



LEARN Online Tutoring Program Study

Summary Report and Analysis of the LEARN Parent Survey

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Dr. Randy LaBonte

Canadian eLearning Network (CANeLearn)
Vancouver Island University

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Introduction

LEARN (Leading English Education and Resource Network) is a non-profit educational organization with a mandate to serve the English-speaking community of Quebec by offering resources and services at no charge to elementary and secondary level students. One of the rapidly growing services is online tutoring and homework. Tutors are fully qualified Quebec teachers, experienced in tutoring, working directly with elementary (gr. 2 and up) and secondary students and their families. LEARN is anticipating up to 45,000 tutorial sessions this year, almost triple the number of sessions in the 2019-2020 school year, with 200 part-time tutors involved in the service.

In January 2023, LEARN mandated the Canadian eLearning Network (CANeLearn.net) to conduct an independent assessment of the program. CANeLearn sought the input of parents with children in the program to help determine how LEARN's online tutoring met parent's needs and how the program might be improved. A survey was developed and administered by CANeLearn, though LEARN distributed the survey in both English and French to parents of children involved in the tutoring program. The results were directly collected and used by CANeLearn to create this report about the program's effectiveness and to analyze the tutoring program's impact on student learning success, motivation, and confidence. Survey results were also reviewed in the context of recent research on tutoring and a discussion of findings can be found at the end of this report.

Survey Results

The 10-question survey developed by CANeLearn was sent by LEARN on January 12, 13, and 14 in batches of under 1000 to 2904 parents of children registered in the LEARN tutoring program at that time. 700 responses were received, a 24% return rate. Results are broken into two categories: parent observations of the impact of online tutoring on their child's learning and parent impressions on the overall effectiveness of LEARN's online tutoring program.

Impact of Online Tutoring

The first five statements were about the impact online tutoring had and required a "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", "strongly disagree" or a "not applicable" response:

1. LEARN's online tutoring helped my child understand class or course material better.
2. My child showed improvement in grades or test scores.
3. My child developed better study habits or problem-solving skills through tutoring.
4. My child appears more confident in their ability to learn and succeed in school.
5. My child appears more motivated to learn and do well in school.
6. What other positive or negative effects have you seen with the online tutoring program?

Based on 675 English and 24 French survey responses received, parent support for the benefits of the program were overwhelmingly positive. This echoed the anecdotal comments received by LEARN via its Facebook and Twitter feeds. Over 95% of survey respondents reported that tutoring had helped their child understand class or course material better with only a small number of respondents disagreeing. Note, 27 responses to the question were “not applicable”. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of the results.

Figure 1 *Class or Course Understanding*

LEARN's online tutoring helped my child understand class or course material better.

675 responses

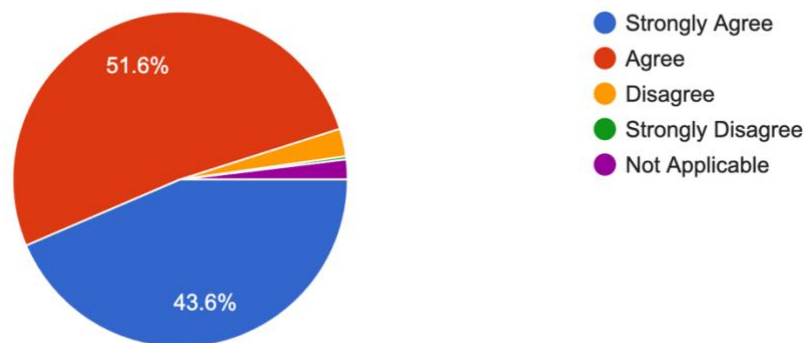


Figure 2 indicates whether parents found the tutoring had improved their children’s grades or test scores. Almost 80% saw direct improvements, slightly lower than improvements in understanding, with about 10% of respondents indicating they had not seen improved scores while 10% responded “not applicable”. See Figure 2.

Figure 2 *Grade or Test Scores*

My child showed improvement in grades or test scores.

