to focus on the impact and successes as well as recognizing that stakeholders must be involved as much as possible.

Analyzing the data was also challenging and very time consuming. The task of analyzing, synthesizing, and summarizing documents and transcripts seemed never-ending. Similarly, my analysis led me down paths which although were very interesting, were not relevant to the study. Deleting these sections was very difficult, particularly because I had invested so much of my time and energy into the writing process, and had grown attached to what I had produced. However, these experiences have helped me grow as a person and have given me a profound appreciation for writers. Although I have always been a book-lover, it is only now that I can truly appreciate the anxieties and challenges that are embedded in the writing process; I have an even deeper respect for people for whom this process is how they make their living.

While pursuing further graduate studies in the future is very much a possibility, my primary calling is that of an educator. The presence of community-based programs such as

Ready, Set, Learn as well as the support it has received from schools, gives me hope that school-community partnerships can help address the gaps in the education system. I plan on applying what I have learned to my practice as a teacher. I hope that one day I will have the privilege of working as both an educator and role-model to Portuguese-Canadian students. I hope I can use my own experiences to inspire them to create and realize their educational and vocational aspirations. Furthermore, I hope to work to create a circle of support for these students so that their educational disadvantages can be somewhat ameliorated.

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Appendix A: Ethics Clearance

July 26, 2011



OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES

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Ms. Christina A. Kwicjala
 Master's Student
 Faculty of Education
 Queen's University
 c/o 250 Yonge Street
 Kingston, ON K7M 1G5

Dear Ms. Kwicjala:

GREB Ref #: GEDUC-564-11

Title: "A Case Study of a Community-Based Tutoring and Mentoring Program"

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "**A Case Study of a Community-Based Tutoring and Mentoring Program**" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (2nd edition) (TCPS 2) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, if applicable, of any adverse event(s) that occurred during this one year period (details available on webpage <http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html> – GREB Adverse Event Report Form). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB (TCPS 2, Article 6.16). For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementations of new procedures on the Ethics Change Form that can be found at <http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html> - Research Ethics Change Form. These changes must be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvingg@queensu.ca prior to implementation. Your request will be forwarded to the appropriate GREB reviewers and/or the GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Joan Stevenson".

Joan Stevenson, PhD
 Professor and Chair
 General Research Ethics Board

c.c.: Dr. Ben Kutsyuruba, Faculty Supervisor
 Dr. Lesly Wade-Woolley, Chair, Unit REB
 E-REB: c/o Graduate Studies & Bureau of Research, Attn.: Celina Caswell

JS/gi

Appendix B: Letters of Information

Letter of Information (Tutors, Program Coordinator)

A CASE STUDY OF A COMMUNITY-BASED TUTORING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen's policies.

This study has been approved by the New Horizons Community Centre and the researcher has been granted full permission to conduct research with the participants of Ready, Set, Learn.

This research is being conducted by *Christina Kwiczala* for her Master of Education degree under the supervision of *Dr. Ben Kutsyuruba* in the Faculty of *Education* at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

What is this study about? The purpose of the research is to describe a community-based tutoring and mentoring program and to examine the impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students it serves from the perspectives of the stakeholders. The study will require a one-on-one 60-75 minute face-to-face interview with the option of a 30 minute follow-up interview. The interviews will be audio-recorded and I will take handwritten notes. The study will also involve the collection of artefacts pertaining to the program but will not include any documentation of specific individuals. There are no known physical, psychological, economic, or social risks associated with this study.

Is my participation voluntary? Yes. Although it would be greatly appreciated if you would answer all material as honestly as possible, you should not feel obliged to answer any questions that you find objectionable or discomforting. You may also withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your position with the program. Should you choose to withdraw, you may request the removal of all or part of your data.

What will happen to my responses? You are participating in this study confidentially. I will not use your real name or any information that would allow you to be identified. However, due to the distinctiveness of the program, it is possible you may be identifiable through the information you provide. My supervisor, my committee member and I are the only people who will know that you have chosen to participate in this study. Again, every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy, and if any reference is made that may reveal your identity in the interview I will do my best to make you aware of that and give you the option of removing it from the data.

