Tutor Training Manual

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Adapted from the Student Success Training Manual, Alfred State College, New York
(Date Unknown)

Dear Tutor,

Welcome to the Operation LEAAP tutoring program! The priority of this training manual is to provide engaging and quality student support to help students achieve mastery in mathematics. We believe that all students are capable of learning and achieving. We make every effort to create a supportive classroom and school environment where active learning takes place.

In choosing to be a tutor, you have accepted an important and satisfying responsibility. As a tutor, you have an opportunity to be instrumental in the success of the many students you serve. Your positive interaction with students can make a substantial difference in their educational endeavors. Your role involves not only a command of mathematics, but also a strong command of interpersonal skills.

The purpose of this Tutor Training Manual is to provide an orientation to the process of tutoring. Tutoring may sound like a simple undertaking, but it is complex in many ways. The nuances involved in helping a student learn and grow in their knowledge takes effort, commitment, compassion, and sometimes, a little creativity. In the following pages, you will find principles and procedures that have been developed by many educators. This material is designed to help you become an efficient and effective tutor.

WELCOME TO THE EXCITING WORLD OF HELPING OTHERS BECOME CONFIDENT LEARNERS WITH A POSITIVE MINDSET!

Sincerely,

Allison Smith

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Definition of Tutoring

Tutoring is, by definition, a one-to-one or small group activity where a person who is knowledgeable and has expertise in a specific content area or discipline provides tutelage, help, or clarification to one or more students. The goal of tutoring is to assist students to become independent learners and increase their motivation to learn. As a tutor, you will have an opportunity to be instrumental in the success of the many students you serve.

Role of the Tutor

The tutor plays a vital and multifaceted role in supporting students' academic learning. Here is an overview of the roles a tutor often plays simultaneously.

1. The Tutor as a Helper

The tutor's job is to help students to learn and problem solve on their own. Tutors do not just give students answers; rather, they are ready to help the student begin to make progress toward a solution. Tutors understand that learning is a process of comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. To assist in actively becoming involved in the learning process, tutors help tutees to:

- Know the type of problem being solved.
- Understand and use the vocabulary of the subject.
- Practice the application of principles.
- Realize that all learners make mistakes but that learning from one's mistakes is a very effective way to learn (revision is valued!)
- Perform the work themselves.
- Verbalize what they have learned.

2. The Tutor as a "Model Student"
Tutors demonstrate the thinking, study skills and problem solving abilities necessary to learn new information. Tutors exemplify the behaviors of a model student. They must assess the areas where a student may need additional assistance and take the time to share tips and strategies that work.

3. The Tutor as a Competent Employee
Tutors follow the rules and policies outlined in this manual, as well as stated during the tutor training. Also, <u>tutors are responsible for documenting their work in the Operation LEAAP tutoring log</u>, collaborate with the classroom teacher and Operation LEAAP resource teacher to understand the unique needs of the tutee/s, and conduct tutoring sessions with compassion and respect for the student and their learning needs. During the semester, tutors should report any problems or concerns to the classroom teacher or the Operation LEAAP resource teacher.

Tutor Code of Ethics
(adapted from The National Association of Tutorial Services' Tutor Code of Ethics)

- I understand my role as a tutor is to guide students to do their own work using the best learning approach possible.
- I will provide honest feedback in the form of positive praise and/or constructive suggestions to students I serve in a manner beneficial to their overall learning.
- I will demonstrate faith in each student's learning abilities, understanding my primary goal is helping them discover and develop skills needed to reach their desired educational outcomes.
- I understand my relationship to each student I tutor is professional and not personal.
- I will respect and be sensitive to students' cultural background and personal value system; keeping in mind their personal dignity.
- I recognize I will not have answers to every question asked. Therefore, I will seek assistance in finding answers to the student's questions and/or directing the student to "how" and "where" appropriate resources are found for the information each student is seeking.
- I will maintain accurate records of tutoring sessions to fulfill expectations & requirements which exemplify excellence in tutoring.
- I will respect each student's personal dignity at all times.
- I will be on time for tutoring all appointments with the understanding that excellence does not compromise time nor make excuses.
- I will keep information about all students I work with confidential.
- I understand the ultimate goal is to assist students in discovering how he/she best learns. I will accomplish this by helping each student develop the skills needed to achieve their best educational outcome.
- I will share any concerns I have with the classroom teacher or Operation LEAAP resource teacher.
- I recognize the win-win relationship tutoring fosters. I expect to learn along with each student I assist.
- I will keep current in my subject area and learning methodologies.
- I will remain flexible to my approach to student learning, respectful of the various learning styles and preferences.
- I will share techniques for improving study skills with students; respecting their differing learning styles and preferences while exhibiting excellence in my approach to the content

being tutored.

