CEMETR-2022-05
OCT 2022

CEME Technical Report

The Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation

Augustine Literacy Project - Charlotte: Formative Evaluation Report

Leonardo Herrera Mosquera

A PUBLICATION OF THE CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

THE CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Mission of the Augustine Literacy Project - Charlotte (ALP)

The mission of the Augustine Literacy Project – Charlotte (ALP) is to improve the reading, writing, and spelling skills of young, aspiring readers in under-resourced communities by providing free, long-term, one-on-one instruction from highly trained tutors.

ALP methodology is built on the research-based Orton-Gillingham approach and uses materials developed by Wilson Language Training Corporation and ALP.

Vision

All children have access to reading instruction that meets their individual needs and improves their opportunities to be successful in school and in life.

Introduction

In recent years, global organizations and educational leaders have emphasized developing digital literacy skills (OECD, 2021), yet many children lack even basic literacy skills (UNICEF, March 2022). The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school (CMS) population is not exempt from this crisis. According to the 2019 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), "80% of African American and Hispanic fourth-grade boys in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are unable to read proficiently." (Belk Foundation, para.1). Although the COVID-19 pandemic has widened the opportunity and achievement gaps for many students, this phenomenon is not new. Ten years ago, legislators passed the *Read to Achieve Act*, yet little has changed, and many students still need more support to meet rigorous ELA standards (Helms, 2022*)*.

To help bridge this gap, the Augustine Literacy Project-Charlotte (ALP), a non-profit organization established in 2005, has focused its efforts on improving "the reading, writing, and spelling skills of young, aspiring readers in under-resourced communities by providing free, long-term, one-on-one instruction from highly trained tutors" (ALP, n.d., para. 1). The tutoring program implemented at ALP follows the Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach and uses Wilson Reading System® materials. Orton-Gillingham is conceived as "a multisensory, explicit, systematic approach to reading instruction that has been effective with students who struggle with literacy for a variety of reasons" (ALP, n.d., para. 2), and the Wilson Reading System® "provides teacher and student resources that incorporate all the research-based best practices that have been part of our teacher professional learning courses for many years" (Wilson Language Training, n.d., para. 1).

Thus, following a research-based methodology, ALP-Charlotte has provided tutors with an intensive week of training and continuing education to help hundreds of first through third

graders from under-resourced communities in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School (CMS) District achieve levels of reading proficiency that equip them for their educational demands and better life opportunities. To determine the success factors and areas for improvement, ALP and the Center for Measurement and Evaluation (CEME) at University of North Carolina-Charlotte have joined efforts to formatively evaluate the ALP tutoring program using student assessment data and tutors' survey and interview responses. These instruments will allow us to explore tutors' experiences and perceptions regarding different factors that intervene in the process. Tutors' insights will help us identify the general strengths and weaknesses of the tutoring program and the learning opportunities and challenges they and their students face during the tutoring process.

Evaluation Purpose

This formative evaluation aims to enhance our understanding of the benefits students experience from participating in the Augustine Literacy Project – Charlotte (ALP) Tutoring Program. Specifically, we sought to examine positive outcomes for students' reading proficiency development as well as identify areas for program improvement.

Evaluation Questions

EQ1: How does ALP-Charlotte prepare and support Augustine tutors and students for the literacy instructional process?

EQ2: What challenges or opportunities do Augustine tutors and students experience during the tutoring process?

EQ3: What major strengths, weaknesses, and growth areas for ALP-Charlotte can be identified?

Conceptual Framework

This framework focuses on two major components, including, defining the Orton-Gillingham Approach and delineating the program components, and exploring the impact of one-to-one tutoring on student academic gains, especially in reading skills development.

Orton-Gillingham Approach

Samuel Torrey Orton, a pathologist who conducted brain research to examine the brains of struggling readers, and Anna Gillingham, an educator and psychologist who developed a framework for teaching reading, joined their knowledge and research efforts to come up with a "direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy when reading, writing, and spelling does not come easily to individuals, such as those with dyslexia" (Orton-Gillingham Academy, n.d., para. 1). Working alone and in concert, Orton and Gillingham have laid the foundation for successful reading programs, such as Writing Road to Reading, Project Read, the Language Tool Kit, Alphabetic, and the Slingerland Method (Rose & Zirkel, 2007).

According to the Syllabus Learning Center (nd), curricula and tutoring using the Orton-Gillingham approach are grounded in the following elements:

Phonics-Based: Students are taught the basics of word formation before being taught whole words. Students are taught sounds, how sounds relate to written symbols, and how both are sequenced to form syllables and words.

Multisensory: Students are taught using all pathways to learning: auditory, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic (movement). Students are actively involved in their own learning.

Structured: Instruction is carefully structured and directly taught.

Sequential: Students learn language from the simple to the complex.

Cumulative: Each piece of new learning relates to what is already learned.

Cognitive: Learning is based on an understanding of language (not just memorization) so that students learn to reason when thinking about language.

Flexible: Learning is adapted to a student's needs and progresses at the student's pace.

One-on-One Tutoring

The importance of one-to-one tutoring is not a new area of interest. Elbaum et al. (2000) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the effectiveness of one-to-one adult-delivered volunteer tutoring programs. They found, “on average, students who received one-on-one instruction performed at a level ⅖ of a standard deviation higher than the average level of the comparison group, corresponding to a move from the 50th to the 65th percentile on a standardized measure” (p. 616). More recently, Markovitz et al. (2022) conducted a study to evaluate the Reading Corps program, which also uses volunteers to carry out a one-to-one tutoring program to support reading development. They found that previously underperforming students demonstrated statistically significant improvement, with many reaching higher kindergarten and first grade benchmark scores than the control group for letter and sound domains. However, as a replicative study, they reiterate the importance of continued program evaluation to monitor growth and needs.

Similarly, researchers from the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute (2016) reported that one-on-one tutoring programs have multiple benefits on student academic achievement. The researchers cited literature that suggests that students who participate in one-on-one tutoring programs "make greater academic gains with supplemental academic assistance than similar students that do not receive the same assistance. Further, students that are unresponsive to traditional classroom teaching benefit from supplemental tutoring" (p. 12). Furthermore, Aud et

al. (2013) found that beginning readers demonstrated great improvement after attending one-on-one tutoring in alphabetics, reading fluency, comprehension, and general reading achievement. These results suggest that one-on-one tutoring can foster the development of early literacy skills.

Likewise, the Urban Institute Investigators (2016) reported that "structured one-on-one tutoring from a trained adult can have significant, positive outcomes on children's literacy" (p. 12). This finding can be a positive reference for ALP-Charlotte, given that its tutoring program is based on a well-structured methodology. Also, considering that tutors volunteer to be part of ALP-Charlotte, research-based reviews have evidenced the positive impact of volunteer tutoring programs on young students, especially struggling readers, when programs are well implemented (Markovitz et al., 2022). Finally, Mokhtari et al. (2015) also provided strong evidence, through a quasi-experimental case study, of students' learning gains after receiving 47 hours of one-on-one tutoring

Method

The data-collection process for the ALP evaluation involved five stages: (1) key informant interviews and documents review; (2) administering a survey to tutors; (3) conducting follow-up interviews with tutors; (4) visiting training and tutoring sessions; (5) and analysis of internal and external student assessments. For the first stage, the director of CEME and one of the team researchers participated in initial meetings with the ALP Executive and Operations Directors to discuss the purpose of the program evaluation and gain insights about the ALP-Charlotte. For the second stage, 135 ALP tutors completed a survey designed collaboratively by ALP and CEME. The third stage consisted of follow-up interviews with 12 tutors who volunteered to participate. The fourth stage entailed visiting the summer training sessions (June 2022) and some tutoring sessions. And finally, during the fifth stage, we analyzed students' scores on the pre- and post-assessments taken by ALP students at the beginning and end of the tutoring program. We also analyzed student scores on the DIBELS exams at the beginning (BOY) and end of the school year (EOY). The following sections describe the data-collection measures, participants, procedures, and results used in each stage.

Quantitative Measures

The Tutor Survey Instrument

The CEME team adapted the tutor survey from the ALP tutors' survey at the end of each tutoring program cycle. The survey consisted of ten sections (see Table 1) with a varying number of items in each section. *Training and Support, Implementation and Work with Students, and Demographic Information* were the most comprehensive sections, with 12, 11, and 8 survey items, respectively. The first two sections used a four-point Likert scale to rate 23 items: 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) agree, and 4) strongly agree. Sections, including, *Suggestions*

for Future Training, Additional Support Needed, Tutor Challenges, Motivation to be an ALP Tutor, and Comments on Tutoring Experience included open-ended questions.

Table 1

Sections in Tutor Survey

Dimensions	# Items
Training and Support	12
Implementation and Work with Students	11
Tutoring Benefits for Students	2
Suggestions for Future Training	2
Suggestions for Lunch Bunch	1
Additional Support Needed	1
Tutor Challenges	1
Motivation to be an ALP Tutor	1
Comments on Tutoring Experience	1
Demographic Information	8

Participants

In total, 135 tutors, who were active tutors with ALP for the 2021-2022 year, completed the survey. Some tutors declined to answer some of the questions, so the demographic information percentages were calculated only from participants who responded. Among them, 71 tutors (53%) have tutored with ALP for one or two years, 50 (37.3%) for three to six years, 9 (6.7%) for seven to ten years, and 4 (3%) for 11 to 14 years. Even though previous teaching or tutoring experience is not a requirement to be an Augustine tutor, 86 of the tutors (64.2%) had previous experience, whereas 48 (35.8%) did not have any previous teaching or tutoring experience. For those with prior experience, 40 (37%) tutors had taught for one to two years, 23 (21.3%) had for three to six years, 11 (10.2%) for seven to ten years, 7 (6.5%) for 11 to 14 years, 27 (25%) for 15 or more years, and 27 tutors declined to answer this question. For the 2021-

2022 year, 114 (84.4%) tutors tutored in person, 13 (9.6%) did it virtually, and 8 (5.9%) tutored using both modes of instruction.

The participants included 121 females (90.3%) and 13 (9.7%) males. Sixty-seven (50%) tutors were 62 years of age or older, 48 (35.8%) were between 51 and 61 years old, 11 (8.2%) were between 40 and 50, 5 (3.7%) were between 29 and 39, and 3 (2.2%) were between 18 and 28 years old. To become an ALP tutor, tutors are not required to have a college degree; however, most tutors have earned a college degree. Fifty-nine (43.7%) tutors held a master's degree, 53 (39.3%) a bachelor's degree, seven (5.2%) a doctorate, six (4.4%) an associate degree, four (3%) have done some college, three (2.2%) tutors hold other advanced degrees, two (1.5%) tutors have earned a specialist degree, and one (0.7%) has obtained a high school diploma or done some high school. Among this group of tutors, 80 (59.7%) were retired, 18 (13.4%) were employed full-time, ten (7.5%) were employed part-time, and 27 (20.1%) tutors had another employment status not explicit in the question choices. Table 2 summarizes the above-mentioned demographic information.

Table 2

Demographic Information

	Descriptors	Freq.	Perc.
Age	18-28 years old	3	2.2%
	29-39 years old	5	3.7%
	40-50 years old	11	8.2%
	51-61 years old	48	35.8%
	62 + years old	67	50.0%
Gender	Male	13	9.7%
	Female	121	90.3%
	Non-binary/Third gender	0	0.0%
	Prefer not to say	0	0.0%
Highest Degree	High school diploma (or	1	0.7%
	Some college	4	3.0%

	Associate degree	6	4.4%
	Bachelor's degree	53	39.3%
	Master's degree	59	43.7%
	Specialist degree	2	1.5%
	Doctorate	7	5.2%
	Other Advanced degree	3	2.2%
Employment Status	Employed full-time	18	13.4%
	Employed part-time	10	7.5%
	Retired	80	59.7%
	Other	27	20.1%
Previous Teaching/Tutoring	Yes	86	64.2%
	No	48	35.8%
# Years Previous Teaching/Tutoring Experience	1-2 years	40	37.0%
	3-6 years	23	21.3%
	7-10 years	11	10.2%
	11-14 years	7	6.5%
	15 + years	27	25.0%
Years with ALP	1-2 years	71	53.0%
	3-6 years	50	37.3%
	7-10 years	9	6.7%
	11-14 years	4	3.0%
	15 + years	0	0.0%
Instruction Mode	In-person	114	84.4%
	Virtual	13	9.6%
	Both	8	5.9%

Procedures

Tutors completed the survey between in June 2022, and the completion time ranged between 2.8 minutes and 1.6 hours. Table 3 reports the type of analyses conducted for the tutor survey responses. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for 33 close-ended questions, consisting of 12 items from the *Training and Support* section, 11 from the *Implementation and Work with Students* section, two items from *Tutoring Benefits for Students*, and eight from the *Demographic Information* section. Qualitative software ATLAS.ti 8 was used

to code answers to open-ended questions from the following sections: *Other Training or Ongoing Education, Suggestions for Lunch Bunch, Additional Support Needed, Tutor Challenges, Motivation to be an ALP Tutor, and Comments of Tutoring Experience.*

Table 3

Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses

Dimensions	# Items	Type of Analysis
Training and Support	12	Desc. Stats
Implementation and Work with Ss	11	Desc. Stats
Tutoring Benefits for Students	2	Desc. Stats
Suggestions for Future Training	2	Desc. Stats/ATLAS.ti 8
Suggestions for Lunch Bunch	1	Constant Comparison - ATLAS.ti 8
Additional Support Needed	1	Constant Comparison - ATLAS.ti 8
Tutor Challenges	1	Constant Comparison - ATLAS.ti 8
Motivation to be an ALP Tutor	1	Constant Comparison - ATLAS.ti 8
Comments of Tutoring Experience	1	Constant Comparison - ATLAS.ti 8
Demographic Information	8	Desc. Stats

Survey Results

Training and Support. This section uses a four-point Likert scale to rate 12 items related to tutor training and support offered by ALP. As evidenced in Table 4, the modes for all the items in this section fall in the "agree" (3) and "strongly agree" (4) options, being "strongly agree" (4) the mode for eight items and "agree" (3) the mode for the remaining four items.

The means for all 12 items were higher than 3. The items with the highest means were *The site coordinator is readily available when further support/clarification is needed* and *The tutor felt supported by the Learning and Development team during.* Table 4 shows the order of the 12 items from the highest to the lowest mean and their corresponding standard deviations.

Table 4

Means and SDs for the Training and Support Items

					A	SA
	Item	**Mean**	**Mode**	**SD**	**%**	**%**
Q1.7	The site coordinator is readily available when further support/clarification is needed.	3.72	4	.526	20.1%	76.1%
Q1.6	The tutor felt supported by the Learning and Development team during training.	3.71	4	.488	26.1%	72.4%
Q1.2	The tutor believes the training prepared them to be an effective tutor.	3.64	4	.512	32.8%	65.7%
Q1.3	The tutor feels confident in the ability to tutor a student.	3.64	4	.702	32.8%	65.7%
Q1.5	ALP provided me with enough resources to support my tutoring.	3.53	4	.570	39.3%	57%
Q1.1	The tutor understands all components necessary to implement the ALP tutoring intervention.	3.52	4	.633	37.8%	57.8%
Q1.4	The training offered by ALP covers all necessary skills needed to tutor.	3.39	4	.702	38.5%	50.4%
Q1.10	The tutor attends Lunch Bunch to learn new skills.	3.36	3	.591	55%	40.8%
Q1.8	Attending a Lunch Bunch Presentation improved their tutoring skills.	3.23	3	.665	55.7%	34.4%
Q1.11	The tutor volunteers with ALP to feel part of a community.	3.20	4	.808	38.2%	42%
Q1.9	The tutor attends Lunch Bunch to feel a sense of community.	3.15	3	.702	51.3%	32.5%
Q1.12	The tutor has been able to apply the tutoring skills to help others outside of the ALP program.	3.07	3	.736	45.9%	30.3%

Table 5 shows that responses in this section that fall in the agree or strongly agree response categories are between 76.2% and 98.5%. Nearly 99% of the tutors agree or strongly agree that they felt supported by the learning and development team during training. The same percentage holds about tutors feeling confident in their ability to tutor a student. 96.3% agree and strongly agree that ALP provided them with enough resources to support their tutoring. A similar percentage of the tutors, 96.2%, agree or strongly agree that the site coordinator is readily available when further support or clarification is needed. 95.6% of the tutors agree or strongly agree that they understand all components necessary to implement the ALP tutoring intervention.

