

**Institute for Social Research**  
ENLACE in Albuquerque  
Los Compañeros Program 2002-03  
Results Summary, November 2003

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## **Introduction**

Middle school students are often promoted based on the ‘social promotion’ scale, which promotes students to higher grade levels based on factors other than academic ability. Consequently, many students are ill prepared for high school, resulting in high dropout rates in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. The overall goal of the Los Compañeros mentoring program is to make middle school students more prepared for the rigors of secondary school by “improving their literacy skills by enhancing their cultural awareness and self-esteem” (excerpt from the ENLACE in Albuquerque proposal). To this end, the program links cultural awareness and self-esteem to literacy by utilizing culturally relevant literature and activities during the mentoring sessions. Further, according to the program mission statement, the goals of the Los Compañeros program revolve around meeting the following five objectives:

- 1) Build self-awareness and confidence by facilitating one-on-one interactions with trained mentors.
- 2) Build and develop literacy and study skills by introducing new literature, poetry and writings.
- 3) Enrich cultural identity of the students by providing Hispanic literature and art workshops.
- 4) One of the program’s goals is to place a visual picture in student’s mind of higher education and the life rewards involved with education; providing field trips to the University of New Mexico and to Santa Fe during the New Mexico Legislative Session will serve this purpose.
- 5) Build leadership skills among the university student mentors.

## **Methods**

For the 2003 evaluation of the Los Compañeros program, ISR staff administered surveys to participating mentees, mentors, and teachers near the end of the spring 2003 academic semester. Data gathered from these completed surveys indicated that the program involved the following total number of participants: 59 mentees, 7 mentors, and 20 teachers. Survey results for each of the three participatory groups are provided herein in the form of descriptive statistics and categorical analyses of survey responses.

## **Los Compañeros Program—Mentees**

A total of 59 students participated as mentees in the Los Compañeros Program during the 2002-2003 academic year. In Spring 2003, the ISR staff administered surveys to all program participants; however, only 23 of 59 students (39%) completed and returned the survey. Survey results in the form of descriptive statistics and student responses are provided below.