General Tutoring Tips and Techniques

- **Relax and be yourself.**
  You have been selected to tutor because you have the qualities that make you a positive role model for students. When you show students your authentic self and model appropriate behaviors for academic learning, they see you for who you are and connect with you. Additionally, connecting with students can offer opportunities to show them that everyone struggles at times and to demonstrate how to problem-solve through struggles.

- **Establish rapport.**
  Learn and remember your tutee's names. Be friendly and sincere in your efforts to understand your tutee as a person with unique interests and academic needs. Create an atmosphere of mutual respect and confidence.

- **Respect your tutees.**
  No positive rapport can exist without mutual respect between tutor and tutee. Be nonjudgmental, accepting their personal integrity without trying to manage or change their frame of reference to suit your own value system. Try for an equal status, non-patronizing relationship.

- **Maintain confidentiality.**
  Be professional! Information gained about your tutee's challenges, behaviors, test scores, grades, etc., is strictly confidential and should only be shared or discussed with the classroom teacher, and documented for Operation LEAAP, as instructed. Discussing students' work or information with persons outside of the school environment or who do not have a professional reason to know this student information, or posting student information to social media, violates student confidentiality.

- **Be sensitive to the individual needs of your tutees.**
  Take some time to establish rapport; let the tutee know you want to be there. Consider such factors as the instructor's style of teaching, the demands of the course; learn about your tutee's special sensitivities and learning styles as well as their particular interests and talents. Your tutee might be embarrassed to ask for help. Offering help in a gentle and encouraging way can promote confidence building and resiliency.

- **Be informative without being intimidating.**
  Help the tutees understand what is expected of them by themselves, by you, and by the instructor. Make them aware of the scope of the subject to be covered, as well as the requirements of individual assignments.

- **Be positive.**
  Your tutees may have had little success in school and need a rewarding experience. Focus on what the tutee is doing right. Help them recognize their strong points and work with them to strengthen their areas of challenge. Be honest, direct, and tactful. Praise and success are the best motivators.

- **Give Specific Positive Feedback.**
  When we respond to students' correct mathematics answers with comments like "Good

job," we miss an opportunity to position students as math thinkers. In response to students' thoughtful contributions, use compliments that are prompt, specific and explicit such as, "Excellent point, Sarah. Your explanation helps us see the connection between your table and Steve's graph."

Among the behaviors that deserve this kind of affirmation:

- Explaining math solutions and the thinking behind them;
- Making connections to students' lives;
- Using math to understand and think critically about the world;
- Showing perseverance;
- Taking risks and contributing ideas without knowing the answer;
- Using more than one representation to communicate an idea.

• **Encourage independence.**
Your tutees must be aware at all times that you are not going to do their work. Let them know that they must put forth an effort in order to benefit from tutoring. Insist that they do their assignments, study on their own, and do their own thinking. In general, the less work you do for your tutee, the better. Although it is quicker, easier, and less frustrating to do the work for him/her, it is of little permanent help to the tutee. Help him or her learn how to do his or her own work. If you do supply an answer, be sure that your tutee understands how you arrived at it and make sure you check for retention and understanding of that concept later on in the session. Try not to act annoyed with a student's progress or lack thereof. Focus on the learning activity.

• **Be a "facilitator."**
Probe or prompt the student to remain in an active role in the tutoring process. Ask questions. Get students doing the thinking. Engage him/her in a joint exploration of problems and concerns. Verbalization builds self-confidence and enhances learning. The tutee should be talking about 75% of your session. (You should be talking only about 25% of the time.) A facilitator should be supporting the students' thinking and resisting the role of lecturing.

• **Be flexible.**
Remember that the style and content of the material to be learned should be adjusted to the individual being tutored. Be resourceful and use initiative in devising or trying new methods and approaches to learning the subject at hand.

• **Encourage your tutees to focus on "learning how to learn."**
Try to get them to concentrate on developing mental processes and learning strategies rather than on getting the "correct answers" and using rote memorization. Poor use of time and lack of good study habits are major shortcomings. Help tutees to master techniques that will help them to become efficient learners.

• **Provide Manipulatives.**
Students should be encouraged to use manipulatives to show their understanding of a

problem. They can build confidence and show a deeper level of understanding. These tools may be counters, tiles, beans, blocks, fraction strips etc. Manipulatives are beneficial to all learners of all abilities.

