

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysis of Emerging Understandings and Recommendations for the Way Forward

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Four, the structure and support of tutoring were outlined and emerging challenges to the tutoring process were described. Such challenges are emergent with themed challenges forming an intricate interrelated web of tutoring issues. The use of the word ‘emergent’ has been used deliberately as in this research the challenges have been allowed to emerge from and were identified by, the research subjects, and not before the start of this study. Also included were comments by tutors and support tutors on the value of tutoring and suggestions of where tutoring could be further supported.

This chapter further analyses the themed challenges by proposing that they fall under a number of categories related to the infrastructure and management of the NEEC. The themed challenges outlined in Chapter Four and as related to different management structures are based on Freeman (1997: 6). They are as follows:

The need for more appropriate management regarding:

1. *tutor support systems*, to deal with constraints to tutoring caused by lack of time (working environments), lack of financial incentive and lack of experience/knowledge in environmental education and/or the NEEC and/or, with DE
2. *learner support systems*, to deal with constraints caused by lack of time (working environments), geographical distance between tutor and participant and, course materials
3. *information, guidance and enrolment*, to deal with constraints of lack of orientation of prospective learners and after enrolment, commitment from participants
4. *learning resources*, to deal with constraints caused by course materials and inadequate telephone access (within working environments).

A graphic representation of these themes and their relationship to the challenges in Chapter Four can be seen in Figure 5.

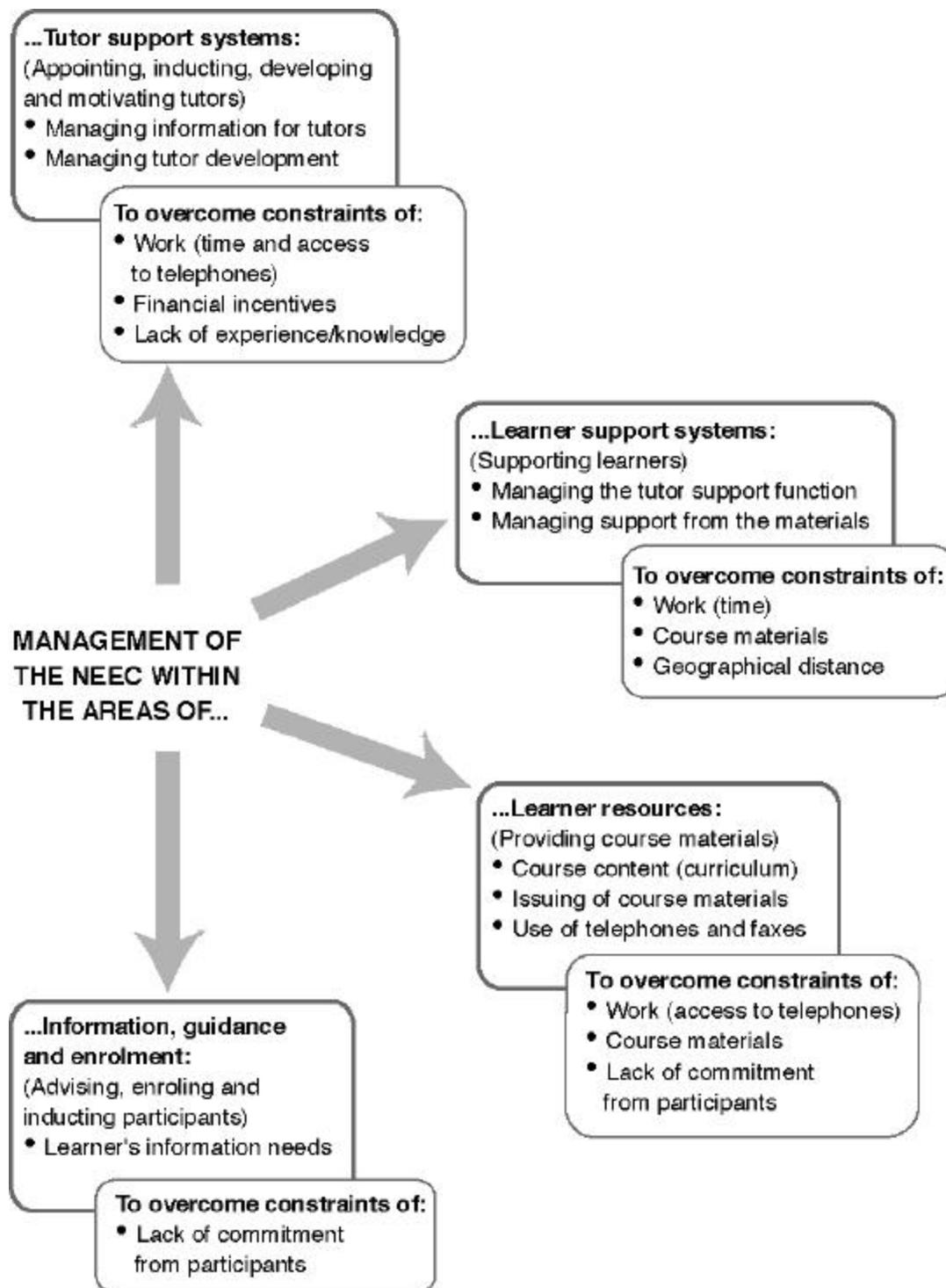


Figure 5: The tutoring constraints related to the management of the NEEC

As was discussed in Section 2.3.4.2, tutoring cannot be 'managed' however the support structures to help create an appropriate environment for tutors to carry out their roles and responsibilities can be. Most of the constraints fall under the need for better management within supporting structures. Therefore, in this chapter, the infrastructure and management areas will be explored in relation to the support of tutoring to suggest how they can help to overcome tutoring constraints. Suggestions for improving the tutoring process based on but also extending those made by tutors and support tutors will also be made within this chapter culminating with recommendations for improving the delivery, infrastructure and management of the NEEC course.

5.2 DISCUSSION ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NEEC

Tutoring processes may improve if the infrastructure and management of the NEEC is improved in specific areas. The following section outlines areas that can improve the constraints mentioned in Chapter Four.

5.2.1 Management of Tutor Support Systems

The management of tutor support systems in this study refers to the proper implementation of recruitment procedures related to the advertising, interviewing and appointment of tutors. This section will suggest how induction and motivation of tutors can help the success of tutoring within the NEEC. This last point entails the management of information for tutors and tutor development. The constraints to the tutoring process that may be overcome under this management theme are those of:

- working environments that impinge on the amount of time available to tutors
- lack of knowledge/experience of DE, and/or environmental education or the NEEC, (related to NEEC recruitment and inducting procedures) and
- lack of financial incentives.

Specific emphasis is placed on examples of situations outlined in Section 4.3.

