



Five College Center for World Languages

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Tutorials

What is an individual tutorial?

Individual Tutorials

Individual tutorials emphasize the reading and writing aspects of the course. A student brings his or her own questions about the homework for the week, the mentor looks over the homework for evidence of confusions or difficulties that need attention, and then the mentor and student work through various activities designed to evaluate and increase the student's mastery of the formal structure and vocabulary of the language. Mentors will also work with students on individual issues with speaking and pronunciation. The session will be conducted as much as possible in the language students are learning, but the mentors will also do some more complex explanations of grammar and usage in English.

Starting with Questions Rather Than a Presentation of the Lesson

In a traditional classroom course, a teacher typically presents some aspect of the lesson material before students read and complete homework on that topic. In the mentored format, students are introduced to the topic first through structured independent study using textbooks and available multimedia materials. Students complete written homework before coming to the session and keep a list of questions and confusions to ask the mentor about in the session. If the student has understood the material well on his or her own, then the mentor will work on more complex uses of the material with the student. If the student has had difficulty with specific aspects of the lesson, the mentor and the student will work through the difficulties together.

What if I'm confused and can't make progress on the lesson?

For the most part, students in the program need to be comfortable dealing with some confusion and sorting out problems for themselves by looking at numerous examples and going over materials multiple times if necessary. It is inevitable, however, that sometimes a certain concept is just too confusing and students come to tutorials with unfinished homework or with homework with many mistakes because of misunderstandings. In these cases, the mentor will work with the student to clarify the problems and then have the student do the homework over again before the next week.

What if I have questions during the time between tutorials?

In a language class that meets multiple times a week, there are multiple opportunities to have questions answered. There are fewer opportunities in the Mentored Language Program. Most of the

mentors will answer questions by e-mail during the week. Some questions will be clarified during conversation sessions. While mentors do not do special makeup sessions for students who miss sessions, mentors will occasionally meet for an extra session with students who need extra help. Students are also encouraged to make use of other resources such as more advanced students of the same language, fellow students who are native speakers of the language, and various online resources. Students need to be aware that both fellow students and websites may not represent the most formal and accurate forms of the language and so students must be careful about the advice they are getting.

Characteristics of a Good Tutorial Session:

- the student arrives well-prepared with completed homework assignments
- the student has self-checked any homework for which answer keys are provided
- the student is prepared with questions for the mentor about the assignments
- the mentor arrives well-prepared and ready to work with the student
- the mentor has prepared activities beyond going over the homework and responding to student questions
- the mentor is patient and provides clear and helpful explanations
- questions, problems, and corrections are dealt with in a constructive manner

Beginning of Session Warm-Up (Swahili)

Beginning of Session Warm-Up (Persian)

Going Over Homework (Swahili)

Going Over Homework (Turkish)

Explaining a Grammar Rule (Persian)

Reading Comprehension in a Tutorial Session (Swahili)

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