### Descriptive Statistics

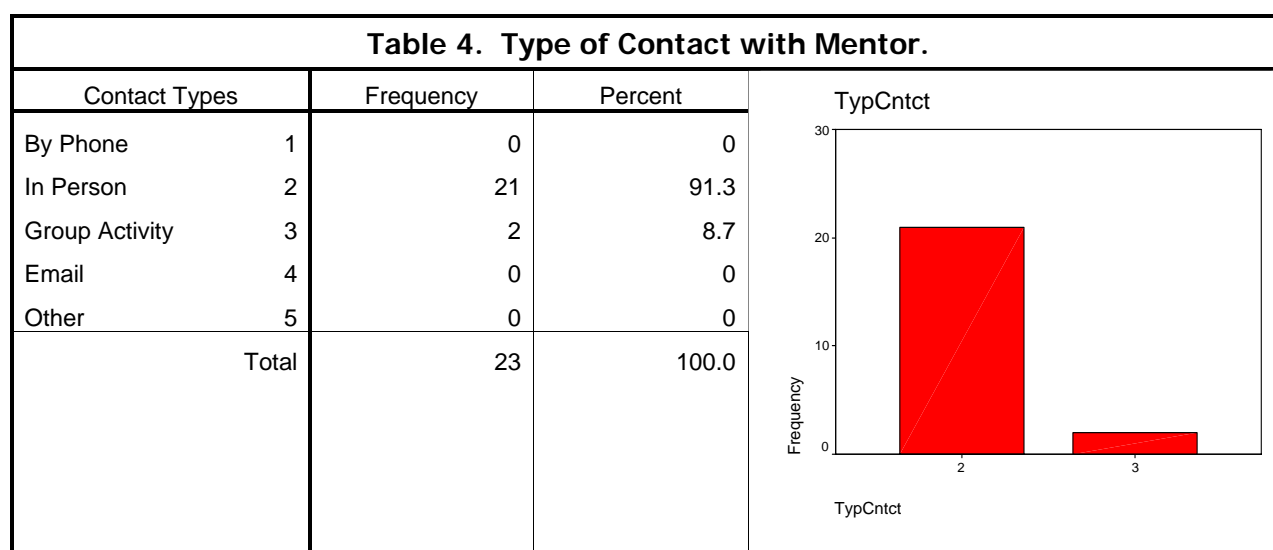
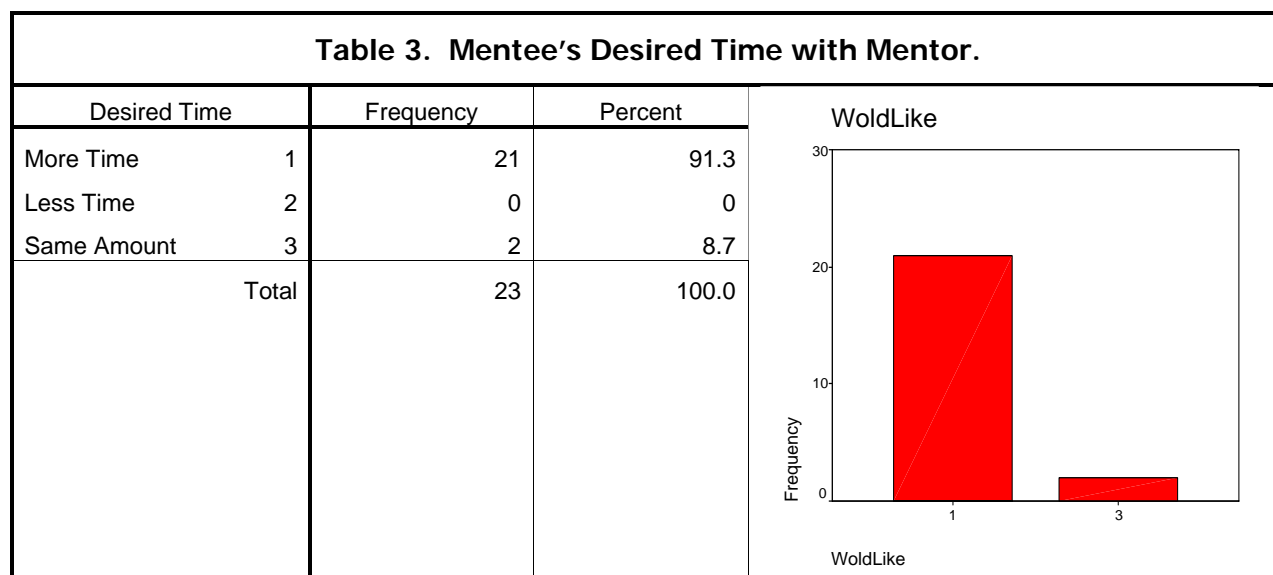
The ISR received 23 completed surveys from mentees, 6 of whom attended Garfield and Truman Middle Schools, respectively, and 11 who attended Washington Middle School (see Table 1). Survey results showed that, during the 2002-03 academic year, 11 of 23 mentees (47.8%) spent “a lot” of time with their mentors (see Table 2). More specifically, 5 mentees met with their respective mentors 34 times, while 6 other mentees met with their mentors 16 times, on average. One mentee reported have spent “too many” times with their mentor. Interestingly, over 90 percent (21 of 23) of all mentees would like to have more time with their mentors than they have currently; two mentees were satisfied with the present time allotment with their mentors (see Table 3). In addition, nearly all mentees reported that the most frequent contact with their mentors was *in person* (91.3%) although two mentees reported having mentor contact via group activities (see Table 4).

Middle School	Frequency	Percent
Garfield	6	26.1
Truman	6	26.1
Washington	11	47.8
Total	23	100.0

