Final Report

Overview

Reading Partners

Research Questions and Sub-Questions

Our research into tutor experiences addresses the following evaluation questions:[2]

1. What characteristics and skills do tutors bring to Reading Partners?
2. How well do tutors implement sessions?
3. How satisfied are tutors with their Reading Partners experience?
4. What factors lead community members to volunteer as tutors?

   What factors lead them to continue volunteering with Reading Partners?

To answer these questions, we used Reading Partners' administrative data, a survey of

Observers rated tutors on a four-point scale[9] in five key areas of the Reading Partners model:

- Tutor Responsibilities
- Effective Instructional Strategies
- Student Engagement
- About the Session
- About the Student

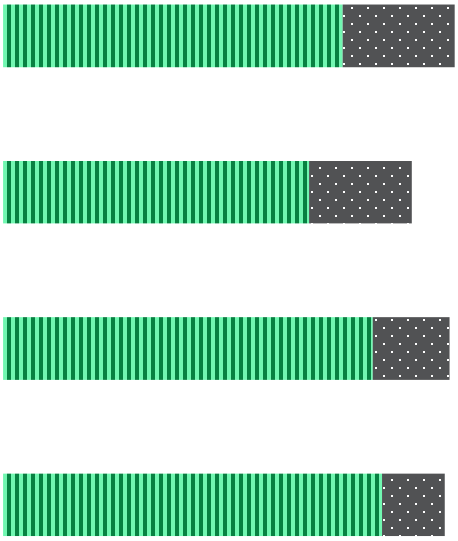
Tutors were most successful in fulfilling key tutor responsibilities. Specifically, they were consistently observed following the lesson plan, using strategies on the individualized reading plan, engaging students as they walked between their classrooms and the reading centers, and accepting and applying coaching from the site coordinator (Figure 3).

Additionally, tutors were often observed using effective instructional strategies (e.g., providing clear and focused instruction).BDC q0.00000912 0 612 792 reW* nBT/F2 9.96 Tf1 0 0 1 422.23 481l/MCI5bcP3(

Child

Though just a minority of tutors felt this way, this finding suggests that some tutors may benefit from additional support when working with challenging students.

Figure 6: Tutor report of student-tutor relationship conflict (N=379)



Source: Spring Tutor Reading Engagement Survey, 2016-2018.

Tutor-student interactions

On the 2017–2018 administration of the Tutor Reading Engagement Survey, tutors were asked to report on their interactions with students in sessions. As Figure 7 reflects, tutors reported being highly empathetic to the challenges their student faces and show patience to their student when working with them. Of note, aspects more closely related to helping students improve their SEL skills (e.g., helping the student identify other perspectives, working with students to identify ways to interact well with others) were some of the lowest-rated items. This finding is not surprising given that SEL skill development is an exploratory outcome of interest for Reading Partners. If, however, the organization wants to have a greater impact in this area of students' development, tutors may benefit from learning effective methods for supporting SEL skill development.

Figure 8: Perceived tutoring efficacy (N=1,508)

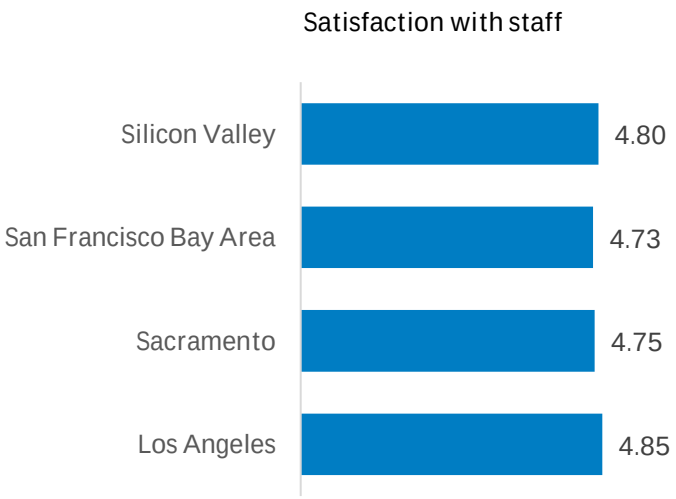
Factors influencing perceived tutor efficacy

