Lessons Learned

**A practical guide for universities
and partners for running a high quality
university-led tutoring programme**

May 2023

Professor Lee Elliot Major and Dr Anne-Marie Sim
Centre for Social Mobility | School of Education, University of Exeter

Acknowledgements

Foreword

University-led tutoring is one of the few initiatives that can make a strong claim to be a "win-win-win" programme. As this report demonstrates, trained undergraduate tutors can improve the school progress of less advantaged school pupils, potentially boosting social mobility. But they also gain much from the experience themselves: securing a credit towards their degree, developing core skills demanded by employers, and deciding whether teaching is for them. A tutoring scheme like this meanwhile enables universities to deliver on their increasingly important civic and regional roles.

At the University of Exeter we have witnessed first-hand the impact of undergraduate students helping to hone the basic writing skills of Year 8 pupils through our tutoring pilot. The findings from this trial involving 16 pupils and six undergraduate tutors are very promising. Assessments of how well pupils were able to write accurate sentences done before and after the nine-week intervention suggest a 100% improvement. Most pupils felt that it helped their confidence in lessons and helped them in subjects.

Undergraduates from a range of subjects produced reflective logs as part of their university module which contributes to their degrees. Providing tutoring over a nine-week period in a local school enables the students to develop key employability skills including teamwork, active problem solving and resilience. Many also found it useful for finding out more about teaching and came away with a clear view on whether teaching was a career they would like to pursue.

The logs also offer a glimpse into the power of the human relationships developed between students and school pupils. One undergraduate expressed admiration for her three tutees in the face of challenges such as a crowded home life, dyslexia, and confusion about how to get home after the tutoring. Her compassion motivated her to do her best for them. Later, she was delighted to discover that one of her pupils had been inspired to go to university.

Tellingly, pupils and students would both recommend the tutoring scheme to others. This is welcome news as university led tutoring is an initiative that is very timely, addressing an emerging priority for higher education institutions. The UPP Foundation's Civic University Commission recently called for a more focused strategy for raising school aged attainment.

Universities are being asked to help schools raise attainment under the new access and participation plans for the Office for Students. Schools meanwhile are considering options for tutoring as the subsidies for schools through the national tutoring programme in England end.

This is why the University of Exeter and UPP Foundation, with the support of a coalition of funders, are working together to pilot a university-led tutoring scheme. The key issue is about quality of delivery. In this guide we outline practical lessons that will be helpful to other universities and university partnerships (with schools and charities) when setting up a sustainable tutoring programme. Our hope is to generate further evidence on how this model can be best delivered to maximise the potential benefits to pupils and students.

Our approach focuses on improving the basic skills of literacy that are so important to access learning across the curriculum. But as our initial pilot suggests, this work can have mutual benefits, giving tutors worthwhile experiences.

The next step is to generate more evidence on how this might work across many universities and schools. But one day a national tutoring service might involve thousands of students and pupils annually. Tutoring delivered through universities and colleges has the potential to reach pupils in the farthest reaches of the country. That would be a major contribution to levelling-up an unequal education system in the post-pandemic era and a genuine boost to social mobility.

Lee Elliot Major, Professor of Social Mobility, University of Exeter
Richard Brabner, Director, UPP Foundation & ESG

Summary

This report outlines practical lessons for universities considering setting up a tutoring programme to improve the attainment of school pupils.

It is based on our experience delivering a small proof-of-concept pilot for tutoring run at the University of Exeter in partnership with St James School in Exeter. The pilot tested a model of delivery in which second, third and fourth year undergraduates undertook a tutoring placement as part of an accredited university module. The undergraduates delivered a foundational literacy course to twelve/13 year olds (Year 8 pupils) in addition to taking part in classroom observation at the school. The course and tutor training were developed by a local head teacher.

Assessments reviewing how well pupils were able to write accurate sentences improved by 100% after the nine-week intervention.

We are now trialling the same tutoring course using other models of delivery, for example paying students for tutoring and working with partners across different universities to test the tutoring with different student tutors, in different schools and areas. We will publish an update on our findings early next year.

Our work suggests that universities should consider ten practical questions when looking to set up their own tutoring programmes:

1. **What delivery routes are available and where will you house the programme within the university?**

2. **How does the tutoring programme fit into other tutoring programmes locally/regionally?**

3. **How will student tutors be recruited?**

4. **Which school/college learners will the tutoring support?**

5. **How will you select participating schools/colleges and learners?**

6. **What will the tutoring consist of?**

7. **How will the tutoring be delivered?**

8. **How will student tutors be trained and supported?**

9. **How will the tutoring be administered and paid for?**

10. **How will the tutoring programme be evaluated?**

We offer several insights in relation to these questions. For example, universities could think about whether a tutoring programme could be developed from existing programmes such as relevant modules or Access activities. Universities should consider how tutoring can be made accessible to all students, for example by embedding opportunities within the curriculum rather than offering them as additional 'volunteering'. And throughout the programme design, they will need to consider how they will ensure high quality tutoring.

Working with multi-academy trusts meanwhile represents an opportunity to work at scale, while further education colleges could help to enhance geographic coverage.

The evidence for tutoring is strong; the main challenge is implementation. Ensuring quality and sustainability at scale is key. This is where we believe universities can add real value. Overall, we believe a university-led tutoring service is an opportunity to build a win-win-win model that benefits pupils, university students and local communities. Our ultimate hope is to help create a sustainable nationwide tutoring effort to improve education and life prospects for young people across the country.

Table of Contents

Why a university-led tutoring service?

We believe a university-led tutoring service could improve the school achievement of hundreds of thousands of poorer pupils across the country[1].

The schooling system is characterised by a stark and persistent achievement gap between poorer pupils and their more privileged counterparts, whether defined in terms of the income, social-class or education of parents[2]. A fifth of pupils at age 16 fail to achieve expected standards in both English and maths[3]. For poorer pupils in some areas of the country this is closer to 40%[4].

Small group tutoring by undergraduate students is an evidence-informed intervention shown to increase pupils'

progress. This is one of the few education approaches which particularly benefits disadvantaged pupils.

Whilst a range of tutoring interventions already exist, the tutoring landscape is fragmented with variable quality and patchy coverage across the country. Our survey work suggests that many universities do not currently deliver a tutoring scheme of this kind.

We believe a university-led tutoring service could embed tutoring for poorer pupils within the education system.

It could potentially overcome the following challenges:

---

1   The idea for a university led model was promoted in 2020 as part of discussions about addressing school attainment gaps during the COVID pandemic. For estimates of possible scale of a national scheme, see: Elliot Major, L., Tyers, M., & Chu, R. (2020). The National Tutoring Service: Levelling-up education's playing field. Available from: https://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/collegeofsocialsciencesandinternationalst udies/education/documentsfordownload/National_Tutoring_Service_April_2020.pdf

2   Elliot Major, L and Machin, S. (2018) Social Mobility and Its Enemies, Pelican Books.

3   Elliot-Major, L., Parsons, S. (2022) The forgotten fifth: examining the early education trajectories of teenagers who fall below the expected standards in GCSE English language and maths examinations at age 16. CLS Working Paper 2022/6. London: UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies.

4   Sim, A. and Elliot Major, L. (2022). Social Mobility in the South West: levelling up through education. Available from: https://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/newsarchive/researchgeneral/Social_Mobility_in_the_South_West_Report.pdf

Quality

Ensuring high quality tutoring that is consistent and effective is crucial to its success. Yet there is substantial variation in the quality being provided by tutors across different tutoring organisations. We know that universities are concerned about providing a quality experience for both tutees and their own student tutors. By carefully designing quality into their tutoring models, universities can become trusted providers and use their reputations to restore trust amongst schools who may have become sceptical about tutoring because of the variation in quality they have experienced.

Scale

The supply of tutors is a major challenge, particularly in 'coldspot' areas of the country. A university-led tutoring service supported by further education colleges could provide a consistent supply of undergraduate and other student tutors at scale to local schools. If all universities and a network of further education colleges across the country became involved, a National Tutoring Service could benefit hundreds of thousands of poorer pupils[5].