5.2.1.1 Tutoring as part of 'normal' duties

Of all the constraints to the tutoring process mentioned by tutors, the most oft repeated was the lack of time available to carry out tutoring responsibilities. As shown by the research data, most tutors often found that their work environments placed certain restrictions on their tutoring processes. This was most commonly associated with the lack of time they had to spend on tutoring responsibilities. However there were some differences between the non-formal and formal groups regarding time available to tutor. The non-formal tutor had continuous and

unaffected support of her employer and hence could use her work time to fulfil most tutor responsibilities. However the role of tutoring within the formal education sector was not fully negotiated with all regional directors or (in the case of TEs) college rectors (see Section 4.2.2). Instead the ATs and TEs tutored within the boundaries of an informal agreement. This quite shaky foundation began to break down once the ATs and TEs saw how much time and energy actually went into the tutoring job. One suggestion therefore was that if work time was to be used for tutoring in the NEEC employers need to be fully supportive of the NEEC and the role their employees play in the course. A memorandum of understanding outlining the use of tutors in the NEEC could therefore be developed and signed between the NEEC and the tutors' institutes/organisations.

As for the difficulties associated with the management of the AT service, (see Section 4.3.1.1), this McClland identifies this specifically as an MBESC management issue, resulting in an ineffective service overall. Such a working environment must certainly add to the individual beliefs that ATs do not have the 'time' to tutor, as apart from the lack of official support from the regions, clear guidance from supervisors as to what to prioritise, and why, is also not available. However it is not in the scope of this study to suggest how the MBESC can rectify their management issues. Rather it is suggested that until such management issues are solved the NEEC should not continue using ATs as tutors whilst presuming that tutoring is part of their AT duties, as constraints such as those shown in this study will continue to hamper the tutoring process. Alternative arrangements of employing tutors should be therefore pursued, allowing ATs the opportunity to tutor, albeit outside the MBESC and MHEVTEC (see Section 5.2.1.2 below).

Additionally, both groups remarked that the time needed to tutor was much more than originally expected (as outlined by SEEN project TAs) and thus planned for. In such cases the researcher believes that once the tutor realised how much time was needed, and the use of private time was a real possibility, enthusiasm for volunteering their services decreased.

Furthermore, despite payment for tutoring being introduced, the lack of time to tutor as well as the issue of payment continued to be an issue. Comments after payment was offered revolved mainly around the amount of remuneration suitable for the time invested. It is assumed that market related payment is a strong motivating factor for spending quality time on tutoring. Added note must be made here however that in the NEEC, the non-formal sector tutor's view was that she was tutoring because the NEEC course offered opportunity to develop professionally. However she too made mention of the need for incentives because of the greater amount of time tutoring took in both her work related and private time, more so than what was originally anticipated.

The assumptions made therefore is that, unlike the RUGF context (see Section 2.4.1.1), tutors from the formal education sector do not place a great amount of value on the course *solely* providing professional development opportunities, particularly outside their work requirements (see comments in Section 4.3.1.1). This is due to the tutors' limited dedication to volunteering their own time and reluctance and/or inability to prioritise tutoring within their own work.

The above constraints are in contrast to the RUGF whereby there seems to be no problem with finding volunteers to tutor in the course. In the South African case this may be related to the large number of highly committed and enthusiastic environmental education practitioners who, because of their commitment to the course and environmental education in general, tend to tutor on account of the professional development and networking opportunities it offers (see Section 2.4.1.1 and Janse van Rensburg & Le Roux 1998: 49 & 98). Tutors in the RUGF seem to have no problem with working outside normal working times (such as on weekends). Less problems could also be related to the higher experience level of the tutors (see Section 2.4.1), which may mean fewer problems both within environmental education and generally with tutoring i.e. tutoring skills such as assessing assignments may be more highly developed than in the NEEC. Additionally, the less face-to-face time undertaken in the RUGF (see Section 2.4.1) course may place less strain on the tutors and thus pose fewer problems with tutoring.

As such, because of the different context in Namibia, introduction of a market-related payment for tutoring is suggested, especially as Namibia does not have a large number of highly committed and enthusiastic environmental education practitioners on which to call. In further support, payment may also be needed because of the large amount of time needed to tutor. The 18 contact days plus time for assessing and supporting participants outside these contact days (approximately 38 days in total although this would be the minimal amount) in return for a small honorarium, seems to be expecting too much of people who, apart from work and home commitments, do not rate the professional development opportunities the NEEC offers highly. A market related payment might motivate tutors to work for the expected time (see Section 5.2.1.3). This payment should also overcome the tutor's reluctance to work outside of working hours as well as allowing an official contract to direct the tutor in fulfilling all tutoring responsibilities.

5.2.1.2 Recruitment process of the tutors

The above issue leads to the question of the development of recruitment procedures and in turn the legalities of contracting and paying for a tutor's services. Specifically, if the course is to be democratic and provide opportunities for all possible tutor candidates in Namibia, the NEEC should put transparent recruitment procedures in place. This should entail advertising tutor vacancies in major newspapers, developing selection criteria and a complete job description

(outlining roles and responsibilities), as well as providing information on the level of commitment required by the tutor.

The recruitment process should also take into account the level at which the tutor will be inducted into the NEEC. As was mentioned in Section 2.3.4.3, tutors can be recruited at any stage of ‘experience’ however ideally should have subject experience. Unfortunately as environmental education is a relatively new field of study and is composed of information from varying fields (such as science, geography, social sciences and from the field of education), it is difficult to find people who are knowledgeable in environmental education at a first degree level. Hence it is expected that those recruited in the near future will only have basic experience in environmental education.

This study illustrates that the majority of tutors were educational practitioners with little experience in environmental education (see Section 4.2.3). Through observations and tutors’ and support tutors’ responses to questionnaires and interviews and the internal moderator’s reports it was evident that tutoring skills need development (see Section 4.3.4). This lack of skills, particularly in facilitation and mediation, proved problematic as it is the researcher’s belief that tutors did not mediate environmental learning effectively particularly within tutorials, and required the SEEN project TAs, course presenters and the NEEC National Coordinator (during national workshops) to ensure that the key concepts were adequately deliberated. The researcher therefore believes the responsibility of making the course work in national workshops and within tutorials in least two of the regions (within those that were observed by the researcher) was left to the TAs or presenters. It is surmised that tutors therefore did not know how, and/or were uncomfortable with mediation particularly of *environmental education* learning and were more comfortable to allow more experienced people to take this responsibility. In consequence, it is also believed when tutoring face-to-face tutors more often modelled ‘facilitative’ rather than mediated learning (see Sections 2.3.4.1 and 4.3.4.2). This may be unlike the RUGF 's-tutors (see 2.4.1.1) who often have more experience of environmental education and require their more experienced tutor to take the main responsibility for tutorials. As such there may be fewer difficulties with supporting learners in these situations, particularly when mediating learning.