I will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. The data I collect will be visible only to myself, my supervisor and my committee member and will be stored in a password-protected file on my personal computer, and used in my thesis. There is a possibility that the results of the study may be disseminated, that data may be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences. However, any such presentations will be of general findings and will

never breach individual confidentiality. Furthermore, if data is to be used for secondary analysis it will contain no identifying information. I will be providing the *New Horizons Community Centre* with a copy of my thesis. Should you be interested, you are entitled to an electronic copy of the findings as well. Once the study has been completed, the data will be destroyed after the five year allotted time frame has passed, according to Queen's policy.

Will I be compensated for my participation? No, participants will not be given any remuneration for their time.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

While the research will not benefit you directly, it aims to benefit the tutoring and mentoring program by providing a rich description of its nature, functions and mandates as well as providing insight into its perceived impacts on students. I hope to learn of Portuguese-Canadian students' perceptions of how the program has impacted them and how their attitudes toward secondary and post-secondary education have been shaped by their participation in the program. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help bring awareness to the perceived impacts of this community-based educational initiative.

What if I have concerns? Any questions about study participation may be directed to Christina Kwiczala at c.kwiczala@queensu.ca or my supervisor, Ben Kutsyuruba at (613) 533-3049 and ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

Letter of Information (Parents)

A CASE STUDY OF A COMMUNITY-BASED TUTORING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen's policies.

This study has been approved by the New Horizons Community Centre and the researcher has been granted full permission to conduct research with the participants of Ready, Set, Learn.

This research is being conducted by *Christina Kwiczala* for her Master of Education degree under the supervision of *Dr. Ben Kutsyuruba* in the Faculty of *Education* at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

What is this study about? The purpose of the research is to describe a community-based tutoring and mentoring program and to examine the impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students it serves from the perspectives of the stakeholders. The study will require a one-on-one 60-75 minute interview with the option of a 30 minute follow-up interview. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face, will be audio-recorded and I will take handwritten notes. The study will also involve the collection of artefacts pertaining to the program but will not include any documentation of specific individuals. There are no known physical, psychological, economic, or social risks associated with this study.

Is my participation voluntary? Yes. Although it would be greatly appreciated if you would answer all material as honestly as possible, you should not feel obliged to answer any questions that you find objectionable or discomforting. You may also withdraw at any time with no effect on your child's/children's participation in the program. Should you choose to withdraw, you may request removal of all or part of your data.

What will happen to my responses? You are participating in this study confidentially. I will not use your real name or any information that would allow you to be identified. However, due to the distinctiveness of the program, it is possible you may be identifiable through the information you provide. My supervisor, my committee member and I are the only people who will know that you have chosen to participate in this study. Again, every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy, and if any reference is made that may reveal your identity in the interview I will do my best to make you aware of that and give you the option of removing it from the data.

I will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. The data I collect will be visible only to myself, my supervisor and my committee member and will be stored in a password-protected file on my personal computer, and used in my thesis. There is a possibility that the results of the study may be disseminated, that data may be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences. However, any such presentations will be of general findings and will never breach individual confidentiality. Furthermore, if data is to be used for secondary analysis it will contain no identifying information. I will be providing the *New Horizons Community Centre* with a copy of my thesis. Should you be interested, you are entitled to an electronic copy

of the findings as well. Once the study has been completed, the data will be destroyed after the five year allotted time frame has passed, according to Queen's policy.

Will I be compensated for my participation? No, participants will not be given any remuneration for their time.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

While the research will not benefit you directly, it aims to benefit the tutoring and mentoring program your child/children are involved in. I hope to provide a rich description of the nature, functions and mandates of this program as well as providing insight into its perceived impacts on students. I hope to learn of Portuguese-Canadian students' perceptions of how the program has impacted them and how their attitudes toward secondary and post-secondary education have been shaped by their participation in the program. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help bring awareness to the perceived impacts of this community-based educational initiative.

What if I have concerns? Any questions about study participation may be directed to Christina Kwiczała at c.kwiczala@queensu.ca or my supervisor, Ben Kutsyuruba at (613) 533-3049 and ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

Letter of Information (Students – English)

A CASE STUDY OF A COMMUNITY-BASED TUTORING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen's policies.