675 responses

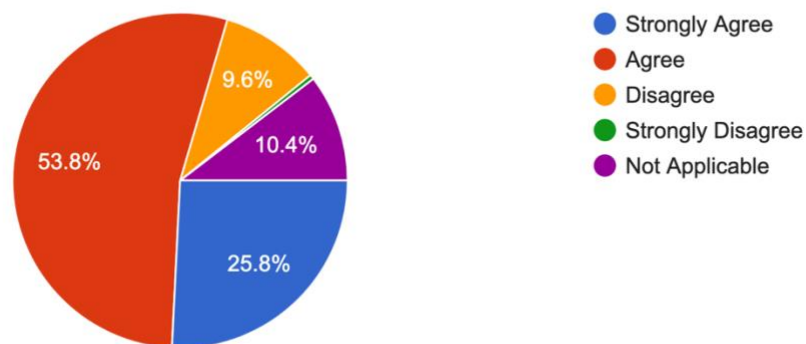
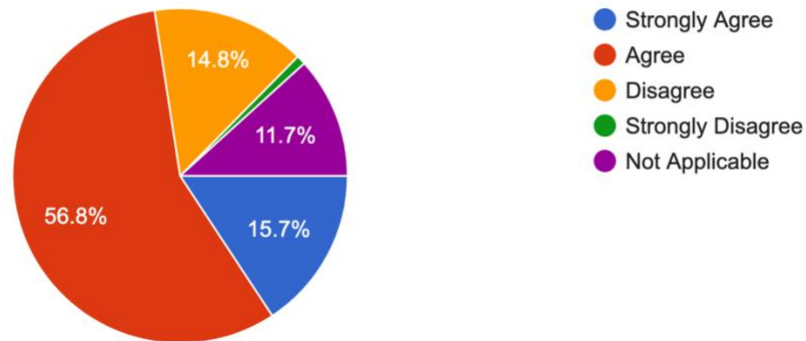


Figure 3 indicates reported improvements in study habits and problem-solving skills. Again, over 70% of parents reported improvements with approximately 15% not reporting visible improvements. Figure 3 also indicates approximately 16% of parents indicated the question was not applicable or they were not able to make that determination.

Figure 3 *Study or Problem-solving Skills*

My child has developed better study habits or problem-solving skills through tutoring.

674 responses



Figures 4 and 5 indicate parent's view of the impact of tutoring has had on their child's confidence and motivation to learn. Over 85% of parents reported increased confidence and motivation to learn as a result of the tutoring program while 10-12% did not see a change as a result of tutoring, the rest indicating the question was not applicable.

Figure 4 *Confidence*

My child appears more confident in their ability to learn and succeed in school.

672 responses

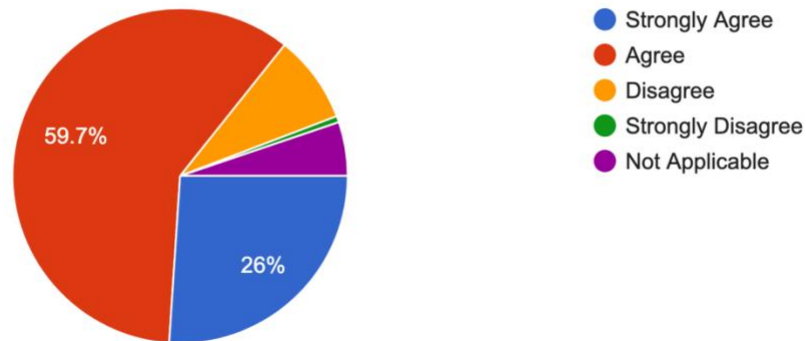
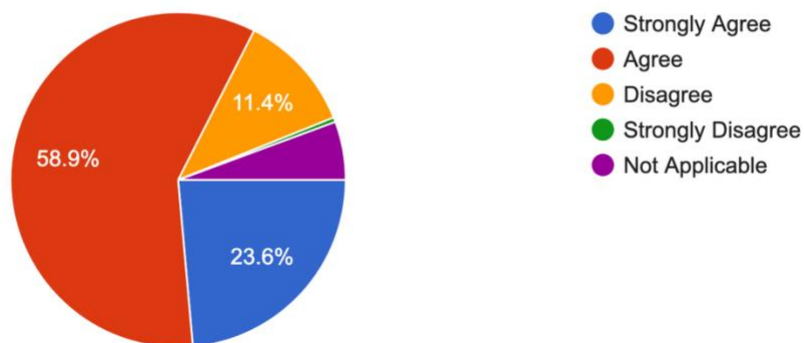


Figure 5 *Motivation*

My child appears more motivated to learn and do well in school.

