

Upward Bound and Tutorfair Foundation's Summer School



Project Report

October 2020

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Executive Summary

Upward Bound and Tutorfair Foundation's Summer School was a 6-week tutoring programme delivered between 27th July and 4th September 2020. The project was conceived collaboratively by the two organisations as a novel way of connecting Upward Bound's beneficiaries with Tutorfair Foundation's community of volunteers through the summer break.

The primary aim of the project was to improve students' confidence ahead of a potentially daunting return to school in September, with many young people having had four months of extremely limited contact with education due to COVID-19 restrictions. By connecting students one-to-one with maths and English tutors through July and August, Tutorfair Foundation and Upward Bound hoped to provide a much-needed positive educational experience leading to boost in self-efficacy, confidence and well-being.

In total, 34 volunteer tutors provided 274 hours of one-to-one tutoring to 33 students, with an overall student attendance rate of 93%, which was higher than expected for a remote learning intervention. There was an overall satisfaction rating of 92% reported by students and 83% reported by tutors. 100% of students report feeling more confident about the subject(s) in which they were tutored and 83% report feeling more confident about their return to school. 88% of tutors report that their student(s) engaged well with lessons and 88% report seeing an improvement in their students' confidence through the programme.

Some student and tutor experiences were marred by difficulties with the online classroom technology – caused in the most part by poor internet connectivity and access to high-quality devices. Tutorfair Foundation is very grateful for the honest feedback given by students and tutors and is committed to making changes based on their insight in the coming months.

Overall, Tutorfair Foundation is delighted with the programme and enormously grateful to everybody who helped to make it happen. Amongst others, this includes the students who took part, their parents and guardians, all of our volunteer tutors, everyone who donated to the crowdfunding campaign, the trustees of the Betty Messenger Charitable Foundation and the teams at Upward Bound and Tutorfair Ltd.

Joss Serrailier

Foundation Director

Wider Impact

Because the summer school programme kept Tutorfair Foundation open and staffed through the summer break, it was able to support an additional 26 less-advantaged students with small group maths tutoring through August. It is unusual for Tutorfair Foundation to work directly with schools through the summer break and it would not have been possible this year if we were not already delivering our summer school programme, with volunteer recruitment and lesson supervision processes remaining active.

Tutorfair Foundation was able to engage 11 KS3 and KS4 maths tutors recruited for but not placed with the summer school programme to deliver an additional 35 hours of one-to-two and one-to-three tutoring. This should be seen as part of the wider impact of the hard work put into the summer school by so many people, and thanks must be given again to all who supported the organisation to make it happen.

Organisational Partners

Tutorfair Foundation

Tutorfair Foundation (represented by Joss Serrailier and Tas Raman) is an educational charity established to fight inequality by improving access to personal tutoring. The Foundation works in partnership with schools and other education programmes with the aim of providing less-advantaged young people with access to its community of volunteer tutors.

Following the school closures in March 2020, Tutorfair Foundation developed a new, online delivery model which was successfully piloted between April and July. Because COVID-19 has affected young people so profoundly this year, the Foundation was determined to continue its work through the summer break to support as many students as possible with their return to school in September.

Upward Bound

Upward Bound (represented by Maxine Bunting-Thomas) is an education programme working in partnership with Islington Council and London Metropolitan University which is aimed at raising attainment and aspirations for young people attending secondary schools in Islington.

During term time, the programme runs on Saturday mornings at London Metropolitan University. A team of specialist teachers, group leaders, student ambassadors and peer mentors work collectively to deliver an exciting alternative education programme that re-engages learners, builds confidence and motivates students to achieve. Students are supported over the two years of key stage 4 until they take their GCSE exams.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, Upward Bound's programme was severely disrupted during 2020, with online access available but regular Saturday morning classes not running from March to October. Keenly aware of the potential negative impacts of this period on young people, Upward Bound was eager to find a way to increase support for its most vulnerable beneficiaries online through the summer break.

Funding

Supporters of Upward Bound

On the 1st July 2020, Upward Bound opened a crowdfunding campaign using GoFundMe. Within just a few days, supporters had made donations of £2,096.28 (including Gift Aid) to fund the initiative. Tutorfair Foundation would like to thank Darren Alexander, Chaachi Deane, Dion Mariyanayagam, Alison Murray, Rui Octavio, and all of the individuals who donated anonymously. Without your incredible generosity, this project would not have been possible.