Sustainability

As established and typically well-funded institutions in their local regions, universities can play an important role in guaranteeing the sustainability of any tutoring service. Unlike short-term government programmes, universities can plan to embed tutoring into the education system for the long term. They are well placed to build strong, lasting relationships with schools and multi-academy trusts ensuring a tutoring service can be self-improving and responsive to local needs.

---

[5] Taking the South-West as an example: in 2019, 60% of disadvantaged pupils in the South-West didn't gain a pass in English and maths GCSE. This was 6,366 pupils. If tutoring was targeted at just one year group and assuming roughly even numbers of pupils year on year, this would require 2,122 student tutors tutoring in a 1:3 ratio to reach every disadvantaged pupil not achieving at expected levels in a year group. If each of the largest universities in the region (Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth and UWE) contributed equal numbers of student tutors, this would mean just over 400 students per institution. This figure would need to be doubled for every year group being targeted.

Evidence for tutoring

The review of the evidence suggests that, delivered well, tutoring can lead to an extra five months (one to one tuition) or four months (small group tuition) learning gain for pupils during one academic year. Some of this evidence includes outcomes reported by commercial tutoring providers that isn't considered to be robust, however[6].

A more realistic outcome is for an extra three months' progress during the school year at Year 6 level, or an extra one month progress for Year 9 to 11 pupils – as reported in randomised control trials of the Tutor Trust programme involving undergraduate student tutors[7].

Indicative evidence suggests that tutoring can produce even greater benefits for disadvantaged pupils[8]. In addition to attainment gains, most evaluations find tutoring leads to other perceived benefits including improvements in learners' confidence and engagement with education[9].

While tutoring by qualified teachers results in the greatest learning gains, undergraduate tutoring works – as demonstrated in the Tutor Trust trials. Major trials from other countries have also confirmed that undergraduate tutoring leads to significant learning gains. For example, a recent randomised trial in Italy found that disadvantaged pupils who were randomly selected for three to six hours of free online tutoring by university students did substantially better than their peers who were not given the same opportunity[10]. A recent meta-analysis of US programmes also showed positive effects although the impact varied depending on school phase and subject choice[11].

---

[6] Higgins, S., Katsipataki, M., Kokotsaki, D., Coleman, R., Major, L.E., & Coe, R. (2013). The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit. London: Education Endowment Foundation. Available at https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition

[7] Torgerson, Bell, Coleman, Elliott, Fairhurst, Gascoine, Hewitt and Torgerson (2018)

[8] Ibid.

[9] Elliot Major, L. and Higgins, S. (2019) What Works? Research and Evidence for Successful Teaching, London: Bloomsbury Education.

[10] Carlana and La Ferrara (2021)

[11] Nickow, Oreopoulos and Quan (2020)

Most of the available evidence focuses on literacy and maths tutoring. Tutoring in literacy has on average resulted in bigger progress gains than maths (+6 months compared with +2 months). And tutoring delivered in primary schools tends to show greater impact (+6 months) than tutoring delivered in secondary schools (+4 months), although the focus has largely been on Years 5/6 and Years 10/11[12].

The US study cited above adds nuance to this. Reading tutoring resulted in higher effect sizes in earlier grades, while maths tutoring yielded higher effect sizes in later grades[13].

Similarly, indicative evidence from evaluation of the UK's National Tutoring Programme shows different effect sizes depending on various combinations of school phase, subject choice, how the tutoring was delivered and tutor qualifications[14].

In line with other studies, face-to-face tuition was perceived to be more effective than online due to better attendance and perceived quality. Contrary to expectations, scheduling tutoring during lesson times was associated with better English scores at primary level, although the timing of delivery didn't make a difference for maths. For secondary learners, online sessions produced better results when scheduled outside school hours, but the timing of face-to-face sessions didn't make a difference.

For Year 11 pupils, having a tutor with a postgraduate qualification led to better scores than having a tutor with only an undergraduate degree or a teaching qualification. But having a postgraduate qualification was associated with lower performance for Year 5/6 pupils[15].

For optimal impact, tutoring appears to work best when scheduled as short, regular sessions (about 30 minutes, three to five times a week) over a set period of time (up to ten weeks) in as small groups as possible (one to one tutoring showing the greatest benefit but being the most costly). Other important factors include tutors' experience, training and support, and the extent to which tuition explicitly links with normal lessons[16].

Linked well, tutoring should support and reinforce pupils' understanding. But tutoring can be detrimental to learning if poorly linked, for example if tutoring covers the same content but uses a different method to what is

---

[12] https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition

[13] Nickow, Oreopoulos and Quan (2020)

[14] Elliot Major, NTP: What lessons can we learn from year one? Schoolsweek, October 2022 https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ntp-what-lessons-can-we-learn-from-year-one/

[15] Lord, Poet and Styles (2022)

[16] Elliot Major, L. and Higgins, S. (2019) What Works? Research and Evidence for Successful Teaching, London: Bloomsbury Education.

taught in class. However, ensuring this happens in practice can be onerous for teachers, tutors and providers as it requires a high degree of coordination.

What is clear is that implementation is critical – in particular course attendance/completion rates and the quality of tutoring. The evaluation of the first year of the government's National Tutoring Programme showed that a substantial minority of pupils (35%) had not completed the requisite number of tutoring sessions thought to be needed to affect their learning.

Unsurprisingly, secondary school pupils who completed more sessions had significantly higher English and maths teacher-assessed grades than peers who completed fewer sessions[17].

Overall, tutoring by undergraduate students is a good bet based on the available evidence. But delivery needs to be carefully thought through to optimise impact based on what is known whilst allowing learning and improvements to be made to add further nuance to the evidence base.

[17] Lord, Poet and Styles (2022)

Tutoring landscape and policy context

A growing sector of companies, individual tutors, charities and social enterprises deliver a range of tutoring programmes. These organisations have grown up in response to the huge rise in private tutoring that has occurred over the past decade[18]. In 2019, an estimated quarter of state school pupils in the UK and almost a half in London were receiving tuition, according to the Sutton Trust[19].

The charitable arm of the tutoring sector aims to reduce the unequalising effect of the private tutoring boom by providing access to tutoring for the hundreds of thousands of families who cannot afford to pay for private tutors.

The aims and models for these programmes vary considerably[20]. Many target high-attaining pupils: for example, CoachBright provides coaching for high-potential primary and secondary school students and

The Access Project and The Brilliant Club support high-attaining learners to access top universities. In line with our pilot programme, some providers such as Action Tutoring target learners at risk of not achieving expected levels. Others such as Tutor Trust meanwhile support tutoring across a range of abilities.

Tutors include undergraduate and postgraduate students, graduates and other adults. Tutoring occurs through face to face, online and blended models with tutoring organisations operating across one or several cities or regions. Most organisations recruit volunteers, although Tutor Trust pay their tutors as a means of providing both quality assurance and fairness for tutors.

Whilst providing an important counterpoint to the private tutoring market, current non-profit provisions

---

[18] Some have termed this the 'shadow education sector' worth billions of pounds in which 'super-tutors' can earn hundreds of pounds an hour. Many graduates serve wealthy families to pay their post-graduation debts. See: Elliot Major, L and Machin, S. (2018) Social Mobility and Its Enemies, Pelican Books.

[19] Sutton Trust (2019)

[20] Some of the main tutoring providers are listed in: Elliot Major, L., Tyers, M., & Chu, R. (2020). The National Tutoring Service: Levelling-up education's playing field. Available from: https://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/collegeofsocialsciencesandinternationalst udies/education/documentsfordownload/National_Tutoring_Service_April_2020.pdf

don't provide a means of reducing disadvantage attainment gaps at scale across the areas of the country that need it most[21].

The policy context across the UK has been rapidly changing over recent years. Here we summarise some of the key developments in England.

In June 2020, the Government announced the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) as part of its £1.7 billion education catch-up programme in England to address 'learning loss' caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme was pitched as a direct response to missed school days during COVID as well as a means of helping to address disadvantage attainment gaps more generally.

£350 million was allocated to the programme in its first year with a further £200 million for two subsequent years. For 2022/23, the government announced £349 million for tutoring. This subsidised the cost of tutoring to schools at an initial rate of 75% but reducing to 60% in 2022/23.