674 responses



There were over 400 comments to the question “*What other positive or negative effects have you seen with the online tutoring program?*” which followed the opening five questions. Of the responses, 54 specifically mentioned the word “positive”, 30 the word “great”, and 17 “improvement” when describing the effects and only 19 mentioned the word “negative” in describing their experience. Many indicated the tutoring time available was too short and others the frequency of sessions were too limited. Some sample responses include:

- *Our daughter started last year in high school failing her math tests and ended the year with the "Most Improved in Math" award thanks to her tutor. :)*
- *My son looks forward to his tutoring sessions and it really does build his confidence in areas that he is weaker.*
- *I have been using this program for over 3+ years and in all the years and all the tutors for both children I have had only 1 negative experience with a tutor. The tutors have been magnificent and so helpful over the years.*
- *So far all tutoring sessions have been very helpful. It gave my boys the extra push of confidence they needed because now they understood something that was not clear.*
- *Only positive! LEARN is quick to reply and offer sessions to students after parents send requests, the sessions are adapted to the individual availability of students!*
- *All my kids look forward and enjoy their online tutoring. They seem to be more focused on their participation. My son gets his homework completed every time.*
- *We've appreciated having the same tutor throughout the sessions. They work so well together. The familiarity between them provided trust and confidence to be himself and express his needs.*
- *My daughter's confidence has sky rocketed!*

Only three parents mentioned internet speed as a limitation and one that distractions at home were a challenge for their child’s learning. One parent mentioned that the experience was not as good as in-person tutoring. Several pointed out that it was not always the same tutor for their child but most mentioned the patience and knowledge/skills of the tutors. The flexibility

provided and travel time saved by being delivered at the home was indicated by many as being important:

- *Online tutoring is convenient, often my child doesn't want to participate having the class online gives us more time to have her ready to join. The other positive side is the online activities are more appealing to children.*
- *I like that is well structured and people are clearly professionals and don't give up even when working with a difficult child that is not easy to engage. Sometimes I wish it could be a longer... but I understand that it's a free initiative as you are trying to help as many kids as possible.*
- *It is convenient as my child can do it from home.*

Finally, several parents specifically applauded the ability of the program to offer tutoring in French which helped their child who's only use of the language was in class as French was not used at home or in their immediate community:

- *My child's confidence and interest in French has increased, her teachers have said that she has become more confident and proficient in French*
- *It was only three months since my children came to Canada, so my children had a hard time because my children couldn't communicate at school, but I am proud to see my children's speaking skills improve gradually by going to school, taking classes, and receiving tutoring at learn.*
- *The sessions have helped to regularize French speaking outside the class. This is great because we are an English household so there aren't always opportunities for my son to practice speaking French outside school*

In summary, very few, if any, had a direct complaint about the program or saw anything negative about it. Below are an additional sampling of comments:

- *The only negative thing that is that unfortunately the demand is high so the number of sessions is in turn low per session.*
- *The fact that we didn't have to pay was important, or else my child would not have benefitted*
- *It's free for parents!!! I also love knowing the tutors are qualified and experienced teachers.*

Program Effectiveness

The final four questions of the survey were about the effectiveness of the online tutoring program.

7. LEARN tutors demonstrated an understanding of my child's needs and an ability to address them. Why?
8. Online tutoring is just as effective as traditional face-to-face tutoring. Why?
9. I would recommend LEARN's online tutoring program to other parents of students in my child's grade level. Why?

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your child’s experience with the LEARN online tutoring program? What improvements would make it more effective?

