The Effect that Using a Tutor or Learning Center has on Student's Grades

Jessica DePuy
St. John Fisher College

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Education is an important issue among the society's youth. Some students need extra reinforcement and support to fully understand topics and concepts. There are many learning centers and tutors that are out to help build students' success both in and out of school. This study was done in order to find out how effective learning centers and tutors are on students' grades, as well as, performances. The study was conducted at the Sylvan Learning Center, where data was collected on diagnostic and progress testing, along with report cards. This data was collected in order to show that learning centers are beneficial for students' grades, motivation, focus, and performance. The study favored the Sylvan Learning Center. Results were shown that students who attended the Sylvan Learning Center improved their grades, as well as, their foundational and fundamental skills.

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The Effect that Using a Tutor or Learning Center has on Students' Grades

Education will always be an ongoing issue in society. Are the teachers presenting the content in a way that is the easiest for students to learn and comprehend? Does the curriculum correlate to national testing and standards? Are the students trying their best throughout the school day and academic year? Nothing is ever going to be perfect for everyone when it deals with education. There are always going to be students who need some extra help and support for whatever reason.

Now more than ever, students are turning to outside sources for extra support. Tutors, learning centers, and supplemental education are a way for students to get extra help, but do they increase student's grades? This paper will look into remedial education and their effectiveness. The manuscript will discuss different types of tutors, learning centers, and supplemental education and the ways it can benefit students as well as educators. This issue is important for educators, parents, and students to see that supplemental education, in any form, is helpful in showing student growth in motivation, attitude, grades, and skills.

Research will be conducted specifically in Sylvan Learning Center, where certified teachers, on a daily basis, tutor students. The students will be given a diagnostic test when entering Sylvan, as well as, a progress assessment given after 36 hours of instruction. Along with this research, parents will provide the researcher with two report cards. One will be before Sylvan, and the other one will be after/during Sylvan. This will show how effective using a tutor is for specific students. It will support that using an outside source is important and essential for some if not most students.
Literature Review

This literature review will explore different types of remedial education, including their services and benefits. It will also discuss how effective specific outside sources are for student motivation, focus, attitude, grade level, and skills. Some research may show positive effects, while some research will produce negative views on supplemental education. This literature review will discuss educational statistics, tutoring background, Sylvan Learning Center, types of tutoring, and statistics used when children have been tutored. Research will be conducted at Sylvan Learning Center, where this literature review will assist in determining how effective tutoring is for student’s grades, as well as, student’s grade level equivalency.

Educational Statistics

It is not a secret that some students are performing below grade level, or are struggling with specific subjects. Only 88% of high school student’s received a diploma nationwide (Gardner, 2001). Gardner also stated that Ohio is one of the states that are at the highest risk for high school dropouts at 74%. High School can be a challenging and intimidating time for some students. It is a time where students should be thinking about their future, college, grades, and SATs. Some students merely need some extra support or motivation to help them get through their high school years. According to Parker (2002), tutoring can be an effective supplemental enrichment for struggling students. Even with adequate classroom instruction, students can require extra support and reinforcement. Tutoring is not just for the struggling student. Students can receive outside help for
enrichment as well. Sometimes students are not being challenged during school, so they get a tutor for enrichment purposes.

In order to prevent an increase in high school dropouts, remediation needs to start from the lower levels. In a recent study, Jitendra (2004) explained that 40% of United States fourth grades are reading below grade level. Those fourth graders will then have a very difficult time trying to master skills at grade level, and then again as fifth graders, and so on. Students who are reading below grade level by third grade are more likely to become high school dropouts or teenagers with social and economic issues (Loundmon, 2000). Therefore, once students fall behind, it is very difficult to keep their heads above water.

Background on tutoring

Tutoring, learning centers, remedial education, and supplemental education all refer to the same thing. Those four things refer to ways that struggling students can get extra support to help build up their confidence, motivation, focus, attitude, reading and/or math levels, skills, and retention. Houser, Plucker, and Wongsampigoon (2006) found that the need for remedial education in College is very high because of poor high school preparation. Likewise, it is easy to conclude that the need for remedial education in high school is poor because of poor middle school preparation and so forth. This is why it is important to make sure that student’s skills are at or above grade level from early grades. Collaboration between schools needs to take place in order to eliminate this problem (Houser et al.).
Believe it or not, tutors are more ancient than school systems (Gordon, 2004). Educational philosophers built their ideologies around their knowledge as a tutor. School systems were structured around these philosophers and tutoring. While schooling is mandatory, tutoring is optional; however, tutoring is what started it all. Next, Dewey came around with his own new philosophies, and thought tutoring was obsolete (Gordon). He thought the focus should be mainly on the school system, and supplemental education was put on the back burner. Little did he know that remedial education would come back in style in the 21st century.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was designed to meet the needs of students who are in both an economic and educational disadvantage in order to improve student performance in many different areas (Anderson & Snell, 2000). In order to qualify to receive services from the Title I program, students have to be eligible to receive a free or reduced lunch in school, as well as, perform below grade level in school. This title has the largest budget in federal education. Anderson and Snell stated that the federal government spends approximately $8.2 billion per year in order to improve the performance of these economically and educationally disadvantaged students. Hopefully, with all that money put into education services, student’s performances, grades, attitude, and motivation should improve greatly. Unfortunately, since 1965 Title I has failed to produce student improvement in any area.