The programme has been marred by a number of issues, however. One has been a lack of quality tutors, particularly in 'coldspot' areas of the country most in need of tutoring support. Another has been the poor quality of tutoring provision particularly by commercial tutoring providers. Criticism focused on the poor rates of pay tutors were receiving relative to the high amounts companies were charging schools for tutoring. Schools reported last-minute cancellations by providers, tutors not turning up, high rates of tutor drop-out and tutors being changed on a frequent basis resulting in a lack of continuity across tutoring sessions[22].

These issues can be particularly damaging for disadvantaged pupils already struggling in class, and particularly so if they are being removed from classroom learning to attend tutoring. A consequence of these issues is that many schools are now wary of tutoring as an intervention.

For 2022/23, the National Tutoring Programme has been reconstituted so that schools receive tutoring funding directly. A majority of schools are opting to use a school-led route in which they use funds to employ their own tutors – either existing members of school staff or specific hires. This should help circumvent some of the problems encountered through the Tuition Partners route. Beyond this year however, the future of the NTP is unclear.

---

[21] Numbers of beneficiaries of the main charity tutoring charities number in the thousands, see: Elliot Major, L., Tyers, M., & Chu, R. (2020)

[22] See for example https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/feb/13/ive-got-one-word-for-the-tutoring-programme-disastrous

Against this backdrop, universities in England have been asked to demonstrate how they are helping to improve attainment in schools[23]. Guidance from the Office for Students in England suggests that tutoring is a way in which universities may be able to support attainment raising in schools. Uni Connect partners meanwhile have also been tasked with raising attainment as one of their four priorities and there is interest in tutoring as one means of delivering this priority[24].

Given the implementation difficulties seen with the NTP, careful consideration of how to deliver tutoring consistently and effectively is vital.

[23] See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-levelling-up-plans-to-improve-student-outcomes and https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/schools-attainment-and-the-role-of-higher-education/

[24] See: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/uni-connect-guidance-on-priorities/

University-led tutoring provision

Despite growing interest in university-led tutoring provision, our survey work indicates that perhaps only around a third of universities currently run a tutoring or mentoring programme for school or college learners - around 50 out of around 150 universities[25]. These results should be treated as indicative: it could be that schemes are not clearly advertised on university websites, or that universities were unable to respond to our requests for information.

Many of these programmes are aimed at improving access to specific higher education courses and careers rather than improving earlier attainment for disadvantaged learners. It is unsurprising that more university-led programmes are mentoring programmes aimed at Years 11 and above given that universities' central interest has been in widening access to their institutions.

Nevertheless, a number of universities are running tutoring programmes aimed at raising attainment in schools[26]. Almost all are aimed at supporting disadvantaged learners, with the majority supporting learners not achieving at expected levels in school – although a few target high-achieving pupils and some don't have attainment criteria.

The majority of programmes appear to be run by universities themselves, but some are run in partnership with external providers such as Into University (who provide their own learning centres), the Brilliant Club and the Tutor Trust among others. A number of programmes use external providers to provide tutor training.

Our research suggests that students are usually paid. Most programmes use undergraduates but some also involve postgraduates and recent graduates. Programmes are typically led by

---

25 Based on an online search of publicly available information on universities' own websites carried out by a research student. A tutoring programme was defined as being at least three sessions of at least 30 minutes each aimed at aiding learners in Key Stage 5 and below with material within the school curriculum. A mentoring programme was defined as sessions with a designated mentor lasting at least three months aimed at aiding learners with skills or materials falling outside of the school curriculum. These definitions were designed to exclude other types of programmes universities might run such as taster days and residentials.

26 According to the search described above, as well as an online survey we sent out to all heads of WP via FACE

universities' Widening Participation teams with some also being part of Student Employability initiatives.

Examples of tutoring programmes currently being run include:

- Imperial College London – Pimlico Connection Tutoring, an online maths and science tutoring programme for Year 10 – 13 students

- Kings College London – Scholars+, a year-long face-to-face English and maths tutoring programme for Year 10 and 11 students run in partnership with external provider, Team Up

- Queen Margaret University Edinburgh – Enhanced Learning Tutoring Initiative (ELTI) for Year 11 – 13 (equivalent) students in all subjects. Includes community referrals and self-referrals; some tutees are school refusers. Tutoring takes place through different delivery means/locations depending on pupil needs

- Queen's University Belfast – Reading Together and Numeracy Together for Year 7 and 8 (equivalent) students and Senior Academy for Year 13 (equivalent) students in any subject

- Sheffield University – US in Schools mentoring programme for Year 9, 12 and 13 students

- St George's University of London – Science Stars, a GCSE science tutoring programme for Year 10 and 11 students

- University of Essex – Outreach Mentoring Programme for Year 9 students

- University of Worcester – Introduction to Tutoring, a 15-credit undergraduate module in which students learn about tutoring and apply their skills by seeking employment in local schools through the NTP school-led route

- University of York – Students in Schools, a volunteering programme originally set up by students and now run by the university volunteering team offering a variety of placement options in schools including English and maths GCSE tutors

In addition, a number of universities have programmes that are due to start shortly such as:

- Nottingham Trent University (together with Nottingham University) – Students in Classrooms, a reading programme for Year 7 and 8 students, and Primary Learning Advocates, a reading and communication programme for Year 3 – 6 pupils

- Oxford Brookes University – Year 11 Tutoring Programme in English, maths and science

- University of Cumbria – Year 7 tutoring with Graduate Interns

This is not intended as an exhaustive list but gives an indication of the tutoring programmes currently operating across the sector. Our surveys suggest that there are opportunities to expand tutoring programmes significantly.

Our pilot: creating a quality-focused model

Our pilot aimed to test a potential model for a university-led tutoring service based on two key elements:

1. Tutoring of a foundational literacy course for Year 8 pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds not achieving at expected levels, developed by a current Exeter head teacher

2. Delivery of tutoring by undergraduate students on the Learning for Teaching course based at the University's School of Education, an optional credit-bearing module open to second, third and fourth year undergraduates studying any subject

We believe these two elements together have the potential to provide for a high-quality model of undergraduate student tutoring that at scale could help to improve achievement for disadvantaged learners.

We carried out a ring-fenced pilot in Autumn Term (Term 1) 2022 with six undergraduate students on the Learning for Teaching course tutoring 16 Year 8 students at St James School in Exeter, which is part of the local Ted Wragg Trust. Coordination between the module organisers, the undergraduate tutors and the school was carried out by the researchers (Anne-Marie Sim and Lee Elliot Major).

On the school side, Lindsay Skinner, head teacher at St James School in Exeter, wrote the tutoring course, produced the undergraduate tutor training course (a set of five online lectures and supporting slides), selected and grouped the pupils and oversaw weekly tutoring sessions, which took place in the atrium after school. She also conducted an in-person training session with the undergraduate students on their first afternoon in school, and organised their 'classroom observation' sessions, which took place before the tutoring each week.

Foundation literacy course for Year 8s

We collaborated with Lindsay Skinner to address key issues within current tutoring provision: lack of focus on content that will have the most impact on outcomes for disadvantaged learners, and variability

in tutoring quality. Lindsay Skinner wrote and produced our foundational literacy course – the University of Exeter Crafting Accurate Sentences programme.

The course focuses on foundational literacy concepts to help pupils write basic sentences accurately, which we believe is the key deficit underlying poor attainment across many subjects. It is a standalone course that assumes no prior knowledge meaning it doesn't need to be linked in to what pupils are learning in class, reducing the burden on teachers. Student tutors also don't need any prior knowledge.

The course provides all the activities pupils will use across the nine weeks, minimising variation in what pupils are taught and enabling student tutors to focus on delivering the content. Learning has been carefully sequenced to reinforce threshold concepts, with provision made for pupils missing sessions.

Tutor training has been designed to cover both content and pedagogy, with time built in for student tutors to practice delivering every activity they will conduct with their pupils. Concepts that pupils are likely to struggle with are flagged and tips given on how to overcome difficulties. This reduces the need for tutors to rely on their own learning experiences to inform their practice, which is a key source of variability in tutoring.

Delivery through Learning for Teaching module

The researchers worked with colleagues from the University of Exeter's accredited Learning for Teaching course to offer the tutoring as a 50-hour placement option. Incorporating tutoring into an accredited module enables high-quality delivery with significant time dedicated to training and preparation in a low-cost, sustainable way.