Over 97% of parents of both the English and French survey respondents indicated they would recommend the program to other parents. The responses and summary for the three questions addressing program effectiveness follow. The parent comment that captured and summarized the overall feedback on the program was:

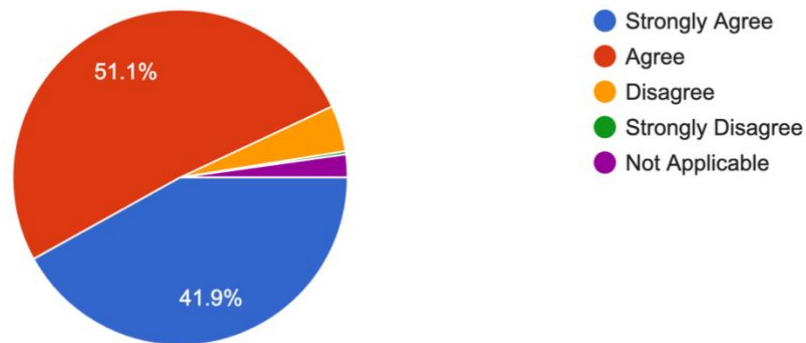
- *The convenience of this free online tutoring is priceless, without it my children would not have the same opportunity to access tutoring due to financial aspects, parent and child availability in attending face-to-face tutoring and the logistics that go with it. This is an amazing initiative in assisting my children and I am so grateful for it. More classes in a season though would be extremely beneficial.*

Tutors

Approximately 93% of parents indicated LEARN’s tutors had demonstrated understanding of their child’s needs and were able to have a positive impact in addressing them with less than 5% disagreeing with this statement. See Figure 6.

Figure 6 *Tutor’s Understanding*

LEARN tutors demonstrated an understanding of my child's needs and an ability to address them.
675 responses



Some of the reasons why parents responded this way included the tutors were teachers and familiar with the curriculum and the students. They knew how to understand their child’s needs and how to help. The tutors were kind, caring, and patient. Several comments were about the 30 minute time limit being a bit too short. There were positive remarks if there was consistency of tutor, negative if more than one tutor was involved with the parent’s child. In the case of special needs students, it was noted that tutors were able to adapt materials and approach to suit their needs.

Some of the over 400 comments reflecting this summary include:

- *Most tutors were very patient and encouraging and provided my children with tips and motivation to succeed.*
- *A 30 min tutorial once every 2 weeks is not enough in my opinion and should be once a week for 45 minutes at least to have any real effect on grades.*
- *know the material and explain it very well. They always identify her areas of difficulty and praise her strengths.*
- *The tutors approach made learning fun, and my child was motivated and enjoyed each tutoring session. His test results improved directly as a result. Small tricks helped him to overcome some difficult parts.*
- *The tutor has been so helpful and understanding for reading and math. My son is very comfortable with his tutor, they chat a bit and then get to work. The tutor also uses a lot of positive reinforcement. My son really likes his style.*
- *Feedback has usually been very targeted and specific, and included statements that were directly related to my child's learning needs and successes.*
- *My child is on the autism spectrum and the tutor adapted the sessions to work with their strengths and learning level.*
- *My son is dyslexic and the tutor went out of their way to gather material that is specific to his needs to be better prepared for their next session.*
- *My boys have autism and the tutors they have had handle the boys needs fantastically. They adjust and reword as needed before the boys get frustrated.*
- *Over the months the tutor has gotten to know my child and bring more level specific tasks.*
- *My daughter was able to have all her sessions with the same tutor so the tutor was able to tailor the lessons according to my child's particular challenges and learning style.*

In some cases, the comments were about some of the limitations with the tutoring program, particularly about different tutors in concurrent sessions, the non-use of cameras during sessions, and, in one case, limitations of sessions guided by a particular tutor. Some comments reflecting this summary:

- *I think the rotating door of tutors undermines this. We have tried to get around this by constantly requesting same tutor (with great results last year). This year, it is more challenging with tutor's changing - and thus, having to refamiliarize themselves with my child's needs each time.*
- *The tutors were competent and could ask questions. However, I wish the program was more individualised, with the same tutor working with our daughter for the whole semester, setting goals which are followed up or for example help prepare for year-end exams. Now., it was more of a Q&A sessions with a very qualified teacher....but we did not know if we would have the same tutor in five weeks or not and there was no clear expectation of progress/home work/follow-up during the next session.*
- *I wish there was something between agree and disagree. The answer is yes BUT. The but is because the LEARN practice is for tutor and student to have their cameras off. Since communication was done only orally and by ear, it took longer to establish needs.*

- *My child's teacher didn't even turn her camera on. It felt very impersonal. She was very kind and helpful but the camera off completely made my child not want to sign up again.*
- *A 30 min tutorial once every 2 weeks is not enough in my opinion and should be once a week for 45 minutes at least to have any real effect on grades.*

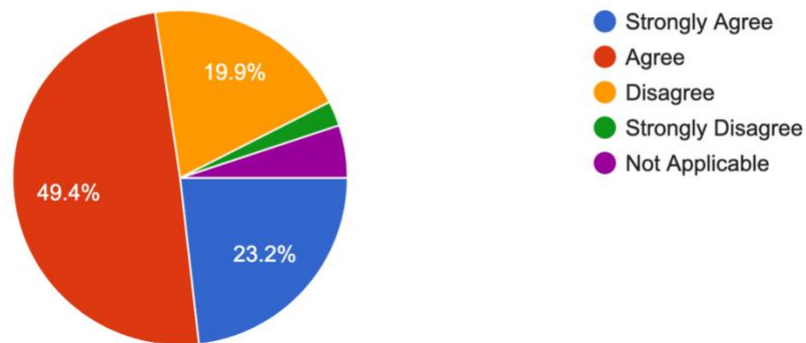
Online Tutoring

Just under 74% of the respondents believed that online tutoring was just as effective as face-to-face tutoring with 21% indicating that in-person was a more effective way for tutoring their child, the remaining 5% indicated “not applicable” for this question. See Figure 7.

Figure 7 *Online Tutoring Effectiveness*

Online tutoring is just as effective as traditional face-to-face tutoring.

668 responses



Some of the reasons why parents responded this way included the convenience of online delivery reducing the driving time, and the ability to fit tutoring into the child’s schedule. Fewer distractions at home were mentioned by many, although some indicated there were fewer distractions away from home for their child. Several parents also indicated that their child’s anxiety was reduced when learning at home online. Their child’s ease of use with technology, particularly after the experience of pandemic remote learning, was mentioned by many, although noted that younger children needed more support struggled at times with technology.

Some examples of these summary comments:

- *For this generation, online is how they communicate so it is not an issue being online for my daughter.*
- *The generation nowadays are very comfortable with technology and with the new norm, my daughter has adapted well with using online. It’s also less stressful for the family using online - no need to rush out to make it on time for tutor time.*
- *There are pros and cons. At a young age, a child needs some assistance to use tool on the computer (how to choose pencil option, un-mute, turn on video, etc.) But the pros are that we don't need to spend time driving to a location, so that's easier for both*

parents and kids. Overall, the easiness of the process overcomes the small difficulties in learning to manage on-line interaction.

- *My child has never done in-person tutoring.*
- *I've seen the results! My daughter doesn't have any distractions that are found in a classroom setting and is engaged through the virtual whiteboard.*
- *I find it is actually more convenient because it can happen at home AND if confidence or anxiety is an issue, it is alleviated with being at home*
- *My son has a tutor for French who he has seen both in person and online. There is no difference that we or the tutor can see to his learning. What we have discovered is that he learns and concentrates more in shorter sessions, rather than hourly ones!*
- *Both my children have ADHD and evening tutoring comes way after meds have worn off so it's tough at times to keep them engaged, more difficult to do on-line than in person.*
- *Too difficult over an iPad, time gets wasted and 30 mins is already not long enough.*
- *My first impression would be to disagree, but this is really working.*
- *Online tutor is better because it makes the child feel more comfortable*
- *Not only is it as effective, it is much more convenient and allows for busy families to access extra help.*

One interesting comment was mentioned by quite a few parents. The comment was about tutors not using a web camera as being limiting in their child establishing a relationship with the tutor. Also, many believed that by not seeing the tutor's face, particularly during language lessons, was detrimental to their child's learning.

