

Effectiveness of Strategy Training for Struggling English Language Students:  
Profiles and Results of a Five-year Study

Josephine A. Taylor, Julio Cesar Gómez,  
Gloria Quintero, Ricardo Nausa and Luz Libia Rey

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## **Abstract**

This study examines a group of approximately 1,100 English as a foreign language students who attended a tutoring program dedicated to training learners in study skills and language learning strategies. The study covers a five-year period of time during which the tutoring program remained consistent in its focus and organization. Students identified by teachers as struggling learners were assigned between one and five hours a week of tutoring sessions in addition to regular English classes of ten hours a week. The tutoring program focused on language learning strategies and study skills as a long-term solution to persistent difficulties learning English. The data illustrate general tendencies in the kinds of difficulties students exhibited, the content of tutoring sessions, the amount of time spent in tutoring and the results of this process. Clear patterns emerge in these areas and suggest common traits and treatment of learners. In terms of actual success of the tutoring program, the study demonstrates that the vast majority of tutees dropped out of the English program before completing all 18 levels. Nevertheless, the percentage of desertion from the program for tutees is virtually identical to that of the general population, i.e. students who did not attend tutoring. More importantly, the rate of desertion for the general population is much sharper than that of tutees. Students who attended tutoring dropped out at a much slower rate than other students, indicating that the tutoring system may have aided these struggling students in terms of their willingness to continue with their learning process.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Struggling students are everywhere. In the English as a Foreign Language setting, many adults see the need to learn English and feel a distinct pressure to succeed in this endeavor. Some learners enroll in English classes and are able to reach high levels of proficiency. Others, however, have great difficulty progressing beyond the most basic levels, despite many attempts in different programs. There are different ways in which these students might be helped, including tutoring and remediation. This study takes place at a large bi-national center in South America. The largest program in this center, the adult English program, is intended to maximize learners' chances for success through a syllabus designed to train all students on language learning strategies and study skills. In addition, support for struggling learners is provided through a tutoring program featuring individualized strategy training. Training on language learning strategies and study skills is proposed as a mechanism to address underlying learning problems and provide a long-term solution for struggling learners.

The study examines a group of approximately 1,100 English as a foreign language students who attended the tutoring program over a five-year period of time, from 2003 to 2007, during which the tutoring program remained consistent in its focus and organization. Students identified by teachers as struggling learners were assigned between one and five hours a week of tutoring sessions in addition to regular English classes of ten hours a week. The data illustrate general tendencies in the kinds of difficulties students exhibited, the content of tutoring sessions, the amount of time spent in tutoring and the results of this process. Clear patterns emerge in these areas and suggest common traits and treatment of learners. In terms of actual success of the tutoring program, the study demonstrates that the vast majority of tutees dropped out of the English program before completing the 18 levels. Nevertheless, the percentage of

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## **TUTORING**

Tutoring is generally understood as a way to support learners who have difficulty coping with the pace or demands of the regular classroom. Its character of individualized instruction dates back to Dewey, who actually envisioned education more in the style of individualized tutoring than the large classrooms of today (Gordon, 2007). Research on tutoring is extensive, dating from the 60s, and is mainly based on school settings. A range of delivery models can be found, including individual and group arrangements in learning centers, and even internet sites. Tutor profiles vary from teachers to adult volunteers and student peers as well (Gordon, 2007).

In terms of individual learner characteristics, Gordon (2007) describes two areas: biological differences including attention, maturation stages and temperament; and psychological differences including knowledge, language, memory organization, mood, attitudes, personality, cognitive style and motivation. While biological factors are seen as fixed and unchanging, psychological factors are thought to be alterable in the tutoring or educational setting. Tutoring operates, then, on two fronts. On the one hand, it helps students improve their academic achievement in certain subject areas, for example mathematics or reading (Elbaum et al, in Thomas, 2008). Tutoring also aids students in becoming more independent through modeling, explicit instruction and

guided practice (Newhall, 2008). Fox (2008) links this idea of guided practice to scaffolding, which helps learners gradually achieve simple and then more complex understandings according to their capacities and potential.

While these practices may lead to positive results, another factor may be the extent to which tutors understand their mentoring function as well as the need for psychological and emotional support (Honkimaki & Tynjala, 2007). While tutoring is similar to mentoring, it may not imply the full demands of the classic mentor – mentee relationship, which is more permanent in character (Gordon, 2007). In contrast, the tutor-tutee relationship is usually based on the need to support classroom teaching with more individualized instruction for periods of time that may vary in length and intensity.

Recently, other approaches attempt to address instruction and tutoring in a more comprehensive or holistic fashion. One feature of these models is the need to detect students at risk, and to monitor and assist those who continue struggling. One such approach is the Response-to-Intervention (RTI) model (McMaster et al, 2008). RTI is designed to provide appropriate support and intensive work with students at risk in the regular classroom before considering them for intensive instruction or special education. Another approach is based on the cognitive science model of tutoring, mastery learning and Personalized Systems of Instruction (PSI) which consider a number of cognitive variables (e.g. student aptitude, quality of instruction and ability to understand instructions) that can be modified by the instructor. Mastery learning involves achieving objectives at one level before continuing to the next. Program systems of instruction (PSI) are based on self-pacing with immediate feedback through frequent testing on small units (Gordon, 2007).

Other important considerations in tutoring include the need to provide learners with sufficient time, permanent feedback and improved instructional approaches as a means to raise levels of achievement. In general, all of the models above obtain generally better results compared to traditional instructional methodologies due to their focus on addressing the needs of individual learners (Gordon, 2007). Green (2001) identifies some of the critical success factors associated with tutoring: the development of learner confidence, the review of progress, the clarity of purpose and the development of learning skills. The degree to which all of these factors are considered in a tutoring program, the more likely learners are to be supported effectively.

There is little mention in the literature on tutoring programs of English as a foreign or second language students. Most of the literature refers to tutoring programs for K-12 programs in the United States. As such, the program described in this study is without counterpart in the literature. It would be important to investigate other similar programs in order to learn more about the structure of tutoring programs and results obtained.

## **LEARNING STRATEGIES**

In order to help students acquire the skills needed to succeed at learning English, the tutoring program in this study focused its work on the development of language learning strategies and basic study skills. Learning strategies (LS) have been defined and discussed widely in the literature, and there are several important variations to mention. Learning strategies are defined as mental actions (Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Macaro, 2006), processes (Chamot & O'Malley, 1990; Cohen, 1998), techniques (Wenden & Rubin), or general actions or behaviors (Oxford, 1990) that learners engage in to facilitate (Wenden & Rubin; Chamot & O'Malley), speed up (Oxford), enhance

(Oxford; Cohen) or make more effective (Chamot & O'Malley) learning or using a second language. Not all researchers see speeding up, facilitation or enhancement to be the goal of LS. Rather, LS are considered as integral components of language information processing, assimilation and accommodation into previously-existing schemata (Macaro, 2006).

Learning strategies may or may not be observed (Wenden; Oxford) and can be used consciously or unconsciously (Wenden & Rubin; Oxford; Chamot & O'Malley). Chamot and O'Malley propose that LS can be learned and modified until they become procedural knowledge, as opposed to declarative knowledge. Macaro considers that learning strategies are always conscious, although they might operate so fast as to “appear subconscious” (2006, p. 330). Learning strategies are also said to be learnable and transferable to other domains (Wenden; Oxford; Chamot & O'Malley, Macaro). Their learning and use imply metacognitive processes, for example, planning, monitoring and evaluation of strategies (Wenden & Rubin; Chamot & O'Malley; Oxford, Macaro).

Oxford (1990) considers that strategies are used when there is a problem to solve. Macaro (2006), on the other hand, proposes that they are used whenever there is a language goal to achieve in a learning situation, and that they operate in clusters, sequentially or simultaneously. This clustered use of learning strategies is thought to guarantee success in language learning tasks.

Research on learning strategies has mainly focused on their impact on learners' proficiency. Hassan et al. (2005), in their extensive review of research on learning strategies, assert that including strategies in instruction yields positive results in language learning. Some studies argue that students who use learning strategies, for example, vocabulary strategies, have higher proficiency than those who do not (Fan,

2003). Others argue that students who use metacognitive strategies, in writing, for example, actually have stronger performance than students who have higher proficiency but who do not use strategies (He, 2005). MacIntyre and Noels (in He, 2005) observe that the adoption and use of learning strategies correlates to the degree of motivation.

Another important factor that has been found to influence the adoption and use of learning strategies is learner awareness. According to Cho (2007), “There is evidence that high achievers tend to use self-regulated learning strategies with greater frequency than lower achieving students” (p. 198). This is also confirmed by Wong (2005) who argues a significant positive relationship between language learning strategies and language self-efficacy. In his study, high self-efficacy pre-service teachers reported using more language learning strategies, on a more frequent basis, than their low self-efficacy counterparts. Morrison (2004), in a similar fashion, argues a positive relationship between students’ ability to monitor themselves and their reading proficiency in English and French. Ghebremuse (2007) also claims that students’ being aware of the existence of strategies to enhance their learning may influence their frequency of use. In these studies, successful use of learning strategies seems to depend at a great extent on students’ self-awareness as learners.