Learning for Teaching is a 30-credit module open to all 2nd, 3rd and 4th year undergraduates studying any subject. It provides a taster in teaching and many students select this option because they may be interested in pursuing a career in teaching. Students undertake a mandatory 50-hour placement and complete a reflective log based on the placement, which forms part of their assessment for the module. They also complete a seminar series in Term 2 introducing them to various aspects of teaching and learning including social disadvantage, EAL and SEND.

We offered tutoring as one of three placement options students could choose. Students undertook the tutoring placement in Term 1, before the seminar series. Students had one week in which to complete the online

training – a five-hour series of online lectures created by Lindsay Skinner. They then attended weekly sessions at St James School in Exeter, spending an hour-and-a-half observing lessons before tutoring the same two or three pupils each week, after school for one hour.

The tutoring placement offers a rounded experience for students due to its high ratio of training to tutoring and combination of weekly tutoring sessions with classroom observation and time for reflection. 50 hours' placement time consists of:

· Training: 11.5hrs. Online lectures: 5hrs content plus 5hrs practice. In-person 'live' session to model practice and ask questions: 1.5hrs

· Classroom observation: 12hrs (1.5hrs/week except for first session)

· Tutoring preparation time: 9hrs (1hr/week)

· Tutoring: 9hrs (1hr/week)

· Reflective log: 9hrs (1 hr/week)

Summary of the benefits of this model

Foundation literacy course for Year 8s:

· **Targets the key deficit** for pupils not achieving at expected levels (writing accurate basic sentences) that should improve attainment across all subjects

· **Relatively early focus** in secondary school (Year 8) should provide additional cumulative benefit over time (i.e. before gaps widen further in secondary school). No national assessments for this year group should enable a focus on this foundational work

· **Uses widely used techniques** – developed by a current head teacher and former English teacher with extensive experience of working with disadvantaged pupils, based on her book used by over a third of secondary schools

· **Reduces potential teacher workload** compared with other tutoring programmes as foundational literacy content requires no prior knowledge and means tutoring doesn't need to tie in with classroom subject teaching

· **Reduces variability in tutor quality** as training and course materials combine content and pedagogy – tutors require no prior knowledge to teach the course and the training covers each tutoring activity undergraduates will do with their tutees

Delivery through Learning for Teaching module:

· **Reduces the likelihood of tutor drop-out and absence** (or lateness) as the tutoring forms a mandatory part of students' activities within a credit-bearing module that students sign up to six months

in advance; students are likely to be highly invested in completing and doing well in the placement

- **Focuses on high-quality tutoring** due to the high ratio of time built in for training, preparation and reflection (50 hour total time allocation for nine hours of tutoring); generous allocation of time wouldn't be possible through paid routes

- **Provides a well-rounded student experience** as the placement develops different skills through a combination of the tutoring experience with weekly classroom observation sessions, time for reflection on their observations and practice, and the later module seminar series

- **Accessible to all students** interested in taking part as delivery through the curriculum means the experience isn't limited to those able to take part in extra-curricular activities (delivery through voluntary or paid routes can exclude students on low-incomes needing regular paid work or those with caring responsibilities)

Considerations addressed by our tutoring model

Issue	Addressed?	How
Tutor supply		
Scale (recruitment of tutors)	Somewhat	This was a ring-fenced pilot with a small number of students. 80-100 students take the Learning for Teaching module each year meaning the programme could be scaled to run with significant numbers but would still need to be supplemented with other delivery routes to achieve the scale required to serve the aims of a national tutoring service (400+ students)
Cold spot coverage	No	Pilot was with St James School in Exeter only. Students made their own way to school (c.40 minute walk/ten minute drive) and were not supported with travel costs
Tutor variability		
Attendance/ course completion	Yes	Delivery via credit-bearing module placement ensures optimal tutor attendance and completion rates
Content + pedagogical knowledge	Yes	Course sets out all content that tutors cover including each activity tutors do with their tutees. Training videos enable undergraduates to teach the course based on no prior knowledge and covers both content and pedagogy
Tutor support/ development	Yes	Placement has a generous training allocation including a 'live' session to practice activities and ask questions. Classroom observation sessions and time allocated to writing the reflective log contribute to student development. For the pilot, the researchers provided a contact point for questions while Lindsay Skinner oversaw tutoring at the school meaning tutors had on-hand support if needed. Module coordinators also provided wellbeing support such as options to discuss worries about going to school. Student questions and concerns in this pilot were fairly minimal; we will continue to monitor this in further and expanded pilots
Targeting of disadvantaged pupils		
Pupil selection	Yes	Pupils were selected by Lindsay Skinner, St James head teacher. The primary criteria for selection was pupils struggling to write consistently accurate basic sentences, who would benefit from dedicated support with their writing. Pupil premium was a consideration as was pupils' likelihood of attending after school for the full nine-week course. Pupils were grouped into twos or threes taking into account which pupils would get on well together

Considerations addressed by our tutoring model, cont…

Tutoring content + pedagogy	Yes	Tutoring course was designed to address a specific need: supporting pupils struggling with their writing to enable them to write accurate basic sentences. Course content was written to cover key threshold concepts and course training was designed so that tutors understand key difficulties pupils are likely to struggle with and how to overcome these
Pupil attendance/ course completion	Somewhat	Colleagues at Exeter University were keen that the tutoring should take place after school and not within lesson time. Pupils were selected who would be likely to maintain good attendance at after-school sessions. Tutoring was delivered face to face at school and overseen by Lindsay Skinner who was able to closely monitor attendance and follow up on absence. All of these factors will need to be thought through when scaling this model
School/teacher workload		
Classroom/ tutoring linked	Yes	Tutoring does not require linking to classroom teaching as it does not contain subject content but is a discrete course in foundational literacy. This should reduce teacher workload when delivering the tutoring programme
Administration (pupil selection, safeguarding, tutor supervision)	No	Pilot did not address school administrative workload. Lindsay Skinner selected suitable Year 8 pupils based on target criteria above. She also supervised the weekly tutoring sessions. School administrative staff were involved in ensuring student tutor DBS and safeguarding checks were in place
Cost		
To the university	Yes	Low-cost model as tutors are not paid but complete the tutoring as part of a credit-bearing module. Additional staffing requirement is fairly minimal – for the pilot the researchers managed coordination between undergraduates and the school; in future, once operating at scale, this would require a small administrative resource on a flexible basis throughout the term plus some resource for ongoing evaluation
To the school	Yes	Tutoring was provided free of charge to pupils and the school. Lindsay Skinner created the course in her own time with no charge. The tutoring required some dedicated school staff time for administration, overseeing tutoring sessions and marking the pre- and post-tutoring assessments
Sustainability	Yes	Incorporation into an existing credit-bearing module means the placement is sustainable for the longer term

Indicative evidence and next steps

Indicative evidence from our pilot suggests the following results:

A group of 16 Year 8 students was selected by the head teacher to work in groups of two or three with six Exeter University undergraduates. Students were selected because they had been identified by their English teachers as not consistently writing in accurate sentences. There were eight males and eight females in the group. Of the 16, four students were entitled to Pupil Premium, three students had English as an additional language and two children were open to social care. Three students had an identified SEND K of whom two were Pupil Premium eligible. Students were placed in groups with their tutors by friendship.

14 of the school students completed the intervention though some of the students in this group did miss one or more sessions due to absence from school. Attendance was voluntary and students were not pushed to attend (although they were occasionally reminded of the tutoring sessions in passing).

Students completed a pre-assessment that assessed the range and accuracy of sentence structures and punctuation in their writing. Their writing was assessed against a framework evaluating the following areas: full stops, capital letters, simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, range of sentence structures, range of conjunctions, participle phrases, commas and other punctuation. Each area was scored from 0-3 with 0 being 'absent' and 3 being 'consistently used and accurate'.

The average score for the pre-assessment was 10.9 out of 30. The average score for the post-assessment was 21 out of 30.

In the pre-test, the average score in each area was one, indicating that features were occasionally present but mostly inaccurate. In the post assessment, this had increased to an average of two, indicating features being regularly present and mostly accurate.