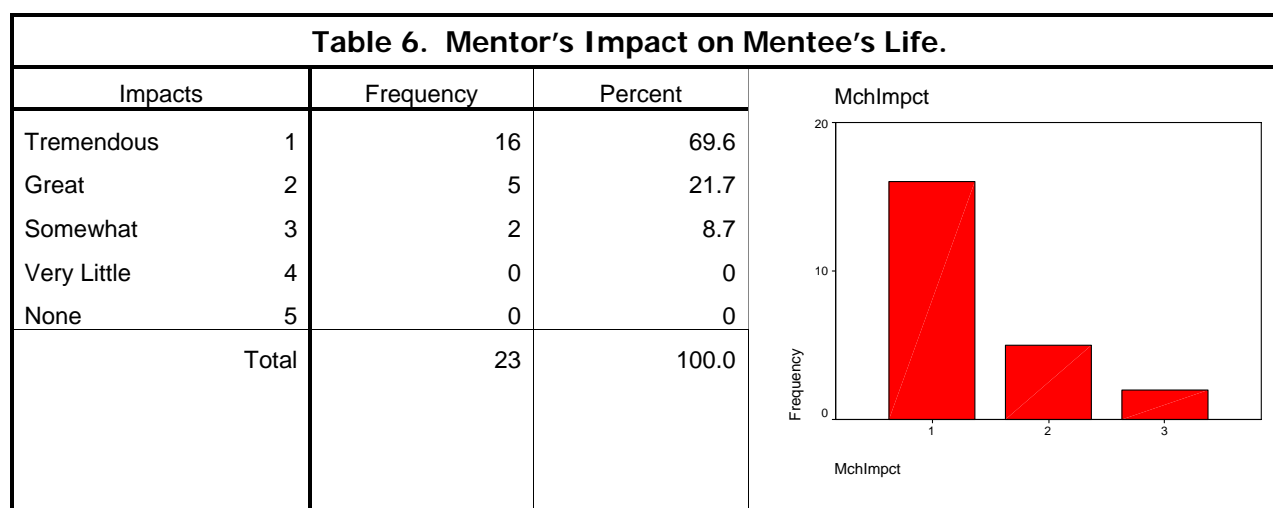
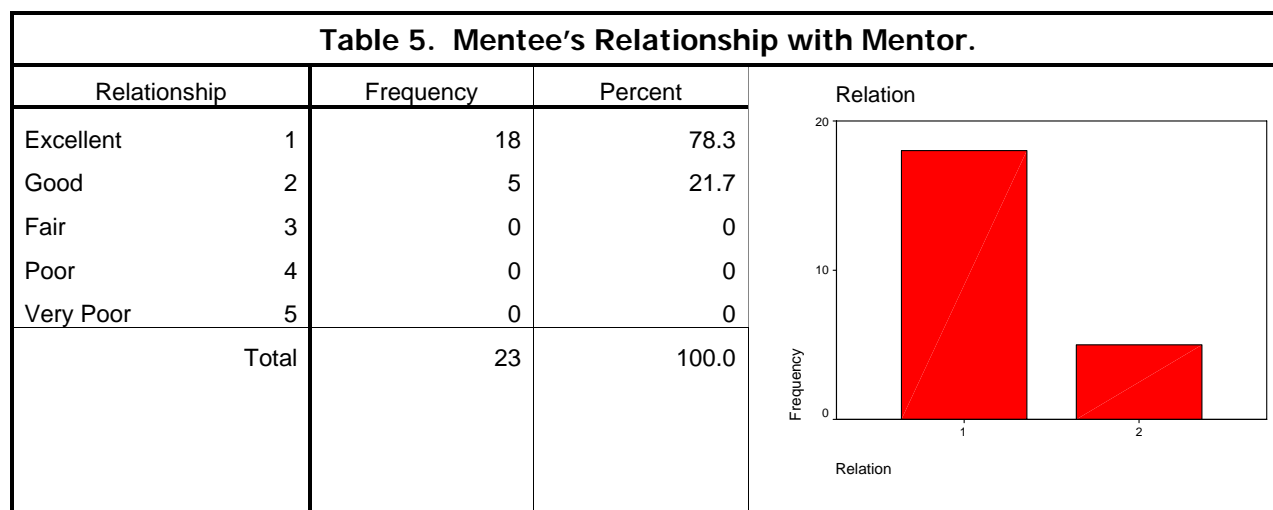
School

Reported Sessions	Frequency	Percent
“a lot”	11	47.8
10	2	8.7
17	3	13.0
20	1	4.3
34	5	21.7
“too many”	1	4.3
Total	23	100.0

HowMany



An important aspect of the Los Compañeros Program is the formation of mentee-mentor relationships. Survey data showed that most of the mentees (78%) reported having *excellent* relationships with their mentors, while the remaining 22 percent (5 of 23) rated their mentoring relationship as being *good* (see Table 5). Moreover, when mentees were asked about the level of impact that their mentors have had on their lives, e.g., their values, school performance, ability to resolve personal issues and problems, etc., over half (70%) of the mentees reported a *tremendous* impact, while the remaining mentees considered their mentors' impact to be great (22%) and somewhat (8%), respectively (see Table 6).