Hassan et al (2005) point out that despite the fact that learning strategies have been found to be determinant in student success, research must yet address issues such as the long-lasting effect of strategies. Other issues that require more analysis include whether specific training or simply enhanced awareness on the part of the learner are the cause for positive effects. Further, it is unclear why strategy training seems to work more for reading comprehension and writing skills than for listening, speaking and overall proficiency. Finally, more research is needed on the difference between discrete strategies and ‘packages’ or clusters of strategies.



Another important aspect that is not considered in studies reviewed is the systematic use of LS to help low achievers become high achievers, which is of particular interest given the objectives of the tutoring program in this study. The studies of LS training include disparate groups of subjects including distance language learners (Andrade & Bunker, 2009), undergraduate college or university students (Ceo-DiFrancesco, 2003; Fan, 2003; Morrison, 2004; He, 2005; Wong, 2005; Ghebremuse, 2007; Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006) high school students, (Atay & Kurt 2006; Lafontaine, 2006; Laufer, 2006), and immigrant children in the United States (Cho, 2007). Subjects in these groups are not described in regards to their overall abilities to learn or use a second or foreign language.

The research is clear on the use of learning strategies by high achievers. When discriminating between high and low achievers or proficient and non-proficient users, successful learners seem to master strategies better than less or non-successful students (Bin, 2008). High achievers adopt strategies that are not necessarily related to their learning styles, something that low achievers do not (Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006). Further, the level of competence appears to determine the number of cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective strategies students use (Lafontaine, 2006).

The research essentially confirms what the background literature on LS argues: accomplished learners know how to learn. This relates to the development in the strategy literature of the concept of the good language learner; a student with a natural knack for learning languages who employs strategies naturally (Rubin in Carter & Nunan, 2001; Nunan in Carter & Nunan, 2001). Although the logical conclusion of this research is that the strategies used by good language learners could benefit low achievers, there is no research of large-scale, systematic strategy training for struggling students apart from the present study. It is, therefore, necessary to examine program

outcomes from other tutoring programs dedicated to language learning in order to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of LS when applied systematically to large numbers of students who have been explicitly identified as struggling learners who lack LS, and who have been explicitly trained in language learning strategies as a long-term solution for low achievement.

## **THE SETTING**

The setting for this study is a large, bi-national center in South America. The center was founded in 1942 and is a prominent English language institute and cultural foundation. Courses at the bi-national center serve a wide range of EFL learners through several different programs for adults, children, teens and university students. Total students number approximately 15,000 each month. The current study was conducted in the adult English program which serves over 4,500 students monthly. The largest age group in this program is approximately 18-25, although students' ages range from 16-60. Roughly half of the students are in the basic levels, in this case, the first six of an 18-level program. Each level is covered in a 38-hour course lasting 19 days, roughly one month, eleven months per year. Class sessions are held two hours daily, Monday through Friday, in schedules ranging from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

In terms of curricular philosophy, the program prominently features training in learning strategies, study skills and communication strategies. It also seeks to provide authentic language encounters and experiences to enhance the social and cultural fabric of the classroom. Aspects of language, learning and communication are structured into the program design and are explicitly taught and evaluated. It is thought that this broad treatment of the learner contributes to favorable conditions for language learning (Taylor, 2006).

## **The Tutoring Program**

The tutoring service of the adult English program began as a complement to this curricular focus. Tutoring is seen as a commitment to each student's learning process, and the program is designed to deal specifically with individual learning difficulties. Although the classroom experience incorporates explicit instruction in study skills and language learning and communication strategies, not all students respond quickly or successfully to this training. Students who are not able to acquire active learning habits tend to have difficulty keeping up with the pace of the class and mastering basic course content. In order to address students' difficulties at the core, the tutoring program seeks to remedy the causes of students' poor performance.

The tutoring program began in 2002 as an individual exploration of students' weaknesses, fears and problems learning English in an effort to supply precise advice and training to each person. This initial practice was influenced strongly by theories of learning styles and preferences as well as multiple intelligences (Brown, 2001; Gardner, 1993). Learning style and multiple intelligence inventories were widely used during this period as a way to profile individual learners. It was felt that a separate, unique treatment would be needed for each student, depending on his or her styles and preferences, as well as the particular difficulties he or she may be experiencing in class. It was not uncommon during this period of time to find one tutor singing with students to work on listening, while another tutor explored self-esteem issues when dealing with learners' fear of speaking.

By 2003, clear patterns began to emerge as tutors identified common needs, difficulties and profiles of learners. Tutors became more objective in their focus, developing formulas for dealing with students in a uniform fashion and using small

group sessions to deal with common problems. Specific techniques and practices varied from tutor to tutor on the level of content and technique although general areas of focus became consistent. Repeated training sessions on vocabulary strategies, using the International Phonetic Alphabet for pronunciation, or using the dictionary were quite common from 2003-2004.

Later, tutors returned to individual sessions almost exclusively although each tutor tended to develop and use a set collection of trainings during the sessions, regardless of individual student differences. The focus continued to be on a set repertoire of study skills and language learning strategies rather than any specialized treatment according to individual needs or difficulties. Still, aside from these general trends throughout the period studied, the organization of the tutoring system as well as the areas of focus tended to remain consistent.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **Students**

Roughly 1,100 students received tutoring in the five-year period studied. The procedure for identifying learners needing tutoring remained consistent throughout the period studied. Teachers submitted tutoring requests at the end of each 38-hour course for students who were identified as lacking basic language learning strategies. Teachers described students' difficulties and documented how they had attempted to train the student during the course, as well as any results from this training. In a program emphasizing on-going, individual observation and assessment, it was possible over time to build a description of common behaviors of students needing tutoring. These behaviors were shared with teachers in informational literature about the tutoring service and include the following:

- The student is dependent on peers;
- has difficulty following basic instructions;
- cannot master basic course content (expressions, vocabulary, structures);
- tends to be lost in class much of the time;
- has difficulty or shows resistance to speak or express basic ideas;
- has little to no active vocabulary in English;
- has difficulty retaining new or repeated language (Appendix 1).

All students in the adult English program sign informed consent forms upon entry into each block of the program where new students might be incorporated. These formats describe the permanent innovation and research in the program, and explain that students' work and processes may be observed and recorded for these purposes. In addition, students in the tutoring program signed new informed consent forms explaining that information about their work and processes in the tutoring program would be gathered for purposes of academic research. In both cases, students were informed that they would remain anonymous in this research, and that this would in no way affect their class performance or evaluation.

### **Tutors**

Tutors were chosen from the general teaching staff of 90 teachers. During the five-year period of the study, 35 teachers served as tutors. Tutors were chosen based on the following characteristics:

- The teacher has grasped the philosophy and principles of the program;
- believes in the effectiveness of learning strategies and has implemented them in his or her classes;

- wants to be a tutor;
- is interested in helping even the slowest students succeed;
- knows how to identify, observe and help slower students learn.

Tutors received training on tutoring procedures and observed tutoring sessions before taking on their own cases. They were also referred to bibliography on language learning strategies. Tutors were assigned anywhere from five to fifteen tutees each month. Tutors met regularly and exchanged techniques and problems. The most common trainings developed in the tutoring program were also organized into open sessions for all students in order to make learner training available to everyone. Other than this, there was no comprehensive training for tutors, nor was there ever a unified curriculum for the tutoring program. Tutors tended to develop their own repertoire of trainings based on techniques they brought from their own practice in class.

## **Teachers**

Teachers in the adult English program are largely local, non-native speakers of English, ranging in age from early 20s to 50s, most in their early 30s. They tend to be early- and mid-career professionals, most holding university-level degrees in English language teaching. Teachers in the program were trained on the three core principles of the program: language, learning and communication. Strong emphasis was placed on using English from the first day of class, and communicating effectively in the target language. Teachers were also trained in the use of learning strategies as well as study skills and tools as a way for slower students to improve performance. These trainings specifically emphasized the use of vocabulary notebooks, dictionaries, the International Phonetic Alphabet, as well as training on how to use the textbook.

It is unclear, however, how widespread this strategy instruction was. During the period studied, 85 teachers requested tutoring for their students. In their requests, teachers were required to list actions they had taken with students in order to address difficulties. At times, it is clear that teachers instructed students to use the specific tools and strategies listed above. At other times, however, the teacher's request does not indicate that these actions were carried out.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Artifacts Analyzed**

Records of individual students' processes in tutoring were kept in folders beginning in 2003. The system of registration and record keeping in tutoring remained consistent throughout the time studied. All 1,100 folders were generally complete and were included in the data set.