This study has been approved by the New Horizons Community Centre and the researcher has been granted full permission to conduct research with the participants of Ready, Set, Learn.

This research is being conducted by *Christina Kwiczala* for her Master of Education degree under the supervision of *Dr. Ben Kutsyuruba* in the Faculty of *Education* at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

What is this study about? The purpose of the research is to describe a community-based tutoring and mentoring program and to examine the impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students it serves from the perspectives of the stakeholders. The study will require a one-on-one 60-75 minute interview with the option of a 30 minute follow-up interview. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face, will be audio-recorded, and I will take handwritten notes. The study will also involve the collection of artefacts pertaining to the program but will not include any documentation of specific individuals. There are no known physical, psychological, economic, or social risks associated with this study.

Is my participation voluntary? Yes. Although it would be greatly appreciated if you answered all questions as honestly as possible, you should not feel obligated to do so if any of them are objectionable or make you feel uncomfortable. You may also withdraw from participating in this study at any time with no effect on your participation with the program. If you choose to withdraw, you may request removal of all or part of your data.

What will happen to my responses? You are participating in this study confidentially. I will not use your real name or any information that would allow you to be identified. However, due to the distinctiveness of the program, it is possible you may be identifiable through the information you provide. My supervisor, my committee member, your parents and I are the only people who will know that you have chosen to participate in this study. Again, every effort will be made to protect your privacy, and if any reference is made that may reveal your identity in the interview I will do my best to make you aware of that and give you the option of removing it from the data.

I will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. The data I collect will be visible only to myself, my supervisor and my committee member and will be stored in a password-protected file on my personal computer, and used in my thesis. There is a possibility that the results of the study may be disseminated, that data may be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences. However, this will be only of general findings and will never violate individual confidentiality. Furthermore, if data is to be used for secondary analysis it will contain no identifying information. I will be providing the *New Horizons Community Centre* with a copy of my thesis. Should you be interested, you are entitled to an electronic copy of the findings as well. Once the study has been completed, the data will be destroyed after the five year allotted time frame has passed, according to Queen's policy.

Will I be compensated for my participation? No, participants will not be given any remuneration for their time.

Are there any benefits to participating in this study? While the research will not benefit you directly, it aims to benefit the tutoring and mentoring program you are involved in. I hope to provide a rich description of the nature, functions and mandates of this program as well as providing insight into its perceived impacts on students. I hope to learn of Portuguese-Canadian students' perceptions of how the program has impacted them and how their attitudes toward secondary and post-secondary education have been shaped by their participation in the program. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help bring awareness to the perceived impacts of this community-based educational initiative.

What if I have concerns? Any questions about study participation may be directed to Christina Kwiczala at (416) 574-1405 and c.kwiczala@queensu.ca, the Program Coordinator Sandra Martins, or my supervisor, Ben Kutsyuruba at (613) 533-3049 and ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

Letter of Information (Students – Portuguese)
Carta de Informação
 UM ESTUDO DE UM PROGRAMA DE TUTORIA E ORIENTAÇÃO BASEADA NA
 COMUNIDADE

Este estudo foi autorizado de acordo com os princípios recomendados de diretrizes éticas do Canada e políticas da Universidade Queen's.

O New Horizons Community Centre aprovou e concedeu permissão a investigadora para realizar pesquisas com os participantes do programa Ready, Set, Learn.

Esta pesquisa está sendo conduzida por Christina Kwiczała para um Mestrado em Educação sob a supervisão de Dr. Ben Kutsyuruba na Faculdade de Educação em Universidade Queen's em Kingston, Ontario.

Qual é o objetivo da pesquisa? O objetivo da pesquisa é descrever um programa de tutoria, orientar e examinar o impacto sobre os alunos Luso Canadianos que serve a partir das perspectivas das partes interessadas. O estudo vai exigir uma entrevista de forma pessoal de cerca de 60-75 minutos com a opção de uma futura entrevista de 30 minutos . As entrevistas serão conduzidas de cara a cara, serão gravadas em áudio, e notas manuais serão recolhidas. O estudo também vai envolver a recolha de artefactos relacionados com o programa, mas não incluem qualquer documentação de indivíduos específicos . Não são conhecidos nenhuns riscos físicos, psicológicos, econômicos ou sociais associados a este estudo.