The largest increase was seen in the range of conjunctions used by students and use of participle phrases. Students made the least progress with accurate use of full stops though this was largely because this was already an area of strength.

Pupil experience:

In the post-tutoring survey, 100% of pupils indicated that they would recommend the programme to others and the vast majority felt that the tutoring had helped with both their writing and their confidence in lessons. A majority of pupils also thought the tutoring had helped them in all subjects and English specifically. All the pupils indicated that they enjoyed the tutoring and the vast majority enjoyed it all of the time. The stickers the undergraduates gave out were particularly popular!

Interestingly, despite feeling that the tutoring had helped them, fewer pupils indicated that they were "good at writing" after the intervention, with more choosing the "okay at writing" option. And more pupils indicated that they "didn't like writing" in the post-tutoring survey compared with the pre-tutoring survey. It's unclear why this might be the case. It's possible that the tutoring brought to the fore pupils' struggles with their writing despite the improvement they experienced; alternatively, there may be factors outside of the tutoring that caused the pupils to feel this way as the surveys were completed a term apart.

Pupils highlighted clauses, punctuation and vocabulary as the most helpful in improving their writing, whilst one pupil thought simple sentences was the least enjoyable topic as they already knew this. When asked if and how the tutoring had helped change how confident they felt in lessons, pupils suggested that it had helped with knowing what and how to write.

Undergraduate student experience:

Outcomes from the post-tutoring survey indicate that undergraduate students enjoyed the tutoring, found the workload manageable and would recommend it to others. Many additionally found it useful for finding out more about teaching and came away with a clear view on whether or not teaching was a career they would like to pursue.

The students' reflective logs provide fantastic evidence of the learning for teaching that undergraduate students gained from the process. These learnings include the importance of fostering good relationships with their tutees, developing an understanding of each learner and the difficulties or barriers they might be facing, how to address these difficulties with empathy, and techniques like using repetition, positive reinforcement, quizzes and 'merits'. The logs also describe the initiative and improvisation involved in responding to tutees' understanding of each lesson and the mood of the tutee group.

The students provided useful feedback that will enable us to improve elements of the programme for next year. In the training, we will be adding some more pedagogical learning upfront. We will also give the students links to some lecture content which they currently do after the placement so that they can learn more about topics like disadvantage before doing the placement.

Interestingly, the survey results indicate that the undergraduates did not find the observation sessions useful because they wanted to be observing classroom teaching rather than electives (this is an 'extra-curricular' type programme built into the school week at St James). However, the students' logs suggest that students did take away learnings from their observations – in particular, reflections on the effectiveness of

differing approaches that different teachers took in their lessons, but also a sensitivity to the different intentions teachers might have had in taking different approaches.

The student logs also provide fascinating insights into some of the issues involved in delivering tutoring in practice including how to deal with pupil absence caused by friends falling out, how to support tutees who might be at different points in the course or at different writing levels, and how to react to pupils losing concentration at the end of a long day. Some of these issues will be things we can address in the programme design; but what the logs also show is the degree to which students' care, attention and initiative still matter hugely to successful delivery.

Various elements of the programme are not changeable despite feedback – for example, changing the day and timing of sessions is not possible due to undergraduate teaching schedules. As we note later in this document, some elements of a programme will be set by what is possible rather than what may be optimal.

Finally, what the students' reflective logs give insight into, over and above the survey results, are the quality of the relationships fostered between the undergraduates and school students and the impact of these relationships on both the tutors and tutees. For example, one undergraduate describes with great empathy the difficulties her three tutees face, which include a

crowded home environment, dyslexia, and uncertainty over how to get home from the tutoring. Her admiration for the pupils' determination to succeed inspires her to do her best for them. In a later entry to the log, the undergraduate is overjoyed to hear that one of the students has become inspired to go to university.

Feedback from undergraduate module convenors and school:

The module convenor, Anita Wood, found the logistical elements of the placement ran very smoothly and the outcomes in terms of undergraduate student experience were very positive. The reflective logs which formed a part of the undergraduates' assessed work showed real insight into the challenges of tutoring and the undergraduates' ability to link educational theory with practice. Placements as part of a university module can provide undergraduates with employability experience and skills that lead to enhanced employability prospects beyond their degree. It was particularly noticeable in the undergraduate tutors' reflective logs that teamwork, active problem solving and resilience were qualities demonstrated and developed by the undergraduate tutors during the tutoring placement.

From the school side, Lindsay Skinner was involved in overseeing the tutoring and this enabled her to see which parts of the course worked well and what needs tweaking for next year (for example, activities taking more or less

time than anticipated and concepts that learners struggle with and how student tutors might be supported to better explain these).

Future evaluation plans:

This was a small ring-fenced pilot and basic evaluation. The researchers put together a pre- and post-tutoring survey for school students and undergraduate students to complete, as well as a short post-tutoring survey for pupils' English teachers. Lindsay Skinner kept a record of attendance, and administered a short pre- and post-tutoring assessment testing pupils' literacy skills according to the aims of the tutoring course. Assessments were marked by Lindsay Skinner and moderated by another teacher.

We will be re-running the pilot next year, aiming for a scaled-up programme with many more students and a more comprehensive evaluation involving school progress data with a comparator group.

Alternative delivery routes

With support from the UPP Foundation, we are also looking into alternative delivery routes for tutoring including through paid student ambassadors and the work experience component of university award programmes and will provide updates on further pilots we are running in due course.

One pilot involves working with Next Steps South West, the Uni Connect (UC) partnership for Cornwall, Devon and Somerset to offer paid student ambassador tutoring work. (The considerations addressed in the table on pp22–23, would need to be reviewed if using paid students.)

We are also speaking with other Uni Connect (UC) partnerships and universities about scaling this model elsewhere next year. And we are exploring further models with the University of Exeter's Access, Participation and Outreach and Employability teams.

We have also had discussions about developing tutoring as part of a service learning model that is factored into students' learning time. This would be part of a standard offer to undergraduates who would benefit from a placement experience that supports future employment and links them with local communities.

As part of our work for the South-West Social Mobility Commission meanwhile we will explore how universities can work with further education colleges and multi academy trusts to scale up university-led tutoring so that it benefits pupils across the entire South-West peninsula.

Considerations for universities when setting up a tutoring programme

Our work suggests that universities should consider ten practical questions when considering setting up tutoring programmes. We set out these questions below, and then summarise our own experiences in relation to these. For a more detailed checklist of questions, see the Appendix.

1. **What delivery routes are available and where will you house the programme within the university?**

2. **How does the tutoring programme fit into other tutoring programmes locally/regionally?**

3. **How will student tutors be recruited?**

4. **Which school/college learners will the tutoring support?**

5. **How will you select participating schools/colleges and learners?**

6. **What will the tutoring consist of?**

7. **How will the tutoring be delivered?**

8. **How will student tutors be trained and supported?**

9. **How will the tutoring be administered and paid for?**

10. **How will the tutoring programme be evaluated?**

1. What delivery routes are available and where will we house the programme within the university?

Starting a new tutoring programme at a university is likely to need the support of several functions/approving bodies to go ahead, therefore having a core organiser/organising team with influence within the university to drive this forward initially, as well as administer the programme, is essential. The organising team will need to obtain buy-in for the programme to go ahead, and coordinate between relevant departments and personnel to ensure the programme aligns with the university's existing offers.

In our case, the researchers initiated the tutoring programme. We obtained buy-in from the university's Deputy Vice Chancellor for Education and Education Leadership Team. We also had multiple conversations with the Learning for Teaching lead and Access and Participation team together with the school head teacher and multi-academy trust vice principal to understand and agree objectives, key parameters, timeframes, and roles and responsibilities.

Universities will most likely already have a range of programmes doing outreach work with schools and colleges or school/college learners – for example, summer schools, taster days, career pathway programmes, and so on. These may be run through different groups including the Access, Participation and Outreach team, Employability function or student-led societies.

Universities are also likely to have a range of programmes (overlapping with or separate from the above) offering their own students opportunities to get involved in service learning activities – for example, student ambassador or student award programmes.

When considering developing a tutoring programme, knowing the landscape of existing programmes is a useful first step. Organisers will need to understand each programme's aims and expected outcomes and how the programme is delivered.