Each folder contains the following obligatory items:

- Teacher's diagnosis: The teacher's description of student's strengths and weaknesses, submitted when requesting tutoring for the student (Appendix 2).
- Tutoring activities: The tutor's description of work done in each tutoring session.
- Final tutoring report: Tutors' report on students' progress at the end of the month with recommendations to continue or finish tutoring sessions.
- Grade and class record: A list of all courses taken by the student, including dates and final grades.

Both teachers' requests and tutors' descriptions of each session's activities were completed in descriptive formats from 2003-2004. In 2004, both requests and session

descriptions were recorded with more unified and concise formats for teachers and tutors to fill out (Appendix 3).

Additional items in some folders include learning inventories applied by the tutors, samples of students' work and reflections by students. In 2007, a short survey was completed by students evaluating the tutoring service, and was also included in the folders.

### **Participant Observation**

It is worth noting that all five researchers in the current study were also participants in the tutoring program in one capacity or another. Four served as tutors at some point in the five-year period studied and have intimate knowledge of both the program and the artifacts used to collect information. The fifth researcher is an administrator in the bi-national center and was responsible for designing the curriculum of the adult English program, including the tutoring program. Although the research team attempted to apply rigorous research methods to the study, it was inevitable that their deep participant knowledge of the program, its students, its tutors and the processes of teaching and learning underway found their way into this study.

Specifically, researchers had first-hand knowledge of the artifacts chosen for review, the tutoring folders. They recognized tutors and occasionally students by name. Their own tutoring cases were also included in the data set. They were intimately familiar with the types of students sent to tutoring as well as the kinds of tutoring sessions documented in the folders. This immediate and deep familiarity with the artifacts also allowed for a highly critical and informed reading. When extracting information from the folders, particular attention was paid to the actual discourse of reports, especially during the years when descriptive reports were used exclusively.



This attention to discourse was crucial in order to define categories, as discussed later in the content analysis. It also enabled researchers to draw conclusions on a wide variety of aspects of the tutoring program, including students, teachers, tutors and their respective attitudes towards teaching and learning.

Participant observation as a research method is widely documented. One of the main advantages of insider knowledge gained through first-hand participation in the research setting includes deepened understanding of human activity (Hatch, 2002). It is not uncommon, in fact, for the roles of participant researchers to shift over time (Posner, in Merriam, 1992). In the current study, participants agreed on the use of artifacts, in this case the folders of tutoring sessions. These artifacts or “intended and unintended residues of human activity” (Hodder, in Hatch, 2002, p. 25) are thought to be difficult to interpret due to the difficulty connecting text-based artifacts to relevant contexts. Indeed, in this study, participant researcher’s first-hand and intimate knowledge of the folders allowed for more accurate interpretation.

### **Coding Procedures and Content Analysis**

The goal of this study is to determine a general profile of students in tutoring and to attempt to determine whether or not tutoring was successful in terms of helping students cope with and succeed in the learning process. In order to do this, it was necessary to determine which information could be examined in all 1,100 tutoring cases. To do this, a sample of folders was analyzed. The sample contained tutoring cases from different years, and included a range in terms of quantity of information. For example, folders of students who attended tutoring several months, where a significant amount of information was gathered, were contrasted with folders of students who attended only one month, resulting in a relatively thin folder. The available information

was used to construct a coding sheet that would be used to record information in the complete data set.

The initial coding sheet was extensive, including basic information about the student, such as personal information, course, teacher, date sent to and leaving tutoring, as well as the last course taken in the program. It also contained information about the tutoring process, including areas of teacher's concerns, areas treated in tutoring and final recommendations. The initial coding sheet also included additional information thought to be quite important in terms of individual learner differences although not included in each folder, including student's age, occupation, prior exposure to English, results from learning inventories, and the like.

The research group piloted the coding sheet on sample groups of four or five folders ranging in years and size. After coding, each folder was discussed by the group and discrepancies among coders were discussed at length. Items with the most controversy were omitted or collapsed into other categories. Agreements about coding practices were recorded in a document that was updated after each round of piloting (Appendix 4).

Roughly five rounds of piloting resulted in a much shorter coding sheet (Appendix 5). For example, most information relating to individual learner differences and educational background thought to be relevant to students' performance was simply not available in most folders. Despite this smaller coding set, discrepancies among coders when using the coding sheet continued. Definitive agreement on the coding sheet (100% concurrence in all the information) was impossible to achieve. The highest inter-rater concurrence was roughly 85%, but it was not consistently achieved on each folder reviewed. A further exercise to increase the rate of agreement was to carry out content analysis of each category, resulting in a detailed addendum to the coding

guidelines already in place. The content analysis attempted to refine, based on the actual discourse in the folders, assumptions and definitions of items to be coded; that is, what constitutes "grammar," "communication / speaking," "writing," essentially all categories on the sheet (Appendix 6). This addendum proved to be a useful tool for coders to refer to, resulting in inter-rater agreement of at least 85% on each student's folder.

### **Data Base**

The information on the coding sheets was then entered into a data base. The data base was developed using the Informix Standard Engine data base program and Informix 4gl programming language. The data base is made up of two tables. The first table includes tutoring activities, which is divided into two fields, one field for the code of the activity and the other for the description of the activity. The other table consists of 67 fields containing the basic information on the student, including course, grade, teacher beginning and ending tutoring and the relation of the different activities by area. The tutoring table contains 1081 records. This table can be consulted by any of the 67 fields, or in combinations. Once designed, the data base was fine-tuned after another round of piloting and then researchers entered information from all 1,100 folders into the into the data base.

### **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

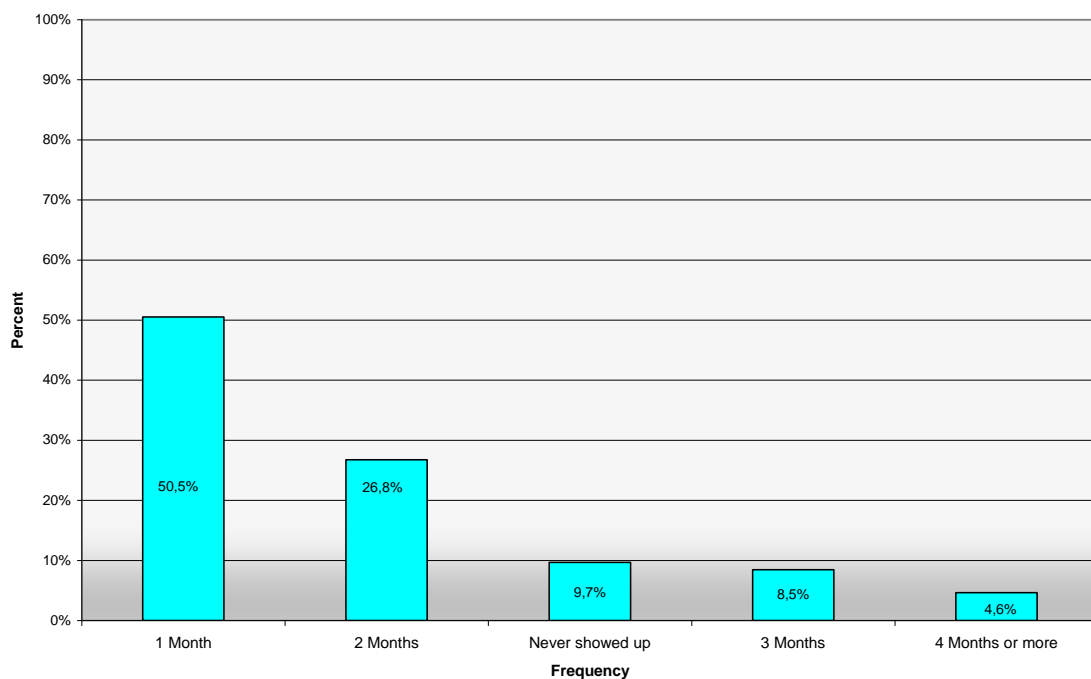
Reports gathered from the data base indicate clear patterns in terms of the profile of students sent to tutoring and in the treatment of these students in the tutoring service. While a close reading of the folders clearly indicates that individual tutors exhibited

preferences for certain activities and techniques, the topics covered in tutoring sessions overall tended to be similar.

### Time in Tutoring Sessions

Over half of the students attended tutoring for only one month, and some for two months. Very few students received tutoring for three or four months, and these tend to be during the initial year of the tutoring program (2003).