Betty Messenger Charitable Foundation

Upon hearing of the project, Betty Messenger Charitable Foundation very generously provided grant funding that matched the initial crowdfunding target of £1,800. Tutorfair Foundation would like to thank the Trustees of the Betty Messenger Charitable Foundation, Jenny Hirsch, Steven Jaaffe and Robert Wallis as well as Stephen Ross for their continued support, which has been an invaluable lifeline through this difficult period.

Students

Students are nominated for Upward Bound by schools through SLT, school assemblies, individual applications and interviews. Students are selected for inclusion on the programme according to the following priorities:

- They are predicted GCSE level 4 in Maths or English
- They are eligible for Free School Meals/Pupil Premium
- They are Looked-After Children
- They have Special Educational Needs or receive English as an Additional Language support
- They are First Generation University attendance or from groups under-represented at Universities

From its cohort, Upward Bound identified Year 9 and 10 students who would benefit from the support and contacted parents and guardians to establish interest in the programme. The final group was made up of 33 young people; 21 leaving Year 9, 11 leaving Year 10 and 1 leaving Year 6 – the sibling of another student involved in the programme.

All students involved in the programme had faced significant disruption to their education up to July 2020, with several of them having had absolutely no contact with education since March. Some of their families were required to continue shielding as restrictions eased, so they were not experiencing the same increased freedoms as many other people were in the summer months.

Ahead of the programme's start, Upward Bound identified several students to Tutorfair Foundation who may be facing particular behavioural challenges or who may require specific support from tutors. Upward bound also identified several high achievers among the group who would require more challenging work in one subject or another. This information was passed on to the relevant tutors before teaching began.

Tutors

From mid-July to early August 77 volunteers signed up to support the programme, with 34 going on to actually deliver the tutoring. 85% of the 34 tutors had significant tutoring experience, though 50% had never previously volunteered with the Tutorfair Foundation.

Tutors were a mix of Undergraduates, Graduates and Qualified Teachers who all surpassed academic requirements to tutor their chosen subject at a given level. All tutors attended Safeguarding training sessions as well as training sessions in how to use the virtual classroom technology effectively. All tutors underwent an Enhanced DBS Check and double-referencing process before they were eligible to begin tutoring. Tutors without significant tutoring experience attended tutoring training sessions designed to familiarise them with the key skills and approaches required to plan and deliver effective tutoring.

Platform

The tutoring was delivered using a virtual classroom with interactive whiteboard features. This platform was chosen for its simplicity, offering a user-friendly 'pen and paper' approach to online learning. The platform allows all attendees to toggle cameras on and off, upload documents, write, draw and erase easily. All sessions are automatically recorded and archived as video files, with PDF copies of completed work sent to both student and tutor at the end of each session.

Purpose

Since the preceding months had been particularly challenging for the students involved, the primary purpose of the summer school programme was to provide learners with an engaging and positive educational experience designed to promote confidence, self-efficacy and well-being ahead of a potentially daunting return to school in September.

As a result, it was decided that providing a set scheme of work for all students was not the correct approach. Instead, tutors were encouraged to begin by getting to know their tutees; working on resources appropriate for their level and diagnosing individual challenges and areas of low-confidence early on. This insight could then be used to inform planning and delivery of sessions that would represent tailored, rewarding learning for students as the programme progressed.

Delivery Method and Subjects

The tutoring was delivered as hour-long one-to-one weekly sessions over a period of 6 weeks from July 27th to September 4th 2020. This method allowed tutors to provide entirely personalised, highly engaging sessions each week with minimal distractions. One-to-one tutoring also means that students have the most opportunity to communicate verbally; something which we hoped would benefit their confidence and self-efficacy most effectively.

Students were offered both maths and English tutoring. All students were paired with a maths tutor. Two students requested not to receive English tuition and a further 6 students were not paired with an English tutor; 3 because of their limited availability and 3 because they failed to regularly attend their scheduled maths sessions.

Communications

Parents and guardians who enrolled a student were invited to provide a contact email address and a contact mobile phone number, as well as to provide permissions for Tutorfair Foundation to store and use this information solely for the purpose of delivering the project.