The researcher believes that skills within adult education, DE and environmental learning take time to develop. Additionally, Raven (2003: 25) mentions that a tutor’s “background and insight into the course orientation, aims and course process appear to largely shape the support given to participants” and they therefore “play a significant role in shaping course processes that support professional development”. Through this study it emerged that many tutors were also not proficient in *mediation* of environmental learning as outlined in the NEEC. In particular, it

transpired that many tutors had difficulty in mediating critical thinking, reflexivity, autonomous learning and in particular grappled with the theory-practice gap. Tutors should have adequate understanding of the NEEC orientation and content, be critical thinkers and able to model reflexivity. Without these basic competencies there may be a risk of such competencies not being sufficiently developed by participants. This is especially risky if tutors are the main responsible persons within the NEEC, as was originally intended in the 2003 course. What is possible is that the performance expectations outlined in tutor roles and responsibilities (see Section 4.2.3) may have placed strain on tutors and contributed to their desire for adequate payment. This is especially significant as most tutors are inexperienced environmental education practitioners.

What the information and results of this particular research has revealed is that tutors should be recruited carefully. Potential tutors should have a sufficient level of knowledge in environmental education and general experience in education, with the tutor having qualifications higher than the certificate level. This also seems to be supported through Jenkin’s model (see Section 2.3.4.3) which places subject knowledge (Stage 1) with tutors having qualifications at a first degree level, before educational experience (Stage 2). This is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7 Proposed stages for development of recruited tutors of the NEEC

Support Member	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
RECRUITED TUTOR (STAGE 1: recruited with subject knowledge)	Basic development in adult education	Basic development in teaching at a distance	Development in specifics of tutoring in the NEEC
	<i>Induction period</i> 		

Therefore, in order to find the most appropriate people to tutor, a panel of NEEC stakeholders should carry out interviews based on the recruitment procedure mentioned earlier in this section. In doing so the tutor selection process should become transparent and consistent and both NEEC management and potential tutors should be aware of both the responsibilities of tutors and the level at which they are required to perform. Additionally, once chosen, recruited tutors should sign contracts that outline their roles and responsibilities in full, including the minimum amount of time the tutor is expected to invest in tutoring in the NEEC.

Subsequently, once recruited, the tutors may be in need of further professional development to help them become more competent with current adult education praxis, DE support strategies and

with the skills needed to mediate environmental learning within the orientation of the NEEC and whilst responding to the contextualised needs of the learners. Recruited tutors must thus be enabled to effectively fulfil roles and responsibilities through the development of skills and understandings. This is especially important if tutors are recruited with little experience in and/or understanding of the various aspects of adult education, teaching at a distance and tutoring within the NEEC. Therefore an induction period for tutors and opportunity for professional development as shown in table 7 above will be discussed in the following sections.

5.2.1.3 Induction of tutors

Once recruited, a needs assessment of the tutors should be carried out within the areas of adult education, and in teaching at a distance. As DE aims at producing autonomous learners, skills for doing so should be developed amongst tutors. This should help to counteract problems associated with participants who rely heavily on face-to-face contact sessions and the tutors for learning (see Section 4.3.4.1).

Once tutors are comfortable with Stages Two and Three, Stage Four of development can be attempted, i.e. introduction to tutoring within the NEEC course. Melgaard and Rasmussen (Section 1.3) and Ovlisen and DC (in Section 4.4.1) indicated they felt that having done the course helped their understanding of the course tremendously. However should potential tutors be recruited without this understanding, then Stage 4 will need to be focused on in more detail. The development outlined in Section 2.3.4.3 could be followed but as has been shown in Molose's research (2000: 96-97), inexperienced tutors without appropriate tutoring skills need to be provided with specific support in the areas of assignment feedback, support with readings and the interpretation of course materials, and with the tutor's role in facilitating workshop sessions. It is suggested here that not only should facilitative skills be developed but also that of mediation (see also Section 5.2.1.2 above). This point is especially noted as Molose (2000: 99) has shown that those course materials, if they are to be of significant use should be constantly and overtly mediated during sessions. Again however tutors should also develop skills to deal with the contextualised needs of their learners. Hence by stressing the need of mediating sessions tutors should recognise their part (i.e. their responsibility) within contextualised learning processes (see also Section 2.3.3) and thus contribute in better ways towards making the course a success.

Furthermore, as the NEEC aims at developing independent, critical and reflective participants, tutors need to have appropriate understanding and skills to promote participation, in-depth critical engagement with the texts and discussions; challenging own and others ideas and practise and for participatory and process learning (see Section 1.3). Generally this should be discussed within the orientation of the NEEC and hence be overtly related to how the NEEC is structured to achieve

learning outcomes. By doing so the ‘good education’ needed to be modeled by the tutors should begin to be clarified. Therefore during the induction period tutors should be given an opportunity to discuss ideas on teaching and learning (see Section 2.3.4), particularly exploring tutoring models such as those described in Section 2.3.4.1, and how these ideas and beliefs affect the NEEC tutor roles and responsibilities.

Such an induction period could involve those areas outlined in Sections 2.3.4.1, 2.3.4.3, 2.4.1.2 & 4.2.6 and should also involve the use of learning support materials that outline the necessary information and procedures needed to be followed by tutors. This would entail the development of a tutor support manual. This booklet, again as Molose (2000:99) suggests, should be overtly mediated during professional development workshops.

Overall the induction process, apart from orientating the tutor into teaching and learning in the NEEC, should enable tutors to more effectively deal with problems arising from course materials and geographical distance between participant and tutor (however these constraints will be dealt with in more detail in Sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.4.). It should also foster commitment as “enthusiasm grows as [tutors] understand what they do and why” (Jenkins 1997: 34).

Despite the need for investing time in the induction period, given that tutors are part-time, this development process would need to be limited whilst still maintaining educational quality. It needs to be proportionate to the amount of time they will be expected to tutor (see Section 2.3.4.3). In the 2002/3 course, approximately 304 hours of work was expected of the participants, with approximately 144 hours of this as contact time. Tutors should have devoted approximately 18 days for contact time alone, without taking into account the time needed to assess assignments and portfolios and support participants outside contact days. It could be reasonably expected that another 2 days a month (minimally) should be devoted to this support. If the course is to run for a year, with 10 months of this year being actively used for support and the other two as lead up to the first workshop and graduation, another 20 days could be expected from tutors. Hence 38 days should be used as guidance for tutors when developing work and ‘family’ plans. It is proposed that development of the tutor recruits would need to take minimally another four days (approximately 10% of 38 days), for which they are also to be paid for their time. The four days need not be taken at the same time but could be broken into smaller more manageable ‘chunks’ and spread out over the course of the year, especially if alternate tutoring models are followed (see Section 5.2.2.2). This would add up to a total of 42 days the tutor spends on tutoring responsibilities. In the case of the 2003 NEEC course, only 2 days were spent on development and little guidance was given on how many days should be spent devoted to the course. This lack of information and reduced time for tutor development must have had consequences for quality of

tutoring. It is therefore recommended that tutors be made aware of the time required for tutoring and that this time is included in the employment contract.

However, development of tutors should not only be left to an initial workshop. It is suggested that the professional development of tutors be encouraged throughout the course. This will be discussed further in the next section.