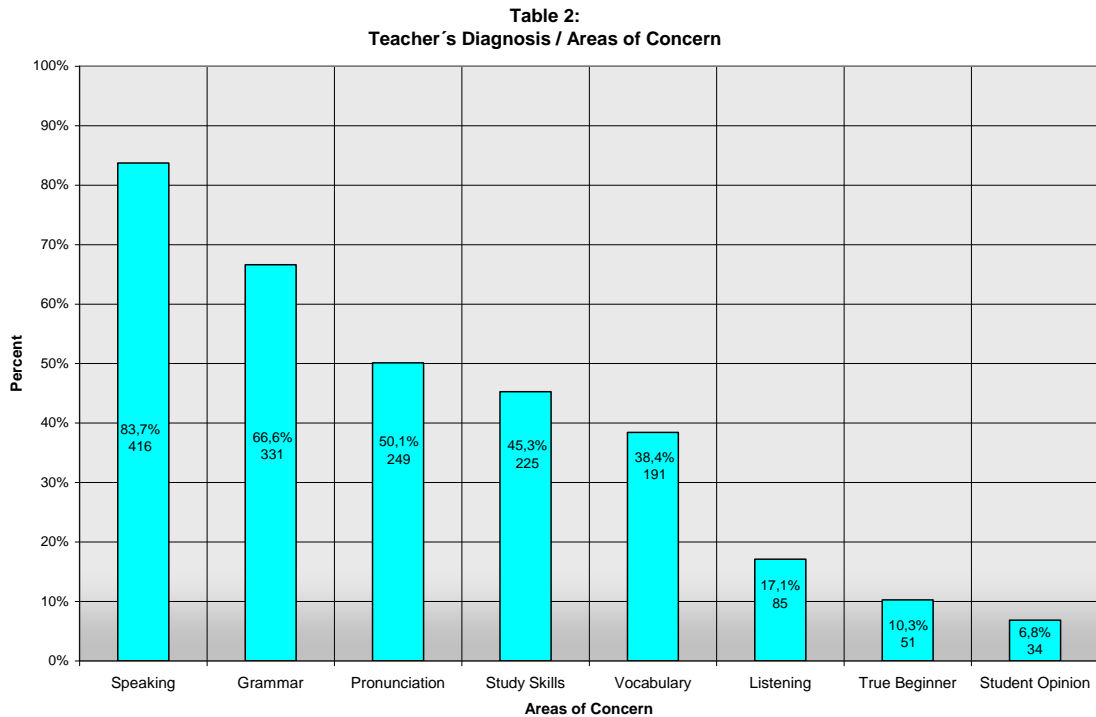
**Table 1:**  
**Time in Tutoring Sessions**



Longer periods of tutoring in the early years are most likely related to the feeling in the early stages of the program that individual learning processes took time, including tutoring processes. There was little concern for program standards or policies, for example, requiring students to show progress after only one month of tutoring. It was not uncommon for individual students to receive tutoring for four or even six months, and to pass from two or even three different tutors during this period.

## Areas of Concern

Areas of concern refer to the teacher's diagnosis when requesting tutoring for the student. Since the teachers' diagnoses are descriptive, not discreet, the content analysis was necessary to determine how these comments should be categorized.



For each year from 2002-2007, the most frequent area of concern described by teachers when requesting tutoring was speaking. Based on the content analysis, speaking difficulties generally refer to two broad areas. One refers to students' inability to convey ideas, not being able to use conversation models from the textbook independently, or speaking in isolated words rather than thought groups. Another area refers to students' fears associated with speaking, often resulting in students' blocking when trying to speak, and switching frequently to Spanish as the only compensation strategy. In a program emphasizing communication, even in the most basic levels, students unable to overcome fears or difficulties associated with speaking were often

designated as candidates for tutoring. Even though classes were intended to provide support in the form of training on communication strategies, most importantly compensation strategies, some students continued to have difficulty expressing basic ideas in spoken English.

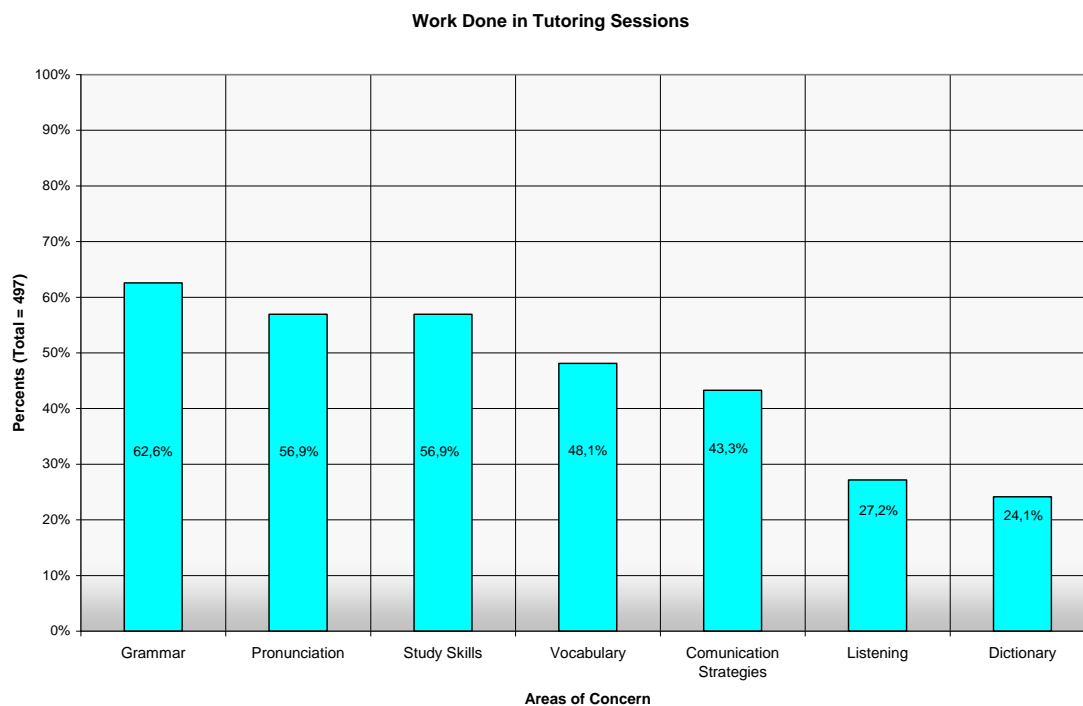
Speaking is followed by four other areas, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and study skills, which vary in ranking from year to year. It is interesting to note that grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation actually refer to sub-skills of speaking, and teacher's comments often mention these areas in conjunction with difficulties conveying ideas when speaking. In general, teachers' descriptions of students' difficulties rarely refer to skills in isolation, rather in terms of how they hinder communication. For example, pronunciation is mentioned in reference to students' lack of intelligibility, or problems with sight /sound correspondence of words. Grammar often refers to students' difficulties mastering basic word order, resulting in communication through isolated "content" words only. Vocabulary generally refers to students' inability to retain high frequency words used in the most common conversation models.

In addition to concerns about how students' difficulties affect communication, teachers' diagnoses reveal concerns about students' difficulties learning. In the area of study skills, teachers frequently report that students have no explicit study routines, or ineffective study habits. A second area refers to students' difficulties following classroom routines including instructions and book exercises.

Listening is the least frequent area of concern described by teachers when requesting tutoring. In the category of "other," confidence is the most frequent area of concern, which also relates strongly to concerns about students' fears when speaking and taking risks.

## Work in Tutoring Sessions

Work done in tutoring refers to the training the tutor conducted in the small group or individual sessions with students. Once again, the information is descriptive and categorized according to the content analysis exercise.



The most frequently addressed area in tutoring sessions is grammar, followed by vocabulary, communication skills, pronunciation, study skills, listening and dictionary. Grammar is the highest area with the exception of the first year of tutoring, 2002. In this area, tutors typically focused on basic sentence structure and word order. It was thought that part of students' difficulty in expressing basic ideas or relying simply on isolated "content" words was related to a fundamental lack of knowledge about the syntax of English. Tutees were taught how to build simple statements using a subject + verb + object/complement formula.

Communication skills refer explicitly to training on communication strategies including a basic repertoire of compensation strategies, including requests for help such

as “Can you repeat that please?” At times, explicit reflection was done regarding students’ fears related to speaking, basic risk-taking behaviors, strategies to avoid switching to Spanish as the only resort, again through requests for help such as “How do you say....?” Finally, communication strategies such as turn-taking techniques (using “How about you?” as a follow-up question) were taught to give tutees basic tools to negotiate speaking activities in class.

Explicit instruction on the International Phonetic Alphabet was a common feature of tutoring sessions. The IPA was generally accepted in the program as a valid tool for even beginning students in order to assimilate the sounds of English. Tutees generally exhibited an over-reliance on the English spelling system as a tool for pronunciation, usually with poor results.

Other study skills included explicit instruction on the use of a bilingual learner’s dictionary as an aid to learn and retain vocabulary, and to consult pronunciation and usage of words. Both the IPA and the dictionary were seen as important ways to boost students’ independence, as most tutees exhibited a high degree of dependence on teachers and classmates. Other important study skills treated in tutoring included basic study habits and routines including the use of a vocabulary notebook, and how to properly review material at home and prepare for class. It was also common to find training on the use of the textbook. It was found that many tutees did not understand the organization of the book into sections by skills or what kinds of exercises to expect in which sections. This lack of ability to anticipate events in class was thought to contribute to tutees’ difficulty in following instructions or classroom routines. Once again, listening received the least emphasis in tutoring sessions.