Due to the disappointing performance of the Title I program, it was changed in 1994. The reauthorization required states to have content and performance standards for both reading and math by 2001 (Anderson & Snell, 2000). In this redesigned Title I, economically disadvantages students also have enrichment and accelerated programs.
available to them. This is supposed to ensure improved student achievement that the federal government is hoping for. According to Anderson and Snell, 90% of school districts receive Title I grants. In order to receive a grant, school districts must have at least ten poor students, as well as, have a county of two percent of poor five to 17-year-olds (Anderson & Snell). With this extra money, school districts should be able to provide their students with the supplies, staff, and programs they need to be successful in school. The Title I program also allows students to contract out to receive extra help from private tutoring companies if seen as necessary.

This program seemed like the perfect cure to help disadvantaged students, but unfortunately there are 10% of school districts that do not receive funding. Over four million poor students are being left behind, because there are not enough economically-disadvantaged students in their school or county (Anderson & Snell, 2000). There are students who really need these services in order to be successful in the school setting; however, they are not guaranteed them because their school is not poor enough.

Types and Statistics of Tutoring

There are many varieties of tutoring worldwide. One popular type is cross-age tutoring. This consists of two students who are of different ages, where the older student is the educator (Olmscheid, 1999). The older student will teach the younger student material that is familiar to the elder one. Peer tutoring is also prominent in school classrooms. In this type of tutoring, students are paired up with students their own age, and both students revert back and forth from tutor and tutee (Olmscheid). This is a great strategy, because both students are learning at the same time. To teach is to learn, and to
learn is to teach. Small group tutoring is another way to tutor. This is where students in
the same class get into groups of four or five. They then discuss, practice, and review
topics and concepts that were taught in the classroom (Heron, 2003). Peer and small
group tutoring is favored because it can build up necessary social skills. Olmscheid stated
that students are more likely to identify with peers their own age, then with adult or
teacher figures. Gardner (2001) agreed with Heron, and stated that children are effective
teachers for their peers. Home based tutoring is popular among the parents. It is cheap
for the parents, and the control of when, where, and what is put into the parent’s hands
(Heron). Heron also stated that home based tutoring is extremely effective, because the
parents know the students the best, and therefore, can figure out their learning style. One-
on-one tutoring can provide the best results (Leal, 2004). Leal also stated that one-on-
one tutoring is beneficial for the students. This is because it includes individualized
instruction as opposed to group instruction. Private tutoring can refer to a learning center,
such as Sylvan Learning Center, Kaplan Educational Services, or Huntington Learning
Center. Gordon (2004), states that private tutoring is the most common use of tutoring in
the United States.

According to Olmscheid (1999), tutors are very beneficial for students. They
build self-confidence as well as increase their self-esteem. Tutoring programs also
involve structure, training, purpose, and individualism (Jones, 2004). Even educators are
now convinced that tutoring programs are beneficial to a student’s academic success. A
poll was taken, and it found that 42% of Americans believe that there is a great
requirement for tutoring for students from an outside source (Gordon, 2004). With all
these combined, it makes sense that students profit from tutoring programs. People
worldwide are discovering and accepting the benefits that students receive from remedial education. However, it seems that supplemental education is the best when it is continued throughout schooling (Coyne, 2004). The best way to keep students above the water is to continue tutoring services so they do not fall behind all over again.

It was also shown that tutoring could reduce behaviors problems with students (Heron, 2003). Heron also explained that once tutoring is not present in a student's schedule, negative behaviors return. In tutoring, the reins are in the hands of the tutor. They can pre-assess students to find their strengths and weaknesses and teach according to their judgment (Sanderson, 2003). This will ensure one-on-one instruction, which was already shown earlier to have the most beneficial results.

It is very important that tutors are trained in ways to instruct that will be the most beneficial for students. Beginner tutors lack the experience to engage in one-on-one tutoring effectively and efficiently. It is difficult for novice teacher to correct students in a positive manner, provide constructive criticism, give positive feedback, or use sophisticated teaching strategies (Hock, 2001). Without all of those components, tutoring can hinder the performance of the students, instead of providing them the tools to be successful in school. Tutors hope that tutees will acquire new knowledge, become more independent, be more motivated and learn new important skills (Hock).

Private Tutoring

Sylvan Learning Center is a popular franchised tutoring center. It was founded in 1978, and there are 700 centers nationwide and growing, by adding 50 centers per year (Anderson & Snell, 2000). The programs at Sylvan are very detailed and thorough. The
students start out by taking a diagnostic skills assessment. This will determine the student’s strengths and weaknesses. From there a program is built based on the student’s individual needs in Math, Reading, Study Skills, or Writing. Instruction is taught in a three-to-one student-teacher ratio; however, teachers will be instructing students one-on-one to ensure personal and individualized attention. With Sylvan’s programs being so thorough and accurate, the tuition does not come cheap. On an average parents are spending anywhere from $2,000 to $4,000 a year for outside tutoring (Anderson & Snell). All of Sylvan’s teachers are certified and trained in a specific area of content.

Many school districts are contracting out and asking for outside help from Sylvan Learning Center. Sylvan has enrolled 80,000 students in 850 school districts under contracting by the school (Anderson & Snell, 2000).

Sylvan uses the California Achievement Test (CAT) to diagnostically test as well as progress test students. In order to find out if students have improved, they will compare the grade level equivalency and Normal Curve Equivalents from the two tests. According to the United States Department of Education, a gain of two Normal Curve Equivalents is an acceptable growth, while a gain of seven is excellent (Anderson & Snell, 2000). There is also a Sylvan Guarantee that each student will improve by at least one grade level or 2.5 Normal Curve Equivalents after 36 hours of instruction. If a student does not meet this guarantee, free instruction will be serviced by Sylvan Learning Center. Anderson and Snell also stated that Sylvan meets the requirements of sound assessments by the ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness.