5.2.1.4 Continuous professional development of tutors

As was outlined in Sections 1.3 & 2.3.4.3, and inferred above, specific professional development is needed in the areas of mediation, course orientation, content and management processes to ensure learners gain a better understanding of what the course is about and to enhance the participants' participation. Additionally as mentioned in Sections 1.8.9 and 4.4.2, professional development should not just be a single workshop but rather an ongoing or continuous process. In order to do so it is proposed that the initial NEEC tutor development workshop be combined with continuous professional development 'on-the-job' with the overt help of a mentor and following the orientation as set out in Section 1.8.9. This 'on-the-job' development was originally the reason for having support tutors in the NEEC i.e. to support novice tutors within their tutoring roles. Unfortunately because of the varying constraints imposed on tutors and support tutors in the process of tutoring (as mentioned in Section 4.3), most particularly the lack of proper recruitment and contractual agreements, and minimal time spent with initial training and development, the process did not work well. Specifically, tutors could not find the time, nor were they motivated to participate in their own professional development 'on-the-job'. Such findings also reflect the limited support given to participants (see also Section 4.3.1.1). However, once these constraints are dealt with (as outlined in this chapter), 'on-the-job' development should be viable. A model for tutoring using 'on-the-job' development and a mentoring system will be outlined in more detail in Section 5.2.2.2.

The suggestion of having combined professional development workshops to share ideas on tutoring (mentioned in Section 4.4.2) is also seen as a very valuable and worthwhile suggestion as it would help with tutors developing competencies based on sharing experiences rather than on top-down, 'expert' driven approaches. Additionally the more experienced tutors could help the less experienced with any tutoring difficulties. Discussion would also revolve around true-life experiences and thus be more relevant than out of context and abstracted advice. Furthermore this form of development would model learning processes that are promoted by the NEEC orientation.

5.2.1.5 Numbers of participants allocated to tutors

In the findings (see Section 4.3.1.1) as mentioned by a support tutor and tutor, the number of allocated participants were too many for the tutor to appropriately cope with. Guidelines for participant numbers were not in place for the 2003 NEEC as, although there was a rough idea on numbers of participants each regional group was willing to take on, the work required to effectively tutor the larger regional groups was not known at the time. The inability to cope may partially be equated to the tutor's lack of experience in tutoring as it does not seem that seven participants could be considered a lot of work, considering modern Namibian class sizes (up to and beyond 40 learners in some instances). However because the tutoring role is part-time and tutors are often involved in other work, it may be necessary to limit numbers of participants within a regional group, according to experience and willingness of the tutor. This should ensure that participants have sufficient opportunity to be adequately supported. There is thus a need to have guidance on the maximum number of participants within regional groups. Because of this it is suggested that no more than ten participants should be allocated to experienced tutors, and fewer for less experienced tutors (and can be negotiated with these tutors).

It is proposed that if clear recruitment, induction, training and professional development procedures and activities are undertaken and limits to participant numbers are observed, the constraints of a lack of time, financial incentives and inexperienced and/or lack of knowledgeable tutors in environmental education and/or the NEEC and/or in DE in general, should be dealt with effectively. However these procedures and activities will need careful thought and proper development if they are to be a success.

5.2.2 Management of learner support systems

Constraints in this field are mainly caused by:

- a lack of time (working environments) to tutor (hence support participants)
- geographical distance between tutor and participant and
- course materials.

In this regard the management of learner support systems deals with the NEEC tutors support of learners to help them use the organisation's resources effectively (Freeman 1997: 48). This process of management involves:

- putting the support systems in place;
- helping participants to learn to use the systems, and;
- monitoring the participants (and their tasks) to ensure that they are getting the support they need (ibid.).

In the case of the NEEC, the main supporters of learners and the learning process are that of the tutor, with help from the support tutor and NEEC National Course Coordinator. However, as the tutors are the main focus of this study and the 'key' supporters of the NEEC learning process, managing support for them will be discussed in more detail in this section.

5.2.2.1 Setting up the role of tutors in a learning support system

As has been outlined above, enthusiastic tutors need to be recruited with adequate experience and knowledge of environmental education and preferably with DE teaching and learning strategies, and with experience of the NEEC. If not, then training and professional development strategies need to be put into place (see Section 5.2.1.3).

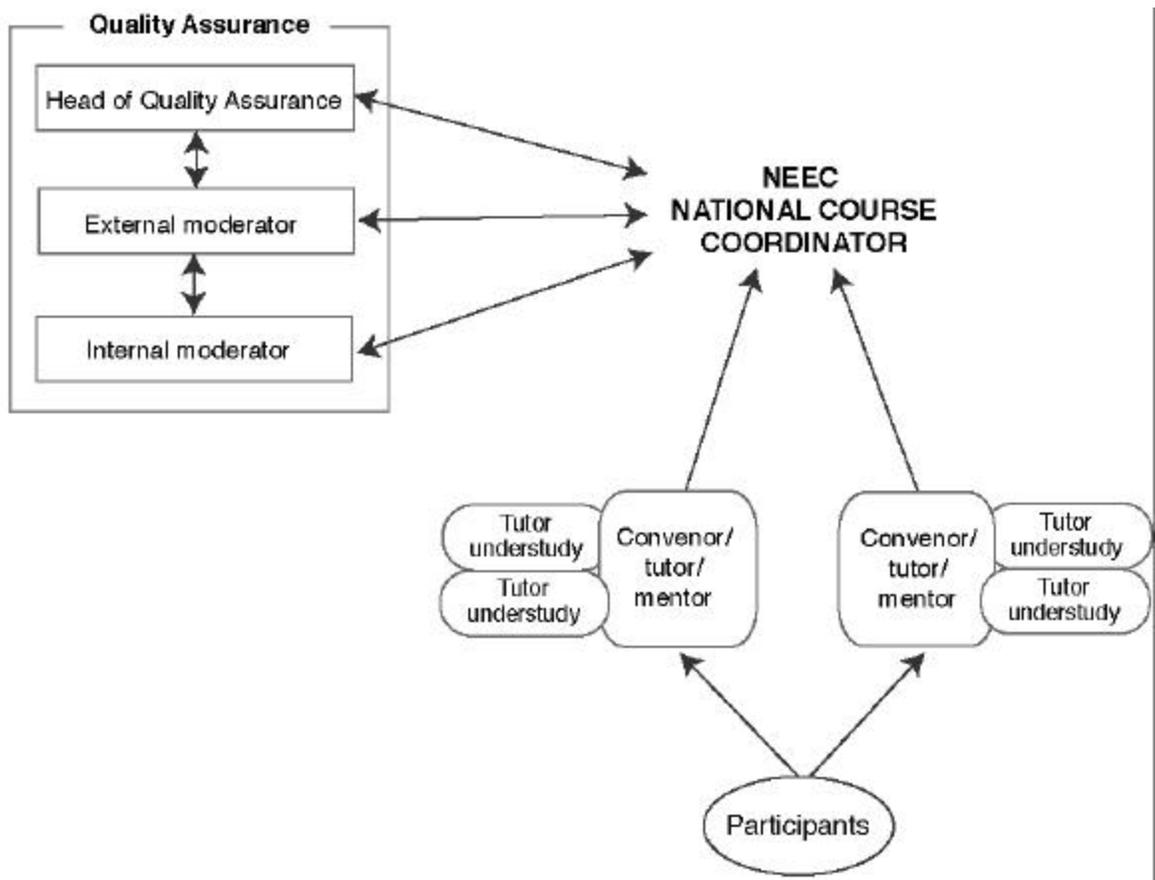
The role of the 2003 tutors in the NEEC has been outlined in Sections 2.4.1.1, 4.2.3 and a suggestion for developing and refining roles and contracting tutors to fulfil these were mentioned in Section 5.2.1.2 above. However, this implies that once the suggested improvements in management of the NEEC have been made, the tutoring system will have a high chance of being successful. However, the results emerging in this study suggests that implementing management procedures as outlined may not be feasible given the limited competent and appropriately experienced human resources in Namibia. At the beginning stages of a course such as the NEEC, it is crucial that all support persons are highly competent in their roles and responsibilities so that a well managed and reputable course is founded. As tutors hold the key to the course's success it is clear that they must be competent and appropriately experienced. This research has shown that this is not the case (see Section 5.2.1).