It is interesting to note that although speaking is the area most commonly targeted by teachers in their requests, this priority does not correlate to the work done

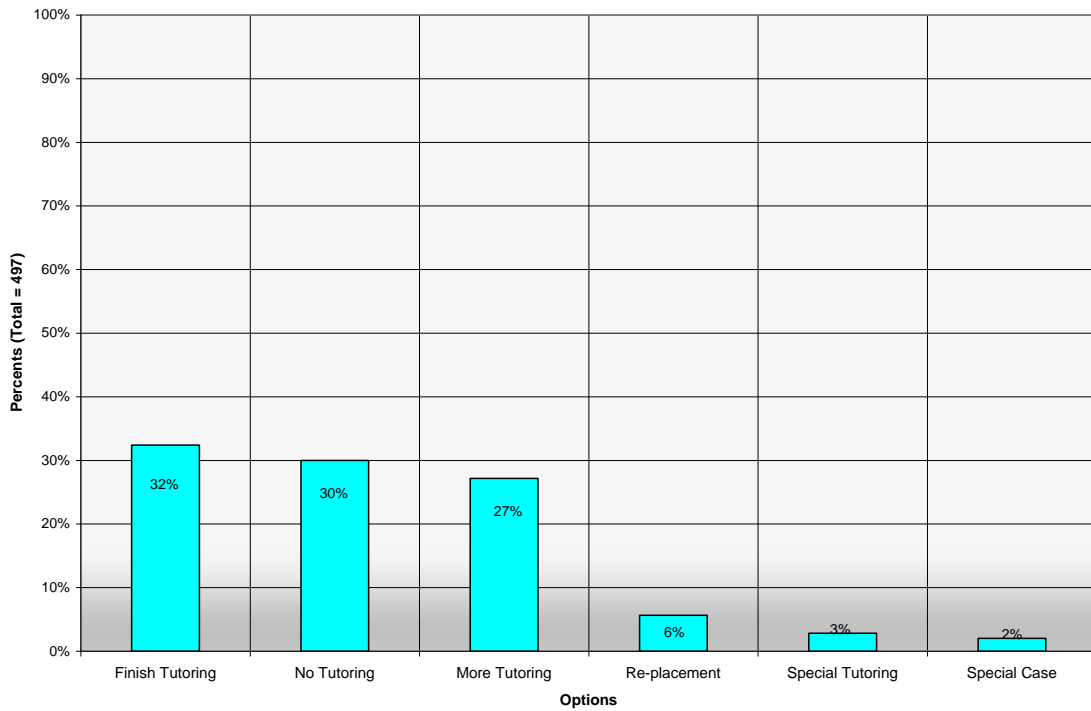


by tutors in the training sessions. This may be attributed to two factors. First, tutors possibly targeted underlying language skills such as grammar and basic sentence structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Second, as has been observed through the study of the folders of individual tutors, it is clear that tutors developed set repertoires of trainings which they used with all tutees, regardless of teachers' diagnoses. Tutors may have, in fact, ignored the teacher's diagnosis in favor of their own tried and true set of strategy trainings (e.g. IPA, dictionary, and vocabulary strategies).

### **Recommendations and Outcomes after Tutoring**

After each monthly cycle of tutoring, decisions were made as to whether the student would continue tutoring or return to class to try to implement the strategies on his or her own. Roughly an equal number of students were referred for more tutoring, or were recommended to finish tutoring and return to class, as well as those who were not recommended to continue tutoring. "No tutoring" applied to students who either had not attended tutoring sessions faithfully, or whose difficulties involved more attitude and motivation towards learning rather than more concrete learning difficulties.

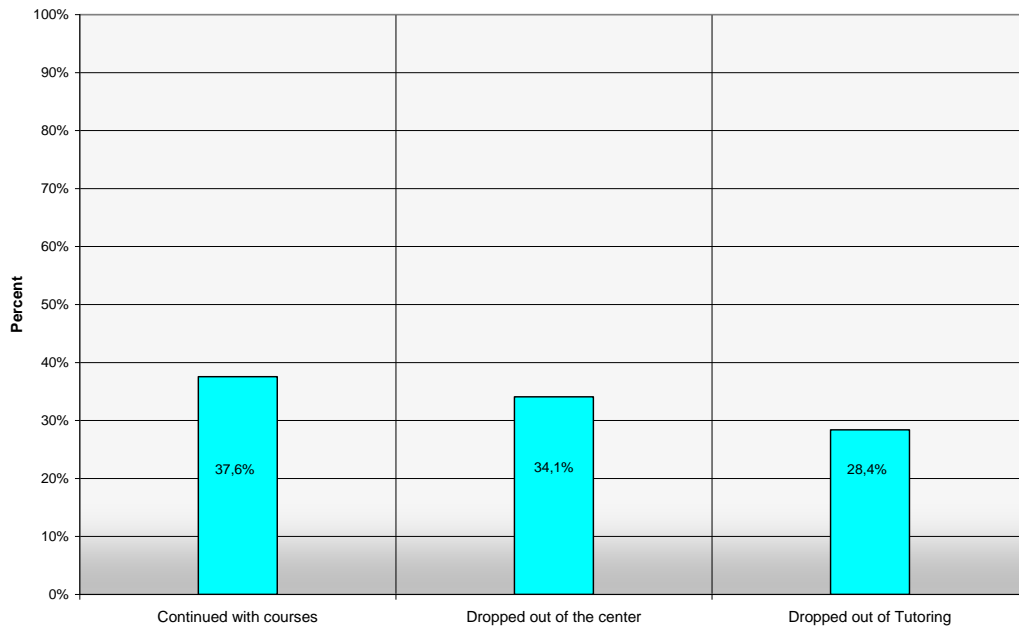
### Final Tutoring Decisions



Outcomes refer to what occurred in the learner's studies after the tutoring process ended. This is the only information available as no specific follow up was conducted of students' performance in class or the extent to which the strategies taught in tutoring sessions were applied. Still, whether or not students continued with courses, and how many courses were completed, may serve as some indication of success.

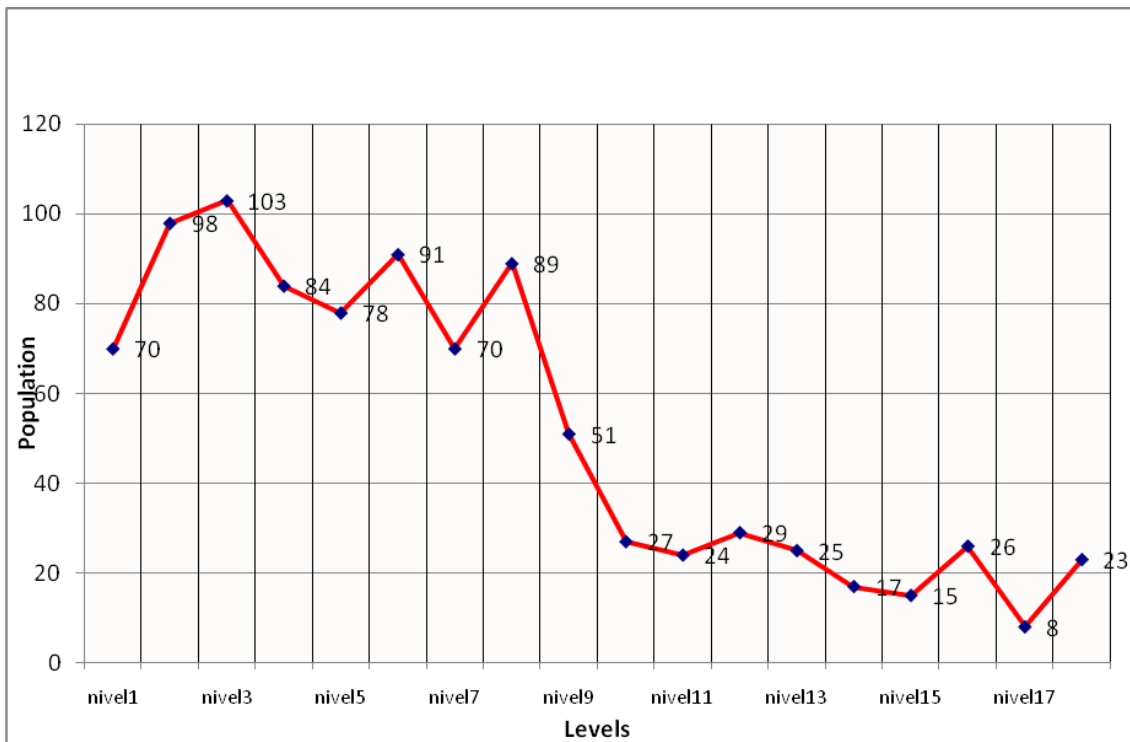
The number of students who continued with courses vs. those who did not is roughly equal. Slightly more students continued than dropped out, except in 2004 and 2006, when more students dropped out. In 2007, the number of students who dropped out of the center fell in 2007 vs. those who continued.

