

“MISSIONARIES” NO MORE: TUTORS AS BENEFICIARIES IN A COMMUNITY-BASED TUTORING PROGRAM

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Informal learning spaces play an important role in the formation of students' relationships with mathematics. More often than not, struggling learners have found an opportunity to engage more successfully with mathematics when out of the classroom (Roberts et al. 2018; Saxe, 1988). Prepare2Nspire (P2N) is an example of an informal learning system that combines tutoring, mentoring, and culturally-responsive practices to directly cater to urban youth and their mathematics learning. When we think of informal tutoring environments, youth participants and their academic success are typically the focus. We argue that the undergraduate mentutor (mentor + tutor) also benefits from the interactions in these spaces, both academically and professionally. In addition, mentutors develop experiential knowledge that can in-turn transform the program for future participants. The research questions are:

- What key features of P2N impact mentutors' social and professional development?
- How can the experiential knowledge of mentutors be utilized to transform the program for future cohorts?

For this initial study, five mentutors participated in a singular semi-structured interview and narrative inquiry was utilized to better understand mentutors' situated identities and professional development while engaging with the program. The findings described the assets and personal impact of P2N as well as recommendations for future P2N cohorts. P2N provided mentutors with a number of tangible resources, including reliable meals, consistent pay checks, and graphing calculators. In addition, P2N was a sacred communal space where mentutors formed long-lasting relationships with other college students, youth participants, and program directors. Finally, mentutors utilized their experiential knowledge to provide advice, grounded in authenticity and adaptability, for new undergraduate mentutors. These scholarly findings allow researchers the opportunity to reflect on mentutors' experiences, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and reimagine informal learning systems as restorative spaces for both adult and youth participants.

References

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