As for attending the Lunch Bunch, 95.8% of the tutors agree or strongly agree that they attend it to learn new skills, while 90.1% agree or strongly agree that attending a Lunch Bunch Presentation improved their tutoring skills. 88.9% agree or strongly agree that the training offered by ALP covers all necessary skills needed to tutor; and a similar percentage, 88.5%, believe the training prepared them to be effective tutors. 83.8% agree or strongly agree that they attend Lunch Bunch to feel a sense of community, yet 80.2% agree or strongly agree that they volunteered with ALP to feel part of a community. Regarding the possibility of applying tutoring skills to help others outside the ALP program, 76.2% agree or strongly agree that they have been able to do it.

Disagreements with the statements in this section go from 1.5% to 23.8%. However, only disagreements higher than 10% will be described. Tutors disagree or strongly disagree that they have the possibility of applying their tutoring skills to help others outside of the ALP program (23.8%), disagree or strongly disagree that they volunteer with ALP to feel part of a community (19.9%), disagree or strongly disagree that they attend Lunch Bunch to feel a sense of community (16.3%), and disagree or strongly disagree that the training offered by ALP covers all necessary skills needed to tutor (11.1%).

Table 5

Frequencies of the Training and Support Items

Item	SD		D		A		SA	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
The site coordinator is readily available when further support/clarification is needed.	0	0%	5	3.7%	27	20.1%	102	76.1%
The tutor felt supported by the Learning and Development team during training.	0	0%	2	1.5%	35	26.1%	97	72.4%
The tutor believes the training prepared them to be an effective tutor.	0	0%	2	1.5%	44	32.8%	88	65.7%
The tutor feels confident in the ability to tutor a student.	0	0%	2	1.5%	44	32.8%	88	65.7%
ALP provided me with enough resources to support my tutoring.	0	0%	5	3.7%	53	39.3%	77	57%
The tutor understands all components necessary to implement the ALP tutoring intervention.	2	1.5%	4	3.0%	51	37.8%	78	57.8%
The training offered by ALP covers all necessary skills needed to tutor.	1	0.7%	14	10.4%	52	38.5%	68	50.4%
The tutor attends Lunch Bunch to learn new skills.	1	0.8%	4	3.3%	66	55%	49	40.8%
Attending a Lunch Bunch Presentation improved their tutoring skills.	2	1.6%	10	8.2%	68	55.7%	42	34.4%
The tutor volunteers with ALP to feel part of a community.	3	2.3%	23	17.6%	50	38.2%	55	42%
The tutor attends Lunch Bunch to feel a sense of community.	1	0.9%	18	15.4%	60	51.3%	38	32.5%
The tutor has been able to apply the tutoring skills to help others outside of the ALP program.	0	0%	29	23.8%	56	45.9%	37	30.3%

The Implementation Process and Working with Students. This section also uses a four-point Likert scale to rate 11 items related to the implementation process and working with students. As evidenced in Table 6, the modes for all the items in this section fall in the "agree" (3) or "strongly agree" (4) response categories, with "strongly agree" (4) being the mode for seven items and "agree" (3) being the mode for the remaining four items.

The mean for all items in this section was higher than 3, except for the item *I feel connected with other ALP Tutors*, which received an average rating of 2.93 across all participants. The items *When my student is feeling excited about a success (big or small), I tend*

to get excited too and *I feel connected with the student(s) that I tutor for ALP* demonstrate the highest means (3.84 and 3.78, respectively). Table 6 shows the order of the 12 items from the highest to the lowest mean and their corresponding standard deviations.

Table 6

Means and SDs for the Implementation and Work with Students Items

					A	SA
	Item	**Mean**	**Mode**	**SD**	**%**	**%**
Q2.11	When my student is feeling excited about a success (big or small), I tend to get excited, too.	3.84	4	.364	15.6%	84.4%
Q2.1	I feel connected with the student(s) that I tutor for ALP	3.78	4	.436	20.9%	78.4%
Q2.2	I feel that ALP has positively impacted the literacy skills of my student(s)	3.67	4	.486	31.1%	68.1%
Q2.3	I feel connected with the ALP Site Coordinator at my student's school.	3.58	4	.674	25.9%	66.7%
Q2.8	ALP has significantly helped students who were below grade level in reading and writing.	3.57	4	.512	41.8%	57.5%
Q2.7	I feel that students who participate in ALP will perform better on reading assessments.	3.55	4	.514	43.3%	56%
Q2.10	I feel I am able to work "with" my student as opposed to "for" my student.	3.55	4	.529	42%	56.5%
Q2.9	I have found a mutual interest with my student.	3.33	3	.573	56.8%	37.9%
Q2.4	I feel connected with my student's school.	3.10	3	.840	42.2%	36.3%
Q2.6	I feel connected with the ALP staff.	3.03	3	.671	59.7%	22.4%
Q2.5	I feel connected with other ALP Tutors	2.93	3	.711	53.7%	20.2%

Table 7 shows that responses in this section that fall in the agree and strongly agree scale were between 73.9% and 100%. All tutors agree or strongly agree that they get excited when their students feel excited about a big or small success. In four statements (*I feel connected with the student(s) that I tutor for ALP, I feel that ALP has positively impacted the literacy skills of my student(s), ALP has significantly helped students who were below grade level in reading and writing,* and *I feel that students who participate in ALP will perform better on reading assessments*), 99.3% of the responses fell in the response categories, agree or strongly agree. Tutors expressed that they feel they can work "with" their student as opposed to "for" their student, with 98.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing. With similar percentages in the agree and

strongly agree response categories were the items *I have found a mutual interest with my student* and *I feel connected with the ALP Site Coordinator at my student's school,* with 94.7% and 92.6%, respectively. The lower percentages in the agree and strongly agree scales were *I feel connected with the ALP staff* (82.1%), *I feel connected with my student's school* (78.5%), and *I feel connected with other ALP Tutors* (73.8%).

Disagreements with the statements in this section range from 0% to 26.1%. The disagreements rating higher than 10% were related to tutors' connections. Tutors disagree or strongly disagree that they feel connected with other ALP tutors (26.1%), disagree or strongly disagree that they feel connected with the student's school (21.4%), and disagree or strongly disagree that they feel connected with ALP staff (17.9%).

Table 7

Frequencies of the Implementation and Work with Students Items

Item	SD		D		A		SA	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
When my student is feeling excited about a success (big or small), I tend to get excited, too.	0	0%	0	0%	21	15.6%	114	84.4%
I feel connected with the student(s) that I tutor for ALP	0	0%	1	0.7%	28	20.9%	105	78.4%
I feel that ALP has positively impacted the literacy skills of my student(s)	0	0%	1	0.7%	42	31.1%	92	68.1%
I feel connected with the ALP Site Coordinator at my student's school.	2	1.5%	8	5.9%	35	25.9%	90	66.7%
ALP has significantly helped students who were below grade level in reading and writing.	0	0%	1	0.7%	56	41.8%	77	57.5%
I feel that students who participate in ALP will perform better on reading assessments.	0	0%	1	0.7%	58	43.3%	75	56%
I feel I am able to work "with" my student as opposed to "for" my student.	0	0%	2	1.5%	55	42%	74	56.5%
I have found a mutual interest with my student.	0	0%	7	5.3%	75	56.8%	50	37.9%
I feel connected with my student's school.	6	4.4%	23	17%	57	42.2%	49	36.3%
I feel connected with the ALP staff.	2	1.5%	22	16.4%	80	59.7%	30	22.4%
I feel connected with other ALP Tutors	2	1.5%	33	24.6%	72	53.7%	27	20.2%

Students' Benefits from ALP Tutoring. Regarding how students have benefited from ALP tutoring, 58.3% of the tutors believe their students have made progress but need additional tutoring in foundational literacy skills. A notable group of tutors (29.5%) believe their students have made significant progress in reading, spelling, writing, and comprehension. Only 8.3% of the tutors think their students continue to struggle and show minimal progress. A few tutors (*n*=5, 3.8%) reported that they could not determine their students' progress.

To support the question on student progress, 32 comments were analyzed, with 22 comments corresponding to significant progress in reading. The remaining ten comments describe the factors that may have contributed to minimal or no literacy progress. Among the factors mentioned by tutors is the lack of family support, student behavior issues (difficulty listening and focusing, reluctant to reading, uninterested in learning, and attendance), English language limitations, and learning difficulties. Excerpts are included below that highlight the range of responses provided by tutors regarding students' progress:

> *"My student could not read a single word when we started. At the end of the school year he was able to read the decodable readers. He still needs help but made significant progress." (Q4.4)*
>
> *"Tremendous progress was made in reading and writing skills but there is still plenty of room for growth to reach grade level skills." (Q4.8)*
>
> *"My student made measurable progress. I learned she is on grade level according to EOY DIBELS." (Q4.11)*
>
> *"My student was challenging due to behaviors, focus, and attendance. His progress was minimal which was disappointing." (Q4.25)*
>
> *"A lot of behavioral/personal issues impacted my student's literacy progress." (Q4.26)*

About 71.88% of the comments analyzed dealt with the progress students made in their literacy process, and 28.12% focused on the factors that hindered the progress. These numbers

and excerpts provide evidence in support of the current model supporting students in the acquisition of foundational reading skills. This section corresponds specifically to the question: s*pecific to the student that you have been tutoring most recently, how do you feel your student has benefitted from ALP tutoring?*

Tutor Training Preferences for Next Year. Tutors were given 17 options to select and one open answer choice to suggest types of training not listed. They were asked to select their top five. As we can see in Table 8, the options with the highest percentage of selection were: *Hear from experienced tutors about 'lessons learned' and 'tutoring tips'* (10.5%), *literacy games* (9.8%), *fluency* (8.9%), *phonological awareness* (8%), *and syllable types* (7.9%). Tutors selected all 18 options.

Among the types of training not listed and suggested by tutors were: More training on Step 2 and beyond (suggested three times), more lesson time with high-frequency words (3), and refresher classes or workshops in new techniques/ideas for people who have been tutoring a long time (3). The types of training suggested only once were: videos of experienced tutors working with a child, recording training sessions for future reference, tips for teaching spelling in the lesson or for students to use outside the lesson, mapping for those students who are not able to tap/smear/blend, early writing impacts acquiring literacy skills in reading, help with the behavior management tool, controlled reader recommendations for Steps 3, 4, 5, free ESL training for parents, building an appropriate relationship/ communication with the student's teacher, without overstepping boundaries, teaching book 2 - How to modify the initial lesson plan and teach new skills.

Table 8

Tutor Training Preferences

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	**Percent**	
Hear from experienced tutors about 'lessons learned' and 'tutoring tips'	72	10.5%	55.8%
Literacy games	67	9.8%	51.9%
Fluency	61	8.9%	47.3%
Phonological Awareness	55	8.0%	42.6%
Syllable types	54	7.9%	41.9%
Handwriting	47	6.8%	36.4%
Comprehension	44	6.4%	34.1%
Working with English language learners	36	5.2%	27.9%
Working with under-resourced students	34	4.9%	26.4%
Vocabulary	31	4.5%	24.0%
Hear from local experts	31	4.5%	24.0%
Student behavior	30	4.4%	23.3%
New tutor refresher workshops	30	4.4%	23.3%
Google suite of products (slides, Jamboard, Drive)	28	4.1%	21.7%
Word charting	27	3.9%	20.9%
Exploring cultural differences	17	2.5%	13.2%
Student Advocacy	14	2.0%	10.9%
Other	9	1.3%	7.0%
	687	**100.0%**	**532.6%**

Questions 6, 7, and 8 in the survey asked open-ended questions about additional suggestions for future training and Lunch Bunch events. Some responses confirmed the classification in Table 8, and others added new elements. The topics suggested were training on module steps (14); learning instructional strategies such as games and fun activities (11); having regular check-ins and communications with ALP support staff, site coordinators, other tutors, and teachers (9); having refresher courses (7); how to use the different resources such as the tutor portal (7); further training on high-frequency words (3); training on how to deal with student behavior issues (3); ESL training; promote parent involvement (2); and watching an experienced tutor working with a kid (2). Tutors reported:

> *"I think that tutor training should include watching in person or at least videos of experienced tutors working with a child. I benefited from that when I trained. I also think more supervision is required once a tutor finishes training." (Q6.8)*
>
> *"May be nice to have refresher classes for long serving tutors in whatever new techniques/ideas are available." (Q6.14)*
>
> *"I would love opportunities to meet with other tutors to discuss methods that are working for them." (Q7.18)*
>
> *"Inviting parents of students to lunch bunch to learn more about their child. having child create collage about themselves as part of a literacy lesson." (Q8.18)*
>
> *"Review of phonological awareness games to play with students while walking from classroom to tutoring room. For example, I saw that one tutor had created laminated cards to practice word groups ... this seemed to be helpful and fun. Normally, I would play rhyming games, but I would run out of ideas and I think he got a bit bored." (Q8.28)*

Multiple comments make it clear that the initial tutor training week effectively prepares them for the tutoring process. However, tutors insist on the use of an ongoing training model by keeping regular check-ins with the training support team, site coordinators, literacy facilitators, teachers, or other tutors.

Open-ended Questions regarding Tutoring Challenges. Tutors made about 60 comments regarding challenges they faced when tutoring their students. The challenges most frequently mentioned were *student behavior issues (24), distracting factors (9), attendance (6), slow learning progress (5), and lack of family support (4)*. Other challenges cited once or twice were due to *English language limitations, lesson time constraints, and teaching strategies*.

Behavior issues were related to refusal to do the required work, talking off-topic, breaking school rules, lack of interest in reading and learning, bad mood, anger, inattentiveness, defiant behavior, lack of confidence, refusal to try anything, and hard time following directions

and sitting still. Regarding distracting factors, tutors reported noise and distractions due to the number of students and tutors in the same room, some tutors speaking too loud, and tutoring taking place at the end of the school day. Tutors suggested this last factor in the list as very inconvenient. Concerning attendance, some tutors commented that their students were well-behaved and eager to learn, but absenteeism slowed their progress. Comments related to the remaining categories of slow learning progress and lack of family support were about students giving up easily, not having enough sleep, not eating well, having issues at home, and lacking basic English vocabulary.

Open-ended Questions regarding Motivation to Become an Augustine Tutor. Tutors made about a hundred comments concerning why they wanted to become Augustine tutors. The reasons most frequently mentioned were *to help others and give back to the community (35), belief in reading as fundamental to success in life (25), sense of accomplishment (23), love of teaching (10), and building relationships (5)*.

Tutors want to give back what they or their children may have received in life. They understand that many children need extra support, that hiring a tutor is expensive, and many families cannot afford it. They reported that they want to create equity, give children more chances to succeed, get them excited about reading, help them reach their potential, and thus "*make a difference in a world full of inequities*." (Q10.32). One tutor commented, "*Kids need help. Parents need help. Teachers need help. Our community needs help*." (Q10.36).

Tutors believe reading is a fundamental skill to a child's success. Reading gives them the confidence to tackle other challenges and opens doors for personal enjoyment. Tutors expressed their love of reading and wanted to transmit it to their students. Tutors emphasize the need to address literacy at an early age to avoid future hardships. One tutor asserts that reading is a

human right. Some other comments were: *"Books have been a huge part of my life, and I believe that the ability to read fluently will lead to opportunities that would be missed without it"* (Q10.58); *"Literacy opens the door for personal enjoyment, educational pursuits, sense of belonging and identity, and to be a positive influence in the community"* (Q10.64); and *"I think everyone should be able to read and to read well. It is a delight as well as a necessity"* (Q10.71).

Tutors repeatedly expressed feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction from their tutoring experience. They saw the opportunity to become an ALP tutor as intellectually challenging, an opportunity to contribute to public education, to be part of a program that can make a difference in children's lives, and to witness student development in literacy skills. Some of the comments were: *"I appreciate the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction as my student improves -- especially seeing his interest in reading and different types of books increase" (Q10.75); "Try to be part of a solution to poor learning outcomes for underserved kids in Charlotte" (Q10.82); "I really feel that I'm doing something important, and something that I can do well. I love rejoicing with the student over his new-found abilities." (Q10.86)*

Along with the *Love of Teaching* expressed by tutors were expressions of enjoyment of teaching children, love of teaching reading, enjoyment of working one-on-one, love of students, and love sharing their skills with aspiring readers. Likewise, tutors appreciated the relationships built up from the connections made with students and other stakeholders. They commented: "*I love the relationships - with the student, the teacher, the literacy facilitator... Giving a student to the tools to learn how to read and to instill a love of reading is one of the greatest joys"* (Q10.94); "*Being an ALP tutor is important to me because of the relationship that my student and I have built together. We both walked into this relationship unknowing of what it would eventually become, and I'm so grateful for the bond that we have formed"* (Q10.96); and "*I enjoy*

the connection with the student, the other tutors, the teacher, and the school and site coordinator." (Q10.98)

Student Pre- and Post-Assessment

The pre- and post-assessments occur at the beginning and end of a tutoring period within a school year. This period usually goes from one semester to one year. These assessments allow ALP stakeholders (administrators, tutors, students' families, and teachers) to identify the progress students make in their literacy skills areas for further improvement by the end of their tutoring period. If the post-assessment shows that students need additional support, they will continue for subsequent years for up to 3 years. The pre- and post-assessments contain the same structure (sections and questions), as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Pre- and Post-assessment Structure

Assessment Topic	Maximum Score
Phoneme Assessment Part A Letter Names	31
Phoneme Assessment Part A Letter Sounds	31
Phoneme Assessment Part B Written Letters	31
Auditory Deletion Analysis	15
Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation	22
IOTA Word Test	53
Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale	50
High-Frequency Word Test	92

Participants

For the 2021-22 year, 174 first-through third-grade students participated in the tutoring program. These students attend 23 schools, most of which are part of the CMS district. Students participated in 9 to 128 sessions, with 56.9% of the students attending between 31 and 59 lessons, 33.3% attending 30 or fewer lessons, and 9.8% attending 60 or more lessons. For the

pre-assessment, 67.8% of the students took the test in person, and 30.5% did it virtually. Likewise, 89.1% completed the post-assessment in person and 10.9% virtually.