As Figure 9 shows, because tutors' perceived tutoring efficacy was assessed among the full sample of tutors, we were able to examine the extent to which tutor efficacy varied by region and by tutor characteristics (i.e., age, education, and tutor type). Tutors in Los Angeles and Silicon Valley reported significantly higher levels of efficacy than did tutors in the San Francisco Bay Area.[13] Additionally, though potentially unsurprisingly, tutors who were Reading Partners staff or interns/work study students also reported significantly higher tutoring efficacy than those who were community volunteers.[14]

Tutors ages 18–21 reported the highest levels of tutoring effectiveness, reporting significantly higher tutoring efficacy than tutors ages 26–35 and tutors over age 45.[15] Finally, tutors whose highest education level was less than a 4-year college degree reported significantly greater tutoring efficacy than those with a 4-

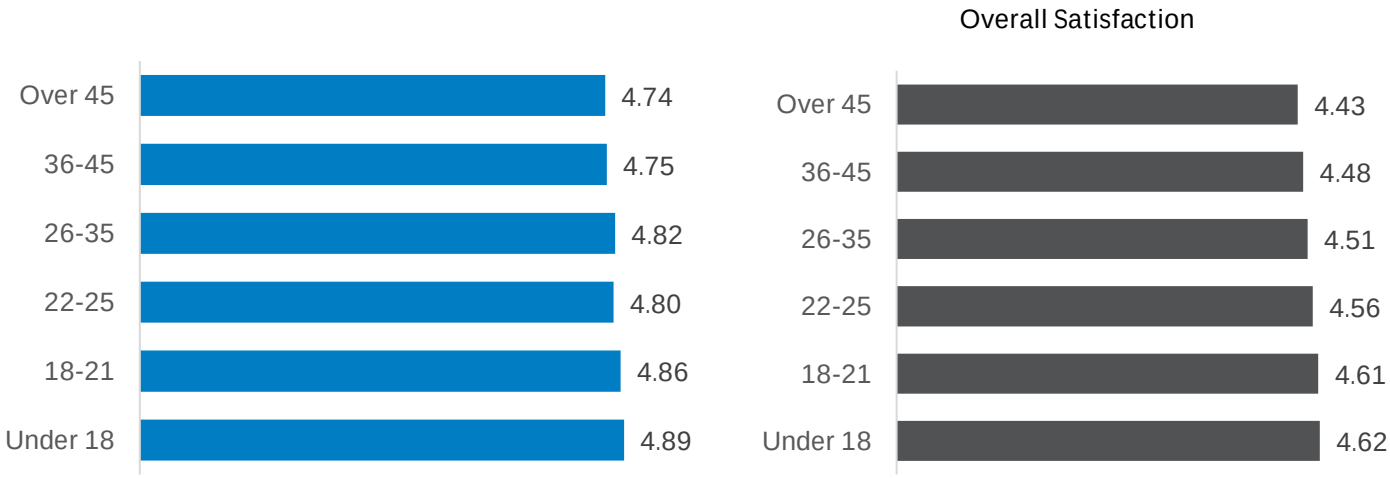
Factors influencing tutor satisfaction

Tutors' overall satisfaction with Reading Partners was simp cas



Note: Items were based on a 5-point scale (1=*None of the time*, 5=*All of the time*