É a minha participação voluntária? Sim. Agradeco imenso se voce respondeu a todas as perguntas o mais honestamente possível, você não é obrigado a responder se a pergunta em questão o fizer sentir desconfortável. Você tem a opção de se retirar como participante deste estudo a qualquer momento. Se você optar por se retirar, você pode solicitar a remoção de todos ou parte dos seus dados.

O que vai acontecer com as minhas respostas? Sua participação será confidencial. Eu não vou usar seu nome real ou qualquer informação que lhe permitiria ser identificado. Mas, devido à especificidade do programa, é possível que você pode ser identificado através das informações que você fornecer. O meu supervisor, o meu membro do comitê, os seus pais e eu somos as únicas pessoas que saberão que você escolheu para participar neste estudo. Todos os esforços serão feitos para proteger a sua privacidade, e se qualquer referência que seja feita na sua entrevista que possa revelar a sua identidade eu vou alertá-lo sobre isso e dar-lhe a opção de remover a informação previamente recolhida.

Vou manter a confidencialidade na medida do possível. Os dados que coletamos serão visíveis apenas para meu supervisor, meu membro do comitê, e eu e serão armazenados em um arquivo protegido por senha no meu computador pessoal, e utilizado na minha tese. Há uma possibilidade de que os resultados do estudo poderão ser divulgados, ou publicados em jornais profissionais ou apresentados em conferências científicas. Mas, este será apenas de conclusões gerais e nunca violaram o sigilo individual. Além disso, se os dados forem usados para outras análises não irão conter nenhuma informação de identificação. Eu estarei fornecendo O *New Horizons Community*

Centre com uma cópia da minha tese. Se você está interessado, você também tem direito a uma cópia eletrônica dos resultados deste estudo. Uma vez que o estudo foi concluído, os dados serão destruídos após um período de tempo de cinco anos de acordo com a apolice da Queen's.

Será que vou ser compensado pela minha participação? Não, os participantes não terão qualquer compensação pelo o seu tempo.

Existe alguma vantagem de participar neste estudo? Embora a pesquisa não vai beneficiá-lo diretamente, indiretamente ira beneficiar o programa que você está envolvido . Eu espero fornecer uma abundante descrição da natureza, funções e mandatos deste programa, bem como fornecer informacoes sobre seus impactos observados nos alunos. Espero aprender percepções dos alunos Luso Canadianos, e se as suas atitudes em relação ao ensino secundário e pós-secundário foram moldadas pela sua participacao no programa. Baseado no que aprendemos como resultado desta iniciativa eu espero que os factos observados vao ajudar esta comunidade educativa.

E se eu tiver perguntas?

Christina Kwiczała tel: (416) 574-1405 email: c.kwiczala@queensu.ca

Supervisor, Ben Kutsyuruba tel: (613) 533-3049 email: ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca.

Presidente do Conselho Geral de Ética em Pesquisa tel: (613) 533-6081
email: chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

Coordenador do Programa *Ready, Set, Learn*, Sandra Martins

Appendix C: Consent Forms

Consent Form (Tutors, Program Coordinator)

A CASE STUDY OF A COMMUNITY-BASED TUTORING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return it to Christina Kwiczala. Retain the second copy for your records.

Name (please print clearly): _____

1. I have read the *Letter of Information* and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I will be participating in the study called *A case study of a community-based tutoring and mentoring program*. I understand that the purpose of this study is to describe the community-based tutoring and mentoring program I am involved in and to examine the impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students it serves from the perspectives of the stakeholders.
3. I understand that the nature of my participation in this study will involve at least one one-on-one interview of about 60-75 minutes, with the option of a 30 minute follow-up interview. I understand that these interviews will be conducted face-to-face, will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.
4. I understand that the researcher will have access to artefacts used in the tutoring program. However, these artefacts will not contain references to myself or any other participant in the program, or other identifiable information.
5. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time with no effect upon my position in the program. Should I choose to withdraw, I understand that I may request the removal of all or part of my data.
6. I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future to the extent possible. I understand that the data may also be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences, but any such presentations will be of general findings and will never breach individual confidentiality.
7. I understand that I am entitled to an electronic copy of the findings if I am interested. I would like the findings of the study to be sent to the following email address:

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Any questions about study participation may be directed to Christina Kwiczala at c.kwiczala@queensu.ca or my supervisor, Ben Kutsyuruba at (613) 533-3049 and ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

Consent Form (Parents)

A CASE STUDY OF A COMMUNITY-BASED TUTORING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return it to Christina Kwiczala. Retain the second copy for your records.