### Student Survey Responses

Mentee survey results included student responses to questions that asked why they had joined the Los Compañeros Program, how they would describe their mentoring relationships, what they valued most about the mentoring sessions and how the sessions could be more helpful, and what problems, if any, they faced during the mentoring sessions.

In terms of program participation, nearly half the mentees (11 of 23) joined the Los Compañeros Program to receive help with their homework and school projects; it appears that these students understood that this program was intended to provide such academic assistance. Seven students were simply *picked* by teachers to join the program but with little or no understanding as to why they were chosen to be program participants. The remaining 5 (of 23) students joined the program *to learn new things* or *to have fun*; for example:

- *I thought [the Program] would help me a lot to learn new things about Chicanos.*

- [The Program provides] *the opportunity to learn new things and get to know Bill Richardson and Las Sparx.*
- *I got in this program to have fun...*

Most of the mentees (18 of 23) reported having *excellent* relationships with their mentors and considered the impact of their mentors on their lives to be *tremendous*, especially in the following two ways:

Homework assistance:

- *Because everyday after school [my mentor] helps me with the homework by helping me find the answer.*
- [My mentor has] *helped me with my homework.*
- *Because when we stay for the Companeros, [the mentors] help us with our schoolwork.*
- [My mentor] *helped me on my math tests so I could do good.*
- *Because [my mentor] has helped me with my work and...also helped me get my grades up.*
- [Mentors] *helped me with my homework and other things with my mother.*
- [The mentors] *have helped me with solving problems and with my grades in school.*

Providing advice in dealing with personal problems:

- [My mentor] *had advice for when I had a hard time.*
- [My mentor] *has helped me with my work, giving me advice on life and other stuff.*
- *When I have a problem, [my mentors] help me through it.*
- *I like to talk about my problems to somebody that will listen.*
- [The mentors] *help me with problems.*
- [My mentor] *has been helping me in any problem I have with family, homework or other things.*
- *Because [my mentor] helped me with a problem I had with some gang member and they haven't done anything to me.*
- *Whenever I have a problem, [my mentor] is always there for me and...tells me great answers so that I can solve my problems.*

Eleven mentees reported having “fun” during their mentoring sessions, naming the various field trips as their favorite activity. Five mentees valued the time during mentoring sessions to talk with their mentor about school and/or personal issues; 4 other mentees enjoyed having the break outside of the classroom to work on homework. Finally, mentees did not experience any major problems during their mentoring sessions.

Conclusively, survey results indicate that the Los Compañeros Program provided a good opportunity for mentees to improve their academic work while forging meaningful relationships with mentors. Most importantly, all of the mentees expressed considerable enjoyment of the program and some were very grateful for having been involved with the program:

- *I really, really like this program and I think it's great as it is, only if we had more field trips.*
- *I want to thank you for everything because ENLACE has been great this year and I have learned a lot of things.*

- *I really like Los Compañeros because in a fun way they help me with problems in school, homework, and other important stuff. I would like to thank them a lot.*
- *Do you think next year we (all of ENLACE) could try and see how to make our dreams come true?*

## Los Compañeros Program—Mentors

A total of seven college students from the University of New Mexico participated as mentors in the Los Compañeros Program during the 2002-03 academic year. In Spring 2003, the ISR staff administered surveys to all seven mentors and each completed and returned the survey. Survey results in the form of descriptive statistics and mentor responses are provided below.