It may be possible for a tutoring programme to be offered as an extension to or variation on current programmes, which could expedite set-up and reduce set-up and running costs.

Our pilot for example involved piggybacking on an existing undergraduate teaching module at Exeter run by the School of Education, which saved a lot of time relative to setting up a separate tutoring module and getting it accredited from scratch. We are also planning to pilot tutoring models with existing Access, Participation and Outreach and Employability-run programmes.

Understanding how existing programmes work is also vital to ensuring schemes don't compete over the same pool of students in terms of recruitment and that there is consistency in the student offer across different programmes (e.g. in terms of student payment or reward). Tying in with existing programmes will give an indication of potential scale in terms of the number of student tutors the programme is likely to be able to attract.

Budget and staffing are central concerns. If student tutors are being paid, tutoring programmes can be costly especially at scale. Which function will finance a paid programme may determine where the tutoring programme sits within the university. Alternative forms of student reward such as recognition or credits may similarly determine where a tutoring programme is housed.

Tutoring schemes can be quite labour-intensive to administer, especially at the start, which means it is likely to need additional dedicated staffing at the university and resources and buy-in at the school.

For universities, a core organiser is needed to set up administration of any new programme or for any scale-up (finding and liaising with new schools/ trusts). Once a programme is set up and at scale, administration can be much more straightforward (sending out/collecting standard documents and answering student/school queries) and could potentially be covered using a small portion of existing staff time.

For schools, it may be that they would like to participate in the programme but don't have the capacity to engage in university-led projects. The programme is likely to be more sustainable from a school perspective if it ties in with the Pupil Premium strategy and school improvement plans, and has engagement from the senior leadership team.

2. How does the tutoring programme fit in with other tutoring programmes locally/regionally?

In addition to understanding existing initiatives within the university, knowing current local/regional provision will be useful in similar ways to those described above. There may be possibilities for collaboration with existing tutoring organisations operating in the region or for a new programme to fill gaps in provision geographically or in terms of the tutoring offer. Universities should ensure integration with existing offers where possible to avoid duplication of work and resources.

3. How will student tutors be recruited?

Universities will need to decide which students/graduates will be targeted for the programme. Considerations will include target tutor numbers and the size of the available pool of students, students' availability and timetabling, students' subject knowledge and the evidence around what works best for different subjects and tutee year groups.

Universities may want to put in place additional criteria for selecting student tutors such as minimum grades in particular subjects, and they may want to run an application and interview process to select for requisite competences, skills and motivations.

Universities will need to consider **how they can make tutoring opportunities accessible to all students.** If presented as a volunteering opportunity for example, this can exclude students from lower income backgrounds who may need to spend time outside of their course in paid employment or students with caring responsibilities. Even if paid, universities will need to consider rates and hours to ensure tutoring or the paid schemes into which tutoring could be integrated such as student ambassador programmes are a viable form of supplementary income relative to other paid work.

Alternatively, universities could look to embed tutoring into the curriculum: for example through an accredited module as in our pilot or an alternative service learning model that is factored into students' learning time. Considerations here would need to include the timetabling of tutoring sessions to ensure this was an accessible option for all students. Issues around logistics such as how students get to school/college if tutoring is delivered face to face will also need consideration.

In addition to ensuring that programmes are inclusive, choosing how to pay or otherwise reward students for their time is important to issues of fairness and student attendance and motivation (e.g. Tutor Trust pays tutors generously in the interests of fairness and quality).

What elements of the tutoring are paid for is a key consideration. Transport time and costs may need to be incorporated into budgets in the interests of fairness and access. Student tutor training can also be a significant component of the budget – especially in a high-quality programme where significant time is dedicated to training. Organisers may wish to consider engaging student tutors in more than one tutoring block to reduce the relative cost of training to tutoring.

Universities will also need to think about how they raise awareness about the programme and/or market it to students particularly if a new scheme. Running an initial pilot with a small number of students may be useful as a proof of concept to both refine the programme and act as an exemplar to encourage student participation going forwards.

4. Which school/ college learners will the tutoring support?

Tutoring programmes vary in their aims, but typically they aim to increase attainment in some form amongst a group of school or college learners. Universities will need to be clear about what specific issue they are trying to address with their tutoring programme – e.g. boosting exam performance (for example in Years 9-11), providing additional foundational support for learners not achieving at expected levels, or providing 'stretch' opportunities for high-achieving learners. This will enable them to design their model to optimise for intended outcomes.

Universities may wish to consider where they think the greatest need is in their local area/region and/or how the university's strengths could best be put to use. In our pilot, we focused on Year 8 learners from disadvantaged backgrounds struggling with basic literacy, informed by the South-West's stark disadvantage attainment gaps. With around 60% of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds not achieving a basic pass in English and maths GCSE, support with basic literacy early in secondary school targets this group.

5. How will you select participating schools/colleges and learners?

The number of learners universities can reach is likely to be constrained by the availability of student tutors and/or the budget to pay for tutors. On the other hand, demand may be a constraint on scale where schools/colleges are paying for tutoring and/or where they have had previous poor experiences of tutoring schemes. Matching the number of available tutors to tutees is a balancing act that programme organisers will need to manage during programme set-up.

Learner numbers will also depend on the ratio of tutees to tutors. While one to one tuition is deemed to be the gold standard, small group tuition has been shown to be effective, at much reduced cost. Some evaluations additionally find that learners prefer small group tutoring. Ratios of 1:2 or 1:3 (tutor: tutee) are typical; higher numbers may reduce effectiveness[27].

Universities will most likely reach learners via schools and colleges. This is therefore a two-step process: selecting schools/colleges/trusts to work with and then selecting learners within those schools and colleges.

Typically, universities will have schools/colleges they already work with. These might be schools meeting particular criteria in terms of pupil deprivation. Or they might be schools that have proactively reached out to the university. It will be important for universities to be aware of which schools they don't currently engage with, particularly as these might be the schools most in need of support.

Universities will need to think about the locations of schools and travel logistics if students are going to provide face to face tutoring. Organisers may need to factor in taxi hire for more distant schools, and balance travel time with contact time. In our pilot, students were expected to make their own way to school (a 40 minute walk in each direction); once there, they spent two-and-a-half hours at school (one-and-a-half hours of classroom observation time; one hour of tutoring).

We think **multi-academy trusts represent an opportunity for scale** as student tutors could be deployed across a trust with a reduced need for coordination relative to working with separate schools/colleges. In our pilot, we were fortunate to work with St James School which is part of the local Ted Wragg Trust.

As regional and national coverage develops, universities will need to communicate to ensure there aren't gaps in coverage – and in particular that remote and isolated schools who might most benefit are included. We think that **further education colleges could help to enhance coverage especially in more remote areas.** Online or blended models are otherwise an option, particularly for older learners – although these can be perceived as less effectual[28].

Typically, it is left to the discretion of schools to select individual pupils. If targeting disadvantaged pupils, we would expect the majority of selected pupils to be pupil premium eligible. Whilst an imperfect measure, free school meals/pupil premium

[27] Higgins, S., Katsipataki, M., Kokotsaki, D., Coleman, R., Major, L.E., & Coe, R. (2013). The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit. London: Education Endowment Foundation. Available at https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition

[28] Lord, Poet and Styles (2022)

status is still one of the best proxies we have for disadvantage. Schools will be able to use their more nuanced individual knowledge of pupils to select the right learners, however.

Schools might also want to take into account other factors in their selection including pupil attendance, behaviour and special educational needs. Attendance and completion of a tutoring course are essential to impact. If a pupil's attendance is poor, tutoring may not be the right form of support at this juncture. Meanwhile unless tutors are trained in dealing with difficult behaviour or special educational needs, undergraduate student tutoring may not be the right form of support for these pupils.

Schools will also want to consider which pupils they group together if tutoring is to be delivered in small groups. Knowledge of individual pupils will be useful in grouping together pupils who will work well together.

More generally, universities leading a tutoring programme will need to clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of the university and of the school when it comes to selecting learners and subsequent administration of the programme (as detailed further below).