Students who were chosen to attend the Sylvan at school program are very low achieving (Anderson & Snell, 2000). These students are chosen because they would have
the most benefit from a program such as Sylvan at school. Again, these students would start out with a diagnostic skills assessment, including the California Achievement Test. The students who were enrolled in the Sylvan at school Program during the 1997-1998 school years performed below the 25th percentile on the California Achievement Test (Anderson & Snell).

Sylvan at school programs also help out in with a Beginning Reading Program. This program is built to help students in grades Kindergarten through second. The Beginning Reading Program helps students build up sight vocabulary, phonics skills to sound out words, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Seventy-one percent of students who started the Sylvan at school Beginning Reading Program couldn’t read (Anderson & Snell, 2000). Anderson and Snell showed that after the one year program was complete, 100% of the students that were enrolled in the Sylvan at school Beginning Reading Program were reading, and reading well. Anderson and Snell also found that only 27% of students in the Sylvan at school Beginning Reading Program could identify long vowel sounds. With the completion of the program, 73.8% of students were able to identify all long vowel sounds. Now that those students are able to identify long vowel sounds, reading comprehension, sight words, and oral fluency should all come easier for students. During the diagnostic testing, only 23% of students were able to identify all lowercase letters. During the progress assessment, 96.8% of students were able to identify all lowercase letters (Anderson & Snell, 2000). Those students received a growth of 73.8%, which is a significant growth for a one-year program. With the increase in all previous areas, students should find that activities in school are going to be a lot easier.
for them. Not only will school activities be easier for these students, their motivation to read will increase because they actually can read!

Students in schools that were contracted out to Sylvan in 1998 showed strong improvement (Anderson & Snell, 2000). Anderson and Snell showed specific percentage growth in vocabulary, comprehension, and total reading. Vocabulary scores increased by 19%, while comprehension scores increased by 35% and total reading scores increased by 25%. All students enrolled in the Sylvan at School Academic Reading Program increased their reading skills (Anderson & Snell). Referring back to the fact that two Normal Curve Equivalents is an acceptable growth, these students enrolled in Sylvan at School achieved a gain of seven Normal Curve Equivalents. That is a huge jump for only a year of extra help. With such an outstanding increase in Normal Curve Equivalent, it is safe to say that the student’s grade level equivalency increased as well. Anderson and Snell mentioned that elementary students showed the most growth, by achieving a gain of eight Normal Curve Equivalents. Middle school students showed the least growth with increasing their reading scores by 21%, and high school students increased their reading scores by 30% (Anderson & Snell).

In Texas, students are required by the Texas Assessment of Achievement Skills to take an algebra test. During the 1994-1995 school years, only 30% of students in two middle schools passed the test (Anderson & Snell, 2000). Sylvan was brought in to help students pass this algebra test. The next year, Sylvan was present to tutor students, and 100% of students passed. It is easy to see that Sylvan was the main reason why most of these students improved and passed the test.
Between 1993-1995, schools in Baltimore, MD participated in Sylvan Programs. Johns Hopkins University conducted a study to show the effectiveness of the Sylvan Programs as compared to a control group without Sylvan Programs (Anderson & Snell, 2000). The study focused on a Maryland Functional Math test for eighth graders. There were 136 students who were enrolled in a Sylvan Math Program who were compared to other eighth grade students who are not enrolled in a Sylvan Math Program. Both groups had failed this test the prior year (Anderson & Snell). Anderson and Snell showed that students who attended a Sylvan Program achieved a higher test-score gain than did the students who were not enrolled in a Sylvan Program. Sylvan students recorded a 28.5% increase, while non-Sylvan students only received a 12.7% gain in scores from the previous year compared to the present year (Anderson & Snell). In the same study, Johns Hopkins University researchers looked into both the diagnostic and progress assessment for both groups. The Sylvan students gained 14.11 Normal Curve Equivalents, while the non-Sylvan students gained only 7.2 Normal Curve Equivalents (Anderson & Snell). Sylvan showed to be very beneficial for these students who needed extra support in Math. With a year of Sylvan intervention, the students who were enrolled in Sylvan will find math problems to be easier in years to come as well.

Case studies outside of Private Tutoring

Three eighth grade students who were at-risk for failing a math class were handpicked by the school to take part in a study. This study used tutoring three afternoons a week for 45 minutes, and lasted four to twelve weeks. The tutors were brought in from a near-by University. Before the tutoring sessions started, Student 1 had a 46% test grade.
and 45% quiz grade. Student 2 was in the same boat and has only a 54% test grade, and 58% quiz grade. Student 3 was falling behind as well with a 59% test grade, and a 61% quiz grade (Hock, 2001). These students were in desperate need for extra support in their math classes in order to pass the year. The school noticed these grades, and stepped in to give these students the help they needed for success. After a semester of tutoring help all three student’s grades improved immensely. Student 1 passed the semester with a letter grade of C. Student 2 received an 86% test grade and 84% quiz grade during the tutoring sessions. Unfortunately, once tutoring ended his test and quiz grades dropped and only earned a C for the semester. Student 3 made the most improvement with a semester letter grade of B-. Student 3 received an 87% test grade, and a 91% quiz grade (Hock). These tutoring sessions showed to be extremely beneficial for these students. It is possible that the students would not have passed the semester or even year without the extra help and support that they received.