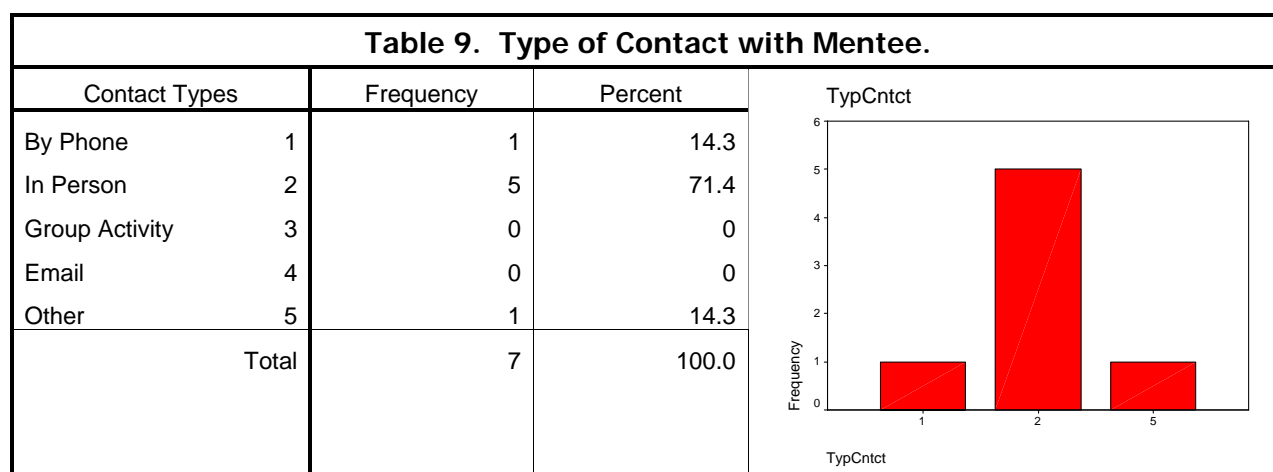
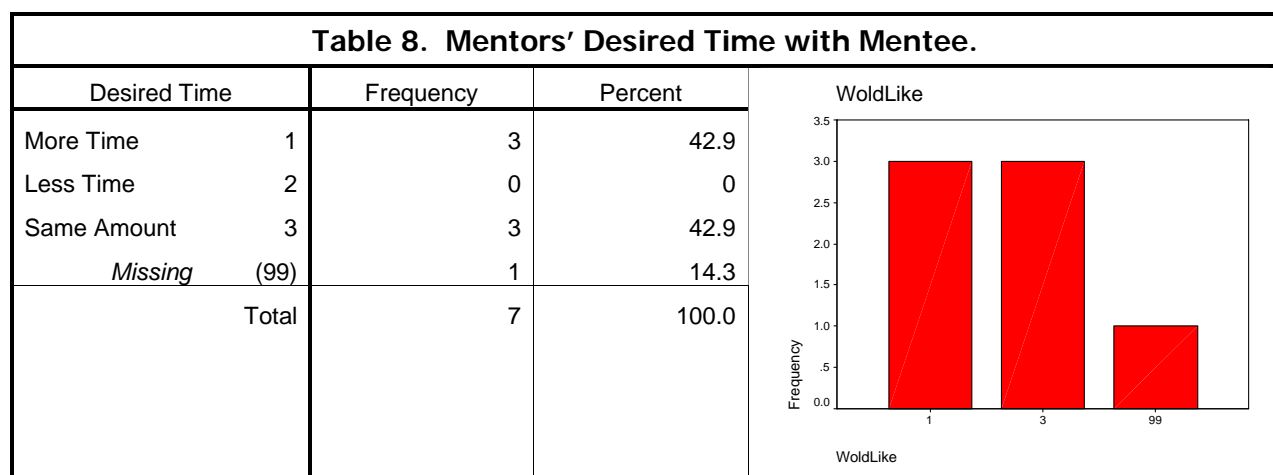
### Descriptive Statistics

Survey results showed that the number of mentoring sessions ranged between 34 and 85, with nearly half the mentors (42.9%) reporting 85 sessions each (see Table 7). Further, three mentors desired *more* time with their mentees while 3 other mentors were satisfied with the current allotted time with mentees (see Table 8). Table 9 shows that most of the mentors (5) were in contact with their mentees *in person*, while another mentor kept in contact with his/her mentee primarily *by phone*.

Reported Sessions	Frequency	Percent
34	1	14.3
43	1	14.3
45	1	14.3
85	3	42.9
<i>Missing</i> (99)	1	14.3
Total	7	100.0

Reported Sessions	Frequency
34	1
43	1
45	1
85	3
99	1



As mentioned earlier in the Mentees' section, an important aspect of the Los Compañeros Program is the formation of mentee-mentor relationships. Nearly half of the mentors (3) surveyed reported having *excellent* relationships with their mentees, while three other mentors rated their mentoring relationships as *good* (see Table 10). Moreover, when mentors were asked about the level of impact they may have had on their mentees' lives, e.g., mentee's values, school performance, ability to resolve personal issues and problems, etc., nearly half of the mentors (3) reported having made a *tremendous* impact, while three other mentors considered their impact to be great (2) and somewhat (1), respectively (see Table 11).