- *This was somewhat tricky to answer. It is certainly convenient to do online tutoring, and I think it works very well for my son, but one suggestion I would make is that the tutors turn on their own cameras when working with the kids so kids can see that there is a human behind the voice. Or at least, we should be asked what our preference is. This would help younger elementary school kids in particular.*
- *I think virtual tutoring is fine, but not being able to see faces is limiting. The connection is not there and as a teacher myself, I cannot imagine not being able to see my student's reactions/facial expressions.*
- *No camera on means they don't feel self conscious*
- *I think it would be great if the tutors were on camera. I think in person is best, but at least a camera on approach brings a more human feel to the session.*
- *I agree to this only when the tutor's video camera is on! We have had a session where the tutor did not put on her video and this session was NOT GOOD!*
- *I agree however I have noticed the disinterest\disengagement in my child when the tutor speaks to her through a black screen and thus decreased effectiveness of the tutoring session in that case. I think establishing a connection is key to engaging the child in the session and the impersonal nature of a black screen is not ideal. As well, when learning, especially a language, seeing the tutor's face can help tremendously with the integration of the language.*

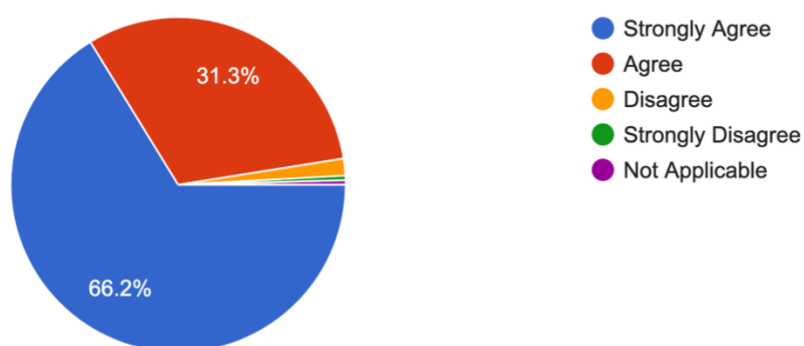
Recommend Program

As mentioned before and seen in Figure 8, over 97% of respondents indicated they would recommend the LEARN online tutoring program to other parents and only 2% did not wish to recommend it to others.

Figure 8 *Recommend the Program to Other Parents*

I would recommend LEARN's online tutoring program to other parents of students in my child's grade level.

675 responses



Some of the reasons why parents responded this way included convenience of access to the program, both as it was online and there were no cost issues for lower income families. Most were happy with the access they had, but wished for more availability and, again, mentioned consistency with one, rather than multiple, tutors. Some agreed with the 30 minute time limit, others thought there should be more allocated:

- *It is better than nothing. I do think there are some easy improvements. For instance, elongate the time for tutoring for high schoolers to 45 minutes a session. Also, try to maintain tutor continuity so that a relationship is built and time is not lost trying to constantly figure out child's challenges with each new tutor. Also, I have very much liked that it is teachers who know the curriculum - that is great!*
- *Great customer service and the administration responds very quickly with answers to my questions and concerns*
- *I have recommended it to EVERYONE, many have registered*
- *You know your child is receiving help from a qualified tutor/teacher*
- *The tutors have very inventive ways of engaging kids with the subject matter in ways parents who are untrained just don't.*
- *Best free tutoring service, well organized and taught by real teachers who know how to quickly help struggling students.*
- *My son has had a terrific experience with LEARN and has gained knowledge and confidence in mathematics. We are very grateful for the assistance!*