Another study tested out the waters of one-on-one tutoring. According to Leal (2004), one-on-one tutoring is the most effective type of tutoring. Hedrick (1999) agreed with Leal, by also having stated that one-on-one tutoring is the most widely used, as well as, the most effective type of tutoring. This study involved pre-service teachers that tutored third, fourth, and fifth grade students one-on-one (Hedrick). The school that hosted this program already gave tutoring services to first and second grade students, but third through fifth did not receive any special services. It is important to give extra support to students starting in lower grades, but according to Coyne (2004), students need to continue to receive help in order to maintain success in school.
The students that received tutoring in this program received individualized instruction in both reading and writing. They would receive extra support four times a week, for 40-45 minutes each (Hedrick, 1999). With the tutors setting up each program based on the student's needs, the tutoring session should show to be beneficial for both students and pre-service teachers. According to Hedrick, the program focused on vocabulary development, word identification, writing about new material, and reading fluency. The tutors maintained portfolios for each student. Running records, comprehension assessments, reading fluency assessments, and writing samples were kept in the portfolio to assess academic growth in all those areas after the program is complete. This is a great way to show improvement from the beginning to end of a program, because it shows student work as well as testing for students. Both of those combined show a better picture of the student's diagnostic levels as well as ending levels. Along with the after school programs, and Sylvan at school programs, this tutoring study showed to be effective for the students (Anderson & Snell, 2000; Hedrick; Gardner, 2001). In the beginning of the program, all students were reading below their grade level (Hedrick). After the tutoring sessions were finished, each student made more than one year's growth in reading. Some students even made at much as a two grade level growth in reading! It is easy to conclude that these students benefited from one-on-one tutoring in reading and writing. Both Leal (2004) and Hedrick believed that one-on-one instruction works, and this study showed that both of they are correct.

Like the study that Hedrick (1999) discussed, another similar one was done in a rural Appalachian area (Leal, 2004). In this study, 107 first through sixth grade students were chosen by parents, teachers and educators to receive extra tutoring in reading. There
were also 107 tutors who were undergraduate pre-service teachers at a local University. Each student was paired up with one tutor, where they would receive one-on-one instruction for one full school year. The students ended up receiving a total of 30 hours of instruction throughout the entire program. In order to determine a baseline for each student, tutors gave their tutee an assessment, which showed the student’s oral comprehension, word recognition, and listening comprehension. This will then give the tutors insight into where to begin their instruction and with what content. The diagnostic assessment will be used to show improvement at the end of the program. The tutors focused on reading fluency, listening and reading comprehension, strategic reading and motivated reading strategies (Leal). This study was unique in that each student co-authored their own book with peers in their class. The tutees received guided support and structure from their tutor in order to produce the book. The tutor hoped that the book would showcase their reading improvement that was made throughout the school year.

The results of this study showed that the one-on-one reading tutoring was successful in improving student’s reading skills, motivation, and writing skills (Leal, 2004). Tutors had said that their student’s motivation improved greatly from the beginning of the program to the end of the program. Leal also showed that motivated students are more likely to succeed in school activities. If students feel like they are capable of reading, of course their motivation to read is going to increase because they know they can do it! It was shown that all students’ grade level increased based on the comparison from their pretest and posttest assessments (Leal). Along with the assessments that were given by the tutor, all students passed reading classes, as well as, state and national exams in reading. Although Leal did not state whether or not students
passed the state and national exams before this study, it is still a huge accomplishment for both the tutor and tutee. The parents were just as proud of their children as were the tutors, the educators and students themselves were. The books were the piece that showed the most improvement. With help from their tutors, they produced these books that were written correctly, and the student's were able to read and understand them (Leal). In this study, tutoring was beneficial for all involved!

In the previous studies, tutoring was shown to improve academics, motivation, and social skills; Coyne (2004) provided a study that is consistent to the previous ones. Coyne stated that reading interventions have become more effective for improving reading skills for younger students. This study follows first grade students who received an intensive beginning reading program in kindergarten, in order to show the success of the program. The students that were hand picked by their teachers to take part in this program, had skills that were in the lowest 20\textsuperscript{th} percentile compared to other students in their grade. Even though these students were only in kindergarten when the invention was put into affect, Loundmon (2000) explained earlier that students who are reading below grade level by third grade are more likely to become a high school dropout, or have social or economic issues as a teenager. Therefore, it makes sense to start reading intervention very early, even as early as kindergarten. According to Coyne, the students were successful in improving their reading skills. After the intervention, the students who were involved in the program received above the 30\textsuperscript{th} percentile for word recognition and decoding skills. Coyne suggests that students who participated in the kindergarten intervention should be caught up by the middle of first grade, and will continue to make acceptable growth. The kindergartners received additional support in reading skills before
it became too late. It is because of this intervention that they are successful in first grade, and they should continue to be successful in later grades as well. It is very important to start intervention in any subject early to prevent future problems.

Another study was conducted using seven first through third graders attending a school district in the northeastern United States (Jitendra, 2004). Children were hand picked by the teachers based on their inadequate reading skills. This school district adopted the Read Well program, which is designed for beginning readers who are reading below grade level. The Read Well program uses three out of the six types of tutoring mentioned earlier. This can be utilized by one-on-one instruction, small group tutoring, or whole class instruction (Jitendra). This allows the tutor to differentiate based on student needs, and preference. Using the Read Well program increased reading fluency, and word identification for three out of five students (Jitendra). This is the first study that didn’t show an improvement for all students. This could be because of the type of tutoring or instruction. The type of tutoring that was designed for each student may not have been the best way for that specific student to learn, or the program could not have been designed based on the student’s weaknesses. However, three out of five students is better than zero out of five students. There are still three students who gained extra knowledge about reading strategies that will beneficial for academic success.