Relationship	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	3	42.9
Good	3	42.9
Fair	0	0
Poor	0	0
Very Poor	0	0
Missing	1	14.3
Total	7	100.0

Impacts	Frequency	Percent
Tremendous	3	42.9
Great	2	28.6
Somewhat	1	14.3
Very Little	0	0
None	0	0
Missing	1	14.3
Total	7	100.0

### Mentor Survey Responses

Mentor survey results included responses to questions that asked mentors why they had joined the Los Compañeros Program, what they valued most about the mentoring experience and how the mentoring program could be more useful, and what problems, if any, they faced during the mentoring sessions.

In terms of program participation, four mentors joined the Los Compañeros Program with a desire to help Latino youth and work in the local community; other mentors either had previous experience working in the public education system or working with youth and mentoring programs. Further, most of the mentors (6 of 7) reported having either *excellent* or *good* relationships with their mentees and at least five mentors considered their impact on their mentees' lives as either *tremendous* or *great*. The following responses provide evidence of such impact levels:

- *I have seen a major change in the students' grades, maturity, and attitude.*



- *There are moments that are so touching between the students [mentees] and I. When they stop and thank me amidst all the insanity, that's when I know I've impacted them.*
- *I would like to think I had a great impact on these students. I know I did get through some students because at first they would not open up to me and now they come to me and tell me what's on their mind.*

In terms of the actual mentoring experience, some of the mentors considered the following aspects to be the most valuable.

- *Learning how to interact with middle school students.*
- *The relation between the students and I.*
- *Learning from, and growing, with the mentors. My leadership development skills have greatly increased while working in this program.*
- *Getting to know the students, learning about things that they go through, learning from them and teaching them.*
- *Seeing the students happy.*
- *Knowing that you have made a difference or some type of impact on these students. When a student comes up to you and wants to talk to you.*
- *Learning the dynamics and factors involved w/working w/youth. Also the relationships built between me and the mentees.*

According to the mentors, the mentoring program could be made more useful if there were more: communication; funds and support for activities with students; applicable and youth focused conferences; useful leadership team meetings; teachers and principal/faculty support in the schools; activities to help the students learn about college, culture, self-esteem; and trainings on different issues these students face. Mentors also suggested the need for better communication with, and less micro-management from, the ENLACE office.

Survey results indicate that many conversations during mentoring sessions centered on current issues or problems concerning mentees. For the most part, discussions between mentors and mentees were about friends/family members, Hispanic heritage and culture, problems at school/home, school teachers/counselors, self-image and self-confidence, social/community concerns, staying in school/going to college and studies/homework. Two mentors reportedly had discussions with their mentees about drug use, rape, sex, peer pressure, and abuse.

Reportedly, mentors encountered a number of problems during their mentoring sessions. For example, one mentor experienced “teachers yelling at students for no reason, teachers not letting us pull out students [from the classroom], the librarian kicking us out of the library, nowhere to work with the students.” Similarly, another mentor emphasized the need for “better cooperation from principals and teachers.” Other mentors expressed concern about the COMPAS program, an after-school tutoring program, and its potential effect on the future of the Los Compañeros Program. That is, according to one mentor, “the [tutoring] component of COMPAS puts mentors in an awkward situation. We [mentors] need to take the role of authority but its difficult because these students [mentees] already see you as a friend.” Another mentor believes that “the [Los Compañeros] program should be reinstated because of all the energy and *corazon* [heart] put into working with our students [mentees].”

### Los Compañeros Program—Teachers

The ISR surveyed 19 teachers in the Los Compañeros Program, the majority of whom (12) teach at Truman Middle School (see Table 12). Four teachers reportedly had between 8 and 11 students participating in the program during the 2002-03 academic year, while the remaining 15 teachers reported having six student participants or less (see Table 13). Survey results in the form of descriptive statistics and teacher responses are provided below.