- **Be a good listener.**
  Be aware of both verbal and non-verbal clues. Listen carefully to all of the messages about their feelings, the progress being made, concerns with the subject matter and course requirements. If you end up doing most of the talking at tutoring sessions, something is wrong.

- **Even if you disagree with the way the course is being taught, your role is to support the methods of the instructor.**
  REMEMBER: You are a tutor, not the classroom teacher. You are not responsible for teaching or grading the course, and must recognize and accept your limitations. Under no circumstances should a tutor disrespect the classroom teacher. It is imperative that you maintain a professional attitude and behavior. If there is a major conflict, please consult with the Operation LEAAP resource teacher for support and guidance.

- **Have confidence in yourself, but don't be afraid to ask for help and guidance.**
  Don't hesitate to say that you do not know an answer. Be willing to research the matter and get back to your tutees at the next session. This teaches problem-solving skills and your tutees will enjoy finding out that you are a learner too!

Characteristics of Successful Tutors

Successful tutors:

- Have fun!
- Are on time and prepared.
- Are friendly and acknowledge students (by name if possible) when they arrive.
- Encourage the student to develop good examples/discover examples provided in the text.
- Let the tutee do the work.
- Ask leading questions to help students learn and understand the material.
- Are patient and provide appropriate "think" time.
- Provide a variety of tools to help students make sense of the topic.

- Provide encouragement.
- Are aware of their nonverbal communication.
- Check the tutee's learning by having the student summarize information at the end of the session.
- Are aware of and acknowledge cultural differences while treating tutees consistently and with respect.
- Relate successful study strategies to the tutee.
- Use questioning rather than answering strategies.
- Pay attention and are sensitive to the self-esteem issues of each tutee.
- Are able to explain concepts from several different angles.
- Focus the session on the process of learning rather than on the correctness of the answer.
- Rotate around the room/group spending time evenly with students.
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Encourage students to fill out a tutoring evaluation form.
- Attend tutor training

Successful tutors DO NOT:

- Teach magic tricks.
- Expect the student to hear and remember everything they've said.
- Say, "This is easy" or use any other phrase that might imply the student is not smart.
- Put down or criticize the student or their abilities.
- Solve the problem or give the answer. The student should be holding the pencil.
- Criticize a teacher or the assignment.
- Go too fast.
- Make off-color jokes or suggestive comments to students.
- Use profanity.
- Waste the student's time talking about themselves.
- Over socialize with other tutors or paraprofessionals in the classroom when not tutoring. When students think you're busy talking they'll be discouraged from asking questions because they don't want to interrupt you.

Being an Effective Tutor

Knowing something is one thing. Sharing it effectively is quite another. Being an effective tutor means taking the time to understand the student you are working with. Here are some questions to keep in mind before, during and after tutoring a student.

1. What does this student already know?

2. What does he or she need to know?

3. What does he or she hope to learn?

4. How does the student feel about being tutored?

5. How does he or she feel about the subject in question?

6. How can I best meet the student's needs without giving them the answers?

7. How can I conduct myself so that I may make the tutoring experience a positive one?

It is not necessary to ask these questions of the student. Just keep your eyes open, listen to the person and you'll have most of your answers.

Study Skills: Hints from Experienced Tutors

The techniques presented here are hints to share with students to help them make connections and study efficiently.

- Make flash cards to build vocabulary.
- Look for patterns in formulas.
- Create a formula sheet and keep it handy.
- Use drawings, manipulatives, and tools to illustrate concepts and deepen understanding rather than relying only on words.
- Make analogies to discuss how two concepts are similar to each other.
- Pay attention to words that are bold, underlined, or italics in the textbook.
- Use "practice" quizzes to help reinforce learning.
- Encourage tutees to tutor other students in the class. The best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else.

Tips for Group Tutoring

The Advantages of Group Tutoring

• Students benefit from helping each other.

• The group benefits from a diversity of ideas and points of view.

• It builds tolerance for differences in background, personality, and intellectual style.

Tips for Successful Group Tutoring

• *Inclusive Seating:* Arrange seating in a circle to include everyone.

• *Face the Whiteboard:* When using a whiteboard, be sure everyone can see.

• *Students Explain:* Have students explain answers, concepts, and definitions to each other.

• *Equalize the Talk Time:* Make sure everyone in the group gets a chance to participate. Control vocal students by giving the floor to others. For example:

"I love that you want to share again Shawn, but let's see if someone else wants to suggest a different perspective."

• *Praise:* Praise students who come prepared to work.

• *Encourage Participation:* Provide opportunities for quiet students to participate. For example:

"We haven't heard from you in a while, Ralph. What do you think of Shawn's answer?"