Additionally, the need for further support from more 'experienced' support tutors was mentioned in Section 2.3.3. This as well as the need of tutors within a social process of learning (see Sections 2.3.3 & 2.4.4) and the positive aspects tutors get from their roles (see Section 4.4) are evidences for the continuation of tutoring within the NEEC. However when looking at the constraints to tutoring that emerged from the study, it became apparent that some have the potential to disrupt effective tutoring and hence need urgent attention. As it stands now, the constraints to tutoring as mentioned in Section 4.3 point to the need to develop a better tutoring structure and management process. An alternative tutoring model will be discussed in the following section.

5.2.2.2 An alternative model of tutoring in the NEEC

As has been suggested in Section 1.3 (Molose 2000), without experienced and knowledgeable tutors, a chance of setting up a vicious cycle of unprepared, ill-experienced participant-tutors may occur. Quality assurance of the certified and accredited NEEC is thus compromised. Given that

most participants would like to see the course accredited (see Section 1.3) quality assurance measures need to be prominent and dependable. Through this the NEEC will deliver a course that not only is successful in achieving its course outcomes and hence contributing to the improvement of the environment but will also promote ‘customer satisfaction’ and uphold the institution’s reputation. Thus to ensure the above, the tutoring process needs to improve. To do so experienced, knowledgeable people competent in all areas of the NEEC need to become the main participant supporters. The experienced persons would provide the support indicated as being necessary and desired by many tutors (see Sections 4.4.1 & 4.4.2). Additionally, as there are limited people in this regard in Namibia, a suggestion is that the NEEC be supported centrally by a small number of dedicated course convenors who also act as tutors (see Figure 6 for an overview of the structure of this alternative model of tutoring). The role of the course convenor would be to both present and tutor the NEEC, with roles similar to those outlined in Sections 2.4.1.1 and 4.2.3 & 4.2.4 but with responsibilities to develop and implement national workshops. The convenors/tutors would be recruited similarly to that outlined in Section 5.2.1.2 and should be paid at a market-related remuneration for number of days.



—————> Denotes ‘is guided by and communication with...’

Figure 6: Model of the alternate structure of the NEEC

It is proposed that the course convenors/tutors take on and mentor a small number of tutor 'understudies', as tutors-in-training, to support the course convenors/tutors but also to learn 'on-the-job' (see Section 2.3.4.3). The learning process (as professional development) was recognised as being advantageous to some tutors (see Section 4.4.1) and the tutor understudy roles could provide those practitioners who are enthusiastic about environmental education with the opportunity to participate as 'tutors-in-training'. The tutors-in-training would need to undergo recruitment procedures as outlined in Section 5.2.1.2 to ensure that the most appropriate people are chosen for the job. These tutors-in-training could also undergo development as outlined in Section 5.2.1.3 above, however their roles will be initially confined to support of the convenors/tutors. They should also be paid a small honorarium however this will be in line with the tutor-in-training responsibilities and time invested. Thus through this process quality in tutoring through a mentoring process, and an option of again implementing tutor mediated regional tutorials may be realised in the future.

Additionally, the applied competency model outlined in Section 2.3.4.4 should be followed by this alternate tutoring development model. In doing so this model of support for tutoring through mentorship should strive to uphold the applied competence framework and be guided by the four points mentioned by Van Hamelen et al (2001).

However, there is a need for competent educational practitioners to support the process and that mentors of tutors should develop and implement tutor development strategies and not leave the developmental process to what the tutor can indiscriminately grab during the NEEC. In other words development with tutors should be overtly mediated based on planned strategies. It is the belief of this researcher that such processes were not developed within the 2002 tutor 'training' year or within the actual implementation of tutoring within 2003 and hence tutors did not develop appropriate tutor competencies (see Section 4.3.4). Thus the employment of experienced and competent mentors of 'tutors-in-training' should accordingly provide opportunity for tutors to become competent in all aspects of the applied competence model.

Additionally however, because of the need to reduce costs of the course (to make it accessible to all Namibians) there would also be a need to cut back on the number of face-to-face sessions i.e. national workshops and regional tutorials, the NEEC undertakes. Initially a number of centralised national workshops could be conducted whilst regional tutorials could occur but only as organised by the participants themselves. These sessions would then become classified as study groups. National workshops could occur three to four times a year for a period of approximately four to seven days each session. In addition, this would have implications for the participant, as they would need to do more work away from the face-to-face sessions. Thus if this option is

chosen, the centralised workshops will become the tutorials and numerous small group activities will need to be undertaken so that opportunity for full participation from all participants is offered. Also course materials would need to change to reflect this increased DE expectations. It is suggested that the course materials be re-written in a DE mode thus making them more accessible and DE participant friendly. Such a structure for the NEEC would then still allow time for deliberation and discussion in social settings and should not compromise the course orientation and expected course outcomes.

Out of necessity the alternative role for tutors should be seriously considered until such time as sufficient numbers of appropriate people have professionally developed and can be called on to tutor in the regions. At this time, regionalising the NEEC may again be an option and the management of the course be re-developed as suits the new circumstance. However whether this tutoring option or another is chosen, once the tutor system has been set up, learners will need to be informed and supported in their use of this system. This will be discussed in the next section.

