I will investigate the attitudes that the students of LaGrange College towards the Tutoring Center. Since the Tutoring Center is sponsored by LaGrange College, it is important to discover how useful students view the program to be. While many, if not all, students will benefit from tutoring, it is possible that multiple factors go into the decision to make use of the Tutoring Center. It will be beneficial to know the students’ thoughts on the quality of the tutors, the availability of the program to the students, and the overall satisfaction the students feel towards it.

Much research has been done exploring the topic of tutoring and its usefulness to students. One study, conducted by Sanna Honkimaki and Paive Tynjala (2007), showed that students who were tutored began to exhibit greater emphasis on learning than those who did not. They concluded that, if tutoring of good quality is provided, the attitudes of the students towards learning and knowledge would begin to change positively. Their study also showed that students who choose to use available tutoring seem to be more motivated in their studies than those who do not choose to make use of tutoring. Overall, Honkimaki and Tynjala found that tutoring is “related to success in higher education” (pg. 195).

In another study, it was shown that tutoring increases students’ performance in the subjects that they are tutored in (Parkinson, 2009). Parkinson showed that “the tutored students progressively increased their performance at in-house tests in calculus compared to the untutored students; their examination marks in chemistry and calculus substantially improved and failure rates were cut dramatically” (pg. 381). As their study indicates, tutoring can be the cause of an increase in academic performance. It is obvious that tutoring, if done correctly, can be beneficial producing both an increase in a student’s grade and the student’s confidence in the subject.

This project will attempt to discover the students’ attitudes towards the Lagrange College Tutoring Center. I believe that the students’ responses will demonstrate an overall feeling of satisfaction toward the tutors and the program in general. With the outcomes of the questionnaire, I will be able to determine if the Tutoring Center is a valuable part of the LaGrange College experience.
Method

Participants

Undergraduate students were recruited to participate in a questionnaire about their attitudes toward the Tutoring Center. Originally, the questionnaires were distributed by the tutors following a tutoring session. As this method resulted in a low response rate, an additional recruitment procedure was tried. Students entering the Tutoring Center were asked if they had been tutored in the last month, if they responded positively, they were then asked to complete the questionnaire. All responses were anonymous. Nineteen questionnaires were completed, with ten completed by females and nine completed by males. The age range for the participants was 18 to 33 years with the median age being 20 years. Throughout the study, all participants were treated ethically according to the “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct”. (American Psychological Association, 2002)

Procedure

Each of the nineteen respondents completed a 20 item questionnaire. After the participant completed the survey the participant placed the questionnaire in a large envelope that was in the Tutoring Center office. This was done to insure the identity of the participant anonymous would be. For the responses regarding the student’s satisfaction of the Tutoring Center, the respondent was asked to choose from a 5-point Likert-type scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Results

Using the one-sample t-test, responses to individual questions were compared to a value of 3 (neutral), several significant results were found. Multiple items produced a significant result in support of the hypothesis that the students will feel satisfaction towards the Tutoring Center. That is, reported satisfaction was positive and significantly above a neutral response. (Refer to Appendix A for a summary of significant results.). For example, the t-test for the hours of the Tutoring Center being workable for the students was $t (18) = 4.025, p<.001$. The t-test for the number of visits was $t (18) = 11.587, p<.001$. The subjects that students need to be offered was $t (17) = 3.189, p<.005$. The results for the increase in confidence level was $t (18) = 7.877, p<.001$ and the Tutoring Center helping with mastering the material was $t (18) = 4.800, p<.001$. The knowledge of the tutoring staff received results of $t (18) = 4.943, p<.001$. Results for the level of comfort increasing was $t (18) = 6.508, p<.001$ and the kindness of the tutors resulted in $t (18) = 2.395, p<.028$.

In addition to the t-tests, several correlations were shown to be significant. The satisfaction with the hours of the Tutoring center correlated positively with the number of visits made to the center with a result of $r (17) = .602, p=.006$. A strong
negative correlation was found between grade point averages of the students and the number of visits that are made to the Tutoring Center with a result of $r(17)=-.708$, $p=.001$

**Discussion**

The results generally indicate students who use the Tutoring Center are satisfied with the services they receive. The results showed extreme positive reaction to more than half of the items assessing satisfaction. The results showed that tutoring allows students to become more comfortable and confident in the subject that is being discussed. It seems that the quality of the Tutoring Center might result in fewer times that are needed to be in the Tutoring Center. As for the hours of the Tutoring Center and the subjects covered by the tutors, most respondents found the program to work well with their schedule and needs. In all the areas concerning the confidence, comfort, mastery level, and help that were gained by the Tutoring Center, the results showed a very satisfied population of participants. With the high number of responses that supports the Tutoring Center and the increase of performance in their classes; it shows that the LaGrange College Tutoring Center is beneficial to the students who choose to use it.

In addition, satisfaction with the available hours of the Tutoring Center correlated positively with the number of visits made to the center. GPA correlated negatively with number of visits to the Tutoring Center. That means the higher the grade point average of a respondent, the fewer number of visits are needed to the Tutoring Center.

One limitation of the study is the small number of respondents who participated. A relatively small sample makes it difficult to generalize to the population. Another problem with generalizing the results is the fact that a large part of the sample is juniors. This makes it difficult to know about the impact of tutoring on students in other classes. A large number of science majors are represented in the study. A better representation of majors is needed. The majority of the participants indicated a relatively high grade point average. This indicates a need for the Tutoring Center to reach students not performing as well academically.

In summary, the students at LaGrange College express the belief that they are benefited by the availability of quality tutors in the tutoring program. The results found show the majority of the respondents feel that the Tutoring Center is not in need of any change. A follow up study should focus on exploring why the students who have not utilized the Tutoring Center choose not to.
References