- *My daughter has been using Learn tutoring for last 4 years, and has benefited with higher grades.*
- *Having someone help my child one on one provided the extra help my child needs. My daughter listens and behaves like a pro with a tutor as opposed to myself or my husband where she puts up a fuss. She is more productive with her time.*
- *The system was straightforward to use from a parent's perspective and had a noticeable impact on my daughter's performance in French. The folks I interacted with were pleasant and professional. I think this is an important and valuable service and I hope it gets the support it needs so that it can help other kids.*
- *Cause even though my child's grades didn't go up that much when we had the appointment it helped with her self-esteem & leaving her happy & wanting to learn more*
- *because it has made a difference in this student's attitude, confidence and ability.*
- *I have recommended tutoring to many parents whose children are struggling because it is a wonderful FREE resource which means it is accessible to all. Tutoring can be very expensive. I have friends in the French school system who are very envious if this service!*

Other Experiences and Suggested Improvements

The additional 365 comments received for the final two questions repeated much of what was expressed in the previous comments, including a call to extend the length of time and frequency of sessions plus consistency in having the same tutor. As well, many mentioned that tutor cameras should be turned to improve their child's learning experience while throughout the entire survey only three positive comments were made about not having cameras on. Some sample comments included:

- *My son is shy to speak French with me, I know he is getting the help and time needed to complete french homework as he is more comfortable with his online tutor. Thank you!*
- *Here are some suggestions: 1) increase the time to 45 minutes for high school students 2) book appointments with the same tutor for the whole semester 3) follow-up on earlier sessions during next session 4) set goals for the whole semester 5) Introduce exam preparation sessions for weak students during November and May.*
- *I would love to see more. As a parent who enlists another company for tutoring and study help (for mid-year and year-end exams), it would be great if LEARN were to offer additional services, even if they came with a cost.*
- *I as a parent am very grateful that LEARN exists to assist my daughter who struggles a lot with Math, she is in Sec 3 now and has been with LEARN for a few years. The 1:1 assistance she receives to tackle material she is struggling with is so very important and has helped her in so many ways! Thank you so very much! :)*

Research on Tutoring -- Key Points Relevant to LEARN's Program

Evidence on tutoring success is clear that tutors who were certified teachers had the strongest effect on the success of the tutoring experience (Gallagher-Mackay ,et. al, 2022) and most researchers report that tutoring equals or exceeds other interventions to boost skills in literacy and numeracy. This is clearly the case as well with LEARN's program.

Recent literature also points to the Increase in use of tutoring post-pandemic, with support for learning acceleration never greater. Australia, United States, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands have invested in large scale tutoring programs while Ontario and Quebec are the only two provinces who have initiated province-wide tutoring in Canada (Gallagher, et. al, 2022). Ontario offers a free one-on-one online math tutoring program for students in Grades 6 to 10 using Ontario certified teachers as tutors. There were over 70,000 students registered for an account in the program, but it is unclear how many were active and actually received tutoring or how many tutors were employed, however TV Ontario did report a 43% increase in sessions in the 2020-21 school year (Ontario Educational Communications Authority, 2021). Besides LEARN's program, the Quebec Ministry announced an online tutoring initiative for the francophone community in 2021 that had college and university students along with retired teaching personnel enrolled as tutors. A June 2021 report by the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (2022) found that of the identified students needing tutoring, only 32% received tutoring with lack of personnel (42%) and scheduling issues (36%) the main reasons why.

Regarding online tutoring, as noted the LEARN survey found that 74% of parents indicated online tutoring was as effective as face-to-face. The Gallagher-Mackay meta-analysis (2022) also reported on several studies on e-tutoring including JUMP Math program from the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara that recommended offering both online and in-person tutoring to increase accessibility and ability to suit individual preferences received positive feedback from tutors, staff, and caregivers. Also mentioned was the Crescent School vLearning online peer tutoring program study that found students and teachers scored the quality as "exceeding expectations" and recommended expansion of it. Finally, a study of an E-tutoring program for elementary students in western Canada reported that all but one instructor indicated the best part of e-tutoring was developing a relationship with the student.

In short, the LEARN program has the following key elements that this body of research backs:

1. Certified teachers who have the strongest effect on the success of tutoring.
2. Tutoring that specifically focuses on boosting skills in literacy and numeracy.
3. The missing online component that fills in the existing gaps of in-person tutoring to increase accessibility.
4. Teachers and parents reporting that the best part of e-tutoring was developing a relationship with the child.

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