5.2.2.3 Helping learners learn effectively within the semi-distance, part-time learning situation

In the case of DE courses, including those of semi-distance education, the ultimate aim is to develop the learner's autonomy (see Section 2.3.1). However this is not a quick and easy job and often requires effort and guidance at the beginning (see Section 2.3.3). This support comes mainly from the tutor, with help from support tutors, course presenters and a number of course learning support materials. However because of constraints shown by the lack of commitment (see Section 4.3.5) and caused by large geographical distances between the participant and the tutor (see Section 4.3.3), the learner still needs some guidance on how to use both the tutors and the course learning support materials when experiencing difficulty 'at a distance'.

The difficulties stressed here particularly involve the development of autonomous learners. It was noticed that by the end of the course participants still needed a lot of support from tutors (see 4.3.4.1). This difficulty is possibly due to the absence of appropriate mediation strategies employed by tutors to help participants become independent learners. Additionally in the NEEC, apart from the tutor and face-to-face sessions, there is only basic written guidance (found in the course file) as support. When learning at a distance, if learners experience difficulties, this written material may not be sufficient support for the learner (see Section 4.3.6). Moreover as the tutor has not been given specific guidance of how to deal with this situation i.e. development opportunities have not been offered and they have no experience on which to draw, a 'double dilemma' arises. As a result, without proper tutor guidance, or written guides, the learner may have nowhere to turn and the consequences of this could jeopardise their fulfilment of course outcomes. Both forms of support (human and written) need to be properly developed.

Initial training and ongoing professional development of tutors (Section 5.2.1) can help the human resource, specifically in developing the tutors' mediation skills. These skills would in turn promote the gradual development of skills associated with autonomous learning. In terms of written support, course materials need to be designed in a DE mode and comprehensive guidelines produced to support the course materials (in response to Section 4.3.6). It is given that the course is semi-distance and thus materials should be written with this in mind (and support partially offered during face-to-face sessions, see Section 2.3.2). Written guidelines need to be produced that will offer the learner information ranging from essential information directly related to the course, to how to use the course convenor/tutor or get other help, and how to contact other learners. These guidelines should be thoroughly discussed with participants at the beginning of the course. Use of these guidelines and the development of tutors will then hopefully deal with constraints posed by long distances between participants and support persons such as tutors.

Once a system of learning support has been developed and implemented, a system of monitoring and supporting the evaluation of the system needs to be managed (Freeman 1997: 49).

5.2.2.4 Monitoring and supporting the tutoring support role

The necessity of having regular monitoring and evaluation strategies in place in the NEEC is suggested so that an indication of the effectiveness of the support from tutoring is obtained.

As mentioned in Sections 4.2.5.3 & 4.4.2, a number of problems arose with the moderation of the NEEC. These were mainly to do with the delays in reporting (from the internal moderator) and the minimal moderation of face-to-face time and portfolios from the external moderator. Improvements to both internal and external moderation procedures should also improve tutoring processes. In terms of the external moderator, there is specific need in monitoring regional tutorials. In 2003 the external moderation team did not monitor any regional tutorials (see also Section 4.2.5.3) and thus the successes and problems of these tutorials could not be gauged until a final course evaluation was completed. The results of this evaluation could not be used to improve regional tutorials when problems arose during the year. It is therefore suggested that face-to-face sessions, be they national workshops or regional tutorials, be monitored regularly by the external moderator (see also Section 4.4.2) and regular reports produced. To help the process tutors should themselves conduct regular tutorial evaluations and feed these to the external moderator. Within this process, other than monitoring participant evaluations, evaluation could also include monitoring participants' progress within the NEEC. This would include regular monitoring of participant portfolios.

If the alternate tutoring model is followed (see Section 5.2.2.2), mentors (course convenors/tutors) may also be used to monitor tutors-in-training and in the process provide the appropriate support. These monitoring and evaluation activities should also be used to improve following contact sessions and to ensure that participants are learning effectively

In terms of the internal moderation and assessment of assignments, late assignments from tutors resulted in the internal moderator's report being delayed and in most cases not mediated in time to make a difference i.e. for improvements to be made in assessing following assignments.

Implementing management systems such as that described above in Section 5. 2.1 may rectify these problems (i.e. management of tutor support systems - recruitment and induction of tutors) particularly Sections 5.2.1.1, 5.2.1.3 & 5.2.1.4 which also deals with professional development and the appointment of mentors. In this way tutors (or in regard to the alternative model, the course convenors/tutor) will be contractually obliged to return assignments timeously.

In the case of the participants not being committed and therefore delaying the assessment process, further management systems will be discussed in following sections.

5.2.3 Management of information, guidance and enrolment

In this section, the management of information related to the course itself, before enrolment, during the course and after, is discussed in reference to the challenges experienced by tutors. Such challenges in this regard include those related to the participants' lack of commitment caused by the lack of orientation of learners before and after enrolment.

Within this study, tutors mentioned that participants were often not committed to the course and its requirements, which then made their tutoring difficult to carry out effectively (see also Section 4.3.5). This lack of commitment from participants resulted in participants not handing assignments in on time, not attending all sessions or when attending, often arriving late, leaving early or attending individual activities within the sessions sporadically. Such problems tended to occur more often, though not exclusively, in the formal education sector. Although non-formal education sector participants also had some problems with the aforementioned issues, tutors did not consider them such a major issue.

Participants from the formal sector were often specifically chosen by the SEEN project TAs to do the course. This may have been done to try and meet the SEEN project outcomes. With these points in mind, it is suggested that some formal education participants may not have participated wholly of their own free will as SEEN TAs may have tried to ensure that participants from their region would participate in order to meet project outcomes.

Moreover it was not until the participants entered the course that they found out that attending the course did not lead to a salary increase, which led to some acrimonious feelings (see Section 4.3.5). This suggests that participants in the formal education sector may not be motivated to participate in the NEEC solely because they value the professional development opportunity it affords. Such issues are linked with the need of appropriate participant selection (SEEN 2003f) and in letting participants know what is expected of them before being admitted to the course, as several participants mentioned in an end of course evaluation administered by the external moderators (Polytechnic of Namibia 2003a).

This evaluation also highlighted another major concern as was shown in Section 4.3.5. It was shown that a large percentage of participants' expectations overlapped with course outcomes only moderately if at all. This alarmingly indicates the course was possibly not what they expected or desired and may have led to their lack of commitment. Hence, when such results are taken into consideration, it is evident that participants need to be fully informed in order to make a rational decision about whether the course will be of interest and use to them before being accepted into the course. This pre-enrolment information could be conveyed through written material but it is suggested that workshops are a better medium as discussions could be stimulated within such a forum. Within these sessions/brochures, areas covered should include:

- who the course is designed for
- delivery mode and related expectations
- orientation of the course
- accreditation that can be achieved, articulation with other courses and possibilities of promotion within the Ministry
- outline of what the accreditation involves e.g. requirements to achieve accreditation
- average study hours per week needed to complete the course
- the course timetable - starting, workshop, assignment, finishing and graduation dates and session outlines
- course outcomes and aims
- the content of the course
- learning support systems, types of teaching-learning strategies undertaken, learning support materials and materials used
- what materials need to be provided by the learner
- course fees
- additional course costs and
- procedures when not performing adequately e.g. late assignments and disqualification procedures.