Student Outcomes

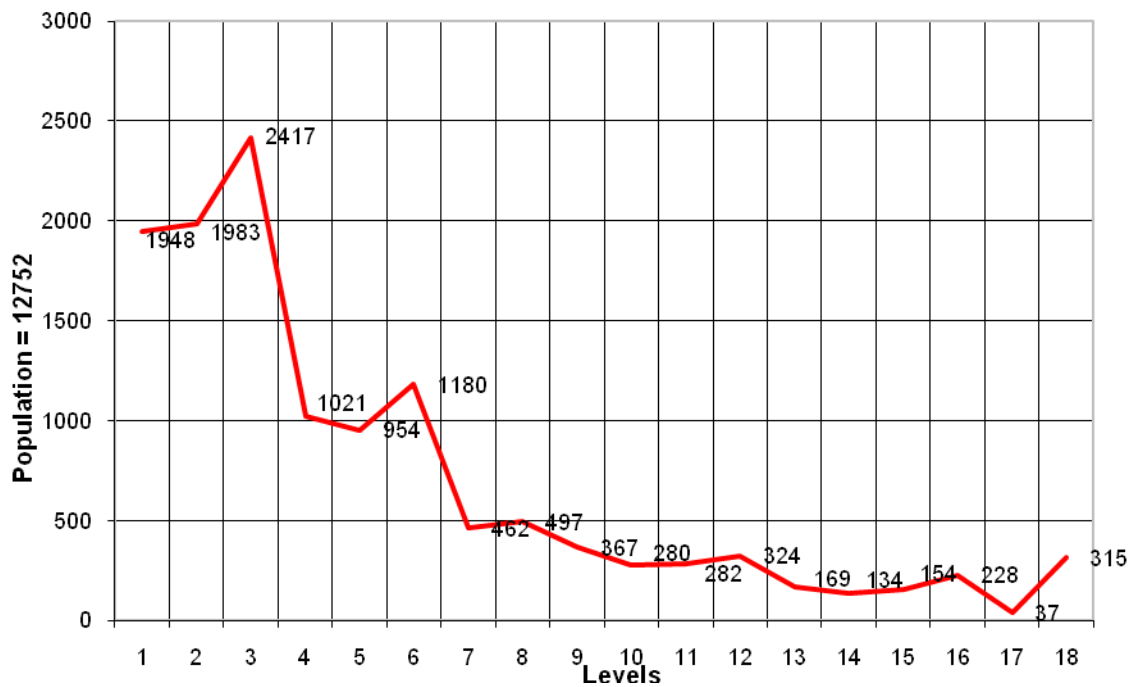


It should be noted that students who dropped out of tutoring could be students who either continued with courses, or who dropped out of the center. Dropping out of tutoring does not automatically mean that a student dropped out of the center, but rather when more tutoring was recommended, the student failed to attend.

Although roughly half the students continued with courses after receiving tutoring, almost all of these students dropped out before completing the program. In fact, 98% of the students who attended tutoring never finished the 18-level program. The following graph indicates the last course that tutees completed before leaving the center definitively.



These results may indicate that tutoring for these struggling language learners was unsuccessful in terms of its goal of affording students the necessary tools to achieve high levels of proficiency in English. However, it is useful to compare these desertion rates with the general population of students in the adult English program during the same period of time, who begin in the first level.



The desertion rate for the general population of students who begin in the first level is 97%, virtually identical to that of students who attended tutoring. This indicates that students who attended tutoring actually fared no worse than their counterparts during the same period of time. More significantly, however is a comparison of the rates of desertion between the two groups. While desertion among the general population is quite sharp, especially after completing the first three and the first six courses, desertion among tutees is markedly slower, indicating most tutees remained in the program longer than the average student.

The precise reason for slower desertion among tutees is unknown. However, it is interesting to speculate as to the possibility that attending tutoring gave tutees an important source of support, resulting in these students' willingness to persevere in their English language studies, more so than their counterparts who did not receive additional tutoring sessions.

## **DISCUSSION**

In general, it can be said that the tutoring program provided consistent training on language learning strategies and study skills to students identified as struggling learners in the adult English program. This training does not appear to have fulfilled its stated goal of helping students achieve clear success in terms of completing an 18-level English language program. Nevertheless, the support provided by the tutoring program may have contributed to slower desertion rates among tutees when compared to the overall population of students. This phenomenon was not the explicit focus of this study, and it would be interesting to explore more deeply students' feelings and attitudes towards their own language learning, both tutees and non-tutees. It would also be important to investigate more broadly the reasons for such high desertion rates among beginner students at the center, and the challenges that adult students face when starting an English language program.

Researchers' insider knowledge of the adult English program and the tutoring service may inform other possible areas for research as well, including the effectiveness of strategy training. Consistent with the research on language learning strategies where little to no information is available on long-term effects of strategy training, no formal mechanisms for follow up of tutees existed either during or after the tutoring process. As such, it is difficult to understand the impact, if any, of the tutoring sessions on students' class performance directly. Informal conversations between teachers and tutors about tutees did occur in about two-thirds of the cases studied. However, this "teacher involvement" may or may not mean that serious follow up or remediation occurred. It may simply mean that a comment appeared in the folder such as "I talked to her teacher and he said she continued to have problems in class."

Although the tutoring program was carried out in a consistent fashion in terms of teachers' requests and administration of candidates through the system, reading of the folders indicates clear preferences on the part of individual tutors for particular content and delivery style during the actual tutoring sessions. Although this may be due to natural differences in individual teaching preferences, it is important to consider the fact that no formal training of tutors was conducted, nor were there established curricula or materials for tutoring. In the absence of an explicit syllabus for the tutoring program, it is difficult to know which aspects of the sessions may have been more effective than others. It would be interesting to correlate individual tutors with students' success following tutoring sessions to determine if some tutors were more successful than others, and what practices may have been implemented.

Further, the data in this study does not consider the number of tutoring sessions students attended and what impact that may have had on final results. Nor was any correlation conducted of the length of time in tutoring with final results. In general, it can be said that the length of time in tutoring does not seem to affect students' successful completion of the program since desertion rates were similar from year to year even though students in 2003-2004 tended to stay in tutoring longer than students in later years.

A further area to explore is students' attitudes and feelings towards the tutoring service and their own language learning process. Starting in 2006, students filled out evaluations of the tutoring sessions at the end of each 19-day course period. These evaluations were almost always favorable, indicating that students in general felt positive about the tutoring experience. Whether this positive reaction to the tutoring sessions resulted in an improvement in student's performance in class or willingness to continue with classes is unclear and not examined in this study.

More broadly, the study does not focus on the reasons for such high desertion rates in the adult English program, particularly among beginner-level students, both tutees and non-tutees. The institution conducted no formal follow-up process to investigate why students drop out of the center. Although many students stop taking courses but return later, the population in this study was tracked for two years following the last course taken, meaning that the final course reported on the graphs was indeed the last course they took at the center. It is widely known among teachers in the program that the typical adult English language student possesses a myriad of personal and professional priorities and responsibilities outside the classroom that frequently interfere with their plan for learning English. It would be valuable to undertake a more thorough investigation of these factors in order to understand the challenges of the adult EFL learning more deeply.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study sheds light on general profiles of students with difficulties learning English. It points to the most common areas of teachers' concerns as well as the areas most frequently covered in tutoring sessions given in addition to English class. It suggests that long lasting support for struggling learners may require more or different treatment in addition to more extensive follow-up. When considering the almost complete desertion of these learners from the program, it is clear that students' difficulties most likely persist after receiving extra tutoring. Nonetheless, the identical desertion rates between tutees and non-tutees in the same time period indicate that the reasons for not completing the program may not necessarily be attributed to lack of language learning strategies. Rather, it suggests a set of generalized challenges facing



the adult learner beginning English language classes. Furthermore, the clearly slower desertion rate for tutees may indicate that the tutoring service provided these students with more incentives for continuing classes in the face of obstacles common to all students, in addition to their own learning difficulties.

