

vello

IMPACT REPORT

2021-22

"I am only able to volunteer online at this time and I LOVE tutoring so it has been a really wonderful opportunity I otherwise could not have. Thank you for this online option."

VELLO Volunteer, United Way Quad Cities

OUR PURPOSE

VELLO offers students personalized reading tutoring sessions with a United Way volunteer. All tutoring sessions occur in a virtual environment allowing students and volunteers to read together without having to leave their classroom or workplace. VELLO is grounded in the research-based practice of guided reading with a focus on fostering relationships that nurture and celebrate students' reading skills and progress. We prioritize student growth toward proficiency and seek to instill a lifelong love for reading.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

VELLO is designed to yield specific outcomes based on our tutoring approach. These outcomes are most directly aimed at improving students' reading skills (i.e., fluency, accuracy, prosody, vocabulary, comprehension) and their overall engagement in reading activities such as asking questions and making connections. In addition, VELLO is designed to directly improve volunteer engagement. As such, VELLO impacts a total of six proximal outcomes.

VELLO is further designed to improve instructional motivation of tutored students and their peers. For teachers, VELLO offers improved lesson planning support. We are also interested in supporting parental engagement in their child's reading progress. As such, VELLO impacts a total of four intermediate outcomes.

By way of our proximal and intermediate outcomes, VELLO also seeks to affect two distal outcomes related to students' independent reading and growth mindset. The latter concept represents the most recent expansion of our theory of change. That is, we seek to empower students with a belief in themselves and their own personal journey as a growing reader.