The contact email address was used to communicate information about lesson scheduling, rescheduling and cancellations as well as to send 24-hour and 48-hour lesson reminders and on-the-day lesson invitation links. Mobile phone numbers were used to contact parents and guardians in the event of a student lateness/absence, a process which proved to be invaluable in improving attendance. Lessons were often forgotten or misremembered as a result of changeable summer routines.

Safeguarding

This programme was delivered in line with Tutorfair Foundation's Combined Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy. All sessions were recorded and available for review and the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Upward Bound was copied into all communications with students, parents and guardians. Staff from both organisations had immediate access to all lessons, all tutors received dedicated Safeguarding and Child Protection training and a clear process for reporting concerns was mutually established before the project began.

No safeguarding issues or concerns were raised throughout the project.

Project Hours

Description	No.	Outcome
Lessons scheduled	312	81% of possible 384* lessons were made available to students
Sessions cancelled by parent/guardian	33	10% of arranged lessons were cancelled in advance
Of which rescheduled	17	52% of cancelled lessons were rearranged and delivered
Student absences	22	93% attendance rate amongst students
Lessons completed	274	88% of all scheduled lessons resulted in an hour of teaching

*6 weeks of tutoring for 31 students in 2 subjects and 6 weeks of tutoring for 2 students in 1 subject

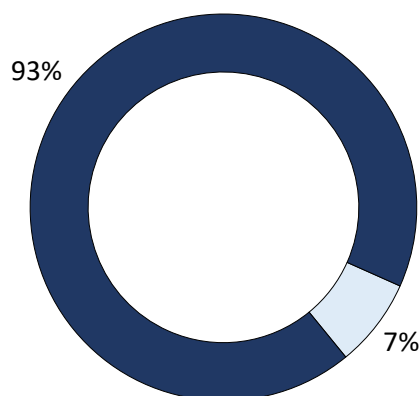
Cancellations and Absences

Tutorfair Foundation was very pleased with attendance from students on the programme and is delighted to see an overall attendance rate of 93% for the summer school with only 22 absences. Some issues with attendance are expected during any programme working with young people, but we have seen over the last few months that online programmes exacerbate these issues due to the added technological barriers and lack of formal routine during the day. Attendance for online programmes is often closer to 80% than 90%, so just 22 absences in 296 hours of teaching should be considered a success.

Given that the programme took place over the summer break, we are also pleased that relatively few sessions were cancelled – and that of those that were cancelled, more than half were successfully rearranged and delivered. This is indicative not only of the enthusiasm of students and their parents and guardians, but also of the commitment and generosity of our volunteers who were in almost all cases able to find a new time to deliver the session within 48 hours. Common causes for absence and cancellation were holidays, religious festivals, illness, doctor’s appointments, technology issues and (in the final week of the programme) students returning early to school.

Attendance

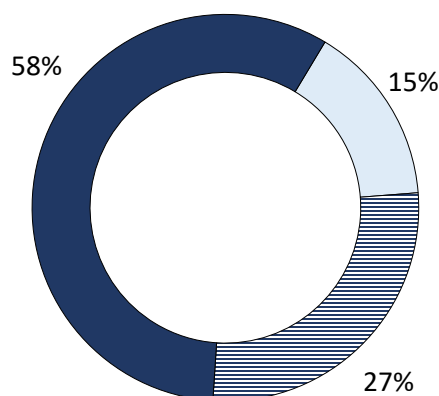
(n=296)



- Student Attended
- Student Did Not Attend

Absence Distribution

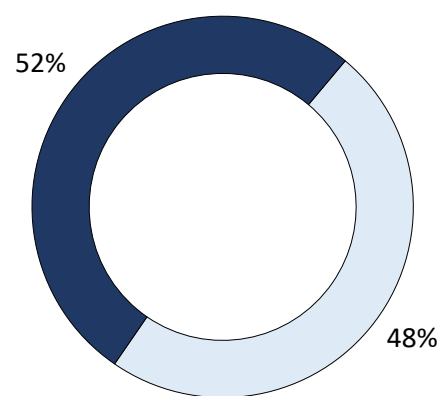
(n=33)



- Students Never Absent
- ▨ Students Absent Only Once
- Students Absent More Than Once

Cancellations

(n=33)



- Successfully Rearranged
- Not Rearranged

Voluntary Hours and Training

Tutorfair Foundation began the project in July by reaching out to all individuals who had signed up to provide either maths or English tutoring online since March 2020. Within 2 weeks, 77 volunteers had signed up to support the summer school and been entered into our vetting and training processes.