**After School Programs**

After School Programs can be helpful for parents, students and educators in many different ways. They can provide a positive place where students can go after school hours instead of being on the streets. Students in an after school program find themselves
less likely to get into drugs, gangs, and sex. Some benefits of after school programs are, improved social and academic skills, and an insight into the dangers of the streets in an urban community (Gardner, 2001). Gardner stated that urban at-risk students who attend an after school program perform better in school, both behaviorally and academically.

Faculty and students at Ohio State University along with the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church put together an after school program for elementary students in an Ohio urban setting. The students who attended the after school program were identified by their teachers and principals as having both learning and behavioral issues (Gardner). The extra support, attention, and education will help these students with both their negative behavior and low academic skills. The after school program consists of academic instruction in reading and math, social skills, and recreational skills (Gardner).

This after school program involved many of the types of tutoring that was shown effective earlier (Olmscheid, 1999; Heron, 2003; Leal, 2004; Gardner, 2001). Peer tutoring, one-on-one tutoring and small group tutoring were all used in this program (Gardner). It was possible to use all the tutoring strategies because of the extra outside help that the after school program received. Not only were these students receiving the academic skills necessary to be successful in school, they also gained life surviving strategies, and ways to stay in school and off the streets. All of the students that attended the after school program improved both their reading and math skills (Gardner). The students were given a pretest before the program began, as well as, a posttest after the program ended. The pretest scores for reading ranged from 0.5-3.5. Seven months later the posttest was given, and students received grades from 2.2-6.1. One student improved their scores by 3.2 points! The math scores were just as successful, all students improved.
The students were tested in multiplication facts for both accuracy and fluency. For accuracy, students ranged from 0.0% to 56.8%. At this point the tutors knew they had their work cut out for them to improve these multiplication facts. After the program students received grades 6.4%-100% in accuracy. There were four students who received a perfect score in accuracy! Most students improved immensely in this area of concern. Students ranged from 0-65, correct answers per minute, in a pretest for fluency on multiplication facts. After seven months of tutoring and multiplication drills, students received 7-100 correct answers per minute (Gardner). This program helped urban at-risk students improve academically, socially, mentally, and morally. However, the only thing that has been measured is the progress in academic areas, which turned out to be a great improvement. These students would probably benefit from a Sylvan at school program, which helped many other at-risk students (Anderson & Snell, 2000).

Sanderson (2003), like Gardner (2001), also believed that after school programs are beneficial for students. Sanderson stated that after school programs allow the students to receive additional learning time, which in turn would have to be helpful for the students. This study is similar to the study that Gardner explained, as that, the after school program provides academic instruction, as well as, a place to keep the students off of the dangerous streets and an empty house. The program that Sanderson mentioned provided an additional two hours of instruction per week. After school programs are important for a community, because it allows parents, educators, students, and the whole community to come together to support success in school. This program takes place in western Philadelphia, where many elementary schools are concerned at-risk. All tutors were certified teachers who obtained a Pennsylvania reading specialist certificate. The after
school program is called, T.O.A.S.T, and it was designed to help improve student’s academic success as well as provide a safe environment for the children. It is important for students to receive tutoring from a safe environment, because if students feel safe they will be more inclined to work to the best of their ability.

The students in the T.O.A.S.T program were instructed in reading comprehension, word recognition, and phonemic awareness (Sanderson, 2003). Assessment in the T.O.A.S.T program was different than the previous studies. Students were assessed weekly by reading records, so that the tutors to maintain and update the student’s program on a weekly basis. This is a great strategy because the program will constantly be focusing on the student’s needs that can easily change weekly. With the other studies, the programs were put together based on the diagnostic testing, which is great, but was never updated based on progress (Gardner, 2001; Anderson & Snell, 2000; Coyne, 2004; Leal, 2004; Hedrick, 1999; Hock, 2001). The tutors tested the students on sight words, and words that were not recognized right away were put on a ring to be reviewed each session (Sanderson).

The results of the T.O.A.S.T program showed that the program was beneficial for the students (Sanderson, 2003). The tutors mentioned that the student’s self-esteem, risk taking, and motivation all improved from the program. In addition, sight words, literacy skills, reading comprehension, and oral fluency all improved for each of the students that were enrolled in the T.O.A.S.T program. This program obviously increased student performance and potential while giving them a safe environment after school. These types of programs are great for the community, school, and students.
No Child Left Behind

George W. Bush created the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001. This act was created to ensure that all students receive the extra support and help that they need and deserve with no cost to the student or parent. No Child Left Behind provides schools with approximately $1 billion per year for tutoring services (Gordon, 2004). With No Child Left Behind, schools team up with either tutoring within the school, or outside tutoring in order to help students achieve academic success. In order for a school to qualify for No Child Left Behind, they have to receive failing grades on state and national tests for consecutive years. Once a school qualifies for No Child Left Behind, students then need to be eligible for services. The students need to receive a free or reduced lunch to even be considered to obtain services from No Child Left Behind. Once both schools and students are approved for No Child Left Behind, the students can chose from many different tutoring opportunities to receive extra help in order to be successful in school. Some examples of tutoring services provided by No Child Left Behind is, Sylvan Learning Center, Dial-a-teacher, tutoring within the school provided by the teachers at the school. With the many different options for teachers, students, and parents, it is easy to make sure the students get the tutoring that they desperately need to survive in school. Since 2001, No Child Left Behind has been successful in providing services to at-risk students, as well as improving academic success, motivation, and self esteem (Gordon). No Child Left Behind makes it easy for economically disadvantaged parents to provide their children with exemplar tutoring and schooling.
Conclusions