Procedures

Upon entering the ALP program, each student completed a pre-assessment to better understand strengths and needs. Additionally, upon the end of each academic year, each participating student completed a post-test to understand growth over time and determine future needs. While pre- and post-test dates vary by child, most students participate in the program for one academic year, or approximately nine months. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, maximum and minimum values) were calculated for the eight sections. Mean scores in the pre-assessment were compared to mean scores in the post-assessment for each of the eight sections. The difference in means, the strength of the correlation, and the effect size of the difference were examined to estimate change in performance over the tutoring term.

Pre- and Post-Assessment Results

The paired samples t-test conducted for each component of the pre- and post-assessments yielded statistically significant differences and positive correlations between student scores on the pre- and post-assessments (See full results in Table 10). For the first component, *Phoneme Assessment Part A Letter Names*, the mean increased from 23.05 on the pre-assessment to 30.10 on the post-assessment. The correlation between these two means was positive (r=0.38), and the effect size of the difference was very large (0.976). The second component, *Phoneme Assessment Part A Letter Sounds*, increased its mean from 20.50 on the pre-assessment to 29.66 on the post-assessment. The correlation between these two means was positive (r=0.39), and the effect size of the difference was very large (1.234). The third component, *Phoneme Assessment Part B Written Letters*, increased its mean from 15.73 on the pre-assessment to 28.39 on the post-

assessment. The correlation between these two means was positive (r=0.20), and the effect size of the difference was very large (1.216). The fourth component, *Auditory Deletion Analysis*, increased its mean from 4.937 on the pre-assessment to 9.73 on the post-assessment. The correlation between these two means was positive (r=0.43), and the effect size of the difference was very large (1.451). The fifth component, the *Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation*, increased its mean from 11.15 on the pre-assessment to 18.47 on the post-assessment. The correlation between these two means was positive (r=0.42), and the effect size of the difference was very large (0.974). The sixth component, *IOTA Word Test*, increased its mean from 6.546 on the pre-assessment to 27.09 on the post-assessment. The correlation between these two means was positive (r=0.46), and the effect size of the difference was very large (2.207). The seventh component, *Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale*, increased its mean from 1.494 on the pre-assessment to 8.425 on the post-assessment. The correlation between these two means was positive (r=0.40), and the effect size of the difference was very large (2.664). The eighth component, *High-Frequency Word Test*, increased its mean from 11.75 on the pre-assessment to 51.25 on the post-assessment. The correlation between these two means was positive (r=0.51), and the effect size of the difference was very large (2.231).

In sum, the increase in each literacy component from the pre- to the post-assessment was significant, and there is a high positive correlation between the scores on both assessment occasions. The large effect sizes also indicate the practical significance of the findings. See Appendix A for the graphical representations (bar charts and boxplots) of statistical analyses conducted for the pre- and post-assessments.

Table 10

Pre- and Post-Assessment Statistics

		Mean	N	S.D.	Corr.	E.S.
Pair 1	Pre-A Letter/Digraph Names	23.05	174	7.190	0.376	0.976
	Post Assessment Letter/Digraphs	30.10	174	2.356		
Pair 2	Pre-A Sounds	20.50	174	7.391	0.390	1.234
	Post Assessment Sounds	29.66	174	2.453		
Pair 3	Pre-A Letters Written (or Letters Named)	15.73	174	10.370	0.200	1.216
	Post Letters Written/Named	28.39	174	5.486		
Pair 4	Pre-A Auditory Deletion	4.94	174	3.290	0.400	1.451
	Post Assessment Auditory Deletion	9.73	174	3.215		
Pair 5	Pre-A Yopp-Singer	11.15	174	7.485	0.431	0.974
	Post Assessment Yopp-Singer	18.47	174	4.446		
Pair 6	Pre-A IOTA	6.55	174	9.274	0.422	2.207
	Post Assessment IOTA	27.09	174	16.440		
Pair 7	Pre-A Morrison McCall	1.49	174	2.589	0.457	2.664
	Post Assessment Morrison-McCall	8.43	174	6.983		
Pair 8	Pre-A Sight Words	11.75	174	17.634	0.400	2.231
	Post Assessment Sight Words	51.25	174	30.517		

DIBELS

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is a reading skills assessment that ALP students must take at their respective school systems at the beginning, middle, and end of their school year. DIBELS 8th edition assesses six reading components: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), Word Reading Fluency (WRF), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), and Maze. This measurement is addressed to kindergarten through eighth-grade students, but not all components are intended for all grade levels. Unlike ALP pre-and post-assessments, the DIBELS assessment is brief. Five of the six subtests are only 60 seconds long, and the Maze subtest lasts 3 minutes. This measure has three main purposes: identify students at risk of reading difficulties, record student progress in reading skills as a result of intervention programs, and establish minimum

levels of performance based on benchmark goals defined by DIBELS developers. Table 11 includes the DIBELS subtests plus the composite component.

Table 11

DIBELS Structure

Assessment Component	Grade Level
Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)	K - 1st
Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	K - 1st
(NWF-CLS) Nonsense Word Fluency – CLS	K – 3rd
(NWF-WRC) Nonsense Word Fluency – WRC	K – 3rd
(WRF) Word Reading Fluency WRC Segmentation	K – 3rd
(ORF-FLU) Oral Reading Fluency-Fluency	1st – 8th
(ORF-ACCU) Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy	1st – 8th
(Maze) Basic Comprehension	2nd – 8th
Composite	K – 8th

Participants

For the 2021-22 year, 177 students participated in the DIBELS assessment, of which 103 are first-graders, 59 are second-graders, 14 are third-graders, and one is a fourth-grader.

Procedures

To analyze growth over time, we analyzed student assessment scores from two-time points, the beginning and end of the school year. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for the six reading components. Mean scores at the beginning of the school year (BOY) were compared to mean scores at the end of the school year (EOY) for each section. The difference in means, the strength of the correlation, and the effect size of the difference were examined to estimate change in reading performance.

Results

The paired samples t-test conducted for each component at the BOY and EOY occasions yielded statistically significant differences and positive correlations (See full results in Table 12). For the first pair, *Letter Naming Fluency*, student scores increased on average from 23.87 at the BOY to 56.04 at the EOY. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.57), and the effect size of the difference was very large (2.361). For the second pair, *Phonemic Segmentation Fluency*, student scores increased on average from 12.64 to 31.34. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.44), and the effect size of the difference was large (0.940). For the third pair, *Nonsense Word Fluency CLS*, student scores increased on average from 17.46 to 54.90. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.37), and the effect size of the difference was very large (1.692). For *Nonsense Word Fluency WRC*, student scores increased on average from 2.63 to 15.34. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.26), and the effect size of the difference was very large (1.497). For *Word Reading Fluency WRC*, student scores increased on average from 5.49 to 19.94. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.76), and the effect size of the difference was very large (1.674). For the sixth pair, the *Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy*, student scores increased on average from 30.06 to 76.16. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.50), and the effect size of the difference was very large (1.646). For *Oral Reading Fluency-Fluency*, student scores increased on average from 9.31 to 42.59. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.70), and the effect size of the difference was very large (1.539). On the eighth pair, *Maze*, student scores increased on average its mean from 1.06 to 3.44. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was negative (r=-0.005), and the effect size of the difference was medium (0.528). For *Oral Language*, student scores increased on average from 16.12 to 17.93. The correlation

between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.56), and the effect size of the difference was medium (0.533). For the tenth pair, *Vocabulary*, student scores increased on average from 17.54 to 18.89. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.53), and the effect size of the difference was small (0.279). On the eleventh pair, the *Composite Score*, student scores increased on average from 308.92 to 426.64. The correlation between child BOY and EOY scores was positive (r=0.81), and the effect size of the difference was very large (6.882).

In sum, the increase in each literacy component from the BOY to the EOY was significant, and there is a high positive correlation between the scores on both assessment occasions. The large effect sizes also indicate the practical significance of the findings.

Table 12

Dibels Statistics

		Mean	N	S.D.	Corr.	E.S.
Pair 1	(LNF) Letter Naming Fluency BOY	23.87	75	13.499	0.575	2.361
	(LNF) Letter Naming Fluency EOY	56.04	75	15.736		
Pair 2	(PSF) Phonemic Segmentation Fluency BOY	12.64	103	14.653	0.442	0.940
	(PSF) Phonemic Segmentation Fluency EOY	31.34	103	21.392		
Pair 3	(NWF-CLS) Nonsense Word Fluency – CLS BOY	17.46	145	13.775	0.366	1.692
	(NWF-CLS) Nonsense Word Fluency – CLS EOY	54.90	145	23.069		
Pair 4	(NWF-WRC) Nonsense Word Fluency – WRC BOY	2.63	145	4.126	0.257	1.497
	(NWF-WRC) Nonsense Word Fluency – WRC EOY	15.34	145	8.556		
Pair 5	(WRF) Word Reading Fluency WRC BOY	5.49	117	7.230	0.761	1.674
	(WRF) Word Reading Fluency WRC EOY	19.94	117	12.757		
Pair 6	(ORF-ACCU) Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy BOY	30.06	125	28.943	0.497	1.646
	(ORF-ACCU) Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy EOY	76.16	125	26.738		
Pair 7	(ORF-FLU) Oral Reading Fluency-Fluency BOY	9.31	97	13.224	0.704	1.539
	(ORF-FLU) Oral Reading Fluency-Fluency EOY	42.59	97	28.780		

Pair 8	(Maze) Basic Comprehension BOY	1.06	39	1.825	-0.005	0.528
	(Maze) Basic Comprehension EOY	3.44	39	4.096		
Pair 9	Oral Language BOY	16.12	106	3.961	0.556	0.533
	Oral Language EOY	17.93	106	3.047		
Pair 10	Vocabulary BOY	17.54	101	4.134	0.534	0.279
	Vocabulary EOY	18.89	101	5.546		
Pair 11	Composite Score BOY	308.92	117	12.649	0.815	6.882
	Composite Score EOY	426.64	117	25.757		

First-Grade Results. The average scores for first-grade students at the beginning of the year fell in the "at risk" level for the components of LNF, PSF, NWF-CLS, WRF, ORF-ACCU, and the Composite score. They were at the "some risk" level for the components of NWF-WRC and ORF-FLU. At the end of the year, they were at the "some risk" level for the components of LNF, PSF, NWF-CLS, WRF, ORF-FLU, and the Composite score. The ORF-ACCU component appears in the "at risk" level, and NWF-WRC is at the "minimal risk" level. Thus, toward the end of the year, there was an improvement in all components except for Oral Reading Fluency-Accuracy (ORF-ACCU) and Oral Reading Fluency-Fluency (ORF-FLU).

Table 13

1st-grade Statistics

		Mean	**N**	**SD**
Pair 1	(LNF) Letter Naming Fluency Score_BOY	23.40	73	13.376
	(LNF) Letter Naming Fluency Score_EOY	56.34	73	15.843
Pair 2	(PSF) Phonemic Segmentation Fluency Score_BOY	14.69	83	14.710
	(PSF) Phonemic Segmentation Fluency Score_EOY	36.95	83	17.740
Pair 3	(NWF-CLS) Nonsense Word Fluency CLS Score_BOY	13.48	86	10.822
	(NWF-CLS) Nonsense Word Fluency - CLS Score_EOY	54.19	86	18.058
Pair 4	(NWF-WRC) Nonsense Word Fluency WRC Score BOY	1.09	86	2.151
	(NWF-WRC) Nonsense Word Fluency - WRC Score_EOY	15.13	86	7.829
Pair 5	(WRF) Word Reading Fluency WRC Score_BOY	4.64	76	6.070

	(WRF) Word Reading Fluency - WRC Score_ EOY	19.28	76	12.660
Pair 6	(ORF-ACCU) Oral Reading Fluency - Accuracy Score_BOY	22.41	66	26.220
	(ORF_ACCU) Oral Reading Fluency - Accuracy Score_EOY	77.65	66	24.797
Pair 7	(ORF-FLU) Oral Reading Fluency - Fluency Score_BOY	5.55	56	8.899
	(ORF-FLU) Oral Reading Fluency - Fluency Score_EOY	37.66	56	25.012
Pair 11	Composite Score_BOY	313.71	76	10.317
	Composite Score_EOY	435.70	76	22.763

Table 14 shows the number and percentages of ALP first-grade students scoring at the different levels of the DIBELS 8th Edition benchmark goals. Students who scored at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels for the *Letter Name Fluency* component changed from 69 (90.8%) at the BOY to 41 (54.7%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 7 (9.2%) at the BOY to 34 (45.3%) by the EOY. As for the *Phonemic Segmentation Fluency* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 76 (81.7%) at the BOY to 50 (58.8%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 17 (18.3%) at the BOY to 30 (35.3%) by the EOY. This is one of the few components in which some students (5 = 5.9%) scored at the "negligible risk" level by the EOY. For the *Nonsense Word Fluency CLS – Correct Letter Sounds* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 88 (94.7%) at the BOY to 50 (56.8%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 5 (5.4%) at the BOY to 33 (37.5%) by the EOY. Five students (5.7%) scored at the "negligible risk" level by the EOY. For the *Nonsense Word Fluency – Words Recorded Correctly* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 82 (88.2%) at the BOY to 38 (43.1%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 11 (11.8%) at the BOY to 46 (52.3%) by the EOY. Four students (4.6%) scored at the "negligible

risk" level by the EOY. For the *Word Reading Fluency* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 83 (89.2%) at the BOY to 53 (68%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 9 (9.7%) at the BOY to 24 (30.8%) by the EOY. One student (1.1%) at the BOY and one student (1.3%) by the EOY scored at the "negligible risk" level. Regarding the *Oral Reading Fluency – Words Correct* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 44 (78.6%) at the BOY to 52 (66.7%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 11 (19.6%) at the BOY to 19 (24.4%) by the EOY. One student (1.8%) at the BOY and seven students (9%) by the EOY scored at the "negligible risk" level. For the *Oral Reading Fluency – Accuracy* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 67 (91.8%) at the BOY to 60 (68.2%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 6 (8.2%) at the BOY to 28 (31.8%) by the EOY. On the *Composite* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 73 (96%) at the BOY to 48 (61.5%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 3 (3.9%) at the BOY to 28 (35.9%) by the EOY. Two students (2.6%) scored at the "negligible risk" level by the EOY.