34 of these applicants went on to complete these processes quickly (some having already completed several stages before July) and were paired with students. A small number of additional tutors were processed at this time but, due to a surplus of available maths hours, did not work on the project. Tutorfair Foundation delivered 27 hours of training for this cohort of volunteers between mid-July and Mid-August, including Safeguarding and Child Protection Training, Tutoring Training and Virtual Classroom Training.

In total, the project benefitted from 296 active volunteering hours, plus many more hours spent training, planning and preparing for lessons. On several occasions, Tutors required lessons to be rescheduled to fit shifting commitments but in all cases these were resolved successfully. Tutors were responsible for only 2 of 33 advance notice cancellations and had a 100% attendance rate to scheduled sessions. Only on one occasion was a tutor marked late to a session – a technical issue that caused a 10-minute delay.

Tutorfair Foundation is delighted by the commitment and enthusiasm shown by its community of volunteers in support of this programme. They communicated with Tutorfair Foundation in a timely, clear and professional manner at all times and represented the organisation admirably.



Thanks to our volunteers...

Anum A, Hazal B, Ebele B, Sabrina B, Lawrence B, George C, Freddy C, Chris C, Matt C, Sarah C, Zaheda D, Molly D, Faisa D, Michelle F, Xavier F, Smriti G, Sally G, Edina J, Vimal J, Mike J, Sarah J, Cressida J, Baishakhi J, Dorothy K, Christie L, Mitesh M, Hannah O, Stephanie O, Isaac P, Liam R, Oli R, Stephanie S, Mehak T and Suzanne W.

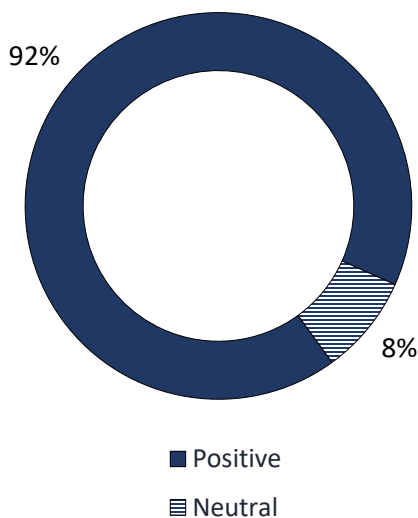
Student Questionnaire

Over a two-week period from August 24th, 30 students involved in the programme were invited to complete a feedback form to provide insight into how they have engaged with the tutoring. 24 students provided responses and the results were overwhelmingly positive.

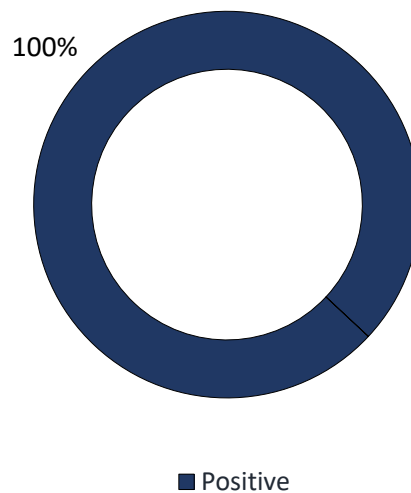
Every young person agreed that their tutors were friendly, patient and explained things well. On average, students rated their overall experience as a 4.6 out of 5 – a 92% approval rating. The most significant area of neutral and negative feedback related to students’ experience of the technology, which is covered later in this report.

Students were asked to respond to a series of statements: whether they had enjoyed the sessions, whether their subject understanding had improved, whether they had learned new things, whether their subject confidence had improved, whether they felt more confident about returning to school in September and whether they would like to continue with the tutoring. The results are outlined below, aggregating positive, negative and neutral responses.