6. What will the tutoring consist of?

The subject(s) and focus areas the tutoring programme covers may have been decided upon when setting out the aims of the programme, especially if the programme targets one specific area such as our basic literacy programme. If the tutoring spans multiple subjects/areas, organisers may need to ensure the programme's objectives are clearly understood by the various parties involved (schools/colleges, student tutors, programme evaluators, etc.).

There are different models for how tutoring courses might be developed. In some instances tutoring providers create and provide all of the tutoring materials tutors use whilst in others tutors are expected to create their own lesson plans, activities and materials. In both instances, either programme organisers or student tutors will need to liaise with class teachers to ensure the tutoring ties in with classroom teaching. Alternatively, as with our pilot, it may be possible to develop a tutoring course that acts in a standalone capacity so that this tie-in isn't required.

Creating a fully specified tutoring course that sets out all of the teaching involved from course overview to individual lesson plans and activities can be a good way of ensuring high-quality tutoring – particularly where this has been developed by a qualified teacher. It reduces variability based on tutor ability/motivation. It also enables tutors to focus on delivery including being responsive to learners' needs and required lesson pace, which is the key benefit of small group tutoring.

Organisers will need to plan for the correct resources to be provided

at sessions such as course booklets, laptops and mini whiteboards.

7. How will the tutoring be delivered?

Designing the programme to maximise attendance of tutoring sessions and prevent drop-outs (by learners/tutors) is a key quality concern.

Face to face tutoring is typically considered optimal in terms of both attendance and the ability for tutors and tutees to build rapport. This typically takes place at school. Blended options (mostly online but with perhaps one or two in-person visits either by learners to the university or students to the school) might be an option where the logistics of providing face to face tutoring are insurmountable. Online sessions can take place at school or in learners' own homes. Online sessions may work better for secondary rather than primary school learners.

Programme organisers will need to consider who will supervise tutoring sessions. If taking place at school, a member of school staff will likely be needed to supervise tutoring. This would work best where tutoring sessions all take place at the same time in one location. For example, in our pilot the tutoring of all 16 pupils took place in the school atrium after school, requiring just one staff member's time for one hour per week to oversee the tutoring.

A further consideration is what quality assurance might be provided throughout the delivery of tutoring sessions. Some tutoring organisations use their own members of staff to supervise tutoring sessions in order to monitor delivery. Others do 'spot checks' by dropping in to sessions, particularly those recorded on online platforms.

In our pilot, the highly specified nature of the tutoring course and training we think somewhat reduces the urgency for a close monitoring of delivery. Nevertheless, Lindsay Skinner oversaw the tutoring meaning she could observe whether student tutors were delivering the course appropriately and accurately. It also meant she was on hand to answer any questions. More generally, we think it advisable to have a subject teacher in the tutoring subject oversee the tutoring, so as to be able to spot any potential concerns and provide additional academic support where needed.

Typically, the school will have a view on when the tutoring should take place within the context of their school day. There are conflicting views on whether it is better to prioritise maximising attendance (typically better served by running tutoring sessions during the school day) and concerns about taking learners out of lessons. Some argue that it can be unhelpful and at worst detrimental to remove disadvantaged learners from lessons with qualified teachers for interventions with unqualified teachers. However others argue that the added focus learners

get from small group tutoring makes this justifiable and beneficial.

There are further arguments against taking pupils out of existing lessons, including curriculum narrowing, where pupils are taken out of subjects such as music, art or sport. This can be a significant problem for disadvantaged learners consistently targeted for interventions, with pupils feeding back that they are "missing out on the fun stuff" or on "things [they] might actually be good at". Schools should also be aware of the potential for negative self-perception by pupils selected for interventions, which can be exacerbated by being taken out of lessons with their peers.

On the other hand, running sessions after school may result in learners being tired and less able to take on new information. This was something student tutors in our pilot commented on, as sessions were run after school. Lunch-time sessions may be a possibility for some schools.

Universities will need to consider when it is practical to run tutoring programmes within the university/school year. Because of student exams, Summer Term may not be a realistic option unless a tutoring block can be compressed into a shorter duration with increased frequency. In our pilots, we ran/are running

one block in each of Autumn and Spring Terms.

EEF guidance suggests that short, regular sessions (about 30 minutes, three to five times a week) over a set period of time (up to ten weeks) are optimal[29]. However, practicality may well be the overriding factor.

In our pilot, we opted for nine weekly sessions as the most practical option in terms of students' availability and fitting the course into one term. The tutoring placement ran on a Wednesday afternoon, which was considered optimal in terms of being the least likely time to clash with students' other lectures/seminars/classes. However, this is also the time dedicated to sports activities, which could deter some students from taking part.

8. How will student tutors be trained and supported?

High quality training is fundamental to reducing variability between tutors and ensuring all tutoring sessions are as high quality as possible. Ideally training will cover various aspects of tutoring. Pedagogical training should ensure students use the best possible teaching and learning methods in their

[29] Higgins, S., Katsipataki, M., Kokotsaki, D., Coleman, R., Major, L.E., & Coe, R. (2013). The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit. London: Education Endowment Foundation. Available at https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition

practice rather than relying on their own learning experiences. Training in the subject content they will be tutoring should ensure students have adequate content knowledge. Learning about other aspects of current teaching practice or wider issues such as pupil disadvantage may also be useful for students.

Developing and delivering a high-quality training programme can be costly and will need to be factored into budgets. **Delivering training through an online programme can be a cost-effective, scalable model** but universities will need to consider how students might voice any questions or concerns and how misunderstandings might be picked up before they inform students' tutoring practice.

In our pilot, training followed a blended approach. This consisted of a set of five online lectures that students could access and practice in their own time. Ten hours' training time was factored in for students to be able to pause the videos and practice. This was supplemented by a one-and-a-half hour in-person training session in which 'live' practice and feedback took place and students could raise questions and have these answered.

Ongoing training, development opportunities and support will need to be considered. At a minimum, students will need to have a contact person for raising any questions or concerns. To ensure high-quality tutoring is delivered, having a subject-specific member of school staff supervise tutoring sessions would be helpful.

We believe that **a university-led programme is a real opportunity to build a win-win model for both learners and student tutors if done in the right way.** Universities are well-placed to ensure that the student tutor experience is as beneficial as possible. Programme organisers could consider how to build in opportunities for students to develop new skills, develop their career experience and feel part of a community of peers and/or the local community.

In our pilot, student benefits included built-in time for reflection that clearly helped the undergraduates develop their teaching practice from week to week; inclusion of classroom observation time to enhance the learning experience; and the opportunity to spend time within the local community. Outcomes from our pilot include a majority of students coming away with a clear view on whether or not teaching is a career they would like to pursue, including one student choosing to pursue a teaching career locally.

9. How will the tutoring be administered and paid for?

Tutoring models will need to consider staffing on both the university and school sides, with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and agreements over data collection and sharing.

Processes will need to be in place for dealing with absence and for raising concerns involving tutors or issues with the programme.

The process by which schools pay for tutoring sessions will also need to be determined, if they are contributing, as well as the process by which student tutors are paid (including for transport and other costs).

In our pilot, undergraduate students signed up to the tutoring placement through the Learning for Teaching course. DBS checks were conducted by Learning for Teaching coordinators for all of the students taking this module. Learning for Teaching coordinators promoted the tutoring placement to students.

The researchers developed information slides to explain the placement to the undergraduates and liaised with the undergraduates to send out timely information and answer questions. They also created parent/child information and consent forms and liaised with the school to coordinate the transfer of information/ documents including DBS documents, evaluation materials and student queries.

The school organised selection of participating school students, administered parent/child information and consent forms, provided course materials (laptops with the tutoring course uploaded for use, whiteboards and exercise books) to their students and oversaw the tutoring sessions. They also liaised with the researchers to answer undergraduate student questions.

All of these roles and responsibilities – including those around evaluation, below – were set out by the researchers in an initial document and agreed in meetings with the school and undergraduate course coordinator.

10. How will the tutoring programme be evaluated?

Programme organisers should consider how the programme might be evaluated. This will require additional staffing/budget resource.

Evaluating the impact of the programme will involve discussions with participating schools/colleges/ trusts in terms of the pupil data collection and sharing that is possible. Schools may be required to administer additional data collection such as pre- and post-tutoring pupil assessments

and/or surveys. And/or they may be asked to provide data they already collect including pupil attainment and progress scores for both pupils taking part in the programme and a comparator group.