Table 14

ALP first-grade students' scores (2021-2022) based on the DIBELS 8th Edition benchmark goals

	LNF-BOY		**LNF-EOY**		**PSF-BOY**		**PSF-EOY**		**NWFCLS-BOY**		**NWFCLS-EOY**	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1 (at risk)	51	67.1	26	34.7	65	69.9	40	47.0	74	79.6	28	31.8
2 (some risk)	18	23.7	15	20.0	11	11.8	10	11.8	14	15.1	22	25.0
3 (minimal risk)	7	9.2	34	45.3	17	18.3	30	35.3	5	5.4	33	37.5
4 (negligible risk)							5	5.9			5	5.7
Total	76	100	75	100	93	100	85	100	93	100	88	100

	NWFWRC-BOY		NWFWRC-EOY		WRF-BOY		WRF-EOY		ORFFLU-BOY		ORFFLU-EOY	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1 (at risk)	65	69.9	23	26.1	71	76.3	35	44.9	35	62.5	39	50.0
2 (some risk)	17	18.3	15	17.0	12	12.9	18	23.1	9	16.1	13	16.7
3 (minimal risk)	11	11.8	46	52.3	9	9.7	24	30.8	11	19.6	19	24.4
4 (negligible risk)			4	4.6	1	1.1	1	1.3	1	1.8	7	9.0
Total	93	100	88	100	93	100	78	100	56	100	78	100

	ORFACCU-BOY		ORFACCU-EOY		Composite-BOY		Composite-EOY	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1 (at risk)	57	78.1	46	52.3	51	67.1	31	39.7
2 (some risk)	10	13.7	14	15.9	22	28.9	17	21.8
3 (minimal risk)	6	8.2	28	31.8	3	3.9	28	35.9
4 (negligible risk)							2	2.6
Total	73	100	88	100	76	100	78	100

The crosstabulations in the appendix B show the following results for first graders: Of all the children that started at level 1 (at risk) for the LNF component at the BOY, 22% became level 2 (some risk), and 36% became level 3 (minimal risk) by the EOY. For this same component (LNF), of all the children that started at level 2, **70.6%** moved up to level 3 by the EOY. Of those that started at level 1 at the BOY for the PSF component, 24.6% became level 3 and 7.0% level 4 (negligible risk) by the EOY. For students that started at level 1 for the NWFCLS component at the BOY, 31.9% became level 3 and 5.8% level 4 by the EOY. For students that started at level 1 for the NWFWRC component at the BOY, 40% became level 3 and 5.0% level 4 by the EOY. For students that started at level 1 for the WRF component at the BOY, 16.4% became level 3 by the EOY. For students that started at level 1 for the ORFFLU component at the BOY, 14.3% became level 3 and 11.4% level 4 by the EOY. For students that started at level 1 for the ORFACCU component at the BOY, 26% became level 3 by the EOY.

For students that scored at level 1 for the Composite component at the BOY, 21.6% scored at level 3 by the EOY.

Second-Grade Results. Based on the DIBELS 8th Edition benchmark goals and the means in Table 15, second-grade students were at the beginning of the year in the "at risk" level for all the reading components, including the Composite score. For the EOY, all the components remain in the "at risk" level except for the component of NWF-CLS, which is in the "some risk" level. Thus, toward the end of the year, there is no improvement except for the Nonsense Word Fluency – Correct Letter Sounds component.

Table 15

Second-grade Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pair 3	(NWF-CLS) Nonsense Word Fluency CLS Score_BOY	20.67	46	12.446
	(NWF-CLS) Nonsense Word Fluency - CLS Score_EOY	54.65	46	22.805
Pair 4	(NWF-WRC) Nonsense Word Fluency WRC Score BOY	3.76	46	4.062
	(NWF-WRC) Nonsense Word Fluency - WRC Score_EOY	15.09	46	8.011
Pair 5	(WRF) Word Reading Fluency WRC Score_BOY	5.11	35	6.471
	(WRF) Word Reading Fluency - WRC Score_ EOY	20.23	35	12.937
Pair 6	(ORF-ACCU) Oral Reading Fluency - Accuracy Score_BOY	36.41	46	28.559
	(ORF-ACCU) Oral Reading Fluency - Accuracy Score_EOY	72.28	46	27.427
Pair 7	(ORF-FLU) Oral Reading Fluency - Fluency Score_BOY	11.29	35	12.881
	(ORF-FLU) Oral Reading Fluency - Fluency Score_EOY	45.34	35	31.227
Pair 8	(Maze) Basic Comprehension Score_BOY	0.76	33	1.312
	(Maze) Basic Comprehension Score_EOY	3.82	33	4.157
Pair 11	Composite Score_BOY	300.17	35	10.498
	Composite Score_EOY	411.11	35	22.289

Table 16 shows the number and percentages of ALP second-grade students scoring at the different levels of the DIBELS 8th Edition benchmark goals. Students who scored at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels for the *Nonsense Word Fluency – Correct Letter Sounds* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 52 (98.1%) at the BOY to 40 (85.1%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 1 (1.9%) at the BOY to 7 (14.9%) by the EOY. For the *Nonsense Word Fluency – Words Recorded Correctly* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 52 (98.1%) at the BOY to 38 (80.8%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 1 (1.9%) at the BOY to 8 (17%) by the EOY. One student (2.1%) scored at the "negligible risk" level by the EOY. For the *Word Reading Fluency* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 52 (98.1%) at the BOY to 33 (91.7%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 1 (1.9%) at the BOY to 3 (8.3%) by the EOY. Regarding the *Oral Reading Fluency – Words Correct* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 34 (94.4%) at the BOY to 32 (88.9%) by the EOY. Students at the "minimal risk" changed from 2 (5.6%) at the BOY to 4 (11.1%) by the EOY. For the *Oral Reading Fluency – Accuracy* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 53 (100%) at the BOY to 35 (74.5%) by the EOY. Twelve students (25.5%) scored at the "minimal risk" by the EOY. For the *Maze* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 34 (100%) at the BOY to 31 (91.2%) by the EOY. Three students (8.8%) scored at the "minimal risk" by the EOY. On the *Composite* component, the number of students at the "at risk" and "some risk" levels changed from 36 (100%) at the BOY to 29 (80.5%) by the EOY. Seven students (19.4%) scored at the "minimal risk" by the EOY.

Table 16

ALP Second-grade students' scores (2021-2022) based on the DIBELS 8th Edition benchmark goals

	NWFCLS-BOY		NWFCLS-EOY		NWFWRC-BOY		NWFWRC-EOY		WRF-BOY		WRF-EOY	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1 (at risk)	52	98.1	27	57.4	48	90.6	30	63.8	50	94.3	27	75.0
2 (some risk)			13	27.7	4	7.5	8	17.0	2	3.8	6	16.7
3 (minimal risk)	1	1.9	7	14.9	1	1.9	8	17.0	1	1.9	3	8.3
4 (negligible risk)							1	2.1				
Total	53	100	47	100	53	100	47	100	53	100	36	100

	ORFFLU-BOY		ORFFLU-EOY		ORFACCU-BOY		ORFACCU-EOY		Maze-BOY		Maze-EOY	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1 (at risk)	34	94.4	28	77.8	51	96.2	31	66.0	29	85.3	29	85.3
2 (some risk)			4	11.1	2	3,8	4	8.5	5	14.7	2	5.9
3 (minimal risk)	2	5.6	4	11.1			12	25.5			3	8.8
4 (negligible risk)												
Total	36	100	36	100	53	100	47	100	34	100	34	100

	Composite-BOY		Composite-EOY	
	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	%
1 (at risk)	31	86.1	25	69.4
2 (some risk)	5	13.9	4	11.1
3 (minimal risk)			7	19.4
4 (negligible risk)				
Total	36	100	36	100

The crosstabulations in the appendix C show the following results for second graders: Of all the children that started at level 1 for the NWFCLS component at the BOY, 13.3% became level 3 by the EOY. Of those that started at level 1 for the NWFWRC component at the BOY,

11.9% became level 3 and 2.4% level 4 by the EOY. For students that started at level 1 for the WRF component at the BOY, 3.0% became level 3 by the EOY. For students that started at level 1 for the ORFFLU component at the BOY, 12.1% became level 3 by the EOY. For students that started at level 1 for the ORFACCU component at the BOY, 22.7% became level 3 by the EOY. For students that started at level 1 for the Maze component at the BOY, 7.1% became level 3 by the EOY. For students that scored at level 1 for the Composite component at the BOY, 6.7% scored at level 3 by the EOY.

Qualitative Measures

Person-to-Person Interviews

The purpose of the interview was to deepen our understanding of the effectiveness of the tutoring program implemented at the Augustine Literacy Project - Charlotte. As we wanted to expand on the tutoring-related information obtained from the survey, one of the last questions asked tutors if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

The CEME research team designed the interview in a semi-structured format, which allowed us to combine the structure and flexibility we needed. Flexibility can be achieved by wording each question or how the entire interview has more or less structured questions (Merriam, 2001). There were eight pre-determined questions and about four follow-up questions. Furthermore, Merriam (2001) adds that in this type of interview, parts of the interview are guided by a list of issues to be explored, which is how the ALP tutor interview was carried out. Preliminary questions and prompts were predetermined, but they were not rigid, and some questions were even adjusted as we received feedback from reviewers. Topics explored included tutors' perceptions of the training program, instructional resources, challenges and opportunities

tutors find during the tutoring process, students' challenges, and strengths and weaknesses of the tutoring program, among others.

Participants

Out of the 133 ALP tutors who completed the survey, 93 (70%) accepted the invitation to participate in the follow-up interview. However, upon following the selection criteria, only 12 tutors were selected.

Regarding the 12 tutors' demographic information, as can be observed in Table 11, 75% of the tutors are 62 years old or older, 17% are between 29 and 39, and 8% are between 18 and 28 years old; 83% are female, and 17% male tutors; 50% hold a master's degree, 25% a bachelor's degree, 17% a doctorate, and 8% an associate degree; 58% of the tutors are retired, and 42% are employed full-time; 42% have 15 or more years of teaching or tutoring experience before joining ALP, 25% have between 1 and 2 years, 17% between 7 and 10 years, 8% between 3 and 6, and 8% between 11 and 14 years; 50% of the tutors have between one and two years of tutoring experience with ALP, 25% have between 3 and 6, 17% between 11 and 14 years, and 8% between 7 and 10 years; 92% of the tutors are in-person, and 8% are both in-person and virtual tutors.

Table 17

Tutor Demographic information

	Age	**Gender**	**Highest degree**	**Employment status**	**Teaching/ tutoring years before**	**Tutoring years after**	**instruction Mode**
P1	62+ years old	Female	Master's degree	Retired	15+ years	1 - 2 years	In-Person
P2	62+ years old	Female	Master's degree	Employed full-time	15+ years	3 - 6 years	In-Person
P3	62+ years old	Female	Doctorate	Retired	15+ years	7 - 10 years	In-Person

P4	62+ years old	Female	Bachelor's degree	Retired	1 - 2 years	11 - 14 years	In-Person
P5	62+ years old	Male	Doctorate	Retired	7 - 10 years	3 - 6 years	In-Person
P6	62+ years old	Female	Bachelor's degree	Retired	15+ years	11 - 14 years	In-Person
P7	18 - 28 years old	Female	Associate degree	Employed full-time	1 - 2 years	1 - 2 years	In-Person
P8	29 - 39 years old	Male	Master's degree	Employed full-time	3 - 6 years	1 - 2 years	In-Person
P9	62+ years old	Female	Master's degree	Retired	15+ years	3 - 6 years	Both
P10	62+ years old	Female	Bachelor's degree	Employed part-time	1 - 2 years	1 - 2 years	In-Person
P11	62+ years old	Female	Master's degree	Retired	7 - 10 years	1 - 2 years	In-Person
P12	29 - 39 years old	Female	Master's degree	Employed full-time	11 - 14 years	1 - 2 years	In-Person

Procedures

The criteria for selecting the tutors to participate in the interview were their years of teaching or tutoring experience before joining ALP and their years of tutoring experience with ALP. The years of teaching or tutoring experience ranged in the survey between 1-2, 3-6, 7-10, 11-14, and 15 and higher. Once the dataset was cleaned, we found that only 60 tutors had provided complete information, including their email, to agree on the day and time for the interview and to sign the consent form. As a sampling plan, the research team classified the tutors with 1-2 years of teaching or tutoring experience as "low" and those with 3 or more years as "high." Thus, four categories emerged: a) Low/Low: Tutors with 1 to 2 years of teaching or tutoring experience before and after joining ALP; b) Low/High: Tutors with 1 to 2 years of teaching or tutoring experience before joining ALP and more than 3 years with ALP; c) High/Low: Tutors with more than 3 years of teaching or tutoring experience before joining ALP and 1 to 2 years after joining ALP; d) High/High: Tutors with more than 3 years of teaching or tutoring experience before and after joining ALP. We invited tutors from each category in a

number representing the population distribution. Finally, twelve tutors (a=2, b=4, c= 1, d= 5) signed the consent form and were scheduled for interviews. An interview protocol was followed (Appendix D). The interviews were conducted from July 11 to 20, 2022 using an online meeting platform. Interviews lasted between 25 and 35 minutes and were recorded. Interviews were transcribed using professional applications and edited once the transcribed interviews were received. The interviews were uploaded to Qualitative software ATLAS.ti 8 and analyzed based on key words and phrases.

Interview Results

A Constant Comparative Method allows qualitative researchers to establish similarities and differences between different data segments, categorize the data based on their similarities, and identify patterns that can help respond to research questions or build grounded theory (Merriam, 2009). Coding as a process of organizing and labeling data is fundamental in the Constant Comparison Method (Cohen et al., 2007). Furthermore, Ravitch and Carl (2021) suggest that coding allows for identifying data patterns and relationships and forming common themes to produce units of analysis.

Like many qualitative coding/analysis methods, the constant comparative method is inductive, iterative, concept-building, and comparative (Merriam, 2009), making it a very effective and strategic method of data analysis. Thus, using the constant comparison method, moving from primary-cycle coding to secondary-cycle coding, as Tracy (2013) proposed, we defined six themes (Figure 1) that respond directly to the evaluation questions. These are the themes:

- The literacy instructional process
- Training program and activities

- Opportunities and challenges for tutors
- Opportunities and challenges for students
- ALP weaknesses and areas of improvement
- ALP strengths and impact

The resulting number of codes was 41, and quotations (comments made by tutors) were 499. Quotations were concurrently labeled with a word or phrase (codes) that described a semantic unit of analysis.

Figure 1

Emerging Themes and Codes

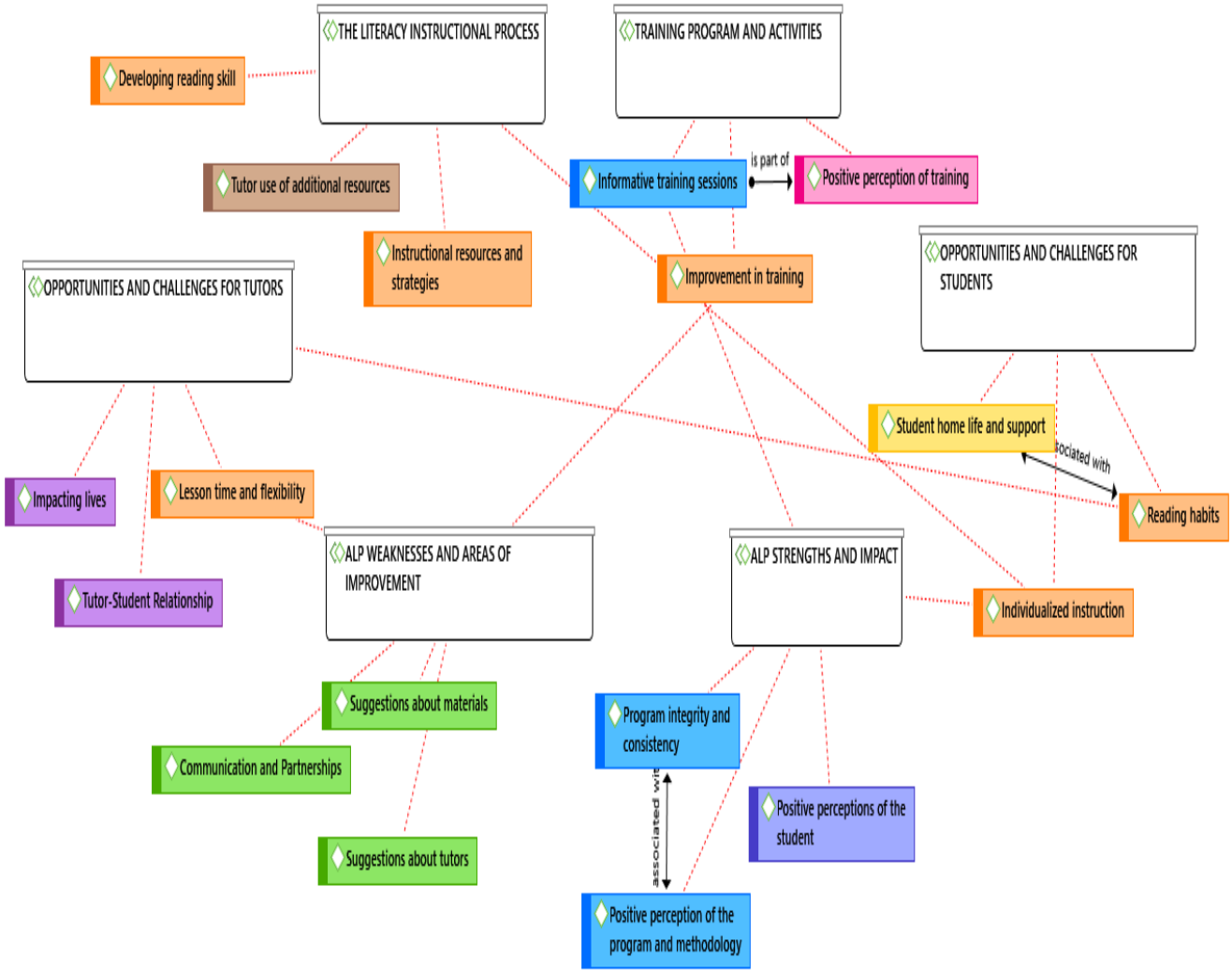


Table 18 shows how the six themes were analyzed regarding the research questions. Some themes may indicate a direct response to the research question, while others may respond indirectly, as explained in the findings section.