• *Summarize Everyone's Contribution:* Summarize the contributions of all students and integrate them into a whole. This reinforces learning and helps all to see their contribution and feel included.

The 10 Steps of Tutoring

Step 1: Greeting and Climate Setting

● Greet the student by name.
● Be warm and friendly, setting a positive tone with eye contact and a smile.
   Arrange seating to facilitate interaction between you and the tutee.

Your goal is to set the session up for success.

Step 2: Identify the Task

● Encourage the tutee to initiate and identify the focus of the session.
● Follow up with questions to clarify the tutee's main concerns.
● Restate what the tutee wishes to work on so that the purpose is clear.

By keeping the tutee involved in the organization of the session, they are in charge of the learning that will take place. It also continues to foster their independence.

Step 3: Breaking the Task into Parts

● Provide an opportunity for the tutee to break the task into manageable pieces.
● Restate the steps the tutee suggests.

This approach reinforces the idea that the task requires distinct pieces to accomplish and suggests there is a sequence to accomplishing them.

Step 4: Identify the Underlying Thought Processes

● Have the tutee clarify the problem solving approach learned in class.
● Help the tutee discover how to approach learning the type of task with which he/she is having difficulties.
● Help the tutee understand/use information sources like textbooks, handouts, notes, etc.

This is a very important step in the tutoring process. It helps the tutee develop a learning strategy for problems of this type and it gives them practice applying their strategy.

Step 5: Setting an Agenda

● Discuss with the tutee the amount of time necessary to complete each part of their task.

In a classroom the agenda is flexible since you must circulate around the room/group

helping all identified students. This step helps to keep the student on task while they are participating in tutoring.

Step 6: Addressing the Tasks

- Encourage the tutee to do most of the talking and writing.
- Use appropriate responses but do not interrupt the tutee's thinking.
- Ask leading questions of the tutee and allow for sufficient response time.

It is at this step that you conduct the tutoring session and help the tutee learn the information. Remember that you are not the sole source of information. The course resources should also be utilized to help the tutee become proficient in using them.

Step 7: Tutee Summary of Content

- Give the tutee the opportunity to summarize what they just learned. ("Ok, let's review. What did we just do?")
- Wait for the tutee to finish his or her explanation before you interrupt or correct them.
- Use this summary to determine if the tutee really understands what was just discussed.
- If necessary return to addressing the task to clarify any misconceptions.

Having the tutee summarize what they just learned allows them to convert the information from short-term memory to long-term memory. Once in long-term memory the tutee can begin to recall the information independent of tutoring.

Step 8: Tutee Summary of Underlying Thought Process

- Have the tutee summarize the process of addressing this type of task.

This step is the companion to step 4 and it's necessary to have the tutee summarize the thought process as they understand it. Often you must act to make this step happen.

Step 9: Confirmation and Feedback

- Confirm that the summaries of both content and thought process are correct.
- Offer positive reinforcement and confirm that the tutee understands or has improved.

This reassures the tutee that they can now do similar work independently and be successful.

Step 10: Closing and Goodbye

- End session on a positive note.
- Thank the tutee for their specific contributions toward the success of the session.

Ending on a positive note encourages the tutee to continue to seek tutorial assistance. This continued assistance will lead to the tutee's academic independence, the ultimate tutorial goal.

Asking the Right Questions

As a tutor, you must learn to ask effective questions throughout a tutoring session–the more effective the questions, the better the response from the student. Here are several ways questioning can be used during a tutoring session.

Ask questions to determine problem areas for the student.
The most frequent question in the tutor session is "What are you having problems with?" This question is an important one; however, the problem comes from tutors taking the student's answers at face value or not examining the answer in detail. A good tutor will want to know more, while one not versed in the importance of using questions will plunge into an explanation without asking anything else. With more questions, the tutor is able to give more specific help and better diagnose the student's learning needs.

Ask questions to determine what a student knows.
Too often a tutor will focus on what a student does not know. However, it is important to evaluate what a student does know. A student's knowledge will not only help the tutor give more specific instruction and provide the student with some positive reinforcement, but also provide a better starting point for instruction. This information is especially true in subjective areas such as writing and interpretation. Always ask: "What do you think and know about this?" "What are your ideas?" "Can you explain this to me?"

Ask questions that help the student determine the right answer.
Generally, the student will always know more than he or she thinks, so it is often the tutor's job to show a student what he or she does know. If you are reviewing problems with a student and the student is stumped for an answer, use questions to show him or her how to solve the problem. Ask things such as "What is the first step?" "How did we solve the other problem similar to this?" "At what point are you getting stuck?" "What is the rule concerning this area?" The questions you ask will vary from situation to situation, but well asked questions are often the key to helping a student overcome anxiety and realize that he or she possesses the knowledge to solve the problem.