Obtaining student tutor feedback will also be vital for monitoring whether the programme leads to intended student benefits and improving the programme for the future.

In our pilot, Lindsay Skinner created and administered a pre- and post-tutoring assessment for participating school students. The researchers created pre- and post-tutoring surveys for the undergraduate students and school students, and post-tutoring surveys for students' English teachers. Lindsay Skinner administered the surveys pertaining to the school, while the undergraduate surveys were administered by the researchers and Learning for Teaching coordinators. HEAT surveys administered by the university's Access, Participation and Outreach team were also given to school students to complete via Lindsay Skinner.

Conclusions

Our view is that small group tutoring is a promising intervention that can help raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils – at a time when school attainment gaps have widened. Tutoring is a viable option for universities being asked as part of their widening participation activities to help raise attainment in schools.

A university-led programme has the potential to be a win-win model for both pupils and undergraduate tutors who can gain invaluable life experience and skills. Tutoring within a school context may also help undergraduate students to discover whether or not they want to pursue a teaching career at a time when there is a growing need for more teachers.

In our pilot, Year 8 students taking part in a nine-hour tutoring course showed a huge improvement in their basic writing ability, with a 100% increase in test scores when taking a pre- and post-tutoring assessment. The average score for the pre-assessment was 10.9 out of 30, while the average score for the post-assessment was 21 out of 30.

These indicative findings add to growing evidence suggesting that tutoring by undergraduate students is a secure bet for improving progress for poorer pupils, amid stark attainment gaps in the school system.

There remains considerable variation in how tutoring programmes have been designed and implemented. More nuanced evidence is needed around what models are most effective in delivering consistent, high-quality tutoring.

The key challenge for institutions is one of implementation. We hope this report will help others to think through key design considerations when setting up their own tutoring programmes.

As reputable, well-funded and established institutions within their local regions, universities are well placed to deliver high quality, sustainable tutoring at scale and make a real difference to many young lives.

Appendix

Considerations for universities when setting up a tutoring programme: checklist

1. What delivery routes are available and where will you house the programme within the university?

- [ ] What existing school/college or pupil access programmes does the university run?
- [ ] What existing student extra/co-curricular programmes does the university run?
- [ ] Does the tutoring programme tie in with existing initiatives?
- [ ] What are the potential costs of a tutoring programme and available funding?
- [ ] What is the additional staffing resource requirement?
- [ ] What are the implications for student tutor numbers?
- [ ] Where will the programme be housed / which function will own it?

2. How does the tutoring programme fit in with other tutoring programmes locally/regionally?

- [ ] What other tutoring programmes are being run and who/what do they target?
- [ ] Which students do they recruit, if any?
- [ ] What is their geographic coverage?

3. How will student tutors be recruited?

- [ ] Will tutors be undergraduates, recent graduates, postgraduates or trainee teachers?
- [ ] What year group and course of study will the programme be open to?
- [ ] What criteria will be used to select students?
- [ ] How will you ensure the programme is accessible to all students?

☐ What remuneration/recognition/reward will students receive for tutoring?

☐ How will you raise awareness about and/or market the programme?

4. Which school/college learners will the tutoring support?

☐ Which school phase and year group(s) will the tutoring be for?

☐ Which disadvantage criteria, if any, will you use to target schools and learners?

☐ Which attainment/ability criteria, if any, will you use to target schools and learners?

5. How will you select participating schools/colleges and learners?

☐ How many learners can be supported by the programme?

☐ How will you select participating schools/colleges/trusts?

☐ What is the programme's geographic coverage?

☐ How will you select participating learners?

6. What will the tutoring consist of?

☐ What subject will the tutoring be in?

☐ What subject area in particular will the tutoring focus on, if specified?

☐ Are the objectives of the tutoring clear?

☐ Who will develop the course aims and overview?

☐ Who will develop specific lesson plans and activities?

☐ Who will provide the course materials and resources required for tutoring?

7. How will the tutoring be delivered?

☐ Will tutoring be face to face, online or blended?

☐ Where will tutees attend sessions (at school, home, university, or elsewhere)?

☐ Who will supervise tutoring sessions?

☐ Will tutoring take place during lesson time or after school?

☐ When will the tutoring take place within the school/university year?

☐ How long will tutoring sessions be, how frequent, and how many sessions in a block?

8. How will student tutors be trained and supported?

☐ What training do students need to tutor effectively?

☐ Who will create the training, and who will provide it?

☐ How and when will training be delivered?

☐ What time/payment allocation do students require for completing the training?

☐ What ongoing training/development will student tutors receive?

☐ Who will provide student tutor support should this be needed?

☐ How will tutoring be assessed/monitored for quality?

9. How will the tutoring be administered and paid for?

☐ Who will coordinate between the university and schools, and with student tutors?

☐ Who will coordinate tutoring on the school's side and are they clear on responsibilities?

☐ Who will arrange DBS checks and safeguarding?

☐ Who will administer learner/parent information and consent forms?

☐ Who will monitor attendance at tutoring sessions (by tutors and tutees)?

☐ What is the process for tutor/tutee absence?

☐ What is the process should concerns arise with tutors or any other aspect of tutoring?

☐ How will costs be split between schools/universities and student tutors paid?

10. How will the tutoring programme be evaluated?

- [ ] Who will conduct the evaluation?

- [ ] How will pupil learning outcomes be measured?

- [ ] How will pupil satisfaction/feedback be measured?

- [ ] How will tutor satisfaction/feedback be measured?

- [ ] How will school satisfaction/feedback be measured?

- [ ] Who will administer data collection for each of the above?

- [ ] What agreements/consents are needed to collect/share data?

References

Education Endowment Foundation. One to one tuition. Available at: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition (Accessed: 27 Dec 2022).

Torgerson, Bell, Coleman, Elliott, Fairhurst, Gascoine, Hewitt and Torgerson (2018) 'Tutor Trust: affordable primary tuition', Education Endowment Foundation. Available at: https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Tutor_Trust.pdf?v=1671556438 (Accessed: 27 Dec 2022).

Carlana and La Ferrara (2021) 'Apart but Connected: Online Tutoring and Student Outcomes during the COVID-19 Pandemic', HKS Working Paper No. RWP21-001

Elliot Major, L and Machin, S. (2018) Social Mobility and Its Enemies, Pelican Books.

Elliot Major, L. and Higgins, S. (2019) What Works? Research and Evidence for Successful Teaching, London: Bloomsbury Education.

Elliot Major, L., Tyers, M., & Chu, R. (2020). The National Tutoring Service: Levelling-up education's playing field.

Elliot-Major, L., Parsons, S. (2022) The forgotten fifth: examining the early education trajectories of teenagers who fall below the expected standards in GCSE English language and maths examinations at age 16. CLS Working Paper 2022/6. London: UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies.

Fazackerley, A. (2022) ''I've got one word for the tutoring programme – disastrous': England's catch-up scheme mired in problems', The Guardian, 13 February. Available at: 'I've got one word for the tutoring programme – disastrous': England's catch-up scheme mired in problems | Tutoring | The Guardian (Accessed: 27 Dec 2022).

Higgins, S., Katsipataki, M., Kokotsaki, D., Coleman, R., Major, L.E., & Coe, R. (2013). The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit. London: Education Endowment Foundation.

Lord, Poet and Styles (2022) 'Evaluation of Year 1 of the Tuition Partners Programme: summary and interpretation of key findings', National Foundation for Educational Research. Available at: https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/projects/Evaluation-Report-Summary-of-evaluation-findings.pdf?v=1666038048 (Accessed: 27 Dec 2022).

Nickow, Oreopoulos and Quan (2020) 'The impressive effects of tutoring on pre K-12 learning: a systematic review and meta-analysis of the experimental evidence', National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER working paper 27476

Sim, A. and Elliot Major, L. (2022). Social Mobility in the South West: levelling up through education. Available from: https://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/newsarchive/researchgeneral/Social_Mobility_in_the_South_West_Report.pdf

Sutton Trust (2019) 'Private Tuition Polling 2019'. Available at: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/PrivateTuition2019-PollingTables.pdf (Accessed: 27 Dec 2022).