Table 18

Evaluation Questions and Themes

Research Questions	Themes
RQ1: How does ALP-Charlotte prepare and support Augustine tutors and students for the literacy instructional process?	• Training program and activities • The literacy instructional process
RQ2: What challenges or opportunities do Augustine tutors and students experience during the tutoring process?	• Opportunities and challenges for tutors • Opportunities and challenges for students
RQ3: What major strengths, weaknesses, and growth areas for ALP-Charlotte can be identified?	• ALP strengths and impact • ALP weaknesses and growth areas

To support the data analysis and interpretations, relationships between codes were also established using the code co-occurrence function in ATLAS TI, as shown in Table 19. The co-occurrence was indicated for those codes having an important correlation of 3 or higher. As the table shows, some of the highest correlations were between tutor-student relationships and Communications and Relationships (29); Tutor commitments and expectations and impacting lives (10); Instructional resources and strategies and positive perception of the program and methodology (8); and improvement in training and training program challenges (8). That is, the comments made by tutors connected themes through a relationship of cause, consequence, effect, association, etc. For example, as figure 2 shows, the codes “Reading habits” and “Student attendance problems” are associated with the code “Student home life and support.”

Figure 2

Codes Associations

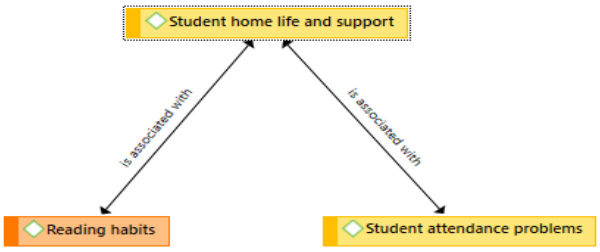


Table 19

Code Co-occurrence

CODES	Improvement in training Gr=37	Instructional resources and strategies Gr=72	Lesson planning and delivery Gr=40	Positive perception of training Gr=42	Program's structure Gr=18	Student home life and support Gr=29	Suggestions about site coordinators Gr=6	Tutor commitment and expectations Gr=29	Tutor use of additional resources Gr=15	Tutor - Student Relationship Gr=28
Communications and relationships Gr=43	0	5	2	0	1	3	0	4	3	29
Developing reading skill Gr=29	0	6	0	0	1	3	0	2	3	2
Impacting lives Gr=40	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	10	0	5
Positive perception of the program and methodology Gr=60	2	8	4	7	7	0	0	3	0	1
Reading habits Gr=10	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	1	1	0
Student learning progress and support Gr=42	0	5	1	0	1	2	0	5	3	6
Suggestions about tutors Gr=52	7	5	0	7	3	2	4	3	2	2
The literacy approach and curriculum Gr=21	1	6	2	1	4	0	0	1	1	0
Training program challenges Gr=29	8	3	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tutor background and readiness Gr=57	2	4	1	5	0	0	0	5	0	2

RQ1: How does ALP-Charlotte prepare and support Augustine tutors and students for the literacy instructional process?

Two themes that may respond to this question emerged from the thematic analysis: *The training program and activities* and *the literacy instructional process*.

Training program and activities

Tutors reported that ALP-Charlotte prepares them for the tutoring process through the formal training sessions at the beginning of their tutoring process, training events such as the Lunch Bunch, and the continuous support offered by site coordinators and coaches. Regarding the strengths of the training program, tutors used different positive adjectives to describe the training program in general and the training team in particular. The training team was described as professional, helpful, and excellent. Likewise, the training program was regarded as informative, needed, important, wonderful, essential, practical, empowering, and more sophisticated. The Lunch Bunch and site coordinators were highlighted as important contributors to the training program's success. The following are comments made by tutors regarding the training program's strengths. Below are some of the 44 comments made by tutors in this regard:

> *"I think our training does an excellent job in in preparing me to go on this new journey." (3:11)*
>
> *"The way we're trained to teach the student makes it a very effective way of learning, I think because there's no, you can't go wrong in tutoring. You can't say like, I don't know what to do for the lesson plan. I don't know what step you know, what's the next step? I don't know. You know, it's very, the manual, it's the training manual. And the training that we receive is very, very extensive." (16:5)*
>
> *"The training, the training is way better than anything I've seen in any nonprofit anywhere. Yeah, it's really top notch. Yeah, yeah. Any you know if you're struggling or any questions you have they they are right there to help you." (22:16)*

"Training, training is really number one." (22:39)

"So I think our training team did a good job in breaking things down, all the way down to the phonemic awareness and really making sure that we are able to understand the concepts and teach them to the students. I think they did a great job." (3:13)

Tutors recognize the importance of the training program for successful tutoring, especially considering that having previous teaching or tutoring experience is not required to be an ALP tutor. This can be evidenced in more than 40 expressions of recognition and appreciation for the training program provided by tutors in the interviews.

The literacy instructional process

Three sub-categories emerged in this theme: *Instructional resources* (73), *the literacy approach and curriculum* (52), *and lesson plan and delivery*.

Instructional Resources and strategies. Didactic and human resources mentioned by the tutors as fundamental in the program's success are the Wilson materials, online tools, websites, library books, site coordinators, and literacy facilitators. Tutors reported that they frequently use additional resources and provide students with books for them to read at home. Most of the instructional activities mentioned are part of the activities suggested by the institutional approach, such as skywriting, songs, dances, and games.

Many tutors agree that the materials have proven successful, and some disagree. One of the later sections will provide suggestions in terms of the materials. Below are some of the comments made by the tutors:

"They prepare you to go out to be successful. So you don't feel like Oh, what am I going to do next? What's the next thing to do? And you know, the lesson plan is so precise and steps, the steps are just so clear. And the materials are so of such great quantity, your actual materials that you're using, you feel confident that you are making an imprint on that student in that 45 minute time period that you have him or her." (16:15)

> *"Um, and I've developed a library of my own that I use. And I also give gifts of books to the students. Um, a lot of them don't have books at home and, uh, if I see that they really like a book that I've read to them, um, I'll give it to them, you know, before a holiday or something." (1:27)*

> *"They can't give you any more more information. It's so much information as it is I don't I don't know, whoever the person that designed the program. The training, program itself materials has thought of everything I could see nothing missing. And again, as I said, I am a reading teacher. So this is more material than I have learned, have had available to me in my in my tenure of teaching. It's a new material that I didn't know." (16:20)*

The Literacy Approach and Curriculum. Tutors view the Orton-Gillingham Approach as an effective way to teach Augustine children to read. They value that it is research-based, well-structured, and has proven successful. Tutors believe phonics and phonological awareness are necessary prerequisite skills for developing reading proficiency. They add that one-on-one interaction strengthens the literacy process.

> *"The methodology, uh, I think I said it before, uh, the phonics, the, uh, the Orton Gillingham method. I believe in so strongly I, after, after these years, I have seen it work." (1:20)*

> *"I think that I really do believe in Orton Gillingham. That the multi-sensory approach to reading and learning and the the structure of our scope and sequence like that's research base, and has been like proven time and time again, to be really effective for students across the board as like a, you know, the, the building blocks to learning how to read." (12:3)*

Lesson Planning and Delivery. Several tutors reported that lesson planning was challenging at the beginning of their tutoring with ALP due to the number of instructional materials. However, as they started planning lesson after lesson, the process became more manageable. Some tutors regard the tutoring lessons as fast-paced, which demands both the tutor and the student to stay focused. Others think that even though the lesson is well structured, they

still have the freedom to incorporate other instructional elements or get off the topic on something that may be relevant to the interaction.

> *"And then it's a very fast-paced class because we only have a limited amount of time. So then you get a job of keeping us on pace and making sure that we got through all the modules so that we would be prepared" (3:14)*
>
> *"With all the freedom that they give you. You can do it however you want. But you've got to do these steps. It makes it a very fast-paced class. So it goes very quickly from one thing to the next. So a child doesn't have time to tune out really easy and hanging on by their fingernails as we zip along through this thing." (17:16)*

RQ2: What challenges or opportunities do Augustine tutors and students experience during the tutoring process?

Opportunities and Challenges for Tutors

The opportunities reported by the tutors are related to their desire to impact their students' lives and the relationships they can build with the student, families, teachers, and other tutors. Thus, 39 comments regarding *Establishing Relationships* were made and 40 for *Impacting lives*. The challenges expressed by the tutors were related to *teaching a lesson in allotted time* (20), *students' lack of reading habits* (10), and *students' behavior issues* (7). *Tutors' teaching background* (57) can be classified as an opportunity or challenge for tutors.

Establishing Relationships. Tutors view the connection and mentorship they build with students as quite beneficial as tutors become a person students can trust. Some tutors mentioned how excited students felt when they met. Another tutor pointed out that for a kid having a tutor who would physically look like him was connecting and encouraging. Tutors made the following comments in this regard:

> *"Definitely the relationship between the tutor and the student. You know, I show up twice a week for my students, and he's always very excited to see me. And that's been my that's*

been the way it's always been. And I think just having that person in a student's life is very important for them." (12:3)

"I think. One of the reasons why I joined ALP was because the students in which they serve look like me… So I'm consistently thinking about, you know, how, how does the student feel? Or what, what is the messaging that comes from the fact that he doesn't see any one or she doesn't see anyone that looks like, you know." (15:23)

Tutors also regard relationships with other participants, such as the student's teachers, families, and other tutors valuable and empowering to students. Yet, they noted that communication with these participants was still lacking in many cases. Likewise, new tutors value the interaction with more experienced tutors.

"But I think if the student knows that, the tutor is, is communicating with the teacher. That's very empowering, empowering for the student. Because they know that people are working to help them. So definitely the relational part of it." (12:5)

"I would I think that there should be a huge initiative to like build community within tutors, because when tutors like they are a part of something or a part of a movement or a part of something larger, or they can develop relationships, they're more likely to stick with it… That will help us with retention and attrition, right?" (14:41)

"That's hard because there's no, there's no interaction between the tutor and the family at all." (22:28)

Impacting Lives. There is a consensus among tutors in their desire to impact the lives of children ALP serves. Tutors decided to tutor for ALP because they enjoy working with children, want to help children learn to read as they were helped when they were kids, like to help others, and believe that developing reading proficiency will change children's lives. The following comments confirm these statements:

"Someone helped me learn to read that that tutor when I was younger, someone took the time to show me, you know, different things and expose me to different things. So I want to do that for somebody else as well." (15:38)

"Um, and I believe so strongly that it can change a student's life if that student can learn to read."(1:9)

"Oh, God, I could not do it. This is like the fun part. You know, like, I love being around kids. I just like, that's, that's what I did for 11 years before I came here. So like, that connects me with what I you know, like what I've always done. So I like it, because I like working with kids. And I know, I'm good at it. And I like doing it." (14:39)

Teaching the Lesson within the allotted time. Some tutors find the 45 minutes assigned for the lesson, which in some cases is reduced to 40 or 30 minutes, very short to cover all the instructional steps. The tutors also noted that students sometimes want to talk about something important in their lives, and tutors know that even though these interactions build connection, they don't want to run out of time.

"So something comes up in the lesson and the child wants to talk, you know, wants to tell you something about their home life or their, you know, their birthday or just something, and you lose that time. It's only two minutes for some of these, some of these steps and you're thinking to yourself, oh gosh, I'll never get through." (1:40)

"That is one of the biggest challenges is being able to get through the lesson in 45 minutes. That is really hard, and I have experience with content. So I can sort of make some changes as on the fly to try to address that but that is very challenging. And in One of my tutoring situations I had an hour, which made a huge difference. That extra 15 minutes made a lot of difference in terms of getting through the lesson." (2:38)

Students' Lack of reading habits. Tutors are concerned about the support students can have at home to practice reading or continue the literacy work done at ALP. Since there is not much communication with parents, they wonder what activities students engage in at home to improve their reading skills.

"So I would say that the main challenge is having the student get enough outside reading. To build on the skills you're providing." (1:40)

"I understand people are busy at home, they have other children, they have jobs, they they can't always stop and do those necessary tasks. But I think you know, that's, that makes it very hard for the beginning reader to grow. To not get that practice at home with somebody that can help them with words they don't quite get because there are that you know, I will say that it's one challenge." (21:23)

Student Behavior Issues. Student Behavior issues mentioned by the tutors had to do with student attention, attendance, and hyperactivity on particular days. It becomes a challenge for tutors and a threat to the effectiveness of the lesson when students cannot sit and attend the lesson as expected.

"The kid is just wired for sound and he's not focused and you know, you go go through the drill of, why don't you stand up and give me 10 Jumping jacks and run around the table and get rid of the nervous energy. Okay, now, you know, let's let's go back to the lesson and they're still not focused or they're falling asleep. So, then you shift gears." (18:23)

"The day, for example, that we were being reviewed, he was just a mess. I mean, I think he fell off his chair that I mean it sincerely, and he just was so unhappy. And then there were days that he was just flying through the work." (20:22)

Tutor teaching background. Tutors view their previous background in education as an advantage to their adaptation to the ALP-Charlotte's literacy instructional methodology. However, tutors also see that the lack of educational background is effectively managed by the ALP training program, making tutors without previous teaching experience succeed in their tutoring experience at ALP. Thus, tutors view the lack of education background as an opportunity or challenge.

> *"I'm really impressed by the people that come to tutoring, with no background in education at all, we have a lot of bankers and you know, people that don't have, and so to feel comfortable with that, you know, it takes a lot. And it's just like absorbing all the knowledge is, is a big part too." (22:10)*

> *"It was awesome to see people who had no idea really what it took to teach, say, I'm feeling more empowered now, because of the fact that I'm able to teach in a way in a roundabout way. And I have never had an opportunity for it before. And now I'm presented with it in a way that will give me the tools I need to succeed." (15:19)*

Other challenges, less frequently commented, mentioned by tutors have to do with working with students who may have learning difficulties, tutoring remotely during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and paying for the training program.

Opportunities and Challenges for Students

Opportunities for students during their tutoring experience at ALP can be synthesized into two main themes: Students' *Access to Individualized Instruction* (17) and, consequently, their *Learning Gains* (33). Students' challenges are mainly related to their *Background knowledge and skills* (6) and *Basic needs* (34).

Access to Individualized Instruction. Tutors believe that one-on-one instruction allows children to receive the attention and help they need in particular areas. Tutors know that each student has different needs, so individualized attention helps students move forward. The individual interaction also allows students to build a stronger relationship with their tutor. In this regard, the tutors commented:

> *"Because each child is different. Each child has a different area that they need help with. And so you've got to bring in different ways of addressing that needs, you know, If they're having trouble blending three sounds together, then there are various ways that you can teach.... And there are a lot of ways of teaching different things in different addressing*

different problem areas just according to what the child needs and what they respond to." (12:12)

"I think working with students, because every student is different. And there are a lot of overlap, overlapping problems, maybe that a student has not just, you know, their reading difficulties, but their handwriting and their language, and maybe attention or different things. So that's, that's all something else, you every time you get a new student, you have to figure out what your what your student needs." (22:21)

Individualized instruction, one-on-one interaction, or customized instruction are some terms used interchangeably and repeatedly by tutors at different moments in the interview to highlight a strength of ALP-Charlotte.

Learning Gains. Even though it is only two hours of tutoring a week, as stated by one of the tutors, student learning gains are evident. Tutors either perceive the learning gains or receive the report from the student's teacher. Some tutors relate these gains to the effective literacy approach implemented at ALP-Charlotte.

"Oh, he made a lot of progress. His teacher said from March 9, that I became his tutor to the last day that I tutor, she gave me a printout of what she actually took from some printouts of of his improvement, and his literacy skills." (16:31)

"They were getting close to two years accomplishment for one year of school. And that's just in the two times a week tutoring." (17:14)

"The strong points separately, that phonological awareness that that basic methodology that we've talked about throughout I think that is absolutely foundational for reading and it's just so evident, like I said, with my students, she really, you know, picked up and got it and ran with it." (21:28)

Some tutors suggested that staying with a student for more than a year will create more consistent results. Some other tutors claimed that scores on the assessment do not seem to reflect their gains and that spelling is one of the main challenges for Augustine students.