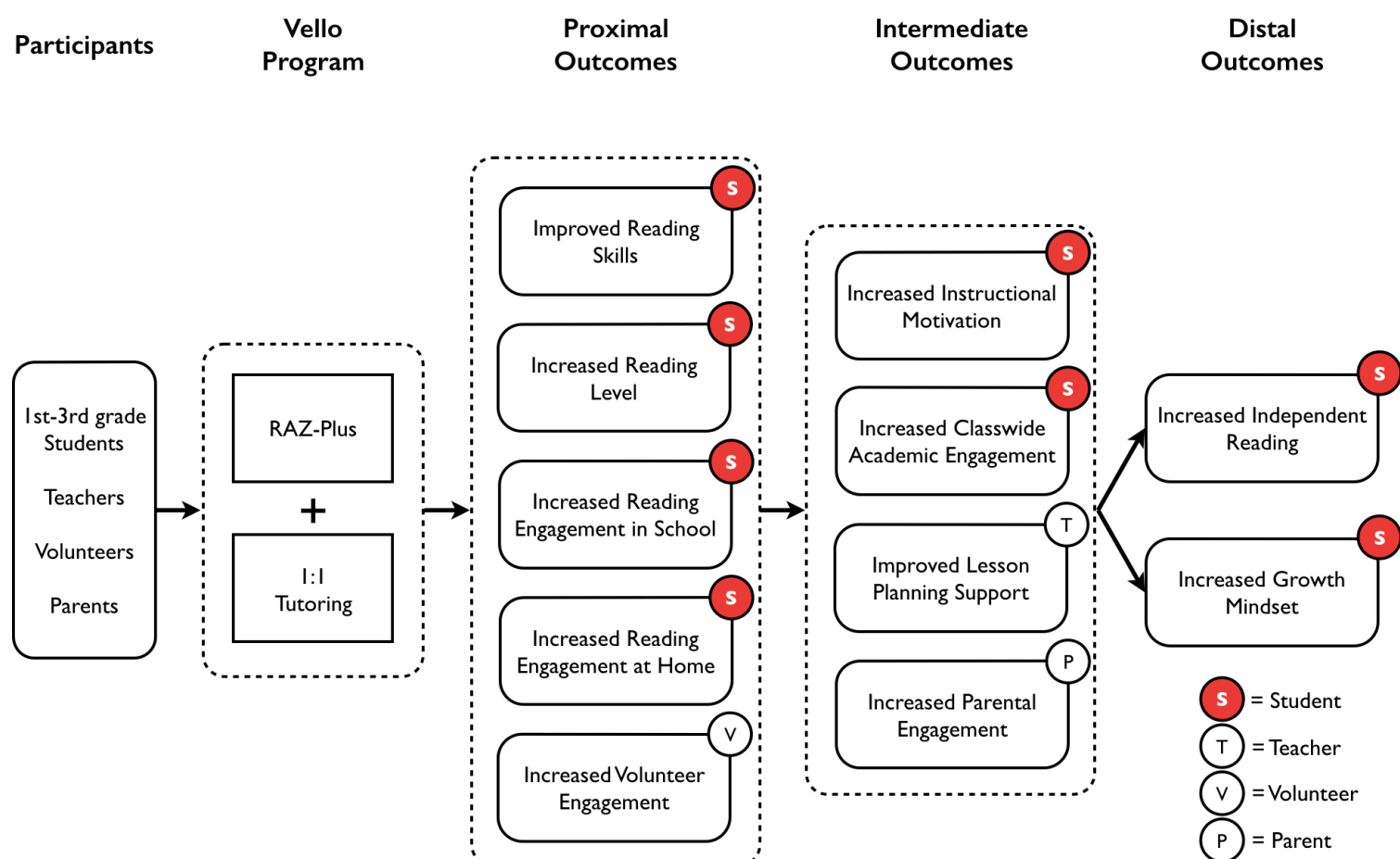


Figure 1. Theory of change developed by Alexander Kurz, PhD.
Page 2

OUR PROGRAM

VELLO consists of one-on-one tutoring and Learning A-Z's blended learning platform, Raz-Plus. The Raz-Plus platform provides students, teachers, and parents access to over 50,000 online resources including leveled books, lesson plans, activity sheets, and quizzes for each book. Our teachers have further access to online, data-driven reports that show individual and classwide activity and performance. Our tutoring program includes a teacher and volunteer curriculum, and an all-in-one computer station for VELLO in the classroom (or special resources for VELLO outside of the classroom).

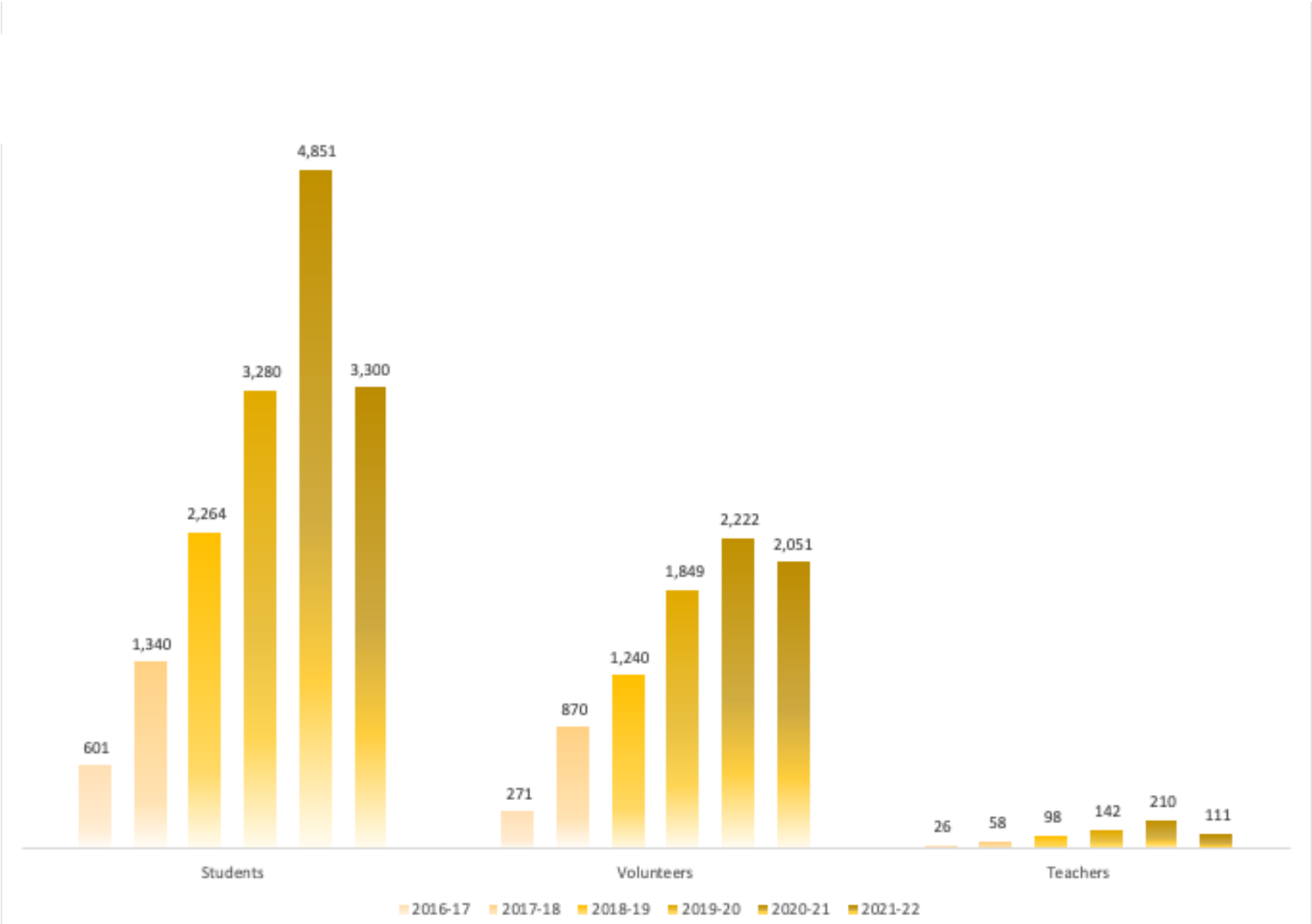
Students typically receive two 30-minute tutoring sessions per week. Our online portal assists teachers and volunteers with training and scheduling. During a VELLO session, students and volunteers connect with each other to explore the story's main ideas, characters, and plot lines.