In terms of the literature on language learning strategies and learner training, more research is necessary in order to shed light on how poor students might acquire the strategies that good language learners use naturally. It will also be important to explore how training for struggling students may be carried out, and to determine which practices seem most effective. Further, it will be quite important to know how students may go about implementing these skills in the regular classroom, and which tools and techniques prove to be the most effective. Finally, it will be necessary to explore the attitudes and feelings of adult students toward their learning process, including their reaction to challenges and obstacles inside and outside the classroom.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## Appendix 1: Tutoring Information for Teachers

### TUTORING SERVICE INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

#### Tutoring Candidates

The following are the most common signs teachers must be ready to identify in any of his/her students who may be having problems and who can easily become a tutoring candidate:

A student, who is committed, does homework and attends classes, but doesn't seem to be making progress and has any of the following characteristics:

- seems to be lost most of the times even when s/he prepares class contents or receives T's assistance
- cannot answer the teacher's questions even when the teacher paraphrases or gives him/her time to think up an answer
- cannot do what teacher asks him/her to do even when clear explanations and examples have been given
- relies completely on the teacher's or classmates' assistance when trying to perform or interact in freer activities
- has serious pronunciation problems that make understanding really hard even when the teacher has provided the class with clear pronunciation exercises and activities to overcome typical mistakes (usually the rest of his/her classmates has already overcome them)
- cannot repeat or produce intonation patterns after being explicitly explained how they work
- finds it really difficult both to maintain dialogues and to exchange information properly (i.e. personalize it)
- does not understand or use formulaic language
- cannot use or respond to the models spontaneously (can not go beyond the model or gets lost when trying to do so)
- continues using translation and/or Spanglish even when being aware of or familiar with other communication strategies
- can not follow strategies suggested in the book even when teacher has provided the class with exact explanation on how to deal with the different language areas
- has memory problems even when the teacher has provided the class with appropriate strategies to work with memory enhancement

#### How to help these students in class

Once teachers identify students who fit the description mentioned above, they must take action on the case(s). Students should get the most help from the teachers in order to guarantee that only those students, who really need it, have access to the tutoring service. Consequently, teachers have to identify the students' problem and then suggest activities to help them overcome those problems. If the student does not seem to improve, teacher must send him/her to tutoring.

Suggested activities:

- **Memory:** vocabulary notebook with word maps, word associations or word tables, mnemonic techniques (refer to vocabulary training document), effective use of a good dictionary
- **Listening:** bottom-up/top-down listening method provided by the teacher for the student to use it before doing class exercises, guided transcript recollection (phrases not single words) movies

with the transcripts of the most relevant scenes to help students learn new vocabulary in context, have students in group to listen to a song and everybody in the group tries to write the lyrics.

- **Reading:** an integrated reading system ranging from pre-viewing, activating previous vocabulary, reading for gist, scanning, skimming, identifying key vocabulary using workbook readings, guided reading with the group and make questions at the time of reading.
- **Pronunciation:** familiarize with the IPA, practice with difficult or demanding vowel and consonant sounds, do exercises with word and sentence stress, tape himself/herself reading a short text or *Start Talking/Talk some More*
- **Writing:** writing dialogs or paragraphs connecting different units, sending emails to the teacher, having a pen-pal activity, using pre-drafting and drafting techniques, keep a journal
- **Speaking:** Repetition of start talking exercises done in previous units, expansion of talk some more using previous topics, lots of improvisation exercises after doing express yourself, expansion of basic models in each lesson with similar expressions, S+V+C structure work
- **Classroom Expressions:** providing students with basic unit vocabulary, reviewing basic classroom expressions, reinforcing use of necessary communication and compensation strategies, a checklist to keep track of the expressions used by the student in each class

### Further considerations

- Students who have attitude problems should not be sent to tutoring but rather asked to repeat the course. They need to understand that our program requires their participation and responsibility for their learning process. Reluctance, shyness and apathy are not directly learning problems but more consequences of poor motivation and, sometimes, of personality traits that tutoring can not deal with.
- Once a candidate is accepted to be part of the tutoring service, s/he must be committed to attend regularly and do any extra work tutors assign. S/he must be willing to practice and rehearse on his/her own. The candidate should also show interest on spending some time working in our support units.

## Appendix 2: Teachers' Diagnoses and Requests for Tutoring

### Request for Tutoring

**Student:**

**Course:** 1 Exp 72

**Cycle:** March- April 2005

**Teacher:** ✓

is a young student who wants to learn English to leave the country. She has good attitude and is very friendly. However, she does not have strategies that help her succeed. She is always writing things down on her notebook or looking up words in the dictionary instead of paying attention to me. I have advised her to concentrate more on what we do and on the situations we develop rather than how we say it or what each word means. I think her affective filter is a little high because she looks stressed and lost. I have also told her to review the workbook after we finish each unit in order to review, and do the workbook more consistently since she sometimes forgets to do homework. I think she would benefit from the tutorings because they will help her feel a little more confident and they will give her the tools she needs to cope up with an academic environment she is not used to.

Vase

Tutor

Bray

Time: 9-7 p.m.

6 Exp 01  
6-8 315



ADULT ENGLISH PROGRAM - REQUEST FOR TUTORING

Student: _____		ID Number: _____	Phone Number: _____
Av. 19 North <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Course: <b>EXP 5</b>	Cycle: <b>NOV</b>	Schedule: <b>6-8:00</b>
			Classroom: <b>315</b>
Teacher: _____			
STUDENT GENERAL PROFILE (Personality, motivation, attitude, commitment)			
<p>IS AN EXTREMELY COMMITTED STUDENT WHO ALWAYS COMES TO CLASS. SHE'S AWARE OF HER DIFFICULTIES AND USUALLY DOES EXTRA WORK AT HOME. SHE'S AN ELDERLY WOMAN WHO TAKES LONG TO ASSIMILATE INFORMATION. SHE'S BEEN IN TUTORING BEFORE.</p>			
WEAKNESSES OR DIFFICULTIES		TEACHER'S WORK SO FAR	
LANGUAGE SHE LACKS ACCURACY		SHE'S DONE EXTRA WORK ON COMPOSITION TO CONSOLIDATE THE BASIC SENTENCE STRUCTURE	
LEARNING SHE TAKES LONG TO ASSIMILATE NEW INFO		<p>SHE DID THE 'FOCUS IN' ACTIVITIES IN ADVANCE</p> <p>SHE DID EXTRA EXERCISES ON GRAMMAR: HANDOUTS AND WEBSITES</p>	
COMMUNICATION SHE HAS LISTENING AND PRONUNCIATION PROBLEMS		<p>SHE WENT TO THE LAB AND PRACTICED WITH 'TELL ME MORE'</p> <p>SHE WORKED WITH THE BOOKCD ⇒ DICTATIONS</p> <p>SHE RECORDED HERSELF AND CORRECTED HER PRONUNCIATION</p> <p>SHE PRACTICED LISTENING WITH SOME WEBSITES</p>	



Appendix 3: Formats for Tutoring Sessions

TUTORING SYSTEM

FOLLOW UP

DATE: Sep 24<sup>th</sup>, 03

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TUTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

HOUR: 5-7

TUTOR'S OBSERVATIONS:

- We reviewed parts of the book.
- He hasn't bought his dictionary but we'll work with it <sup>next session</sup>.
- We reviewed IPA vowels and learned the consonants.

---

→ We <sup>Sep 29<sup>th</sup>, 03</sup> went over his questionnaires. He's very analytical and doesn't like being laughed at. He likes the class. He thinks it's a nice atmosphere to learn. He has difficulties with pronunciation. He does well at understanding the Teacher, making sentences.

---

<sup>Sep Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 03</sup>

- We did Dictionary Use practice.

<sup>Oct 6<sup>th</sup>, 03</sup>

→ We reviewed the IPA. He explained it to a class-mate and practiced.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT SESSION: We did some guessing activities!

TUTORING REPORT

CYCLE Jan - Feb

STUDENT		TEACHER			TUTOR		
I.D. Card	Phone Number	Course	Classroom	Schedule	Classroom	Time	Days
		6 EXP01	315	6-8	315	8-10	F-T-H

Learning Problems	Communication Problems	Linguistic Problems	Personality/Attitude
She takes long to assimilate new info.	Listening Pronunciation	Lacks accuracy	Motivated Responsible

Session date	Topic	Tutor's activities and comments	Support Units	Teacher's follow-up
2006 First Jan. 19 <sup>th</sup>	Meeting the student	We talked about her classes, the way she studies. Strategy Inventory for Lang.		
Second Jan. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Pronunciation	Strategies + Intonation		
Third Jan. 27 <sup>th</sup>	Listening	Strategies - Key Words		
Fourth J. 31 <sup>st</sup>	Communication	Errors, strategies to overcome them. Strategies to develop oral skills		
Fifth Feb. 2	Communication	Exercises + Errors + Strategies (Analysis)		
Sixth Feb. 3	Communication	Exercises + Audio Recording		
Seventh Feb. 6		She couldn't make it.		

Final concept She understood the strategies, but still can't apply them in class or at home. She worked hard during the tutoring sessions, though.

This student should continue next month  
Yes  No

## Appendix 4: Coding Guidelines

In order to ensure inter-rater reliability, please adhere to these guidelines when recording tutoring folders on the Coding Sheet. Items are listed in the order they appear on the sheet.