Background knowledge and skills. Tutors report the lack of foundational literacy skills and the limited proficiency in English as major challenges for students to advance in their literacy process. Because of their limited language proficiency in English, many children have little experience reading in English, and the language they use at home is not English, so they do not have the opportunity for reinforcement.

> *"But my, the student, I've had two students who are non in non-native English speakers. And clearly, that's hard, because they just haven't had the depth and breadth of English experiences with reading in English, and beginning to read in English that a native a native English speaker would have." (2:28)*

> *"But the children actually are already have been, have been noticed that they are behind in every hidden skills. So we come in to them knowing that as a tutor, you know that you have to do some best an additional giving, you have to give to try to have them feel comfortable and wanting to learn with you." (16:21)*

Basic Needs. Tutors believe that there are some factors relating to home stability that affect students' learning process. They seem concerned about what happens to students at home regarding food insecurity, lack of sleep, basic provisions, and a strong support system or lack thereof. The tutors reported:

> *"A lot of these children, if they're not homeless, they don't have things we take for granted like pajamas in their own bedroom. And the kids in many cases are showing up hungry, or without enough sleep, because the uncle was over watching the Panthers great game. So they don't always have a lot of those things that that make for a good learning experience." (18:16)*

> *"And if you are not able to feed your brain, then of course, you're not going to be ready to retain information, not going to be ready to go into the, you know, to the classroom ready to learn." (15:31)*

There is a consensus among tutors that students' unsatisfied basic needs threaten students' effective development of their literacy skills. So, whatever threatens students' reading proficiency progress constitutes a challenge for both the tutor and the student.

RQ3: What major strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement for ALP-Charlotte can be identified?

ALP Strengths and Impact

The Program Structure. One of the most repeated terms used by tutors in the interviews was "structure." ALP-Charlotte is viewed as a well-structured organization. When tutors talked about the structure, they mentioned the tutoring program in general and other elements, such as the training program, instructional materials, the O.G. Methodology, staff leadership, and lesson planning. Site coordinators were always brought up as part of that solid structure. Tutors used terms such as systematic, documented, research-based, consist, and integrity to amplify the structure connotation.

> *"Clearly, the structure of the program, the materials of the program, and one of the strengths that I've been really aware of, especially through the last couple of years, when the pandemic are the site coordinators, they're very important and very critical and really, really helpful" (2:17)*

> *"The leadership has been wonderful. The site coordinators are just great. The whole structure of the thing is just fantastic. So I have no criticism really." (17:21)*

> *"The training was wonderful, absolutely essential. They have reduced it in length, it used to be two weeks. And now it's one and I have a it just wouldn't be possible to teach out without the training. It's It's so different. It's so well non intuitive, in a way, really, really have to follow their scope and sequence. With all the freedom that they give you." (17:15)*

Tutor Commitment and Expectations. Tutors are committed to helping students learn to read and expect that they develop a love of reading. They reported that they had devoted extra time to tutoring their students and sometimes provided them with reading materials for home or vacation. Tutors also expressed interest in refining their tutoring skills through future training and interacting with more experienced tutors. Below are some of their comments about their commitments and expectations:

> *"I think one of the strengths is the commitment of the tutors. Um, the, the extreme commitment <laugh>, I mean, it's, uh, but it's so fulfilling and that's the other thing about it." (1:50)*
>
> *"Well, yes, I think just the fact that time I'll be, I think I'll be a better tutor next year than I am today, from just that your experience for the interaction with other experienced tutors in the LP tutor program, additional training that they provide, reviewing in greater attention paid to some of the materials that are available online, you know, will help me to be a better tutor." (16:9)*

Tutor-Student Relationship. As mentioned in the section about opportunities for tutors, the strong connection between tutors and students has been reported as a beneficial component in students' learning and growth. Building good relationships with students resorted to trusting, motivation, and successful mentorship.

> *"The strength, I would say, the ability to communicate that we're here to focus on the whole child and to build a relationship with that child, while also teaching them literacy skills are the foundational skills." (3:19)*
>
> *"We also build relationships between the tutors and the students where in some cases, those students don't have undivided one on one attention. And so a lot of students benefit from that connection that they are able to serve with, with their students and with their tutor." (3:3)*

> *"And then also, it allows our relationship to form like, you know, builds trust and mentorship around educate within education, which I think is important to, to kids, too." (14:3)*

Good relationships and communication have motivated tutors in some circumstances to go beyond the two-hour weekly tutoring requirement to help them advance in the process. Some tutors reported providing children with additional reading materials, tutoring them beyond the assigned hours, and even serving as their legal guardians for specific purposes.

Student Learning and Growth. As mentioned in the section about opportunities for tutors, the strong connection between tutors and students has been reported repeatedly as a beneficial component in students' learning and growth. Building good relationships with students has resorted in trust, motivation, and successful mentorship.

> *"So I just think ALP is the best thing for really good for all children. But for dyslexic children, it is life changing. And I truly have seen that with particularly the two children that I have worked with most intensely over a number of years." (17:4)*

> *"So I'm pretty sure you get growth out of every student and sometimes it's a little, but that little is really meaningful. And then sometimes it's, it's a lot." (22:34)*

> *"You can watch the student grow just with every lesson by utilizing tried and true measures so and like I said, maybe tutoring before and then after ALP I really did see a difference in being able to help a student."(21:3)*

Different testimonies of students who have shown learning progress were reported in the interviews, even if some students did not perform in the post-assessment or external standardized assessments as the tutor expected.

ALP Weaknesses and Areas of Improvement

Regarding the Training. The weaknesses suggested by the tutors were: the shortness of the training, the amount of content covered during the training, the need to have continuous

training, and the fee tutors must pay for the training program. Some tutors reported that the training had been shortened from two weeks to one week, and the amount of information to grasp could be overwhelming. They also noted that some retired tutors might not have enough income to pay for the training. Following are some of the comments made by the tutors in this regard:

> "*Well, on the other the flip side of that coin, I do worry about the training and the shortness of the training, the brevity of it now. Just feeling like maybe some tutors are not as prepared as they could be, particularly, you know, you don't have to have teaching experience." (12:!6)*
>
> *"I found the training to be a little overwhelming, especially if someone like myself, haven't been in academic situations for 40 years." (20:5)*
>
> *"I know, some in my circle are retired people. So they may not have a lot of discretionary income. So if, you know, I think that might be somewhat of a hindrance or will you know, that I'm gonna have to pay to do that to volunteer that might be a little roadblock for some." (21:35)*
>
> *"But they're not always like the most well informed. So they're more they make mistakes, because there's not continual training. And we definitely, I think that if we're going to cut the amount of training at the beginning, then there just need consistent support provided for tutors throughout their time." (14:10)*

One tutor mentioned the lack of interaction during past training but argued that it was perhaps due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another tutor commented that they had planned to have a meeting with the site coordinator to discuss aspects of the tutoring process, but it never happened. Another tutor suggested including topics such as dyslexia in the training program. The weaknesses suggested by tutors were fewer (one-third) than the strengths.

The suggestions most commonly made by tutors were related to improving the training structure, and suggestions included, making the training more consistent, offering the initial

training in alternative schedules or non-traditional hours, offering refresher courses, using technology, and making the tutor population more diverse. The comments in this regard were:

> *"There's plenty of resources for you even from the first day that you get there. And so I think, you know, the training is perfect and can only get better with the enhancement of technology." (15:7)*
>
> *"He was not reading when I started, uh, tutoring him that, that year, that school year he was in first grade. Um, and I just think that the, the training is good, but it needs to be continuing." (1:33)*
>
> *"Maybe you could sit down with a trained tutor, to have a refresher at that point. So when you're taking the child from basic phonetics to syllables, let's say, you know, you want you need a little help there." (20:10)*
>
> *"Um, I see that we don't have a ton of tutors who like the diversity in our tutor population doesn't really exist. And I'd love to see people in more of my age range become tutors. But we don't necessarily always cater to that because of our training class schedule." (3:25)*

A couple of tutors suggested focusing the lunch bunch on tangible skill sets for the tutoring process and making efforts to attract younger tutors. They appreciate the experience and knowledge of many ALP tutors but consider that bringing younger tutors can create a more diverse population. The tutors insisted on a refresher course and consistent training throughout the year.

Regarding the Instructional Materials. About 13 comments were concerned with the access to quality of materials and their alignment with the modules. Tutors reported that ALP provides them with plenty of resources, but they sometimes struggle to maximize their use. Some tutors also suggested updating the materials as they did not find some of the reading passages or sentences quite suitable to students' interests or backgrounds. The tutors reported:

> "*I think there's still there's aspects of it that can still be improved. There was a focus group recently with some of the tutors. And one of the things that things that became*

readily apparent was, we have a multitude of resources at hand, our website, reading material readers, and a lot of the tutors, myself included, are somewhat overwhelmed by the resources. And it would be helpful if the resources were, if not skinny down more tightly aligned with the various modules that we teach." (17:7)

"The materials, as great as they are, because that, that is a really good way to teach people how to read. They're just, they're, they're getting sort of outdated because they use words that fit the vowel pattern that the student is learning. So some of these words is the students don't have a background to understand what the sentences mean, because they've never heard these words." (22:45)

Tutors are aware that ALP instructional leaders are constantly looking for ways to improve their tutoring process; therefore, tutors are hopeful that ALP will continue to enhance the quality of their reading materials. Tutors are looking forward to the new learning management system ALP is building with the videos and other resources that may reinforce the literacy instructional process.

Regarding Tutors and Site Coordinators. Tutors reported suggestions (36) for different aspects related to the characteristics and roles of tutors and site coordinators. Suggestions were about hiring more site coordinators, as some of them have many tutors to support; formal training for site coordinators; enhancing tutor demographics in terms of race and age; offering tutors consistent support; having higher accountability of tutors and site coordinators; building new partnerships so that ALP can serve a larger student population; learning and understanding the Dibels exams better; offering refresher courses, perhaps with trained tutors; and coaching in small groups or one-on-one with tutors who may be struggling in the tutoring process. Below are some of the comments that support these suggestions:

"I know that some of the site coordinators have more than one school. They have, you know, know, uh, I've even seen up to three schools. And I just think that's very hard if they're going to be providing the kind of support that I think, um, new tutors and old tutors, I have gone to my site

coordinators with specific problems about a, a student I'm tutoring. And, uh, when they have so many schools to, to do this with, and I mean, I think my school has something like 14 or so tutors. So, I mean, if, if another school has another 14 that, I mean, that's a lot of people to support." (1:71)

"I would say that there's not a and that rule falls under what we are now calling the site coordinator role. Those people are the ones at the schools that are there to provide support. But that is a very vague job description. There's little to none, zero accountability. And there's actually not even a job description and or formal training or formal training manual on that position." (14:11)

"But, you know, another thought for bringing in a younger demographic would be that we hold events annually, and they're typically, you know, focus more on funders who are older people above to be, you know, something that's more interactive with the younger demographic of tutors that we have. Because right now, I think we have one event, the appreciation luncheon that we would invite them to, but there's not really anything that's like, super energizing that other organizations are doing to like, I don't know, energize the young people and make them want to come learn more about it." (3:37)

Even though the most frequent comments made by tutors in the interviews and survey refer to the beneficial role of most site coordinators and the effective implementation of the training program, the above suggestions aim to maximize the human and material resources ALP offers. Other less cited comments regarding areas of improvement were about communication channels with students' teachers and families, tutoring at schools that have not partnered with ALP, and the spelling component of the instruction and assessment, among others already mentioned in previous sections.

Quantitative and Qualitative Results Discussion

The tutor survey, the interview, and the scores on the pre- and post-assessments and the DIBELS allowed us to examine various aspects of the tutoring process at ALP-Charlotte, such as the training program and support, tutor training preferences, the instructional process, student benefits from the tutoring, tutor opportunities and challenges, student opportunities and challenges, student learning gains, and areas for potential programmatic improvement.

Tutors in both the quantitative and qualitative measures used in this evaluation provided sufficient arguments in favor of the training program, comprised of the formal training week that usually takes place at the beginning of a school year, training events such as the Lunch Bunch, and the support site coordinators and the learning and development team offer throughout the year. Tutors believe the training, resources, and support offered by ALP prepare them to be effective tutors. Yet, some tutors with no educational background or previous teaching or tutoring experience feel they could benefit from further formal training sessions. Tutors suggested that they would like to receive more training on the module steps, instructional strategies, and how to use different resources offered by the institution. Regular check-ins and refresher courses were also suggested as reinforcement to tutor preparation.

As part of the preparation for the instructional process, some tutors reported using resources besides the Wilson materials and other materials suggested by the program. They also provide children with books to read at home, expecting to reinforce their work during the 45-minute lesson. Tutors believe in the Orton-Gillingham methodology and the one-one-interaction format as an effective approach to teaching Augustine children to read and write.

ALP-Charlotte brings countless opportunities and benefits for both tutors and students. However, impacting students' lives through literacy development constitutes their greatest

opportunity. Tutors feel accomplished by helping others, especially if it is through teaching, if it is about reading, and if the beneficiaries are children from under-resourced communities. Tutors reiterated their satisfaction with their tutoring experience and their relationship with students. Consequently, tutors view the possibility of accessing individual instruction and learning gains as vital opportunities for students. Learning gains are confirmed by the significant increase in scores students obtained on the post-assessment and the EOY DIBELS compared to the pre-assessment and BOY DIBELS for the 2021-2022 year. Beyond the literacy gains, tutors see student growth in other developmental areas and personality attributes from the tutoring experience at ALP.

Opportunities and feelings of accomplishment also accompany challenges, affecting tutors and students in many circumstances. The main challenges students face during the tutoring process are their lack of foundational skills in literacy and unsatisfied basic needs. These difficulties are, in turn, associated with other challenges tutors frequently deal with, such as student behavior issues, attendance problems, slow learning progress or learning difficulties, lack of family support, and, therefore, lack of reading habits. Besides these challenges, tutors reported challenges they faced during tutoring related to distracting factors owing to the number of students and tutors in the same room, the scheduled time for the tutoring sessions (at the end of the school day), English language limitations, the short time to deliver the lesson, and the fact that some of the tutors do not have the educational background or previous teaching or tutoring experience.

Thus, the preparation of tutors, the implementation process and the work with students, the opportunities and benefits for tutors and students, but also the challenges that they find in their tutoring, have consolidated the strengths and impact the ALP-Charlotte program has made

on first-through-third grade students from Title 1 schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. ALP-Charlotte's strengths were around its solid structure based on an effective literacy approach and training program, supportive learning and development team, tutors' commitment and high expectations for their students, a positive relationship with students despite latent challenges, and students' learning gains and growth. In the latter, the quantitative measure showed that most tutors believe that their students have made progress (significant for some, still needing support for others, and minimal for others) with reading, spelling, writing, and comprehension.

On the other hand, tutors noted areas of growth where the organization can continue working. Weaknesses and areas of improvement reported by tutors were about training, instructional materials, and the tutors and site coordinators. Some tutors believe that the content and materials covered during the initial training session may be overwhelming; therefore, it is necessary to continue offering training sessions over the school year, perhaps with a higher frequency than what is currently being done. It was noted that tutors without previous educational or teaching backgrounds might greatly benefit from consistent training. Other aspects regarded as potential constraints were the fee for participating in the training program, the length (a week) of the initial training, and the lack of interaction during these sessions. Areas of improvement in this regard included offering alternative training schedules for potential tutors who cannot attend during traditional hours, refresher courses, using technology, promoting tutor diversity in terms of gender, race, and age, and making training sessions more interactive.

Concerning instructional Materials, some tutors suggested making the materials more aligned with the modules, the lessons, and the steps. Tutors appreciate the variety of resources the organization suggests, yet sometimes find it hard to maximize their use. As tutors value the fundamental role of site coordinators, they suggest hiring more personnel in this area, offering

them additional formal training, using experienced tutors to accompany new tutors, and having higher accountability of tutors and site coordinators and providing timely quality feedback that benefits everyone. Some tutors also expressed interest in learning more about the external assessments their students take, ALP building new partnerships so that some monetary-based suggestions can be executed, among them reaching a larger population of children who aspire to read and write at the level many of their school peers do.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion, we make the following recommendations around three themes: The training program, building community, and implementing the tutoring process.

