

THE ROLE OF THE TUTOR



The goal of tutoring is not to give students the answers to their homework, but to help them learn the skills and strategies to succeed on their own. If you are really good at your job, there will come a time when your tutee doesn't need you anymore.

The Stages of a Tutoring Session

1. Be Friendly and Approachable

It is much harder to ask a person for help if they seem unfamiliar and distant. Try to arrive early, so you can greet students as they come in. Learn their names. Talk to them about their interests. If students feel comfortable with you and think of you as a nice, friendly person, they will find it easier to go to you for help.

2. Initiate Support

Few students will ask for help directly, especially at first. Circulate around the room, checking in with students to see how they are doing. Look for signs that a student might need help (see below). If you notice someone having difficulty, offer your help. You might try saying something like, "You look like you're stuck. Would you like some help?"

It is not unusual for a student to refuse support when it is first offered. Keep an eye on them. Check in again in a few minutes, and if they still look like they are struggling, don't take no for an answer. This time, when you offer your help, be more insistent: "I notice you are in the same place as you were the last time I came by. Let me help you with that question."

3. Clarify The Task

Read the question, topic or assignment description together. Make sure both you and the student understand what they are expected to do. If possible, clarify any confusion about the assignment by contacting their teacher.

Signs a Student Needs Help:

- They haven't made any progress.
- They are off-task and avoiding the work.
- You notice they have made one or more errors.
- They are taking a long time to finish.
- They appear frustrated or otherwise upset.
- They put up their hand.

4. Provide Guidance with Questions

If you sit down and just start showing the student how to do the work, you are basically doing the assignment for them. They still won't know how to do it on their own, and you could end up being accused of helping them cheat.

Asking questions is the best way to figure out what a student does or does not know. Good questions will be open-ended, but provide enough guidance to help the student think through whatever is causing them to struggle.

To figure out what the student already knows or where they may be getting confused try asking questions like:

- What is this question asking us?
- What procedure are you using to solve this problem?
- At what point did you start feeling confused?
- Did you do something similar in class? How did you handle that?
- What does this remind you of?
- What are the key vocabulary words? Do you know what they mean?

Based on their responses, you may want to re-read the question and correct any misconceptions they might have about the material or their task. Sit with them as they begin to work through the question or assignment. Reinforce correct procedures, good ideas and useful strategies when you see them.

If you notice that they run into trouble or make a mistake, use guiding questions to help them get back on track instead of just telling them the answer:

- Why do you think the character would say that?
- Have you tried using BEDMAS to help you remember the steps?
- What was the main idea of that paragraph?
- What details could you add to this part to help make your argument stronger?



5. Check for Understanding

Don't walk away from your tutee until you are sure they understand the material and can continue independently. Once again, asking some questions is the best approach:

- How can you check your work?
- Can you re-explain the procedure to me?
- What do you plan to do next?

6. Step Away, But Check Back In

Once you are confident that the student knows how to proceed, encourage them to work on the next few questions or the rest of the assignment on their own. Reassure them that you will check back with them in a little bit. Keep an eye on them; if they appear to run into trouble again, go over and remind them of the steps they need to take to complete the task.

Just be careful not to get drawn in to helping an insecure student with every single question. If that is the case, remind the student that they know what they are doing because they have already successfully completed similar questions. If necessary, politely excuse yourself to help another student, so they are forced to tackle the next problem independently.

Follow up with the student at some point during the next class. Ask them how things went with the assignment or check to see if they will be working on something similar that day. Continuing to show an interest in the student and their work from class to class will help you build a rapport with them, making each tutoring session easier and more comfortable for both of you.

A Few More Tips For Tutors:

- **Teach procedures and concepts, not answers:** Your tutee will only become an independent learner if you teach them the underlying steps or theories, so they can answer any similar questions that are given to them.
- **Encourage good habits:** Teach students the same strategies that make you successful in school. Remind students about the importance of attending class, updating their agenda and other things that you do that help you stay on track.
- **Be sensitive to their struggle:** Avoid phrases like, "This is easy!" You will only intimidate the student and make them less likely to ask you for help. If students are speaking negatively about themselves, encourage positive self-talk, like "I can't do this YET," or "I can improve with practice."
- **Admit when you don't know something and ask for help:** Call over the supervising teacher or another peer tutor to see if they can help the student.

PROMOTING ACADEMIC HONESTY



Academic honesty means doing all of your own work all the time without plagiarism, cheating, tampering, lying, giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, or using anyone else's ideas without properly citing your source.

Examples of Academic Dishonesty:

- Plagiarizing/copying material from any source (e.g. other students, the Internet, a tutor) without citing your source.
- Supplying information or work of any kind to another student knowing that they may copy it and submit it for marks.
- Copying from another person's test or knowingly letting your test be copied.

Promoting Academic Honesty in Your Tutoring Sessions:

Use guiding questions—Asking questions to help the student figure out the answer on their own keeps you from just giving them the answers, which would be cheating.

Be a guide at the side—When you help a student, always have them do the physical work. Sit beside them and offer explanations, steer them in the right direction with guiding questions, but don't pick up their materials and start doing the work for them.

Don't share your work—Always have the student look in their own materials for helpful examples first. You may show a student examples of your own work, but don't leave them with the student, or they may be tempted to copy from you.

Teach proper note taking and paraphrasing—Many students plagiarize because they cut and paste their notes from websites or copy straight out of books. Encourage them to summarize their research in their own words when taking notes and writing assignments.

Discourage dishonesty—Even if you think your tutee is just joking about cheating, always remind students of the importance of doing the work themselves. They won't really learn the material if they cheat.

Dealing with Misbehaviour:

- Always role model appropriate behaviour.
- Calmly and politely remind the student of the class expectations.
- Bad behaviour is often an avoidance technique, so offer to help them.
- If the behaviour continues, make sure you draw the teacher's attention to it, so they can assist you in dealing with the situation.