NAME: Last names first, first names last per student record

ID: Per student record

CODER NUMBERS:

Coders' Numbers are:

- 1 Julio
- 2 Josephine
- 3 Jorge
- 4 Gloria Q.
- 5 Ricardo
- 6 Luz Libia
- 7 Yamith

DATES: Course cycle (e.g. April-May) and year (e.g. 2003). Please write the complete year.

GRADES: Grade recorded in student record. If there is discrepancy, adhere to the grade in the student record. If you cannot read the grade report, get a new print out. If the grade report is recent, confirm if the student is still registered. If so, get a new print out.

TEACHERS' DIAGNOSIS / AREAS OF CONCERN: Refer to CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS, Appendix 1.

TIME IN TUTORING SESSIONS: Count incomplete months as one month. No-show also counts as one month, if there is evidence in the folder that the case was actually referred to a tutor. Do not count months between the referral and the tutoring sessions if there is no physical evidence of tutor assignment in the folder.

SENT TO TUTORING: Twice, if, on a separate occasion, a second teacher requested tutoring for the student, and a process of tutoring occurred a second, separate time, add another sheet for that experience. (This is for a student who had stopped taking tutoring for some reason, gone back to class..)

If there are two separate tutoring experiences, fill out and attach a second coding sheet. If the student had a false start, for example, a T requested tutoring and the student never went, then the T or another T requested tutoring again and the student finally went, fill out only one coding sheet, but include info from both requests in "T's diagnosis." Since there was only one tutoring experience, fill out only one coding sheet.

In the case where a second request was made but the student never went to tutoring the second time, no second sheet should be filled out.

If unsure, folder should be flagged.

**WORK DONE IN TUTORING SESSIONS:** Refer to **CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS**, Appendix 1. Problematic folders should be flagged. On the tutoring forms, do not consider the "problems" section as work done in tutoring. Do not consider tutor's diagnosis of the S as "work done in tutoring."

**TEACHER INVOLVEMENT:** This means that there is physical evidence in the folder of a role played by the tutee's teacher. This means teacher comments or mention of teacher involvement in tutor's reports. "Reported speech" is ok.

**FORMATS APPLIED:** Refer to **FORMATS GLOSSARY**, Appendix 2.

**FINAL TUTORING DECISIONS:** check all that apply. This information is usually written by hand by the tutoring coordinator or program coordinator after the last report by the last tutor. If it is not written by the tutoring coordinator, please read the very last report(s) by the tutor to determine what the final decision was.

"No tutoring" means that the S is not permitted to take any more sessions and usually means that for some reason the tutoring process was not successful.

"Finish tutoring" means that the person has finished the process and should go back to only class. This usually means that the tutoring process was successful or that the S at least was making progress.

Coders should make this distinction by reading both tutor's recommendation and coordinator's "decision." The case may be "finish tutoring" even though the tutoring coordinator or other has written "no tutoring" as a decision.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES:** This refers to the immediate outcome after the last item in the folder, after tutoring experience ended. Eventually all students "drop out of the Center," but this refers only to a student who did not continue with courses when the tutoring folder ends.

**LAST COURSE TAKEN:** Please obtain newest grade record to see if S is currently enrolled in the Center.

## Appendix 5: Coding Sheet

<b>CODING SHEET</b>	Name: _____	
	I.D _____	Coder: _____

**Student Record (print out)**  
**Course (when referred to tutoring)**

Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4	Exp5	Exp6	G1	G2
Exp7	Exp8	Exp9	G3	G4	Exp10	Exp11	Exp12
BS1	BS2	BS3	BS4	BS5	BS6		
SK1	SK2	SK3	SK4	SK5	SK6		
CI1	CI2	CI3	CI4	CI5	CI6		

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Course Results:  Pass  Fail  Inc.  
 Attended special tutoring

**Course (upon ending tutoring)**

Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4	Exp5	Exp6	G1	G2
Exp7	Exp8	Exp9	G3	G4	Exp10	Exp11	Exp12
BS1	BS2	BS3	BS4	BS5	BS6		
SK1	SK2	SK3	SK4	SK5	SK6		
CI1	CI2	CI3	CI4	CI5	CI6		TUT

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Course Results:  Pass  Fail  Inc.

**Teacher's diagnosis / Areas of concern**

Grammar       Vocabulary       Listening  
 Pronunciation       Study skills / Instructions       True Beginner  
 Speaking / Fluency / Communication strategies  
 Student's opinion on diagnosis       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Tutoring**  
Tutor(s)'s Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Time in Tutoring Sessions:**     1 month       2 months       3 months  
    4 or more       never showed up

**Sent to tutoring:**                     Once                     Twice

### Work done in tutoring sessions

- Grammar  Vocabulary  
 Pronunciation  Listening  
 Dictionary  Study skills / Instructions  
 Communication strategies / Speaking / Fluency  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### Teacher involvement

- Yes  No

### Formats Applied

- Learning Styles Questionnaire  Multiple Intelligences  SILL  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### Final Tutoring Decisions

- Special Tutoring  Finish Tutoring / Continue class  
 Re-placement  Special Case (should study somewhere else)  
 More tutoring  No tutoring

### Student outcomes

- Dropped out of tutoring  Dropped out of the Center  
 Continued with courses

### Last level taken

Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4	Exp5	Exp6	G1	G2
Exp7	Exp8	Exp9	G3	G4	Exp10	Exp11	Exp12
BS1	BS2	BS3	BS4	BS5	BS6		
SK1	SK2	SK3	SK4	SK5	SK6		
C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6		TUT

## Appendix 6: Category Descriptions

### GRAMMAR

accuracy  
structure, basic structures  
syntax, word order, sentence structure, S-V-O/C  
specific structures named (“verb tense,” “simple past”)  
agreement  
rules  
form  
patterns  
grammar charts / exercises  
writing sentences or short paragraphs, compositions to work on grammar

### PRONUNCIATION

IPA – recognition / production of sounds  
discrimination  
sight-sound correspondence / written vs. spoken  
words in context vs. in isolation  
recognition of words  
intelligibility / can't understand what S says / difficulty  
    understanding S / affects communication / not comprehensible  
accent  
intonation (flat)  
rhythm / stress  
linking  
articulation  
songs or music to work on pronunciation  
reading out loud

### VOCABULARY

T uses the word “vocabulary”  
words / phrases  
lack of vb  
no use / learning / understanding of vb  
lack of vb strategies  
wants to understand all the words  
no tools to practice and learn vb  
can't categorize  
can't retrieve previously learned vb  
can't keep vb  
can't remember words  
memory  
translates into Spanish  
resorts to Spanish

reading to build vocab

## STUDY SKILLS AND INSTRUCTIONS

doesn't review / prepare / do hw  
doesn't know ht review / prepare  
poor study habits  
ineffective study habits (e.g. "does hw but it doesn't help")  
independence – doesn't know what to do on his/her own  
CD/nb/wb no use / wrong use  
dictionary no use / wrong use  
has problems with book use – doesn't understand organization of unit  
features, sections of the book  
doesn't know ht / can't follow instructions  
Tutor teaches S ht divide actions, basic instruction verbs (match,  
fill in, list, etc.)  
ht prepare instructions before class  
help S understand the importance of instructions and following them  
correctly  
AVM Lab  
reading instructions

## SPEAKING / FLUENCY / COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

can't complete ideas / convey meaning / get an idea/meaning across  
lacks CS / classroom expressions  
specific CS named (e.g. paraphrase, compensation, circumlocution)  
misuses classroom expressions  
doesn't use CS from the book  
breaks down / switches into Spanish / Spanglish  
speaks in isolated content words  
doesn't expand / personalize  
can't follow conversation models  
no spontaneous participation  
doesn't negotiate interaction  
doesn't interact in class with classmates  
avoids speaking  
risk-taking / fear / blocking / confidence related to speaking /  
afraid to speak in front of the class / teacher / in public  
shyness/anxiety related to speaking  
reading the models

## LISTENING

T says "listening"  
doesn't understand others/CD/teacher  
lacks listening strategies  
can't do listening exercises



doesn't understand key words  
doesn't understand linking, blending, intonation, etc.  
doesn't understand general ideas  
can't pay attention / can't understand specific information  
anxiety about listening  
doesn't use CD-ROM or other tools

## DICTIONARY

parts of speech  
choose correct definition / meaning  
ht use for pronunciation, word use, word form, spelling, synonyms /  
antonyms  
ht understand dictionary entries  
ht use as a reference tool (pictures, verb lists, expressions)  
ht to recognize and choose a good dictionary

## TRUE BEGINNER

T says "true beginner"  
no / little previous contact with English  
lost all / most of the time  
can't keep up with class pace at all

## OTHER

attention / concentration  
commitment / attitude / responsibility  
confidence / motivation  
reflections / motivations / reasons for learning English  
feelings  
relationship with classmates  
too much dependence on classmates and T's assistance  
"learning strategies" (T's comment)  
performance or self-evaluation  
general reflections