Ask questions to see if the student can apply new skills.
A very effective teaching tool is to have the student teach you. After you teach the student new skills, ask if he or she can explain to you how to solve the problem. Ask, "What did you learn about this?" "Can you show me the steps to solve this problem?" Try to get him or her to practice what they have learned and to apply it. This practice reinforces the learning process for the student and allows both student and tutor feedback on the effectiveness of the tutoring session.

Ask questions to clarify something that is not clear.
When teaching new skills, the tutor should stop and ask, "Do you understand this?" "Is this part clear to you?" "Do you have any questions about this?" Often, students are afraid to ask questions, even to a tutor, for fear of appearing incompetent. A tutor should use questions like the ones above and positive reinforcement to teach the student differently. Also, a student will often say he or she does not understand something but not be specific. Use questions as stated above to determine exactly where he or she loses understanding of the subject. Ask, "Do you understand this part?" "How much of the problem can you solve" and continue until you reach the part or step in the problem that he or she does not understand.

When asking questions, keep the following in mind:

1. *Ask open-ended questions.* Do not ask questions that require yes or no answers; instead, ask questions that require elaboration.

2. *Allow the student time to answer one question before moving on to the next. Don't bombard a student with several questions in a row without allowing him or her time to answer. Also, do not rush a student's answer. Give him or her time to analyze the question and answer before moving on to another one. Some tutors will give hints if the student does not answer in a reasonable time to avoid embarrassing the student by a lack of knowledge.*

3. *Mix questioning with other tutoring methods. Asking questions is very important and very effective, but a session with only questions can overwhelm a student and not allow the tutor to give enough feedback or instruction. You must learn to ask the best questions at the most appropriate times.*

4. *Make questions specific.* Try to avoid general questions as much as possible. At times, you must be general, such as when you ask, "What are you having problems with?" However, always narrow the focus as much as possible once the general questions have been asked. Specific questions will help a tutor pinpoint the student's needs.

How to formulate good questions:

Questions should be posed that encourage thinking at each of the following levels of learning. Often questions only stimulate thinking at the knowledge, comprehension or application stages. To engage the tutee in active learning it is best to stimulate thinking at all levels by varying the questions asked.

Level of Learning	Type of Thinking	Examples
Knowledge (Remembering)	Remembering or identifying something without necessarily understanding it, using it or changing it.	Define… What is the sum of…? How many are there?
Comprehension (Understanding)	Demonstrating understanding of the concepts; transforming, reorganizing or interpreting.	In your own words… Compare… What is the main idea of…?
Application (Applying)	Using a general concept to solve a specific problem.	Calculate the area of… Apply the rule of…to solve…
Analysis (Analyzing)	Breaking a problem down into parts and analyzing conclusions to see if they are supported by evidence.	Make a graph of… Interpret the results… Does the answer seem reasonable?
Synthesis (Creating)	Original thinking, plan, proposal, design or approach.	How would you start? How many ways can you…? What would happen if…?
Evaluation (Evaluating)	Judging the value of ideas and offering opinions.	Which method is the most effective? Is there a better solution?

Active Learning

Imagine a tutor is helping a student work a homework problem. What are the differences between passive learning and active learning?

Passive Learning:
"Here, let me show you how to do that."

Active Learning:
Tutor: "What section of the textbook discusses this?"

Passive is when…
- Tutor lectures or explains without engaging the student with questions.
- Tutor answers the student's questions rather than asking the student to call upon prior knowledge and skill to try to figure them out, or to consult the lecture notes, textbook, or other reference materials.
- Tutor solves homework problems rather than asking the student to solve them.

Active is when …
- The student does something to participate in learning to seek mastery of the material.
- Activities are structured so that the student is required to do the work.
- The student is engaged in the process of summarizing the content he or she has learned.

Active learning has the following affects:
- It makes tutoring more interesting and fun.
- It fosters appreciation of learning.

● It helps students practice self expression, critical thinking, and self initiated inquiry.

How to Stimulate Active Learning While Tutoring

The Prompt Response Method
A prompt is a statement or a question that requests a response. Generally, tutors prompt with a question or statement, and students respond.

The following scenario is an example of the Prompt-Response Method:

Tutor (prompt): "How do I figure out how to multiply double digit numbers?"

Student (response): "I can use place value to help me break apart the numbers."

Tutor (response): "So what would that look like? Can you show me?"