It is easy to see from this review of the literature that tutoring is an effective way to help student’s achievement academic success. Along with academic success, students gain social skills, as well as, an increase in motivation, self-esteem, focus, and attitude. There are many different types of tutoring and way to implement them into a classroom, or utilize them outside of the classroom. With these many different types of tutoring, it is easy to differentiate in order to make sure that tutoring is being done in a way that is the most effective for students. It is also helpful that the government had stepped in and produced grants for school districts, such as No Child Left Behind, and Title I. These grants enabled students to receive tutoring even if they can’t afford it. The literature described in the review shows an immense improvement with reading skills, along with some improvement in math skills. Student’s benefit from using tutors in many different ways that can all be beneficial to build their academic success.
Methodology

Tutoring is used worldwide in order to help student’s performances in many ways. Parents are spending thousands of dollars to increase their children’s success at school. Is their money wisely spent? Are the students receiving adequate remediation? Research has been conducted at the Sylvan Learning Center to show the effectiveness that using learning centers and tutors have on student’s performances.

The Sylvan Learning Center is a franchised business that is found worldwide. There are four Sylvan Learning Centers in Rochester that are all owned by one person. Students come to Sylvan Learning Center to receive educational help in many different programs. Sylvan offers programs in Academic Reading, Academic Writing, Math Essentials, Senior Math, Beginning Reading, Study Skills, Regents Prep, SAT Prep, and ACT prep. Prospective students are first diagnostically tested in any of the programs to determine their strengths and weaknesses. From there, an individualized program is produced to build up skills in order to maximize their success at school. Along with diagnostic testing, progress testing is performed after 36 hours of instruction to follow student’s progress in the program. The Sylvan Learning Center uses the California Achievement Test for both the diagnostic and progress testing. The California Achievement Test is a standardized exam that correctly identifies student’s grade level equivalency, as well as, specific skills and topics that are essential for success.

The research was conducted at the Pittsford center. There are approximately 100 students that attend, where the majority of the students are Caucasians. There is a 50:50 ratio of male to females that attend Sylvan. Three students were randomly chosen to participate in the Program. The three students are all white males, and attend two
different schools. One student is a kindergartener, one is in 4th grade, and the other is in 5th grade. All three students come from a middle class family, and reside in the suburbs of Rochester.

The research that was conducted at Sylvan used both diagnostic and progress assessments. The two California Achievement Tests were compared to show the student’s process after 36 hours of instruction. Along with the California Achievement Tests, report cards were used to show the success at school. The parents provided a report card from before the student attended Sylvan, and a report card from after the student attended Sylvan. These report cards showed the progress that the students made at school from the help of Sylvan. The two California Achievement Tests, and the two report cards were gathered together to show how effective the use of learning centers and tutors were on the three students.
Results

The data that was taken in this study was beneficial in showing how learning centers help students’ grades. Three male subjects were used in this study. Student 1 was in 4th grade at the time of the study, and has been attending the Sylvan Learning Center since Kindergarten. Student 1 was in Kindergarten when he was tested in both the Academic Reading and Math Essentials Program. The details of his diagnostic assessment are shown on Table 1 in the Appendices section. The scores showed that Student 1 was performing significantly below grade level in both math and reading.

Student 1 had a grade level equivalency of 0.1 in vocabulary, and 0.0 in both comprehension and concepts & applications in Math. Student 1 was immediately put into an individualized program to build up his foundational skills. He was progress tested after 36 hours of instruction of each program, and 72 hours of instructions in math. The results of Student 1’s progress assessments are shown on Table 4 in the Appendices section. It shows that Student 1 make significant progress after instruction at Sylvan. Student 1 grew almost 3 grade levels in vocabulary, and almost 4 grade levels in comprehension. Student 1 took the reading progress assessment when he was in 2nd grade. The progress assessment scores show that Student 1 is now performing above grade level. Student 1 has completed two progress assessments in math, one after 36 hours of instruction, and also one after 72 hours of instruction. After 36 hours of instruction Student 1 grew one whole grade level, and was performing at grade level. After 72 hours of instruction, Student 1 grew four grade levels since the diagnostic testing, and was performing above grade level.
hours of instruction, as well as, 72 hours of instruction. The details of these assessments are shown on Table 5 in the Appendices section. After 36 hours of instruction, Student 2 was in 1st grade, and was performing at a 5th grade level in computation and a 2nd grade level in concepts and applications. This shows significant growth after only 36 hours of instruction at the Sylvan Learning Center. Student 2 was in 2nd grade at the time of his 72-hour Progress Assessment. Student 2’s grade level equivalency went down to 3.8 in computation since his 36-hour test, but was still performing above grade level. However, Student 2 raised his concepts and applications grade level equivalency to 5.1, and was therefore performing significantly above grade level.

Student 2 had also been attending the Sylvan Learning Center since Kindergarten, so there is not a before Sylvan report card. The report card for Student 2 in 5th grade has shown that he is consistently exceeding NYS and District Standards in Reading and Math. His teacher mentioned that he excels in all areas, and has a love for learning. In 3rd grade, Student 2 completed a New York State Reading and Math Assessment. Student 2 performed at a level 4 for both subjects, which soars above the minimum requirement.