Note must be made here however that in order to keep the course flexible and allow participants to direct learning as suits their needs whilst still staying within the bounds of the course outcomes, participants should still be given the opportunity to influence learning processes. In this way the course stays meaningful to the participant and unintended outcomes continue to be valued.

Additionally, as formal education participants did not have to pay for the course (see Section 2.5.1) this may have had an influence on their level of commitment. Fees paid by an individual usually encourage a person to successfully complete a course. Such motivation may not be true of someone who has not had to pay out of his or her own pocket. Consequently, in terms of formal education sector participants who are fully sponsored, the participant, once accepted, must be made accountable for their participation, most especially in terms of accountability to the MBESC which this course (and thus SEEN project) currently falls under. If payment for the course is not stipulated as the participant is sponsored through the MBESC (or another NEEC donor), terms to which they are to comply should be developed. An agreement would need to be developed that outlines the responsibility for participating and completing the course and then signed off by the participant. This agreement should also have the commitment expected of the NEEC to help the participant in the learning process. It is further suggested that any breach of the agreement by the participant should be dealt with immediately and following NEEC procedures so that the participant is fully aware of the consequences of any further transgression. This will help to deal with problems before they become major issues and to keep participants and assessments on track. If this accountability procedure is not possible, it is suggested that formal education sector participants should personally pay for the course.

Naturally all NEEC support personnel such as tutors must also be aware of this information and know the associated NEEC procedures. This knowledge would be dealt with in more detail when undergoing development (Stage Four outlined in 5.2.1.3). Such information is part of the in-course information needs. This and post-course information needs, when not covered in the course materials are best supported through the tutor. The tutor therefore again needs to be enabled to support the learner's needs through education and training, especially through 'on-the-job' experience (see Sections 2.3.4.3 & 5.2.1.4).

Thus, if sufficient information about the NEEC is conveyed to all participants before enrolment, and non-fee paying participants are both aware of and officially agree to the responsibilities of participating in the course, constraints of a lack of commitment from the participant should be diminished.

5.2.4 Management of learning resources

The management of learning resources deals with that of ensuring materials are appropriate to the context and that they are developed, reproduced and delivered on time. This management section also deals with the use of telephones in supporting learning. Therefore these areas are mentioned to deal with noted constraints of course materials (see Section 4.3.6) and inadequate telephone access (working environments, see Section 4.3.1.2).

5.2.4.1 Appropriateness of materials and their timeous dispatch to the tutor and participant

Throughout the two years the NEEC has been implemented, the appropriateness of the course materials themselves has been questioned. This point again emerged from this study. Due to space limitations it is not the intention of this report to go into great detail about how the materials should be made more appropriate¹. However it must be mentioned that materials that are not appropriate can cause problems for tutors, as they are the ‘middle people’ around which most course content and tasks revolve. If content and tasks are not suitable to the context e.g. the content level is inappropriate, removed from local context or generally not meeting the needs of learners, the tutor will be the first person in the course who will be contacted for help or to whom learners’ direct their comments. The tutor may have a hard job of motivating and supporting participants in a situation like this especially when they have not been involved in the development of the course and may not have an insight into the orientation of the course as a whole (see Section 2.2.3).

Tutors indicated that the inappropriateness of parts of the course was often a problem. For example, as shown in Section 4.3.6, both tutors and support tutors described in their final questionnaire (Appendix 4 and 5) how their participants struggled with aspects of the course (particularly assignments) and that they needed to spend much more time with them. Requests to improve the course materials to suit the context were often made. Because of these requests a consultancy by Roberts & Trewby (2003) was carried out and suggestions made to improve the NEEC. Thus if the NEEC is improved by incorporating these suggestions, it is envisaged that tutors may have less problems with course materials.

In addition to the need of contextualised and appropriately pitched course materials, these findings support the need of recruiting tutors at a level which is higher than the NEEC certificate course so that tutors can offer more ideas and stimulate more discussion because of their broader

¹Reports on the appropriateness of the NEEC course materials are more extensively outlined in Roberts & Trewby (2003).

experience and knowledge (see Sections 2.3.4.2, 2.3.4.3 & 5.2.1.2). Tutors should also undergo a period of development to ensure that tutoring skills such as being able to mediate the materials are developed appropriately.

Once course materials are contextualised, there is a necessity to ensure that the materials are completed in their entirety and delivered to participants well before the course begins. This will allow participants and tutors to become acquainted with the course and its requirements before it starts allowing tutors and participants to bring their queries to their training and the first face-to-face sessions thus clearing any difficulties or confusion early in the course.

5.2.4.2 Use of telephones

The use of telephones was a small but important problem mentioned by tutors, particularly within the formal education sector because some tutors did not have direct access to employer sponsored telephones. This meant that there was a need for tutors to look elsewhere for telephones and they often used personal phones. Problems also arose when Internet was not directly available through the tutor's organisation, with the result that the tutor had to leave his workplace to get to such a service. This is both a waste of time and an inconvenience.

Moreover, additional problems arose with the use of personal telephones as procedures and payment for this use were not developed and possible solutions to the problem were also not communicated well with tutors. Tutors then believed that the use of their personal phones was at their own personal expense and this may have discouraged them from making contact with participants. Although there was an arrangement between the support tutor and tutor of the non-formal education sector for payment of telephone calls, no official NEEC system was put in place for telephone usage. Additionally, although there was funding available to reimburse costs, in general tutors in the formal education sector may not have been aware of such funds. The lack of procedures was surmised as mainly due to the different budgets and organisations under which the non-formal and formal education sectors operate (see Section 2.5.1). As a result no common guidelines were developed for the two sectors and hence there were separate systems (or no system at all) put in place.

Using telephones however cannot be avoided. But to repeat Glennie (1996: 26), from Section 2.3.2, telephone use may be a hollow option for many Africans especially as calls can be expensive. Thus participants may not use the telephone extensively to gain support for studies. However, in many a DE situation there may be few options for gaining help especially when the participant has exhausted all other avenues and so the use of telephones as a way of gaining support becomes very important. It is imperative that tutors always have access to telephones and

if possible, be connected to the Internet. In this way the student can contact the tutor when needed and be assured that they can both reach the tutor and have the option of asking them to return the call. Such an uninhibited access would enable the participant to gain the support he/she needs. When employing tutors therefore, they must be able to show that they have direct access to a telephone both at work and after hours.

Accordingly common procedures for the tutors' use of telephone/email should be developed and implemented. In doing so, guidance for telephonic communication, including how such communication should be initiated and developed should be included with the procedures (Freeman 1997: 45). Freeman (ibid.) also suggests the main issues for telephone use as:

- Being clear about what telephones will be used for;
- Briefing learners, tutors and staff about those uses, and;
- Being clear about who pays for the calls.

The researcher of this study also makes a further suggestion of including how and when payments will be processed.