The tutor's prompt is a leading question, a very common tutoring technique. This question helped the tutor identify the information the student has already mastered. Tutor initiated prompts should be questions designed to engage the student. See the 'Asking the Right Questions' section of this manual for more information about effective questioning techniques.

Another example of using the Prompt-Response Method:
Student (prompt): "I don't know how to add these fractions."

Tutor (response): "What do you know about numerators and denominators?"

The tutor did not answer the student's question, but instead responded with another prompt in the form of a question. Again the tutor offered a prompt to help clarify for both of them the student's level of knowledge.

Advantages of Tutor Prompt Student Respond Method

● Focuses attention on the topic keeps the session on track.
● Focuses attention on the student, not the tutor.
● The student is an active learner.
● Helps the student gain self confidence as a learner.
● The tutor can assess the student's knowledge and understanding.
● Demonstrates an effective learning strategy that the student can apply independently.

Disadvantages of Tutor Prompt Student Respond Method

● Can turn into a frustrating guessing game (Guess what's in my head?).
● Can become an interrogation (Since you don't know A, then do you know B?).
● Can be frustrating for the tutor if the student doesn't respond.
● Students may come to feel inadequate.
● Questions may seem like threats.
● Questions may be seen as prompts for thought and consideration rather than a response.
● Sometimes it is more efficient to exchange information rather than prompt.

Common Prompts and Responses

Common Prompts	*Common Responses*
A direct question: "What is a light year?"	**Answer a question**: "A light year is the distance traveled by light in a year."
A fill-in question: "A light year is…"	**Explain an answer:** -How we arrived at our answer. -The thought process underlying a process or concept.
Challenge with problems: "A star is 1000 light years from earth. How far away is that in miles?"	**Summarize progress so far:** -The steps to arrive at an answer. -The relationship of one concept to another.
Be a devil's advocate: "I don't believe in black holes. How do you know they actually exist?"	**Evaluate:** -How the student is progressing. -How tutoring is progressing. -How tutoring is structured.
Seek alternatives: "I've heard it said the other way, how do you know this is right?"	
Missing piece: "Light travels at 186,000 miles per second. Now, can you calculate a light year?"	
Brainstorm: "What else can we think of to explain that?"	

Tips for using the Prompt Response Method
1. Wait…be patient. Give the student time to think about and respond to a prompt. Don't rush to fill in the answer.
2. Ask one question at a time. Don't ask questions in rapid fire succession or it will seem like an inquisition.
3. Use learning resources. Use the text, lecture notes, and other learning resources to demonstrate where to find answers to questions. Don't give the message that the tutor is the only source of information.

Active Listening Strategies

How to listen so that you really hear
Good listening skills are one of the most vital qualities of a tutor. The better you listen, the more you will understand. The more you show understanding, the more your tutee will talk. For a tutoring session to be successful, a non-judgmental atmosphere is critical, as is your ability to understand the other person's point of view.

Active Listening intentionally focuses on the speaker in order to understand what he or she is really saying. Active listening is more than just hearing; it is hearing with the focus placed on what the speaker is saying and reserving your reply until comprehension is complete. An active listener never interrupts the speaker and always listens to understand. Once the speaker has finished, an active listener is able to paraphrase the speaker's remarks including both verbal and nonverbal cues.

Good summary phrases include:
"What you're saying is…"
"It seems to me what your saying is…"
"You sound…"
"It sounds to me like…"

Empathy is imagining oneself in another person's situation and experiencing that situation from their point of view. You try to become the other person so you can understand the reasons behind their feelings.

You communicate empathy with feedback: After listening to the other person, you "feed back" a summary of what you heard, focusing on both the person's emotions and the reason(s) for them ("You feel this way because . . ."). For example,

Student: "I can't believe I bombed that math exam. I studied and studied; I can't figure out why I can't get it. No one seemed to do well on the test. I'm not sure what to do now. I need to do well in this class"

Tutor: "Your distress is understandable. It's really frustrating to work so hard and not have things turn out and not know why."

The tutor's response focused on the student's emotions by using the words "distress" and "frustrated."

The Tutor did not:
judge - "You should have studied harder."
negate - "Don't feel that way. It's only one test."
sympathize - "It's ok, math is hard and isn't for everybody."
rescue - "It's too bad. I'm sure you'll do better next time."
own - "It's my fault for not focusing on those problem sets."

In summary, the process of actively listening and communicating empathy allows the tutee to control the direction, pace and conclusion of the tutoring session. The tutee does most of the work which better equips him or her to answer similar questions in the future.