Name (please print clearly): _____

1. I have read the *Letter of Information* and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I will be participating in the study called *A case study of a community-based tutoring and mentoring program*. I understand that the purpose of this study is to describe the community-based tutoring and mentoring program and to examine the impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students it serves from the perspectives of the stakeholders.
3. I understand that the nature of my participation in this study will involve at least one one-on-one interview of about 60-75 minutes, with the option of a 30 minute follow-up interview. I understand that these interviews will be conducted face-to-face, will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.
4. I understand that the researcher will have access to artefacts used in the tutoring program. However, these artefacts will not contain references to any participant in the program or other identifiable information.
5. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time with no effect upon my child's/children's position in the program. Should I choose to withdraw, I understand that I may request the removal of all or part of my data.
6. I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future to the extent possible. I understand that the data may also be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences, but any such presentations will be of general findings and will never breach individual confidentiality.
7. I understand that I am entitled to an electronic copy of the findings if I am interested. I would like the findings of the study to be sent to the following email address:

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Any questions about study participation may be directed to Christina Kwiczala at c.kwiczala@queensu.ca or my supervisor, Ben Kutsyruba at (613) 533-3049 and ben.kutsyruba@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

Consent Form (Students – English)

A CASE STUDY OF A COMMUNITY-BASED TUTORING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return it to Christina Kwiczala. Retain the second copy for your records.

Name (please print clearly): _____

1. I have read the *Letter of Information* and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I will be participating in the study called *A case study of a community-based tutoring and mentoring program*. I understand that the purpose of this study is to describe the community-based tutoring and mentoring program I am involved in and to examine the impact on the Portuguese-Canadian students it serves from the perspectives of the stakeholders.
3. I understand that the nature of my participation in this study will involve at least one one-on-one face-to-face interview of about 60-75 minutes, with the option of a 30 minute follow-up interview. I understand that these interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed word-for-word.
4. I understand that the researcher will have access to artefacts used in the program. However, these artefacts will not contain references to myself or any other participant in the program, or other identifiable information.
5. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may leave at any time with no effect on my participation in the program. Should I choose to leave, I understand that I may request the removal of all or part of my data.
6. I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future to the extent possible. I understand that the data may also be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences, but these will be of general findings and will never violate my confidentiality.
7. I understand that I am entitled to an electronic copy of the findings if I am interested. I would like the findings of the study to be sent to the following email address:

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have read the above statements and give permission for my child to participate in this research:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Any questions about study participation may be directed to Christina Kwiczala at c.kwiczala@queensu.ca or my supervisor, Ben Kutsyuruba at (613) 533-3049 and ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

Consent Form (Students – Portuguese)
Formulário de Consentimento

UM ESTUDO DE UM PROGRAMA DE TUTORIA E ORIENTAÇÃO BASEADA NA COMUNIDADE

Por favor, assine uma cópia deste Formulário de Consentimento e devolvê-lo à Christina Kwiczała. Reter a segunda cópia de seus registros.