Guidelines should also include the effective use of Internet (email) and faxes in terms of good teaching-learning processes (Freeman 1997: 47).

5.3 CONSOLIDATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD

This section will consolidate and highlight recommendations made in Section 5.2. These recommendations are not placed in order of significance but should be seen as equally important in contributing to a more effective tutor support system.

5.3.1 Recommendations for improving the management of information, guidance and enrolment

To:

- *Discuss pre-enrolment information with prospective participants* within course information dissemination workshops and to provide brochures/handouts containing relevant information.
- *Develop terms of agreement for participation* outlining the participant's responsibility in participating and completing the course, and the commitment expected of both the participant and the NEEC in this learning process. The participant should agree to these terms and sign off on the contract.
- *Discuss the pre-, during and post enrolment course information and the terms of agreement* entered into by the participant and the NEEC during the tutor induction period.

5.3.2 Recommendations to improve the management of tutor support systems

To:

- ***Develop and implement a tutor recruitment process***, which includes developing procedures in the areas of recruitment advertising, interviewing and appointment of tutors.
- ***Tutoring should no longer be viewed as part of a tutor's job description.***
- ***Carry out a needs assessment to inform induction training***. This needs assessment should focus on needs in the areas of adult education, DE tutoring and in the specifics of tutoring in the NEEC. Basic development within these areas should then be undertaken.
- ***Place specific emphasis on developing tutors' mediation skills, particularly in the area of promoting autonomous, critically thinking learners***. Also to develop these during development workshops and on-the-job 'training'.
- ***Implement ongoing professional development i.e. 'on-the-job' professional development***. This professional development should be supported by mentors (more experienced tutors) who will guide tutors in their roles and responsibilities and in mediation skills. Action competence should be aimed for in this process and in doing so professional development activities overtly mediated.
- ***Proportionally allocate time spent attending development workshops to the amount of time tutors are expected to tutor***. Also to pay tutors for attending workshops specifically convened for tutor development.
- ***Research market-related payment for tutoring and develop a payment schedule in line with findings.***
- ***Convene a workshop to share tutoring experiences, successes and challenges and involving tutors from all RUGF courses and adaptations***
- ***Limit the ratio of participants to tutors***. This ratio should be no more than ten to one but the final number should be related to tutor experience and willingness.

5.3.3 Recommendations for improving the management of learner support systems

To:

- ***Employ several highly experienced and knowledgeable (within the fields of environmental, adult and DE) course convenors/tutors in the NEEC. The convenors/tutors could be supported by a small number of tutors-in-training.***
- ***Centralise the course and hold three to four national workshops and provide opportunities for participants to form regional study groups.***
- ***Make course materials more DE friendly***.
- ***Develop and implement appropriate written guidelines with essential course information including how to use the course convenor/tutor, how to contact other learners and where else to seek help.*** These aspects should be discussed with participants at the first workshop.

- ***Undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of the tutoring system.*** Regular evaluations of all contact sessions, tutors' assessment of assignments and portfolios, and participant feedback and progress is recommended. Additionally if the alternate tutoring model is implemented, the mentors should provide the monitoring.
- ***Include the roles and responsibilities that tutors have in supporting a learner support system within contracts.***

5.3.4 Recommendations for the improvement in the management of learning resources

To:

- ***Re-develop course materials to suit the Namibian context.***
- ***Finalise course development and reproduce and deliver course materials timeously*** so that both tutors and participants have sufficient time to explore materials before starting the course.
- ***Employ tutors who have access to telephones during and after work hours. Access to the Internet is also recommended.***
- ***Develop procedures on the management and use of telephones/faxes and ensure that tutors are aware of these before tutoring begins.*** To discuss these procedures during the induction period.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has attempted to accurately portray the challenges experienced within the tutoring process and in response has suggested management and infrastructure changes to strengthen tutoring in the NEEC. However it is acknowledged that the study may have involved a number of limitations. Not all angles of the tutoring research could be investigated and thus a number of suggestions for further research are made.

5.4.1 Limitations of the study

The main limitation of the study was that not all regional tutorial groups were observed. Better insight through observing how other tutors and support tutors worked in their regional tutorials could have added value. Furthermore, the data collection could have involved more personalised interviews to delve into underlying personal tutoring challenges. Another possible limitation is that the researcher is still a 'novice' in interviewing and observation skills. In this case it may be that lack of experience in this area could have influenced the findings of this study. It is also acknowledged that the researcher could have added more detail to the findings by including her reflections as the study progressed, thereby allowing the reader to be more aware of any potential influences on this account.

5.4.2 Suggestions for further research

In terms of further research into tutoring, a number of suggestions are made to allow effective tutoring processes to be studied in broader detail. This research, because of its use of grounded theory was guided by the information offered by the research subjects. The research findings were thus directed towards the management and infrastructure of tutoring within semi-distance and part time adult education. However in the process of this study, an interesting area of tutoring realities relating to theories of teaching and learning arose. For example, many tutors mentioned their role as facilitators of tutorials, however when the tutorials were observed, facilitation made up only one small part of their tutoring models. It would be interesting therefore to investigate what tutors believe facilitation is. Tutors also did not use the term ‘mediation’ when describing their tutoring style. The reasons for this omission could be followed up and possibly extended with investigations into potential ‘good’ mediation processes. This could entail researching how knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of the NEEC are best mediated and why this is so. This study could not go into any great detail regarding this, however the need to understand why certain roles and tasks are undertaken is most certainly a worthy study. Additionally, further research into how mentoring can support tutoring is suggested. This research would enable insight into what aspects of mentoring support tutors in developing action competence.

Generally, research into the support of tutoring within semi-distance and part-time contexts is greatly needed because of the dearth of studies within this area. It should be recognised that tutors play an extremely important role in supporting learners and as such, should be aided in these roles. Support does not end with management strategies but should rather continue within professional development domains. Therefore focussing on the professional development of tutors can only serve to strengthen the tutoring process.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, tutoring within the NEEC course has been greatly influenced by the Namibian context thereby indicating that processes followed by the RUGF course cannot be fully applied. Namibia’s small population and restricted number of experienced environmental education practitioners have greatly affected the successful implementation of the RUGF tutoring model. The challenges experienced by tutors, such as those imposed by work constraints and through the limited enthusiasm for volunteer tutoring, have played a major part in disrupting the smooth running of the NEEC. This has prompted the development of an alternative model of tutoring whereby several enthusiastic, qualified and experienced environmental education practitioners are employed to convene and tutor the NEEC, and a small number of enthusiastic, environmentally experienced practitioners are recruited as tutor understudies. These understudies would be

actively mentored in becoming future course convenors/tutors. Such a model of tutoring would not only ensure the quality of the NEEC and enable a sustainable pathway for this course, but would also directly contribute to further professional development of future Namibian environmental education practitioners. The hope is that these practitioners develop confidence in critically questioning the environmentally detrimental 'status quo', be able to reflect on their own theories and practices and in light of these, improve and finally act on solutions.