Student 3 was in Kindergarten at the time of the study, and has been attending the Sylvan Learning Center since the summer before he started school. Student 3 was only tested in the Math Essentials Program. The details of this assessment are shown on Table 3 in the Appendices section. The scores show that Student 3 was performing below grade level in math with a 0.0 grade level equivalency. Student 3 has not yet completed 36 hours of instruction at the Sylvan Learning Center, and therefore has not completed a Progress Assessment.
Student 3 received his first report card while attending the Sylvan Learning Center. Student 3 consistently received 3’s in all areas of his report card. This shows that Student 3 is meeting NYS and District standards with distinction. Student 3 has learned half of the sight words for Kindergarteners, and is able to identify all upper and lower case letters.
Discussion & Conclusion

The data that was conducted in this research were very beneficial in showing that learning centers help students’ grades and performances. The results that were shown earlier clearly stand for themselves, and show that learning centers are effective for the grades of students. All three students that were used in this study tested significantly below grade level. After the diagnostic testing, all three students were put into individualized programs specific to their needs based on the testing results. With the help of the Sylvan Learning Center’s certified teachers, all three students build up their fundamental skills. Student 1 and 2 were both progress tested after 36 and 72 hours of instruction. The two students’ grade level equivalency skyrocketed, and it is obvious that it was due to the individual attention and support the students received from their teachers.

Referring back to the literature, Anderson & Snell (2000) stated that according to the United States Department of Education, a gain of two Normal Curve Equivalents is an acceptable growth, while a gain of seven is excellent (Anderson & Snell, 2000). Student 1 was progress tested in both reading and math; refer to Table 4 in Appendix D. In Reading Student 1 began with a Normal Curve Equivalent of 83 in vocabulary and 45 in comprehension. This shows a gain of 38 Normal Curve Equivalents, which is far beyond the United States Department of Education’s seven. The same showed true for Student 1’s progress assessment in Math. Student 1 started at a 0 Normal Curve Equivalent in computation, and grew to a 23 after 36 hours of instruction, and jumped to a 54 after 72 hours of instruction. In concepts and applications, Student 1 received a Normal Curve Equivalent of 38 on his diagnostic testing, went down to a 34 after 36
Effect that using 33 hours of instruction, and increased to a 55 after 72 hours of instruction. These results show that the growth that Student 1 made after both 36 and 72 hours of instruction are extraordinary and acceptable.

Student 2 showed the same kind of growth with the Normal Curve Equivalents. Student 2 only completed progress assessment in math. and did so after 36 and 72 hours of instruction. At the time of Student 2’s diagnostic assessment, he achieved a Normal Curve Equivalent of 0 in computation and a 72 in concepts and applications. After 36 hours of instruction, Student 2 received a Normal Curve Equivalent of 99 in computation, and 81 in concepts and applications. After 72 hours of instruction, Student 2 received a Normal Curve Equivalent of 81 in computation, and an 84 in concepts and applications. Between the time of his diagnostic testing and 72-hour progress test, Student 2 grew a total of 81 Normal Curve Equivalents in computation, and 12 in concepts and applications. This exceeds the expectations of The United States Department of Education. Therefore, it is easy to see that the Sylvan Learning Center helped improve the student’s fundamental and foundational skills. The grade level equivalency and Normal Curve Equivalency for both students increased more than the Sylvan Learning Center and the United States Department of Education expect and guarantee. Sylvan guarantees that students will receive an increase of 2.5 Normal Curve Equivalents after 36 hours of instruction. If that is not met, Sylvan will provide free instruction in order to receive the proper growth. In both of these cases, the families will not receive free instruction.

All three students had great report cards. These report cards reflect their own academic success, as well as, the success of the Sylvan Learning Center. It is easy to be
seen that the students were all struggling when they came to the Sylvan Learning Center. They were all performing below grade level, and were lacking basic fundamental skills that are necessary to be successful in school. After several hours of instruction, their foundational skills were built up, and were shown through their report cards. Both Student 1 and 2 scored way above average on the New York State Reading and Math Assessments. With the help of the Sylvan Learning Center, success in school was made possible for these three boys.

According to Olmscheid (1999), tutors are very beneficial for students. They build self-confidence as well as increase their self-esteem. Not only did all three students improve on their progress assessments, and report cards, their self-confidence increased as well. Self-esteem is huge when it comes to young children. They do not want to be picked on in school if they do not know the answer to a problem. At the Sylvan Learning Center these three students built up their fundamental skills, and were therefore more knowledgeable about all aspects of reading, study skills, and math. After this happens, students are ready to volunteer in class instead of hoping that they will not get called on.

Referring back to the results that were shown on the success of all three students, it makes it easy to say that learning centers considerably improve students’ performances. So with this being the case, why is every child not in a supplemental education program? Anderson & Snell (2000) state that on average, parents are spending anywhere from $2,000 to $4,000 a year for outside tutoring. That is a lot that is being paid for tutoring nationwide. However, there is some benefit to cost, parents can look at the price optimistically. If parents invest the money now to help students get their heads above the water, they will not be wasting as much money in college. Houser, Plucker, and
Wongsampigoon (2006) found that the need for remedial education in college is very high because of poor high school preparation. Without the supplemental education in grade school and high school, students will fall even more below water once they reach college. College is another life to these students who are already struggling. It is even bad enough where college students have to drop out or even fall out because they are so far behind. With the use of remedial education in earlier grades, it will make college do-able for most students. Therefore, even though supplemental education is pricey, it is worth it if a student is able to succeed through college.