Nome (por favor escreva claramente) : _____

1. Eu li a carta de informação e têm tido dúvidas respondidas para minha satisfação.
2. Eu entendo que estará participando no estudo chamado *Um estudo de um programa de tutoria e orientação* baseada na comunidade. Entendo que o objetivo deste estudo é descrever o programa de tutoria e orientação estou envolvido e para examinar o impacto sobre os alunos Português-canadense que serve a partir das perspectivas das partes interessadas.
3. Eu entendo que a natureza da minha participação neste estudo irá envolver uma entrevista cara-a-um de cerca de 60-75 minutos com a opção de uma entrevista de 30 minutos de acompanhamento. Eu entendo que essas entrevistas serão gravadas de áudio e transcritas na íntegra.
4. Eu entendo que o pesquisador terá acesso a artefatos utilizados no programa. Mas, esses artefatos não contêm referências a mim ou qualquer outro participante no programa, ou outras informações identificáveis.
5. Eu entendo que minha participação neste estudo é voluntária e eu possa sair a qualquer momento, com nenhum efeito sobre a minha participação no programa. Se eu optar por deixar, eu entendo que eu possa solicitar a remoção de todos ou parte dos meus dados.
6. Eu entendo que todos os esforços serão feitos para manter a confidencialidade dos dados, agora e no futuro na medida do possível. Eu entendo que os dados também podem ser publicados em jornais profissionais ou apresentados em conferências científicas, mas estas serão de conclusões gerais e nunca violar a minha confidencialidade.
7. Eu entendo que tenho direito a uma cópia eletrônica dos resultados se eu estou interessado. Gostaria das conclusões do estudo a ser enviados para o seguinte endereço electrónico:

Tenho lido as declarações acima e livremente consentimento para participar desta pesquisa:

Assinatura do aluno: _____ Data: _____

Tenho lido as declarações acima e dar permissão para o meu filho a participar nesta pesquisa:

Assinatura dos pais: _____ Data: _____

Qualquer dúvida sobre participação no estudo pode ser direcionado para Christina Kwiczała em c.kwiczala@queensu.ca ou meu supervisor, Ben Kutsyuruba em (613) 533-3049 e ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca. Quaisquer preocupações éticas sobre o estudo podem ser dirigidas ao Presidente do Conselho Geral de Ética em Pesquisa em 613-533-6081 ou chair.GREB@queensu.ca

Appendix D: List of Documents Examined

Document Title	Folder Location	Year	Organization Theory Categorization and Code
<i>Assessment of Benefit of Program</i>	Evaluation	2010	Purpose and Goals (PG) Feedback and Results (FBR)
<i>Community Centre Overview</i>	New Horizons [pseudonym]	2010	Governance and Decision Making (GDM)
<i>Community Field Work Description</i>	Teacher Candidates	2011	Collaboration (COL)
<i>End of Year Articles</i>	Outreach	2009	Purpose and Goals (PG) Feedback and Results (FBR)
<i>Expansion Article</i>	Outreach		
<i>Graduation</i>	Events	2011	Activities (ACT)
<i>Information Package</i>	Outreach	2011	Structure and Design (SD) Purpose and Goals (PG) Activities (ACT) Size and Growth (SG) Financing (FIN) Collaboration (COL) Feedback and Results (FBR)
<i>Information for Students</i>	Shadow-a-Student Day [pseudonym]	2010	Activities (ACT)
<i>New Horizons Community Centre</i> [pseudonym]	Operations	2011	Purpose and Goals (PG)
<i>Mayor's Gala Dinner</i> [pseudonym]	Events	2007	Activities (ACT) Financing (FIN)
<i>Organization Feedback Form</i>	Teacher Candidates	2007	Collaboration (COL) Feedback and Results (FBR)
<i>Partnership Agreement School Boards</i>	Administrative	2008	Structure and Design (SD) Collaboration (COL) Financing (FIN)
<i>Placement Description</i>	Teacher Candidates	2007	Collaboration (COL)
<i>Principals Letter</i>	Fundraising	2007	Financing (FIN) Collaboration (COL)
<i>Program Description Write-Up</i>	Operations	2008	Structure and Design (SD) Purpose and Goals (PG) Activities (ACT) Collaboration (COL)
<i>Program Evaluation Reports</i>	Administrative	2002, 2003, 2004, 2005	Structure and Design (SD) Size and Growth (SG) Governance and Decision Making (GDM)