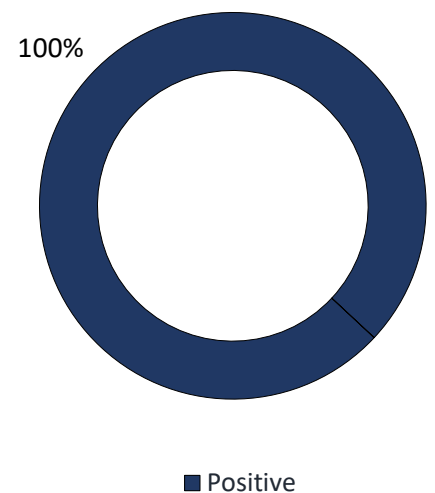
Enjoyment (n=24)



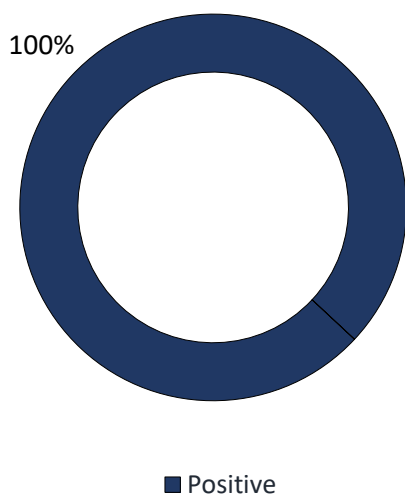
Subject Understanding (n=24)



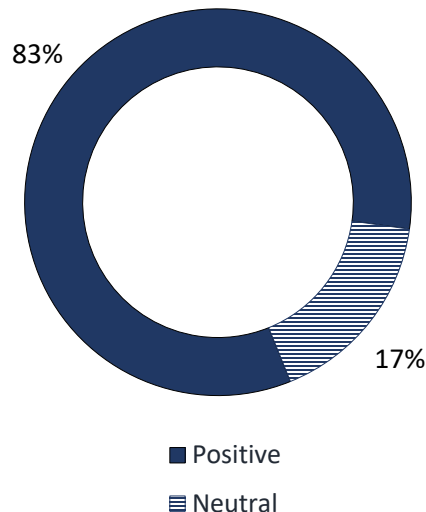
Learning New Things (n=24)



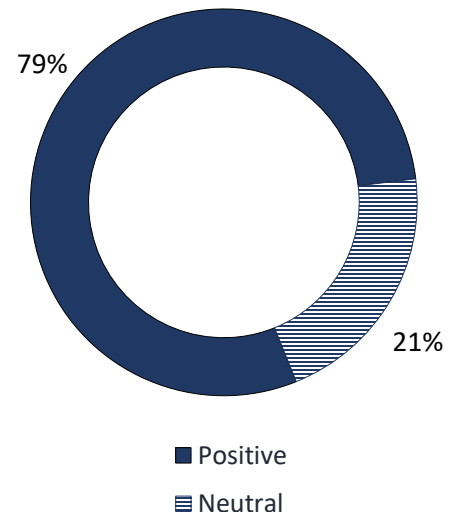
Subject Confidence (n=24)



School Confidence (n=24)



Continuing Tutoring (n=24)



Tutor Questionnaire

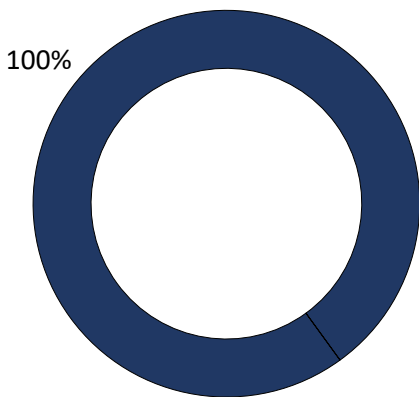
Over a two-week period from September 14th, 34 tutors involved in the programme were invited to provide feedback on their experience as well as their impression of their students' experiences. 26 tutors provided responses with generally positive results.

Every tutor agreed that they had enjoyed their experience, and their average overall rating of the experience was 4.2 out of 5 – an 83% approval rating. The most significant area of neutral and negative feedback related to tutors' experience of the technology, which is covered later in this report.

Tutors were asked to respond to a series of statements relating to their enjoyment of the programme, quality and usefulness of training, scheduling and organisation, student engagement, improvement of student understanding, improvement of student confidence and the quality of support they received from Tutorfair Foundation's team. The results are outlined below, aggregating positive, negative and neutral responses.