On the other hand, the government is making it easier for less fortunate families to take advantage of these beneficial supplemental educational programs. Title I grants, and the No Child Left Behind Programs are the most widely used. No Child Left Behind provides schools with approximately $1 billion per year for tutoring services (Gordon, 2004). According to Anderson and Snell (2000), 90% of school districts receive Title I grants. These grants and programs allow students to receive remedial education at a fraction of or no cost to the families at all. Every student should have the opportunity to receive these beneficial programs no matter what, and it is great that most students are able to.

Parker (2002) mentioned that tutoring could be an effective supplemental enrichment for struggling students. These results show that Parker was correct in his findings. In all three cases, the students were struggling and were performing significantly below grade level. With the help of the Sylvan Learning Center, all three students received the individual attention that they needed in order to be successful. All
students improved immensely on their progress assessments, and now have lifelong strategies that they will be able to use in the classroom.
References


## Appendix A:

### Diagnostic for Student 1

#### Table 1

**Academic Reading Diagnostic Testing - Student 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>NCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>521</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>419</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Reading</td>
<td>470</td>
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<td>61</td>
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**Math Essentials Diagnostic Testing - Student 1**

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<th>Percentile</th>
<th>NCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts &amp; Application</td>
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Appendix B:

Diagnostic for Student 2

Table 2

Academic Reading Diagnostic Testing - Student 2

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<th>Percentile</th>
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Math Essentials Diagnostic Testing - Student 2

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<th>Percentile</th>
<th>NCE</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Concepts &amp; Application</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>72</td>
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Appendix C:

Diagnostic for Student 3

Table 3

Math Essentials Diagnostic Testing-Student 3

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<td>Concepts &amp; Application</td>
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Appendix D:

Progress Assessment for Student 1

Table 4

CAT History (Progress Assessment) - Student 1

### Academic Reading

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<th>36 hour SS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary SS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Percentile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary NCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehension SS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehension NCE</td>
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<td>Total Percentile</td>
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### Math Essentials

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<td>58</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computation GE</td>
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<td>Concepts &amp; Apps NCE</td>
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Appendix E:

Progress Assessment for Student 2

Table 5

CAT History (Progress Assessment) - Student 2

Math Essentials

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<td>Concepts &amp; Apps SS</td>
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<td>Total GE</td>
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Appendix F:

Parental Consent for Student 1

St. John Fisher College
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(for use with minors)

Title of study: Thesis paper - "The effect that using a tutor has on student's grades"

Name(s) of researcher(s): Jessica DeRuy

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Diane Barrett

Phone for further information: 585-224-6108

Purpose of study:
The purpose of this research is to prove that tutors and learning centers are beneficial for student's attitude and grades.

Approval of study: This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: Sylvan Learning Center in Pittsford Length of participation: 4 months

Risks and benefits: The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:

Benefits:
- This study will show how much learning centers enhances student's performances in school.

Risks:
- None

Method of compensation, if any
- None

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:
- Students will remain anonymous. Their names will not be anywhere in the report.

Your rights: As the parent/guardian of a research participant, you have the right to:
1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to allow your minor child to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you or your minor child.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

I, the parent or guardian of Ian McMillan, a minor 9 years of age, consent to his/her participation in the above-named study. I have received a copy of this form.

Suzanne McMillan
Print name (Parent/Guardian) Signature: [Signature] Date: 6/29/07

Jessica DeRuy
Print name (Investigator) Signature: [Signature] Date: 2/10/07
Appendix G:

Parental Consent for Student 2

ST. John Fisher College
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(for use with minors)

Title of study: Thesis paper: “The effect that using a tutor has on students' grades”

Name(s) of researcher(s): Jessica DePuy
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Diane Barrett
Phone for further information: 585-224-8108

Purpose of study:
The purpose of this research is to prove that tutors and learning centers are beneficial for students' attitude and grades.

Approval of study: This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: Sylvan Learning Center in Pittsford. Length of participation: 4 months

Risks and benefits: The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:
Benefits:
- This study will show how much learning centers enhances students' performances in school.

Risks:
- None

Method of compensation, if any
- None

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:
- Students will remain anonymous. Their names will not be anywhere in the report.

Your rights: As the parent/guardian of a research participant, you have the right to:
1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to allow your minor child to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you or your minor child.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

I, the parent or guardian of Jonathan Detro, a minor 9 years of age, consent to his/her participation in the above-named study. I have received a copy of this form.

Print name (Parent/Guardian)  Signature  Date
Kristin Detro  Kristin Detro  1/30/07

Print name (Investigator)  Signature  Date
Jessica DePuy  Jessica DePuy  2/10/07
Appendix H:

Parental Consent for Student 3

Title of study: Thesis paper- "The effect that using a tutor has on students' grades"

Name(s) of researcher(s): Jessica DePuy

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Diane Barrett

Phone for further information: 585-224-6106

Purpose of study: The purpose of this research is to prove that tutors and learning centers are beneficial for student's attitude and grades.

Approval of study: This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: Sylvan Learning Center in Pittsford. Length of participation: 4 months

Risks and benefits: The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:

Benefits:
- This study will show how much learning centers enhances students' performances in school.

Risks:
- None

Method of compensation, if any
- None

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:
- Students will remain anonymous. Their names will not be anywhere in the report.

Your rights: As the parent/guardian of a research participant, you have the right to:
1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to allow your minor child to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you or your minor child.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

I, the parent or guardian of Brandon Detto, a minor 5 years of age, consent to his/her participation in the above-named study. I have received a copy of this form.

Print name (Parent/Guardian)  Signature  Date
Kristin Detto  Kristin Detto  11/30/07
Print name (Investigator)  Signature  Date
Jessica DePuy  Jessica DePuy  11/30/07