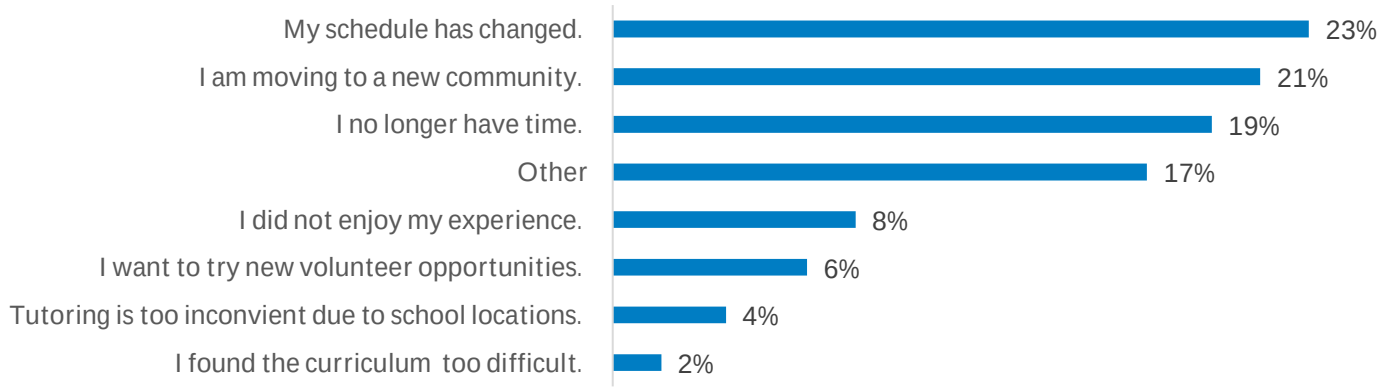
Figure 14: Satisfaction by tutor age (n=1,521)



Intentions to return

Most tutors (65 percent) intended to return as a volunteer for Reading Partners in California for the next academic year (Figure 17). About a quarter said they were unsure about their plans to return, and 9 percent reported they would not return next year.

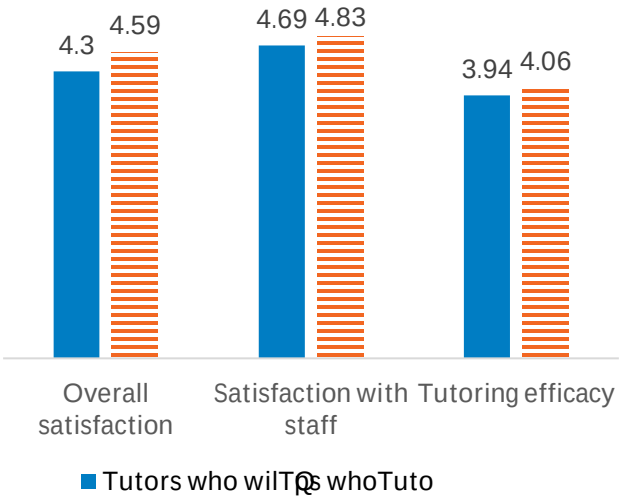
Figure 18: Reasons for not returning (N=130)



Note: Reasons for not returning are not mutually exclusive. Source: Child Trends Tutor Experiences Survey, 2016-2017.

19%(

the "Other" option (such as "program was too disorganized" or "I was not effectively trained") was coded as leaving due to dissatisfaction, while all others were coded as leaving due to logistical challenges. Based on this recoding, we found that only 23 percent of tutors who said they would not return in the next academic year were not leaving the program due to dissatisfaction. Furthermore, within this analysis we found that 3 percent of tutors were not returning because they would be returning as site coordinators the following year.



Predictors of tutors' intention to return

We also examined the extent to which tutors' intent to return as a volunteer tutor at Reading Partners varied by tutor satisfaction, tutoring efficacy, and tutor characteristics. Tutors who intended to return were significantly more satisfied with their experiences at Reading Partners (overall satisfaction[23] and satisfaction with staff[24]) and reported greater levels of perceived tutoring efficacy[25] than those who either reported that they were unsure whether they would return or that they would not return (Figure 19).

Significant differences in intention to return were also found among different groups of tutors. Those within the San Francisco Bay Area reported the lowest rates of intention to return (Figure 20). In addition, college-aged tutors (18–25) were much less likely to report intending to return the next academic year. Similarly, tutors whose highest education level was below a 4-year college degree were also less likely to intend to return the next year. The findings related to tutor age and education are surprising given that these groups of tutors had reported significantly greater rates of satisfaction and tutoring efficacy.

[23] $F(1, 1511)=102.25, p<.001$
[24] $F(1, 1511)=30.16, p<.001$
[25] $F(1, 1511)=12.81, p<.001$