Enjoyment

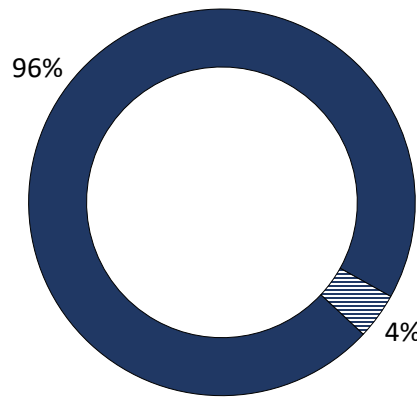
(n=26)



■ Positive

Quality of Training

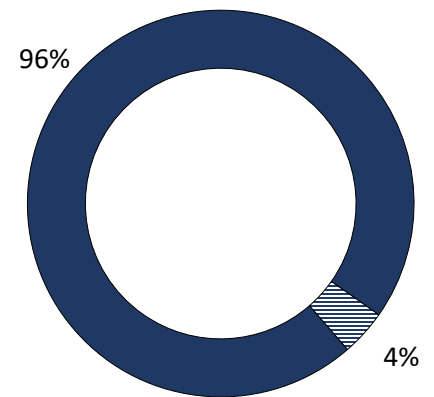
(n=52)



■ Positive
▨ Neutral

Tutorfair Team

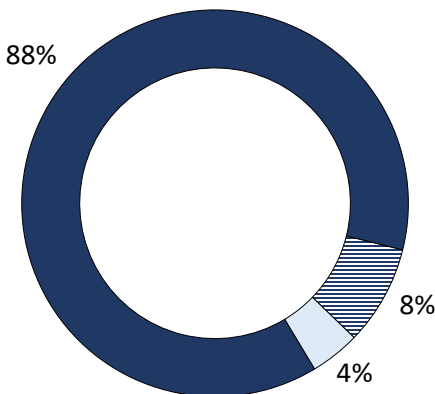
(n=52)



■ Positive
▨ Neutral

Student Engagement

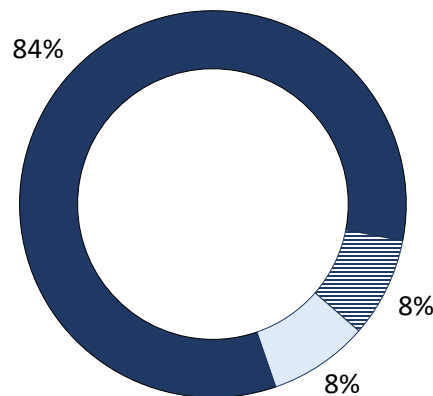
(n=24)



■ Positive
▨ Neutral
□ Negative

Student Understanding

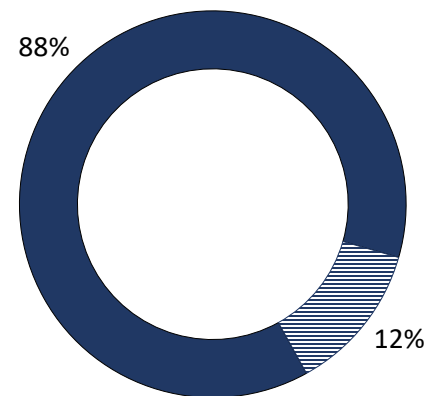
(n=24)



■ Positive
▨ Neutral
□ Negative

Student Confidence

(n=24)



■ Positive
▨ Neutral

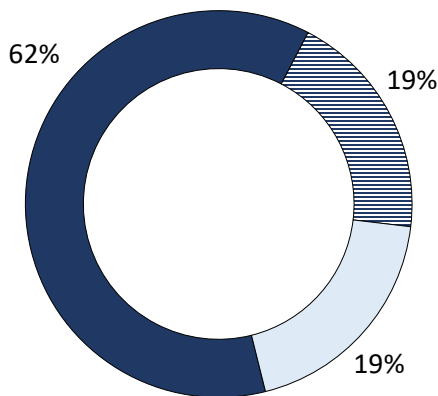
Technology

In contrast with feedback around the rest of the programme, both tutors and students were much more likely to provide negative responses when asked about their experience of the online classroom itself. For many participants, unstable internet connections and limited access to devices caused problems with the technology, leading to issues with audio and video.