Arkin, M. and Shollar, B. The Tutor Book, New York, Longman Inc., 1982. Adapted from: http://www.ccsf.edu/Services/LAC/lern10/listening.html

Common Listening Challenges

1. Subject or speaker is uninteresting or boring.
- Active Listener – Listens closely for information that can be important and useful.
- Inactive Listener – Becomes distanced from the listening experience, loses focus, daydreams, chats or sleeps.

2. Criticizing the speaker's delivery.
- Active Listener – Pays attention to the content and reserves judgment until the talk is over.
- Inactive Listener – Criticizes the speaker's voice or delivery and decides the speaker won't say anything important.

3. Disagreeing with the speaker's message.
- Active Listener – Writes down what they disagree with for later discussion and continues to listen.
- Inactive Listener – Becomes so involved with contradicting the speaker and stops listening.

4. Listening only for facts.
- Active Listener – Listens for main ideas and themes and notes the facts that support them.
- Inactive Listener – Focuses only on facts and believes the rest of the speaker's talk is only opinion.

5. Trying to outline the talk.
- Active Listener – Listens for the main ideas and organizes them once the speaker has finished.
- Inactive Listener – Loses main ideas and themes because time is spent trying to organize and find a pattern.

6. Faking attention.
- Active Listener – Continually refocuses attention on the speaker knowing that attention may sometimes wander.
- Inactive Listener – Is present in body but not mind.

7. Allowing distractions.
- Active Listener – Filters out distractions and concentrates on what's being said.
- Inactive Listener – Uses distractions as an excuse to stop listening.

8. Evading or avoiding difficult material.
- Active Listener – Desires to learn something new and is not afraid of complicated ideas.
- Inactive Listener – Gives up when material is complicated and tunes out the speaker.

9. Letting emotion-laden words throw you off focus.
- Active Listener – Listens very carefully to understand the speaker's point of view before challenging what is said.
- Inactive Listener – Gets upset at words which trigger certain emotions and stops listening.

Learning Styles

The different approaches people use to learn or study are called learning styles. Each of us has a unique preference for how, when, where and with whom we'd like to learn or study, and these preferences help to enhance our learning potential. Learning styles do not reflect a person's academic ability or achievements. Rather, the styles are a combination of environmental, emotional, sociological, physical and psychological factors that influence how a person receives, processes and stores new information. Oftentimes a person has more than one learning style or preference. Therefore, it is good practice to present information in a variety of ways to help encourage the student to be successful regardless of how information is presented. As a tutor, you must be sensitive to the signals that indicate a student's learning style.

Major Learning Styles

There are four main learning styles, Visual Learners, Auditory Learners, Read/Write Learners and Tactile Learners, and their characteristics are given below. Tutoring strategies are also provided to help you capitalize on the strengths of each style.

	Visual *If I see it, I know it!*	**Auditory** *If I hear it, I know it!*	**Read/Write** *If I read it, I know it!*	**Tactile** *If I do it, I know it!*
Learning Style Signals	· Prefers to get information by seeing · Likes looking at books, pictures, puzzles, etc. · Strong sense of color · Difficulty with spoken instruction · Trouble following lectures · Misinterpretation of words	· Prefers to get information by listening · Likes to tell jokes and stories · Remembers spoken words, ideas, lyrics to music · Difficulty following written instruction · Problems with writing	· Prefers to get information from text · Likes reading and writing in all forms · Likes lists, textbooks, handouts, etc. · Emphasis placed on words and the meanings of words · Difficulty with spoken instruction	· Prefers to get information by touching · Likes to work with hands · Learns better when physical activity is involved · Difficulty sitting still · Not avid readers

	Visual	**Auditory**	**Read/Write**	**Tactile**
Learning Tips	· Graphics reinforce learning · Color coding to organize notes · Written instructions	· Study by talking the information through with someone · Learn by participating in discussions · Recite out loud anything that needs to be remembered	· Write out words again and again · Read notes (silently) over and over again · Summarize flow charts or diagrams with words	· Follow your finger as you read · Take frequent breaks while studying · Pace or walk while reciting information on index cards · Tracing letters and words to remember facts

Tutoring Tips	· Give visual directions and clues · Use flashcards, maps, graphs, color coding and other visuals to increase understanding	· Allow the student to verbalize whenever possible · Talk through steps in tasks · Reinforce all visual directions with verbal clues · Allow a lot of wait time for questions	· Utilize handouts · List steps used to arrive at the conclusion	· Use movement to help reinforce the concept · Use manipulative learning aids · Use role playing · Use the computer to write drafts, etc.

Factors that Influence Learning

Once a student has determined his or her learning style, it is important to consider the factors that can influence their learning both positively and negatively. For most people, four or five of the following elements become extremely important as we attempt to learn new or difficult information.