Middle School	Frequency	Percent
Garfield	6	31.6
Truman	12	63.2
Washington	1	5.3
Total	19	100.0

School	Frequency	Percent
Washington Middle Sc	1	5.3
Garfield Middle Scho	6	31.6
Truman Middle School	12	63.2

Mentees	Frequency	Percent
1	1	5.0
2	5	25.0
3	4	5.0
5	2	20.0
6	2	10.0
8	1	10.0
10	2	5.0
11	1	10.0
[left blank]	1	5.0
Total	19	100.0

HowMany	Frequency
0	1
1	5
2	1
3	4
5	2
6	2
8	1
10	2
11	1
88	1

### Descriptive Statistics

Survey results show that nearly half of the teachers (9) in the Los Compañeros Program rated their students' mentors as good or excellent; two teachers rated their students' mentors as fair to

poor, respectively (see Table 14). Moreover, 14 of 19 teachers reported that their students met with their mentors 11 times, on average, over the course of the academic year. Teachers who had only one student being mentored reported a higher average number of meetings (23.3) between mentee and mentor, compared to the average number of meetings (8.6) reported by teachers who had more than one student being mentored. In addition, 11 teachers (58%) would rather their students keep the same amount of meeting time with their mentors, no more time and no less; five other teachers would like their students to have more time with their mentors (see Table 15).

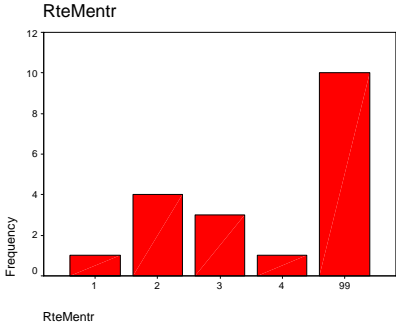
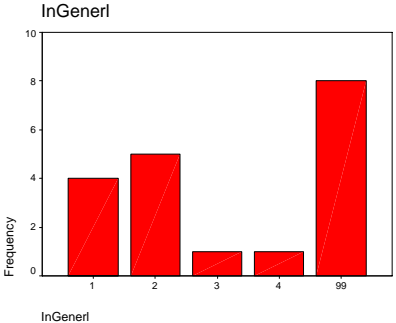
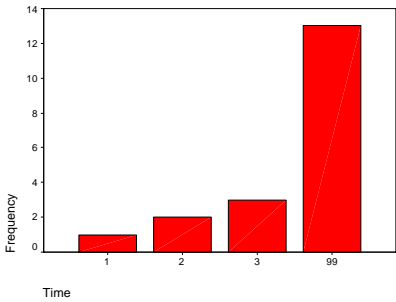
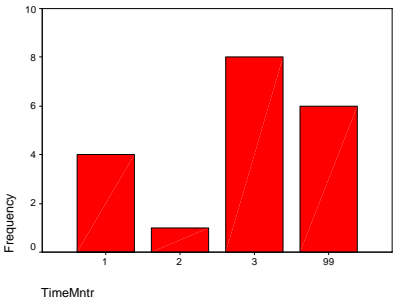
Table 14. Teacher Ratings of Students' Mentors.				
	No. of Mentees		1 Student as Mentee	1+ Students as Mentees
	1	<1		
Rating	Frequency		RteMentr	InGenerl
Excellent	1	4		
Good	2	5		
Fair	3	1		
Poor	4	1		
Missing	99	8		
Totals	19	19		

Table 15. Teachers Desired Time for Mentees and Mentors.				
	No. of Mentees		1 Student as Mentee	1+ Students as Mentees
	1	<1		
Desired Time	Frequency		Time	TimeMntr
More Time	1	4		
Less Time	2	1		
Same Amount	3	8		
Missing	99	6		
Totals	19	19		

From the teachers' perspective, it appears that two-thirds of the teachers (68%) in the Los Compañeros Program considered the mentors to be very caring toward their students, two other teachers considered the mentors to be less caring towards their students (see Table 16). Further,

when asked about their student's level of academic struggle *before* entering the mentoring program, teachers indicated a *moderate* level, on average; students' level of improvement after entering the mentoring program was rated *moderate* (on average), as well (see Table 17).