"I really loved the VELLO program. Not only do I think working with my students helped them learn to read, but it helped me remember why I love volunteering so much."

VELLO Volunteer, Ohio

OUR REACH

The 2021-22 school year was our sixth year of implementation. We featured a total of 22 participating communities across 13 states and 1 Canadian province.



OUR MEASURES

For purposes of our annual evaluation, we gathered empirical evidence through three psychometrically validated survey instruments that collectively measured nine constructs. Our teacher survey measured six constructs: (#1) improved lesson planning support, (#2) improved reading skills, (#3) increased engagement and motivation, (#4) increased reading engagement at school; (#5) increased classwide engagement; (#6) increased growth mindset. Our volunteer survey measured (#7) volunteer engagement, and our parent survey measured (#8) increased reading engagement at home and (#9) parental engagement.

Before interpreting any survey findings, it is important to examine the survey's reliability. This is especially important whenever a survey contains subscales that measure different constructs. To this end, it is helpful to examine Cronbach's alpha (α). Alphas can range from 0 to 1.0 with less than 0.5 being unacceptable and above 0.9 being excellent. The reliability analyses for the 2021-22 implementation indicated high alphas across all nine subscales ranging from 0.94 to 0.97 for the teacher survey and 0.67 to 0.92 for the volunteer survey.

Across all surveys, our question stems asked for perceived improvements due to participation in the VELLO tutoring program. In addition, we examined changes in knowledge and skills based on students' reading level growth. This year, we also included student voice into our annual evaluation. To this end, we asked teacher to randomly select two VELLO students and survey them about the extent to which tutoring session positively impacted their outlook on reading, learning, and school in general.

"VELLO has helped me get my sense of self back. I am a cancer survivor and sadly my face took a beating due to the tumor, radiation and my surgery. I don't have the self-confidence I used to have and I am not engaged with the community like I used to be. Being [able] to help, lend a hand and give back through this remote channel allowed me to get back to the basics - serving those in need. I was able to show up and be present with the kids and lose the insecurity I've had being around people. I am blessed that I had a very dynamic student base. Every child was always in great spirits and it has been very fun doing this. SO THANK YOU!"