- Environmental Factors – sound, light, temperature, room design
- Emotional Factors – motivation, responsibility
- Sociological Factors – work individually, work with peers, work on a team
- Physical Factors – time, transportation, food intake
- Psychological Factors – right/left brain, impulsive/reflective

By paying attention to the elements that most affect a person's learning you are being attentive to their learning style.

Summary

It is important for tutors to have a fundamental understanding of each learning style. The knowledge of your own learning style and the learning style of your tutee will help you:

- Determine why you tutor the way you do.
- Develop strategies to help tutor people with different learning styles.
- Recognize how you affect others and how they affect you.
- Recognize how your personality type affects your tutoring style.
- Provide the most productive tutoring environment possible.
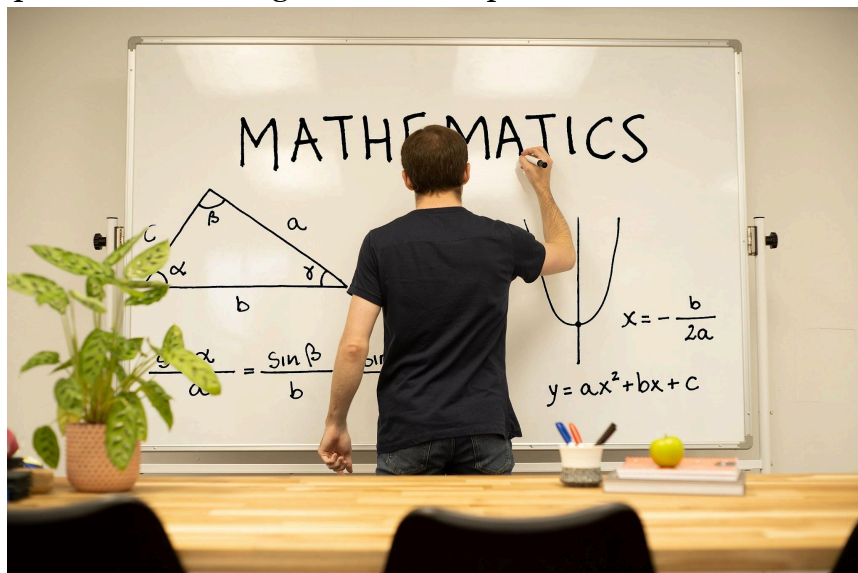
Additional Tips for Working with Students

- Speak clearly, naturally and avoid using lots of slang.
- Ask students to repeat what you have just said to show understanding.
- Repeat directions and/or read/re-read problems out-loud
- Break up problem into manageable parts (word problems: chunk the word problem into 2 separate parts)
- Utilize visuals and charts for references. Put in plastic sleeve so students can write numbers and problems into the charts
- Utilize manipulatives (place value blocks, counters, etc.)
- Access technology (digital fraction strips, Text to speech, etc.)
- Explain accommodations vs. modifications
- Accommodations: providing supports to access grade level curriculum
- Modifications: breaking numbers and problems down to an appropriate level (ex. If a student is not working with numbers in the millions yet, start with hundreds and thousands first.)
- Adapt based on student ability and build on student success
- Utilize sentence and language frames (both verbal and written) to allow student expression
- Give tutors permission to adapt lessons and instruction based on their formative observations of student learning.
- If a student has trouble understanding you, write down what you are saying. If you have trouble understanding the student, ask him or her to write down what he/she is saying.
- Use lots of repetition.
- Encourage each student to take an active part of the tutoring session; there should be "equal time" for the student to talk or ask questions and it is sometimes easy to forget to stop and wait for questions to be formulated. Sometimes you need to wait in silence before a question gets asked. In some cultures, a student does not ask questions.
- Thank the student/s for their questions. Some students are deathly afraid to ask a question, so praising a question is a good way to encourage more.
- Encourage students to make friends outside of class because this will improve their English.
- Don't try to change your students' language patterns by teaching them Standard English. Respect their oral speech habits and encourage them to add Standard English to their everyday language patterns. ESL students may ask you to correct their speech when they feel comfortable, but don't assume this is the case unless asked.
- Use plenty of examples.
- Don't act as if you understand the student if you don't.
- Don't speak too slowly; it might tend to raise your voice volume and/or to make your speech unnatural. Although it might be hard to understand your normal speech pattern, with practice the student will become familiar with it and in the long run, it will help him/her understand other native English speakers. You can lengthen your speech and insert more pauses; this might help a student understand more easily.
- Don't be afraid to correct the student.