			Financing (FIN) Feedback and Results (FBR)
<i>Program Needs</i>	Evaluation	2007	Feedback and Results (FBR)
<i>Promotions</i>	Advertising	2007	Outreach (OUT)
<i>Student Feedback</i>	Shadow-a-Student Day [pseudonym]	2010	Activities (ACT)
<i>Stakeholder Experiences</i>	Stakeholder Experiences	2008, 2009, 2010	Feedback and Results (FBR)
<i>Steering Committee</i>	Committees	2005	Governance and Decision Making (GDM)
<i>Steering Committee Notes</i>	Committees	2004	Governance and Decision Making (GDM)
<i>Sustainability Plan</i>	Administrative	2001	Structure and Design (SD) Size and Growth (SG) Governance and Decision Making (GDM) Financing (FIN)
<i>Tutor and Supervisor Manual</i>	Orientation	2011	Structure and Design (SD)
<i>Teacher Memo</i>	Schools	2010	Structure and Design (SD)
<i>Youth Workshop Feedback</i>	Workshops	2008	Activities (ACT) Feedback and Results (FBR)
<i>Workshops</i>	Parents	2009	Activities (ACT)

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Students

- Please state your name.
- Do you consent to participate in this interview?
- How did you learn of/hear about this program?
- Why did you sign up at this program?
 - Did someone encourage you to sign up?
 - If yes, who was it?
- Walk me through a typical tutoring session.
- Tell me about your relationship with your tutor.
- Does your tutor ever offer you advice?
 - If so, what is it about?
- Do you respect your tutor?
 - If so, why?
- Share a time when you felt happiest/most successful at a tutoring session.
- Do you like your school and enjoy going to it?
 - Why/why not?
- Do you like your teachers?
 - Why/why not?
- What were your feelings toward school when you first began the program?
 - Why?
- What are your feelings toward school now?
 - Why?

- What are some of your hobbies, interests or activities?
- Do you know what you want to be when you grow up?
 - Why?
- How do you intend to get to where you want to be?
- Are you excited to go to high school?
 - Why/why not?
- Did your parents go to school?
- Do your parents ever talk to you about school/careers?
 - Offer you advice?
- What are some things you have talked about with your parents in regards to
 - The Ready, Set, Learn program
 - School
- Do you feel like you've changed at all by being a student in this program?
 - If so, how have you changed?
- If I were to ask your parents about your experience with the program, what do you think they would say?
- Have you made any new friends because of this program?
- Do you have any different interests or activities since beginning this program?
- If you were to recommend this program to another student, what would you say about it?
- Do you have anything else you want to say?

Tutors

- Please state your name.

- Do you consent to participate in this interview?

- How did you hear about this program?

- What attracted you to work in the program?

- How long have you worked with the program?

- Are you of Portuguese-Canadian heritage?
 - If so, has that had an effect on your relationship with your student/s?
 - If so, how?

- Can you walk me through a typical tutoring session?

- Do you think your students were happy to work with you?
 - Give me an example of a situation you've experienced where the student/s showed happiness or pleasure from you working with them.

- Tell me about your relationship with your student/s.
 - What are some of the things you communicate about?

- Tell me about your relationship with your student/s' parent/s.
 - What are some of the things you communicate about?

- Do you ever discuss formal schooling (post-secondary) with your students?
 - If so, how (give me an example of this conversation)?
 - Do your students initiate these discussions, or do you?
 - If you initiate these discussions, why?

- Do you discuss career choices with your students?
 - If so, how (give me an example of this conversation)?
 - Do your students initiate these discussions, or do you?

- Do you ever offer your student/s advice?

- If so, what does it pertain to?

- Tell me about some of the (non-academic) mentoring moments you have experienced with your student/s (things that weren't directly related to homework).

- Do you consider yourself to be a role-model to your student/s?

- If so, why?

- Have you seen any changes in your student/s in regards to

- Academics?
- Social skills?
- Behaviour?
- Attitude towards school?
- Educational/career aspirations?
- Anything else

since they have been in this program?

- If you were to recommend this program to another potential tutor, what would you say about it?

- Do you have anything else you want to say?