The group of tutors for whom this happened regularly understandably felt that it had a significant impact on their ability to teach effectively; and felt that the impact of their tutoring on students' learning and engagement was affected. Of the 4 tutors who provided negative feedback regarding the organisation of the programme, 3 of them cited the online technology as the reason. Similarly, of the 4 tutors who rated their overall experience as a 3 out of 5 (the lowest rating from any participants) 3 of them cited online technology as the reason.

Technology (Tutors)

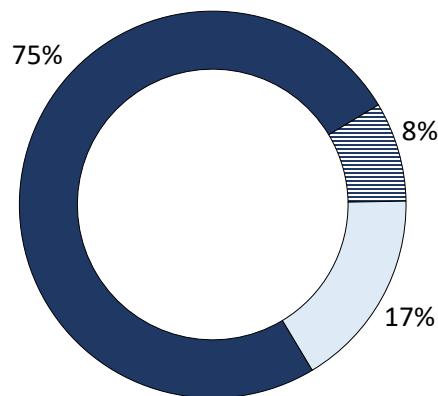
(n=26)



■ Positive
▨ Neutral
□ Negative

Technology (Students)

(n=24)



■ Positive
▨ Neutral
□ Negative

“ I didn't feel that the platform helped me to tutor to my full potential or for the student to engage with me to their full potential.

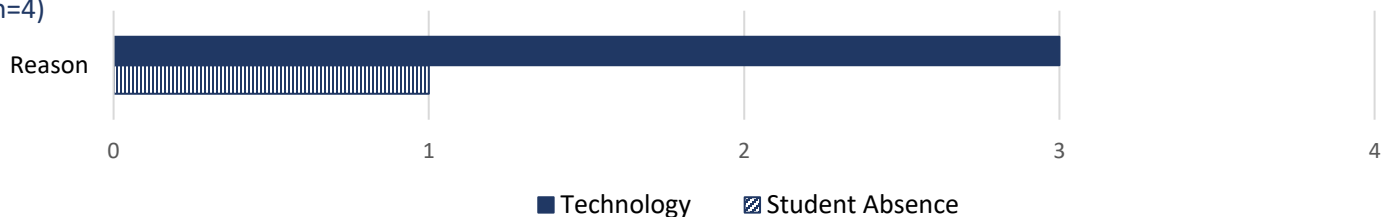
Tutor

“ My laptop was not very compatible, so I was unable to hear my teacher.

Student

The Sessions Were Not Well Organised (Tutors)

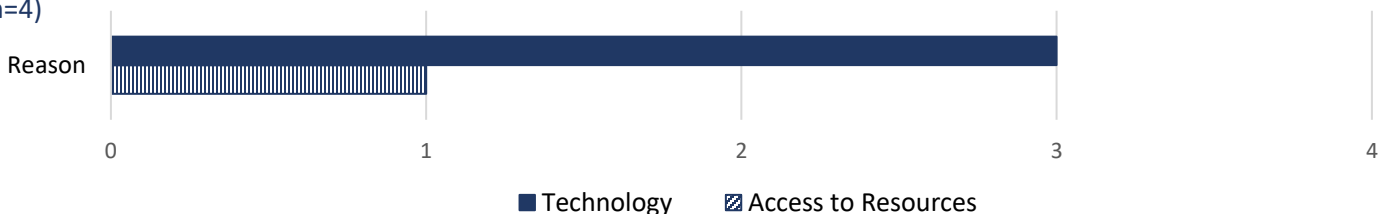
(n=4)



■ Technology ▨ Student Absence

Overall Experience Rated 3 out of 5 (Tutors)

(n=4)



■ Technology ▨ Access to Resources

Written Responses

Comments from students

Of the 24 students who completed their questionnaire, 10 chose to leave additional written responses. 8 of these responses provided positive feedback, 1 provided negative feedback concerning the technology and 1 made a practical request about receiving their lesson transcripts. Some of their responses are recorded below.

“ I have Autism and learning difficulties. I get very anxious to learn. It was nice to be learning these two subjects at home. I do feel worried to go back to school – there will be lots of changes for me. Thank you for helping me during these tough times.