Training Program

- It is recommended that the ALP-Charlotte administrators and training team plan consistent training activities in the form of refresher courses or more formal events similar to the Lunch Bunch throughout the academic year. Once the initial week of training is over, training leaders and site coordinators should pay special attention to tutors who do not have previous teaching or tutoring experience and work with them through small groups or individualized support. Engaging experienced ALP trainers in these ongoing training initiatives is highly recommended. Lesson planning is an area where new tutors can greatly benefit from the assistance of more experienced tutors.
- To make the ALP tutor population more diverse, ALP administrators and recruiting leaders need to plan advertising or communication strategies, establish newer relationships and partnerships with other organizations and sponsors, and offer alternative training schedules that may be more suitable and appealing to people of different ages, races, and gender.
- The following topics and strategies are recommended for future training: Hear from experienced tutors about 'lessons learned' and 'tutoring tips' (in person or videos) or watch an effective tutor working with a student, regular check-ins with ALP support staff and other stakeholders, how to use the different resources suggested by ALP, how to manage student behavior disruptions, ESL training, and involve parents in the process. Training topics recommended are literacy games and fun instructional activities, fluency,

phonological awareness, syllable types, training on Step 2 and beyond, and practice with high-frequency words. As many comments about tutor challenges had to do with students' inattentiveness, lack of interest in learning and reading, lack of confidence, and refusal to stay on task and sit still, among other misbehaviors, it is recommended to offer training on positive behavioral management strategies. These training sessions could involve parents and teachers.

Building Community

- A stronger connection between tutors and students' teachers, other tutors, and ALP staff is recommended. These connections can be strengthened through established institutional activities or the implementation of new events and communications. Institutional activities such as the Lunch Bunch constitute a great learning and interactional opportunity for tutors and other people interested in helping aspiring readers to succeed.
- A stronger connection between tutors and students' families is recommended. ALP leaders need to plan activities that involve parents. These activities can be informative so that parents learn more about ALP objectives and expectations, as well as about tutors' work, or so that families can have a more active role in their children's literacy development. Families can considerably benefit from the meaningful orientation that ALP-Charlotte can offer them.

Implementing The Tutoring Process

- As student behavior issues were reported as a challenge tutors face in the instructional process, it is important to ensure that other distracting factors, such as having many tutors and students in the same room, are avoided. If no rooms are available, tutors must be reminded of the interruption so they can talk in a tone that does not interfere with the

other lessons. Likewise, it is recommended that tutoring sessions be scheduled at earlier hours in the school day. Training tutors on positive behavioral management strategies is recommended.

- It is recommended that meetings between tutors and site coordinators or coaches be scheduled regularly. This will allow the Learning and Development Team or training leaders to hold tutors and supervisors accountable for their work and provide support if needed.
- As ALP introduces a new institutional portal with resources additional to the existing variety, tutors must be continuously trained to align these new resources with the lessons or use them for lesson planning purposes. Training, supervision, and feedback by tutor coaches and site coordinators on effectively using the available resources are pivotal to that purpose.
- As this evaluation was being conducted, ALP-Charlotte was introducing its new learning portal, a new website interface, and new instructional materials. These implementations may constitute an opportune response to some of the suggestions presented throughout this report. Thus, ALP-Charlotte shows its innovative spirit and commitment to continuous improvement. This final recommendation is about the ALP-Charlotte as a highly effective tutoring program committed to improving the literacy skills of aspiring readers in under-resourced communities, as stated in its mission.

Conclusion

This evaluation report aimed to enhance our understanding of the benefits students experience by participating in the ALP Tutoring Program, as well as identify program processes that are operating well and those that could be improved. Findings from this formative evaluation will help to set the stage for a more methodologically rigorous and summative evaluation study in the future. To conduct this evaluation, a survey was administered to tutors, follow-up interviews were conducted with program tutors, and student pre- and post-test data was examined.

To summarize key findings, major strengths included: the Orton-Gillingham Approach, the training program, the support of the training team and site coordinators, the relationship between tutors and students, the possibility of impacting children's lives, student access to individualized instruction, tutor commitment and high expectations for their children, student learning and growth, and the structure of the program. While the program highlights many strengths, tutors also made key recommendations for program improvement, including: offering ongoing training throughout the school year with special attention to tutors new in teaching, diversifying the tutor population, strengthening the relationship between tutors and other tutors, parents, and teachers, dealing with distracting factors and student behavior issues.

Students' results on the post-assessments for the 2021-2022 term showed a significant increase compared to scores on the pre-assessments. Likewise, a comparison of mean scores at the beginning and end of the school year showed a statistically significant difference for all the reading components assessed in the DIBELS 8th edition. First-grade students showed greater improvements from the BOY to the EOY, moving up from the "at risk" level to the "some risk," "minimal risk," and "negligible risk," levels for most of the reading components. These results

are consistent with tutors' perceptions of students' learning progress during this instructional period.

Thus, we have collected ample evidence to suggest that ALP-Charlotte administrative and instructional leaders have worked effectively to prepare tutors for the tutoring process and help first through third-grade students achieve higher levels of literacy proficiency. We recommend further analysis using MClass and 3rd grade BOG and EOG scores. Also, we need to recommend a more summative evaluation study with random assignment. Evidence from this formative evaluation is strong enough to warrant a summative study. Additionally, implementation fidelity needs to be monitored and potentially improved.

References

Aud, S., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Kristapovich, P., Rathbun, A., Wang, X., and Zhang, J. (2013). The Condition of Education 2013. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC

ALP Augustine Literacy Project (n.d.). *Introduction to ALP-Charlotte*. https://alpcharlotte.org/

Belk Foundation (n.d.). *Read Charlotte.* https://www.belkfoundation.org/read-charlotte-improvement-science/#:~:text=THE%20CHALLENGE,are%20unable%20to%20read%20proficiently

Elbaum, B., Vaughn, S., Tejero Hughes, M., & Watson Moody, S. (2000). How effective are one-to-one tutoring programs in reading for elementary students at risk for reading failure? A meta-analysis of the intervention research. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 92*(4), 605–619. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.92.4.605

Helms, A. D. (2022, March 29). *Reading struggles continue for kids across NC not just at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*. https://www.wfae.org/education/2022-03-29/reading-struggles-continue-for-kids-across-nc-not-just-at-charlotte-mecklenburg-schools

Markovitz, C. E., Hernandez, M. W., Hedberg, E. C., & Whitmore, H. W. (2021). Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Volunteer One-on-One Tutoring Model for Early Elementary Reading Intervention: A Randomized Controlled Trial Replication Study. *American Educational Research Journal*, 283122110668–. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312211066848

Merriam, S. B. (2001). Chapter 2: Case study in *Qualitative research and case study application in education* (pp. 26-43). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mokhtari, K., Neel, J.L., Kaiser, F., & Le, H. (2015). Assessing the promise of a supplemental reading intervention for at-risk first grade students in a public school setting. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 7* (3), 281-300.

Orton-Gillingham Academy (n.d.). *Resources*. https://www.ortonacademy.org/resources/

Ravitch, S. & Carl, N. (2019). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological (2nd ed)*. Sage.

Rose, T.E. & Zirkel, P. (2007). Orton-Gillingham methodology for students with reading disabilities, 30 years of case law. *The Journal of Special Education, 41*(3), 171-185.

Syllabus Learning Center (n.d.). *What is Orton-Gillingham?* https://syllableslearningcenter.com/what-is-orton-gillingham/

Tracy, S. J. (2013). Chapter 9 Data analysis basics: A pragmatic iterative approach. in Qualitative research methods (pp. 184-202). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

UNC Charlotte Urban Institute (2016). Augustine Literacy Project – Charlotte: Evaluation study findings and recommendations.

UNICEF Publications (2022, March). *Are Children Really Learning? Exploring foundational skills in the midst of a learning crisis.* https://data.unicef.org/resources/are-children-really-learning-foundational-skills-report/

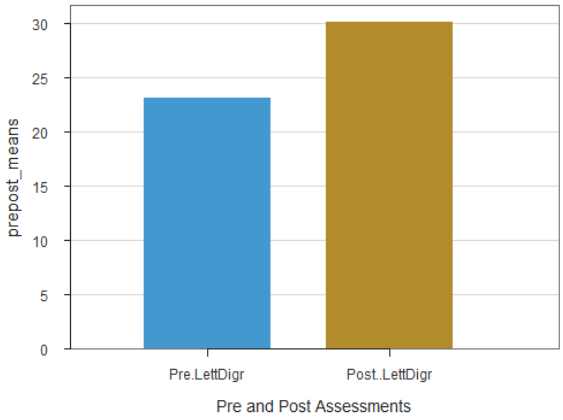
Wilson Language Training (n.d.). *Programs*. https://www.wilsonlanguage.com/programs/wilson-reading-system/materials/

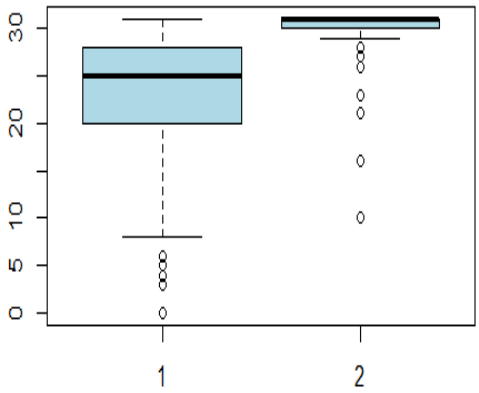
Appendix A

Graphical Representation of Statistical Analysis on the Pre- and Post-Assessments

Paired t-test **Pre.LettDigr and Post..LettDigr**

data:



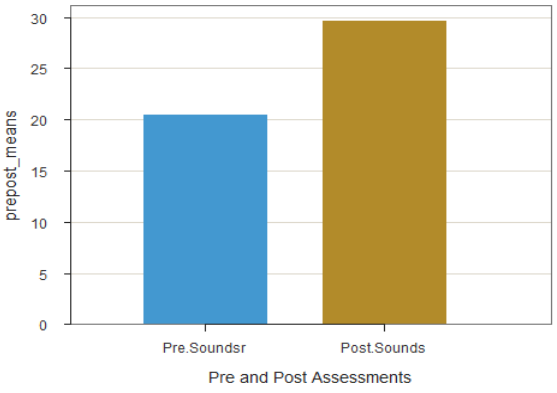


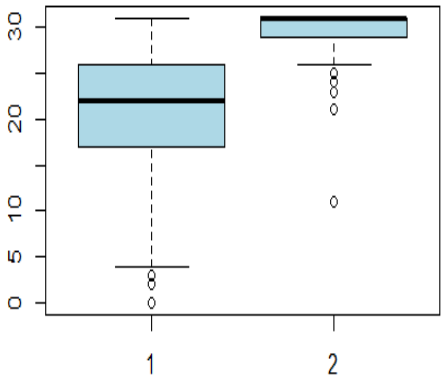
Post..LettDigr and Pre.LettDigr

t = 13.953, df = 173, p-value < 0.00000000000000022
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
6.059117 8.055826
sample estimates:
mean of the differences
7.057471

Paired t-test Pre.Sounds and Post.Sounds

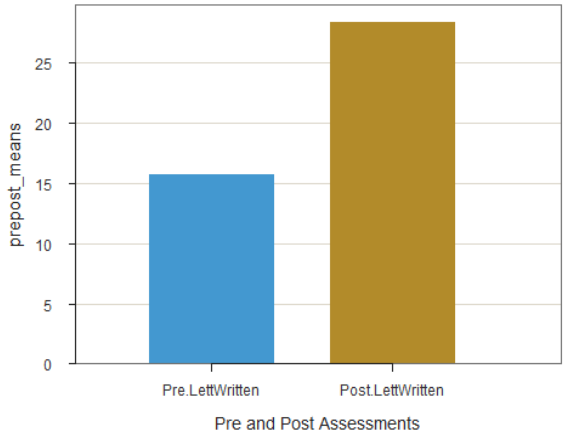
data:

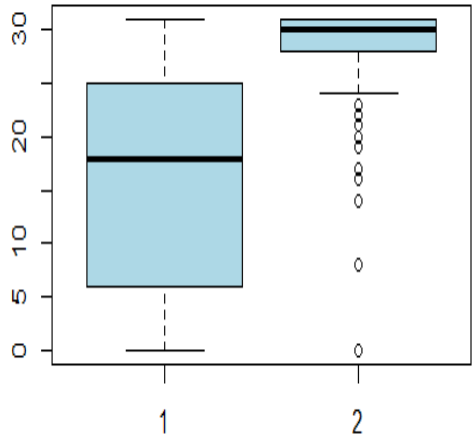




Post.Sounds and Pre.Sounds
t = 17.707, df = 173, p-value < 0.00000000000000022
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
8.134677 10.175668
sample estimates:
mean of the differences
9.155172

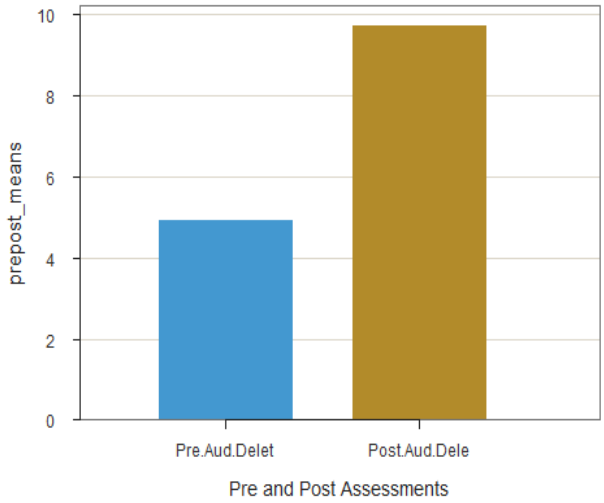
Paired t-test Pre.LettWritten and PostLettWritten

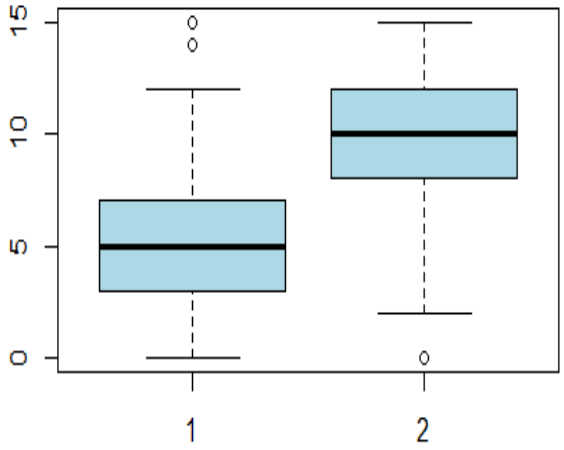




data:
Post.LettWritten and Pre.LettWritten
t = 15.574, df = 173, p-value < 0.00000000000000022
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
11.05127 14.25907
sample estimates:
mean of the differences
12.65517

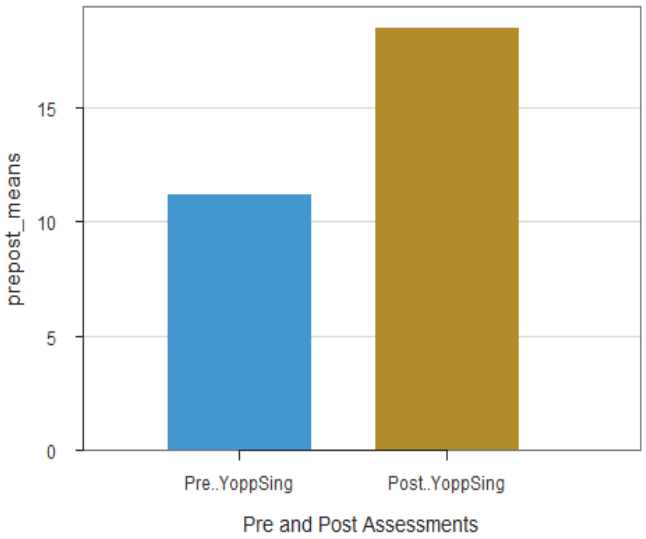
Paired t-test Pre.Aud.Delet and Post.Aud.Delet

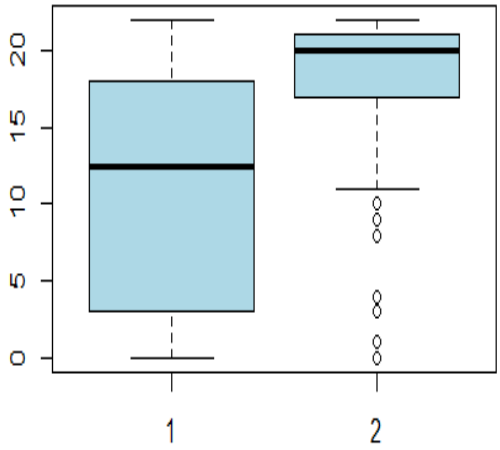




data: Post.Aud.Dele and Pre.Aud.Delet
t = 18.223, df = 173, p-value < 0.00000000000000022
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
4.273948 5.312258
sample estimates:
mean of the differences
4.793103