Parents

- Please state your name.
- Do you consent to participate in this interview?
- How did you find out about this tutoring and mentoring program?
- How many children do you have in this program?
 - How long have they been with the program?
- Why did you sign your child/children up at this program?
- Do you and your child/children ever discuss the tutoring sessions?
 - If so, what specific topics are discussed?
- Does the tutor discuss the progress of your child with you?
 - If so, what does your child's/children's tutor usually say about the tutoring session?
- Do you think your child/children has/have a good relationship with their tutor?
 - If so, why?
- Do you think your child/children look up to and respect their tutor?
- How informed are you about your child's progress in this program?
- Do you feel that you have been encouraged and empowered through the program?
 - If so, how?
- Are you involved in any of the other programs or activities *New Horizons Community Centre* conducts?
 - If yes, why?
 - Describe the nature of your involvement
- How informed are you about your child's progress in school?
- Are you involved in your child's/children's school?
 - If so, how?

- What is your relationship like with your child's/children's teachers?
 - Administrators, other school personnel?
 - What does your child want to do in the future (academically)?
 - Why?
 - Do you ever discuss academic or career aspirations with your child/children?
 - Have you seen any changes in your child/children since they have been at this program in regards to
 - Academics?
 - Social skills?
 - Behaviour?
 - Attitude towards school?
 - Educational/career aspirations?
 - Anything else?
- since they have been in the program
- If you were to recommend this program to another parent, what would you say?
 - Do you have anything else you want to say?

Program Coordinator

- Please state your name.
- Do you consent to participate in this interview?
- How long have you been program coordinator?
 - How/why did you become involved in this initiative?
- Why was this program developed?
 - How was it started?
- Is there still the same need for this program as there was when it first started?
- How has this program promoted itself to the Portuguese-Canadian community?
- Please describe Ready, Set, Learn's relationship with the school personnel at the tutoring sites:
 - Administration
 - Teachers
 - Other (secretaries, custodians)
- How has this program encouraged parental involvement?
 - In Ready, Set, Learn?
 - In the schools?
- How has this program encouraged teacher involvement?
- Does this program use other strategies to aid/encourage students, besides the tutoring and mentoring program? (i.e. workshops, university day, scholarships, etc.)
- In the past 10 years, what evidence is there of this program's impact on students?
- From your discussions with students, what do you think are some of their thoughts about the program?
- Can you tell me of specific examples of changes in students in regards to
 - Academics?

- Social skills?
- Behaviour?
- Attitude toward school?
- Educational/career aspirations?
- Anything else?

- Can you provide me with access to the programs documents to assist me in my analysis of this program?

- Do you have anything else you want to say?

Appendix F: Frequency of Etic and Emic Codes

Etic Codes		Tutors			Parents		Students					Program Co-ordinator		
Item	Code	Beth	Manuel	Kevin	Conceição	Sylvia	Marco	Tatiana	Jessie	Celia	Bella	Sandra	Frequency Among Participants	Frequency in Documents
Cultural Capital	CC	6	6	4	10	3	2	0	1	1	2	29	48	23
Socio-Economic Status	SES	2	1	0	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	2	10	1
Child Rearing	CR	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	11	1
Parental Involvement	PI	4	2	4	8	11	3	1	2	3	3	9	50	7
Academic/ Career Aspirations	ACA	2	2	2	3	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	16	4
Mentoring	MEN	12	9	10	2	1	1	2	2	3	1	11	54	10
School Experiences	SE	3	3	2	8	10	3	2	1	4	2	11	49	8
Student Impacts	SI	3	1	3	2	5	1	0	1	4	3	9	32	20

Emic Codes		Tutors			Parents		Students					Program Co-ordinator		
Item	Code	Beth	Manuel	Kevin	Conceição	Sylvia	Marco	Tatiana	Jessie	Celia	Bella	Sandra	Frequency Among Participants	Frequency in Documents
Bullying	BUL	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	0
Play in Fostering Mentoring	PLAY	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1
Family Structure	SPF	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1
Challenges of Tutoring	CT	6	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0
Learning How to Teach	LT	7	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	15	0
Transitions	TRAN	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	0
Tutor Goals and Aspirations	TGA	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	1
School Experiences	SE	3	3	2	8	10	3	2	1	4	2	11	49	8
Student Impacts	SI	3	1	3	2	5	1	0	1	4	3	9	32	20

Appendix G: Organization Chart of *Ready, Set, Learn*

Executive director of *New Horizons Community Centre*



Program coordinator of *Ready, Set, Learn*



Site supervisors



Tutors

Appendix H: Growth of *Ready, Set, Learn* Over Time