<b>Table 16. Mentors' Feelings Toward Mentees from Teachers' Perspective.</b>				
Feelings	No. of Mentees		1 Student as Mentee	1+ Students as Mentees
	1	<1		
	Frequency			
Very Caring	1	4	9	
Somewhat Caring	2	1	0	
Slightly Caring	3	1	1	
Uncaring	4	0	0	
Don't Know	5	2	3	
<i>Missing</i>	99	11	6	
Totals	19	19		

Frequency

Feelings

Frequency

HowWould

<b>Table 17. Mentees' Levels of Academic Struggle and Improvement.</b>		
Academic Subjects	Pre-Program Level of Struggle (Avg.)	Post-Program Improvement Level (Avg.)
Reading	2.8	2.6
Math	2.9	2.7
Science	2.9	2.5
Social Studies	2.9	2.5
English	2.9	2.8
	1 = Not at All 5 = To a Great Extent	1 = No Improvement 5 = Great Improvement

Table 18 provides a general look at the mentees' experience in the Los Compañeros Program, from their teachers' perspective. Specifically, survey results show that the teachers, on average, considered the program to be *moderately* helpful for their students, and thought their students' self-esteem/confidence and interest in academic studies had *moderately* improved. In addition, teachers found that the students' ability to complete their homework was rather *weak to moderate*, although students' behavior had shown *moderate* improvement (see Table 18).

<b>Table 18. Teachers' Opinions About Their Students' Experience as Mentees.</b>	
Issues	Teacher Responses

	(Avg.)
Has program been helpful for student(s)?	3.3
Has student(s) developed greater self-esteem/confidence?	3.6
Has student(s) shown greater interest in academic studies?	3.1
Is student(s) able to complete homework on time?	2.8
Has student(s)'s behavior improved since participating in program?	3.2
	1 = Not at All 5 = To a Great Extent

In terms of their own experience, teachers found that their students' involvement in the Los Compañeros Program greatly effected their classroom instruction (see Table 19). Moreover, teachers reported only a moderate satisfaction with the rotation schedule used by mentors to pull students from their classes and, in fact, were only moderately satisfied with the mentoring program at their school. In addition, survey results indicate that few teachers worked jointly with their students' mentors to establish certain mentoring goals. Further, teachers considered the program to be only *moderately* adequate in addressing the mentoring needs of their students.

<b>Table 19. Teachers' Responses About Their Own Experience with the Program.</b>	
<b>Issues</b>	<b>Teacher Responses (Avg.)</b>
Did student(s)'s program involvement effect your classroom instruction?	4.0
Were you satisfied with rotation schedule used by mentors?	3.3
Were you satisfied with the mentoring program at your school?	3.3
Did you work jointly with mentors to establish mentoring goals?	2.2
Did the mentoring program adequately address mentoring needs of your student(s)?	2.9
	1 = Not at All 5 = To a Great Extent

### Teacher Survey Responses

In general, teachers found the Los Compañeros Program to be much more organized this year; however, some suggested having a more regular schedule with increased accountability for grades and attendance. In terms of positive program outcomes, teachers reported having students in the program who were positively effected:

- *I've seen students in the program completely "turn around" in a positive way. Who knows if it's due to the mentorship program, but it plays a role.*
- *[The program] is very helpful to those students who are dedicated. We need to find ways for more kids to get to the program more often.*
- *There has been improvement in all my students in the program.*
- *It is an excellent program for our students to bond with college students. They need as many people in their lives as possible to help them.*

- *My students are proud to be part of the program and enjoy participating.*

One teacher stated, “The mentors are excellent role models for our students. [The program] provides stability and a sense of belonging. Students really look forward to their sessions.” Another teacher thought that the “Mentors were extremely professional and had a positive influence.” However, there were two notable issues that teachers wanted to see improved in the Los Compañeros Program:

1. Communication between themselves and their students’ mentors.

- *The mentors never tried to talk to me.*
- *[The program is] an excellent idea, however teacher/mentor communication needs to increase. The Student that was involved in ENLACE needed 1on1 support.*
- *There needs to be more communication between mentor and teacher. I believe they need to work together to get best results.*
- *[Mentors need to] treat staff with more respect and understand when we are testing and cannot send students [out of class] at that moment.*
- *The mentors assume too much. They assume that because they are on campus, they can pull kids out of class—they need to ask if it's ok.*
- *In theory, I think [the program] is wonderful, but in practice falls short. I never knew when kids were going to be pulled from class and mentors never contacted me ahead of time.*

2. Mentors’ self-presentation and dress.

- *They need to be more professional. Mentor dress needs to be more professional. They are powerful role models for the kids.*
- *The mentors' dress/attitude (tight fitting, show mid-drift, excessively baggy clothes) is inappropriate. We are a uniformed school.*
- *I was shocked on occasion by the way some female mentors dressed. Very tight, revealing clothing, really inappropriate for middle school.*