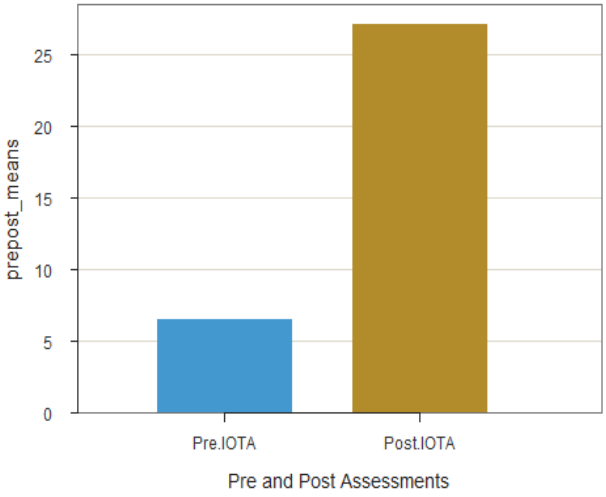
Paired t-test Pre..YoppSing and Post..YoppSing

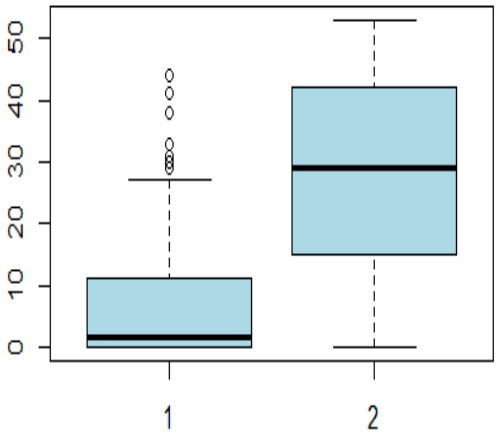




data: Post..YoppSing and Pre..YoppSing
t = 13.977, df = 173, p-value < 0.00000000000000022
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
6.282942 8.349242
sample estimates:
mean of the differences
7.316092

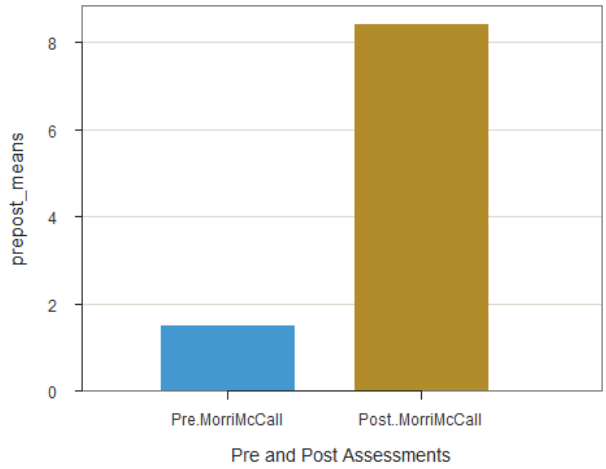
Paired t-test Pre.IOTA and Post.IOTA

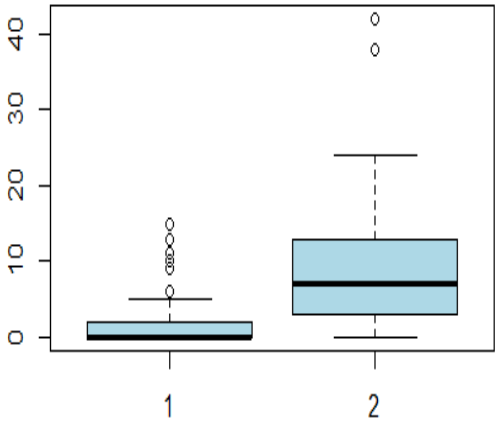




data: PostIOTA and PreIOTA
t = 18.4, df = 173, p-value < 0.00000000000000022
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
18.34206 22.74989
sample estimates:
mean of the differences
20.54598

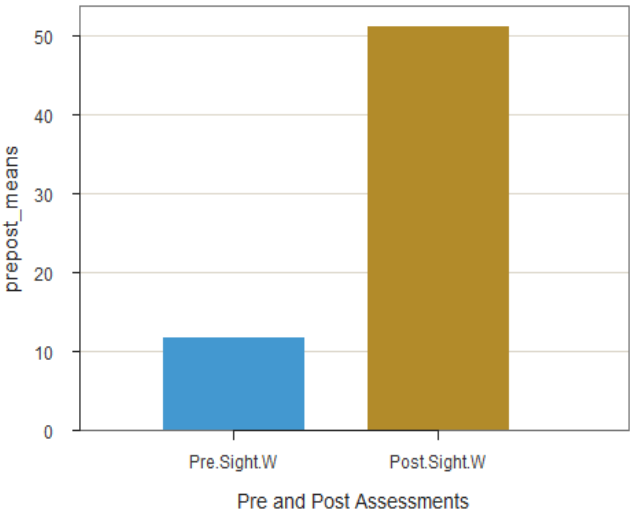
Paired t-test Pre. MorriMcCall and Post. MorriMcCall

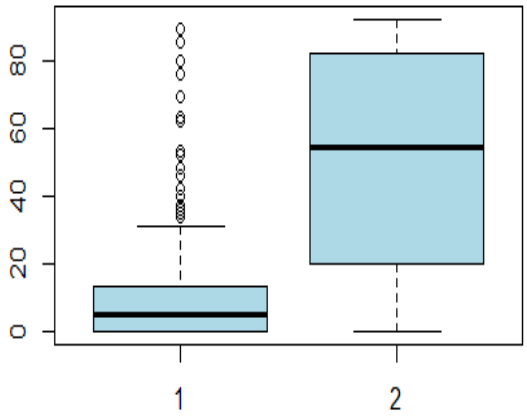




data: Post..MorriMcCall and Pre.MorriMcCall
t = 14.276, df = 173, p-value < 0.00000000000000022
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
5.972780 7.889288
sample estimates:
mean of the differences
6.931034

Paired t-test Pre. Sight.W and Post. Sight.W





data: Post.Sight.W and Pre.Sight.W
t = 19.767, df = 173, p-value < 0.00000000000000022
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
35.55591 43.44409
sample estimates:
mean of the differences
39.5

Appendix B

First-Grade Crosstabulations

LNFBOY * LNFEOY Crosstabulation

			LNFEOY			Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	
LNFBOY	1.00	Count	21	11	18	50
		% within LNFBOY	42.0%	22.0%	36.0%	100.0%
	2.00	Count	2	3	12	17
		% within LNFBOY	11.8%	17.6%	70.6%	100.0%
	3.00	Count	2	0	4	6
		% within LNFBOY	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	25	14	34	73
		% within LNFBOY	34.2%	19.2%	46.6%	100.0%

PSFBOY * PSFEOY Crosstabulation

			PNFPEOY				Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
PNFPBOY	1.00	Count	33	6	14	4	57
		% within PNFPBOY	57.9%	10.5%	24.6%	7.0%	100.0%
	2.00	Count	6	2	2	0	10
		% within PNFPBOY	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	3.00	Count	1	2	12	1	16
		% within PNFPBOY	6.3%	12.5%	75.0%	6.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	40	10	28	5	83
		% within PNFPBOY	48.2%	12.0%	33.7%	6.0%	100.0%

NWFCLSBOY * NWFCLSEOY Crosstabulation

			NWFCLSEOY				Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
NWFCLSBOY	1.00	Count	27	16	22	4	69
		% within NWFCLSBOY	39.1%	23.2%	31.9%	5.8%	100.0%
	2.00	Count	0	3	8	1	12
		% within NWFCLSBOY	0.0%	25.0%	66.7%	8.3%	100.0%
	3.00	Count	0	3	2	0	5
		% within NWFCLSBOY	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	27	22	32	5	86
		% within NWFCLSBOY	31.4%	25.6%	37.2%	5.8%	100.0%

NWFWRCBOY * NWFWRCEOY Crosstabulation

			NWFWRCEOY				Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
NWFWRCBOY	1.00	Count	19	14	24	3	60
		% within NWFWRCBOY	31.7%	23.3%	40.0%	5.0%	100.0%
	2.00	Count	0	1	15	1	17
		% within NWFWRCBOY	0.0%	5.9%	88.2%	5.9%	100.0%
	3.00	Count	3	0	6	0	9
		% within NWFWRCBOY	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	22	15	45	4	86
		% within NWFWRCBOY	25.6%	17.4%	52.3%	4.7%	100.0%

WRFBOY * WRFEOY Crosstabulation

			WRFEOY				Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
WRFBOY	1.00	Count	34	12	9	0	55
		% within WRFBOY	61.8%	21.8%	16.4%	0.0%	100.0%
	2.00	Count	0	5	6	0	11
		% within WRFBOY	0.0%	45.5%	54.5%	0.0%	100.0%
	3.00	Count	0	1	8	0	9
		% within WRFBOY	0.0%	11.1%	88.9%	0.0%	100.0%
	4.00	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		% within WRFBOY	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	34	18	23	1	76
		% within WRFBOY	44.7%	23.7%	30.3%	1.3%	100.0%

ORFFLUBOY * ORFFLUEOY Crosstabulation

			ORFFLUEOY				Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
ORFFLUBOY	1.00	Count	19	7	5	4	35
		% within ORFFLUBOY	54.3%	20.0%	14.3%	11.4%	100.0%
	2.00	Count	1	4	4	0	9
		% within ORFFLUBOY	11.1%	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%	100.0%
	3.00	Count	1	0	8	2	11
		% within ORFFLUBOY	9.1%	0.0%	72.7%	18.2%	100.0%
	4.00	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		% within ORFFLUBOY	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	21	11	17	7	56
		% within ORFFLUBOY	37.5%	19.6%	30.4%	12.5%	100.0%

ORFACCUBOY * ORFACCUEOY Crosstabulation

			ORFACCUEOY			Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	
ORFACCUBOY	1.00	Count	26	11	13	50
		% within ORFACCUBOY	52.0%	22.0%	26.0%	100.0%
	2.00	Count	1	2	7	10
		% within ORFACCUBOY	10.0%	20.0%	70.0%	100.0%
	3.00	Count	1	0	5	6
		% within ORFACCUBOY	16.7%	0.0%	83.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	28	13	25	66
		% within ORFACCUBOY	42.4%	19.7%	37.9%	100.0%

CompositeBOY * CompositeEOY Crosstabulation

			CompositeEOY				Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
CompositeBOY	1.00	Count	29	11	11	0	51
		% within CompositeBOY	56.9%	21.6%	21.6%	0.0%	100.0%
	2.00	Count	1	6	14	1	22
		% within CompositeBOY	4.5%	27.3%	63.6%	4.5%	100.0%
	3.00	Count	0	0	2	1	3
		% within CompositeBOY	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	30	17	27	2	76
		% within CompositeBOY	39.5%	22.4%	35.5%	2.6%	100.0%

Appendix C

Second-Grade Crosstabulations

NWFCLSBOY * NWFCLSEOY Crosstabulation

			NWFCLSEOY			Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	
NWFCLSBOY	1.00	Count	26	13	6	45
		% within NWFCLSBOY	57.8%	28.9%	13.3%	100.0%
		% of Total	56.5%	28.3%	13.0%	97.8%
	3.00	Count	0	0	1	1
		% within NWFCLSBOY	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	2.2%
Total		Count	26	13	7	46
		% within NWFCLSBOY	56.5%	28.3%	15.2%	100.0%
		% of Total	56.5%	28.3%	15.2%	100.0%

NWFWRCBOY * NWFWRCEOY Crosstabulation

			NWFWRCEOY				Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
NWFWRCBOY	1.00	Count	28	8	5	1	42
		% within NWFWRCBOY	66.7%	19.0%	11.9%	2.4%	100.0%
		% of Total	60.9%	17.4%	10.9%	2.2%	91.3%
	2.00	Count	1	0	2	0	3
		% within NWFWRCBOY	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	2.2%	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%	6.5%
	3.00	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		% within NWFWRCBOY	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	2.2%
Total		Count	29	8	8	1	46
		% within NWFWRCBOY	63.0%	17.4%	17.4%	2.2%	100.0%
		% of Total	63.0%	17.4%	17.4%	2.2%	100.0%

WRFBOY * WRFEOY Crosstabulation

			WRFEOY			Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	
WRFBOY	1.00	Count	26	6	1	33
		% within WRFBOY	78.8%	18.2%	3.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	74.3%	17.1%	2.9%	94.3%
	2.00	Count	0	0	2	2
		% within WRFBOY	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%	5.7%
Total		Count	26	6	3	35
		% within WRFBOY	74.3%	17.1%	8.6%	100.0%
		% of Total	74.3%	17.1%	8.6%	100.0%

ORFFLUBOY * ORFFLUEOY Crosstabulation

			ORFFLUEOY			Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	
ORFFLUBOY	1.00	Count	27	2	4	33
		% within ORFFLUBOY	81.8%	6.1%	12.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	77.1%	5.7%	11.4%	94.3%
	3.00	Count	0	2	0	2
		% within ORFFLUBOY	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	5.7%	0.0%	5.7%
Total		Count	27	4	4	35
		% within ORFFLUBOY	77.1%	11.4%	11.4%	100.0%
		% of Total	77.1%	11.4%	11.4%	100.0%

ORFACCUBOY * ORFACCUEOY Crosstabulation

			ORFACCUEOY			Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	
ORFACCUBOY	1.00	Count	30	4	10	44
		% within ORFACCUBOY	68.2%	9.1%	22.7%	100.0%
		% of Total	65.2%	8.7%	21.7%	95.7%
	2.00	Count	0	0	2	2
		% within ORFACCUBOY	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	4.3%
Total		Count	30	4	12	46
		% within ORFACCUBOY	65.2%	8.7%	26.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	65.2%	8.7%	26.1%	100.0%

MazeBOY * MazeEOY Crosstabulation

			MazeEOY			Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	
MazeBOY	1.00	Count	24	2	2	28
		% within MazeBOY	85.7%	7.1%	7.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	72.7%	6.1%	6.1%	84.8%
	2.00	Count	4	0	1	5
		% within MazeBOY	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	12.1%	0.0%	3.0%	15.2%
Total		Count	28	2	3	33
		% within MazeBOY	84.8%	6.1%	9.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	84.8%	6.1%	9.1%	100.0%

CompositeBOY * CompositeEOY Crosstabulation

			CompositeEOY			Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	
CompositeBOY	1.00	Count	24	4	2	30
		% within CompositeBOY	80.0%	13.3%	6.7%	100.0%
		% of Total	68.6%	11.4%	5.7%	85.7%
	2.00	Count	0	0	5	5
		% within CompositeBOY	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%
Total		Count	24	4	7	35
		% within CompositeBOY	68.6%	11.4%	20.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	68.6%	11.4%	20.0%	100.0%

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Purpose Statement

This interview aims to deepen our understanding of the effectiveness of the tutoring program implemented at the Augustine Literacy Project - Charlotte. We want to expand on the tutoring-related information obtained from the survey.

Interviewee Eligibility Criteria

Interviewees must be current or former tutors for the ALP-Charlotte who have already completed the online survey and volunteered to participate in the interview.

Interviewee Profile

We will interview male and female tutors who are at least 18 years old. Tutors should have taught during the 2021-2022 year.

Interviewee Mode and Length

The interview will take about 30 minutes and will be conducted via Zoom or telephone.

Introductory Script:

> Hi! I am Leonardo Herrera, a student of the educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation Ph.D. Program. If you're ready, I will begin **recording** now, if that's okay. Thank you for taking the time to chat with me today. As you know, I am interested in learning more about your experience as an ALP-Charlotte tutor. I have some questions I want to ask, but please feel free to share any other relevant insight that you might have. As I mentioned in the consent form, this interview should take about 30 minutes. If you would like to skip a question I ask, or if you ever need to take a break, please let me know.

Before we start, I want to ask you if you have any questions regarding the interview process? Also, do you have a particular pseudonym that you would like me to use when we transcribe this interview?

Great! Let's get started.

Interview questions:

Besides the question below, we may ask follow-up questions based on tutors' responses.

1. Please help us understand how you believe ALP tutoring is helping students.
2. How did the training prepare you for the tutoring process?
3. Are there any resources you think would help you be a more effective tutor?
4. What do you see as the strengths of the tutoring program at ALP-Charlotte?
5. What do you see as the weaknesses of the tutoring program at ALP-Charlotte?
6. In your opinion, what are the main challenges that your students usually face in developing reading and writing proficiency?
7. What motivated you to become a volunteer tutor for ALP?
8. What suggestions do you have for ways the program could be improved?

Thank you for your time today. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns or if you care to elaborate on anything we discussed today.

Transcription:

S1: Interviewer

S2: Interviewee#1

Start time (##:##)

S1: Thank you very much