Student

“ It was excellent and they should keep up their hard work.

Student

“ Matt was very helpful and I am thankful for the time he has taken out to teach me.

Student

“ In particular I found Freddy very helpful and patient in my maths lessons and I learned a lot from him and found it very useful.

Student

“ I really enjoyed it thank you.

Student

Comments from tutors

Of the 26 tutors who completed their questionnaire, 24 chose to leave additional written responses. These were generally positive comments, but also provided a much more in-depth assessment of the programme including lots of suggestions of how to improve. Some of their positive responses are recorded below.

“ I have thoroughly enjoyed volunteering with Tutorfair. Although the online platform was something new to me and initially needed a bit of getting used to, I was able to confidently navigate the platform and deliver sessions with ease by the end.

Tutor

“ Wonderful job! Many thanks to the organising team!

Tutor

“ A fantastic opportunity and a supportive team! I thoroughly enjoyed working with the students.

Tutor

“ This was my first time tutoring but with all the support available it turned out to be a hugely enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Tutor

“ Valuable and worthwhile.

Tutor

“ Fabulous, thank you.

Tutor

“ The programme is extremely worthwhile and allows tutors flexibility around when they can volunteer. I am pleased I found this opportunity!

Tutor

Areas to Improve

Tutor suggestions

Alongside positive feedback, many tutors provided some more constructive feedback and suggestions as to how to improve the programme for future iterations. Within these comments, there were 3 recurring themes; common areas in which tutors felt improvements could be made. These were the online classroom technology, access to resources and curricula and the length of the programme.

Online classroom technology

As discussed above, students and tutors were more likely to provide negative and neutral feedback about the online classroom itself than any other aspect of the programme.

The platform we use was chosen for its simplicity – a digital ‘pen and paper’ with document upload and very few other features. The choice to limit the features was made to increase the likelihood of establishing and maintaining a good connection to the classroom for all parties, as well as to provide a user-friendly experience.

Nevertheless, several tutors suggested that they would have preferred to have more features to use to augment their lessons and most participants experience some connectivity issues anyway. Tutorfair Foundation is testing new online classroom technologies to see if a better option can be secured.

“ I feel the platform is not good enough for online teaching. We should use [different technology] to get maximum benefits from everyone’s time and effort.

Tutor

Access to resources and curricula

Many tutors’ comments suggested that they received ample support from Tutorfair Foundation regarding planning and delivering sessions. However, several felt very strongly that they had not been provided with enough resources or information about the students’ curricula. Responses do not correlate with tutors’ level of experience, but instead correlate with the tutors who asked for support with resources versus those who didn’t.

Tutorfair Foundation is making changes to its programmes to mitigate this discrepancy and guarantee that all tutors feel supported. This includes providing blanket access to a high-quality online resources bank and (particularly for English) ensuring that all tutors are aware of students’ exam boards and set texts in advance of their first session.

“ It would have been very useful to be given information on the specific texts students had studied in advance.

Tutor

Programme length

Several tutors left comments indicating that the programme was too short – with tutors having a maximum of 6 hours with each student (and in some cases just 4 or 5 hours). Tutorfair Foundation is aware of existing evidence around dosage of tutoring and would like to guarantee that all students receive 12-15 hours of tutoring wherever possible.

“ I wish I could have done more.

Tutor

In this case, the programme length was strictly defined by the length of students’ summer break, but tutor comments that arrangements and introductions could have been made sooner to get maximum utility out of the 6 weeks is valid and we will aim deliver that in similar projects in the future.



'I have really enjoyed volunteering with the Tutorfair Foundation. It has not only allowed me to help students feel more confident with their studies, but it has also given me a much-needed purpose.'

'Every student I worked with showed a tremendous amount of determination and dedication to learning. It made me love what I do even more. Thank you so much for the opportunity.'

M T
Volunteer Tutor

'I get very anxious to learn. It was nice to be learning these two subjects at home. I do feel worried to go back to school – there will be lots of changes for me. Thank you for helping me during these tough times.'

A W
Student

Tutorfair Foundation
Runway East (Lower Ground)
10 Finsbury Square
EC2A 1AF
foundation@tutorfair.com