VELLO Volunteer, South Carolina

OUR SAMPLE

All evaluation samples are based on voluntary participation including the provision of student data. Our student sample included 62 students who answered four questions about their VELLO experience. The student sample was predominantly male with 32 males (52%) and 28 females (45%). Two students did not provide a gender. Our teacher sample included 35 teachers. Participating teachers were predominately White females with a Master's degree and over 10 years of teaching experience. Our volunteer sample included 328 volunteers. Participating volunteers were predominately White females with either a Bachelor's or Master's Degree and extensive volunteer experience.

OUR IMPACT ON STUDENTS

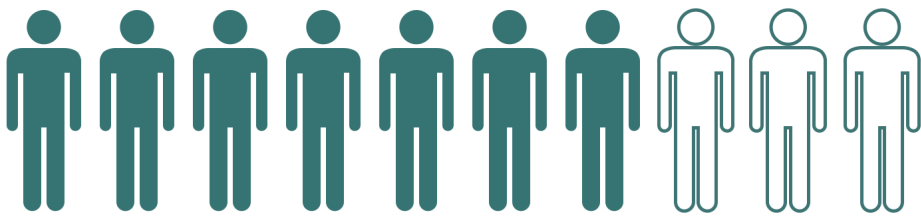
When asked directly, our tutored students said the following based on a 4-point Likert scale that included [Not at all], [Not sure], [A little bit], and [A lot] as options: (a) 73% of students said that they looked forward to reading with their VELLO volunteer a lot; (b) 58% of students said reading with a VELLO volunteer made them

feel a lot better about their reading; (c) 45% of students said reading with a VELLO volunteer made them feel a lot more excited about school; and (d) 55% of students said reading with a VELLO volunteer made them feel a lot more excited about learning.

Our teachers confirmed student perceptions about their improved reading efficacy with 67% of teachers noting that they agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO improved the reading skills of tutored students on 5-point Likert scale ranging from [Strongly disagree]



7 out 10 teachers agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO improved the reading skills of tutored students.



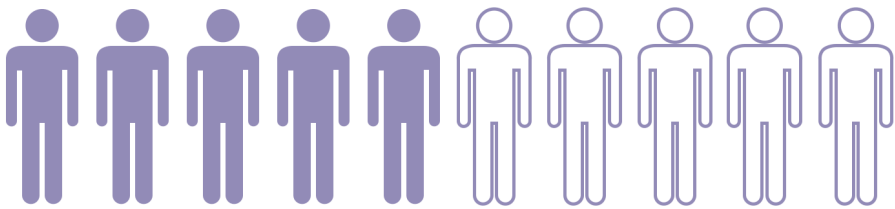
7 out 10 students said that they **looked forward a lot to reading with the VELLO volunteer.**

to [Strongly agree]. In addition, teachers noted the following: (a) 62% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO improved the instructional motivation of tutored students; (b) 74% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO increased the reading engagement of tutored students; and (c) 38% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO improved the growth mindset of tutored students.

OUR IMPACT ON TEACHERS

Our teachers also saw benefits for their entire class as well as their own lesson planning: (a) 49% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO improved classwide engagement of all students; and (b) 52% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO and its resources improved their lesson planning.

These results are underscored by the fact that nearly half of teachers use the VELLO resources (i.e., RAZ-Plus) for their tutored students on a daily basis. Nearly a fourth of the teachers also use these resources for all students in their class on a daily basis.



5 out 10 teachers agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO improved their lesson planning.

OUR IMPACT ON VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers saw themselves as having a positive impact on a child's life and highlighted several noteworthy results including some that extended beyond VELLO: (a) 73% of volunteers

40%
DAILY USAGE

agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO helped

several noteworthy results including some that extended beyond VELLO: (a) 73% of volunteers



7 out 10 volunteers said that VELLO helped them **make a positive impact on a child's life.**

them make a positive impact on a child's life; (b) 77% of volunteers agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO has given them an opportunity to volunteer that they wouldn't have had otherwise; and (c) 72% of volunteers agreed or strongly agreed that VELLO has been a very meaningful use of their time. Nearly half of the volunteers also noted that VELLO has encouraged them to look for other volunteer opportunities (48%).

CONTACT

Bertha Tapia, Community Development & Engagement Director, Workforce Development

Valley of the Sun United Way
3200 E Camelback Rd Ste 375
Phoenix, AZ 85018-2318
602.818.0706

