# Peer Tutor Training Manual

# Revised May 2017

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Part of the Student Success Center's Tutoring Program mission is to encourage students to ask for help and to offer help to others. Through this process students participate in collaborative learning, and peer tutors are a critical resource to this environment. The tutor complements the work of faculty through helping students who are facing significant difficulties, would like to improve their study skills, or just have a few questions.  Tutors enhance the learning experience at CCRI through being an active participant in the dialogue among students, faculty, administration, and staff.

## Objectives

Peer tutoring goes beyond helping students to learn information. Our objectives are to improve the education and achievement of students by helping them with subject and skill areas.  We aim to help students:

- Maximize, expand, and improve their academic skills
- Develop positive attitudes towards learning
- Build self-confidence
- Overcome barriers to learning
- Become independent and proactive learners

*Thank you for becoming part of our department!*

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Background & Operational Information

## Student Success Centers

Student Success Centers (SSC) are located on each campus of CCRI.  The Student Success Centers provide academic assistance through tutoring services, study skill workshops, enrichment programs, coordinate information and referrals to college resources; seek ways to improve student satisfaction and retention, and help students achieve their goals.

The SSC offers students traditional weekly appointments, group tutoring, class, lab and drop-in tutoring.  The SSC Coordinator manages the Peer Tutoring program, Study Skill Workshops, staffs the SSC, and maintains the physical space of the Student Success Center.  *The SSC Coordinator is your work supervisor*.  Scheduling, training, and employee guidance are offered by the coordinator.  It is important

to maintain communication with your supervisor throughout the semester especially regarding schedules, attendance, or any problems or concerns with students you are tutoring.

**Peer Tutoring Program**
The Student Success Center's Peer Tutor Program is a vital and FREE resource designed to assist CCRI students in overcoming challenges they may face in their course of study. Our program provides trained and carefully selected tutors who are eager to help students achieve their individual learning goals and ultimately create a successful educational experience at CCRI.

*CRLA Certification*
The Peer Tutor Program is seeking certification through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). All tutors in the Peer Tutor Program will be eligible to earn CRLA certificates as Level One tutors.

Tutors are encouraged to earn CRLA certification as it will further their professional development and contribute to their resume for a job or transfer to a four-year institution. Getting CRLA certified will also result in an increase in your hourly wage.

In order to become CRLA certified, tutors need to fulfill the following requirements:

**The minimum eligibility requirements to become a tutor:**
1. *Student earned at least a grade "B" in the subject(s) they tutor*
2. *Overall grade point average of 3.0*
3. *Faculty Referral form completed by the teacher or department chairperson*
4. *Good communication skills – able to get along with a wide range of personalities and academic skill levels*
5. *Reliable; this is a job and the tutors need an excellent attendance record*
6. *Tutor must be <u>registered for at least six (6) credits</u> the semesters they work on-campus*

**Tutor Responsibilities**
The position of Peer Tutor is a job.  Your supervisor is the SSC Coordinator.  Tutors are expected to comply with the SSC tutoring policies.  Tutors are a role model for the students that they tutor.  It is especially important for tutors to be on time for their sessions, act professionally, and to demonstrate care and concern for the students they tutor.  In addition, tutors;

1. Provide subject-specific tutoring
2. Encourage students to attend faculty office hours
3. Introduce themselves to faculty in their subject of tutoring when appropriate, in order to:
    a. Determine how you can best serve their students
    b. Determine the customary areas of difficulty in their courses
4. Work with faculty to encourage students to seek help early
5. Maintain confidentiality of student performance and faculty feedback
6. Maintain records according to instructions from the SSC Coordinators
7. Check your e-mail daily for scheduling and work information
8. Attend and participate actively in all training sessions and seminars, including during the summer and college breaks

**CRLA/Senior Peer Tutors**
After completing a minimum of ten hours of training and tutoring for at least twenty-five hours, a tutor will have completed the College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA) requirements.  Tutors interested in being considered a Senior Peer Tutor, must talk with the SSC coordinator.  In addition to the previously mentioned responsibilities, senior tutors are expected to:

1. Be role models for other tutors
2. Work on special projects
3. Assist in training new tutors
4. Be available to help new tutors

**Commitment**
Working as a Peer Tutor requires a definite commitment.  We are here to help people, and we cannot let them down or disappoint them.  Because of the importance of this job, we ask tutors to be sure that they can meet the responsibilities of the job.  The reputation of the Peer Tutor Program at Student Success Center has been carefully established as one that offers worthwhile services.  As a tutor and a staff member, you will share in our reputation and contribute to it.

Be certain that the hours you have submitted to your supervisor are hours that you are able to work each week of the semester.  Your supervisor and students you tutor expect a consistent weekly schedule.  Remember to be on time, but if you will be late, call the main telephone number to let the staff know you are running late.  It is embarrassing to have to tell students that we don't know why their tutor has not shown up for the appointment.

**Professionalism**
The SSC coordinator expects a high level of professionalism from tutors.  In order to become an effective and professional tutor please consider the following statements.
- Be friendly and relaxed with your students, but keep a professional distance
- Be sympathetic to students' problems, but do not let them play on your sympathy or use you
- Do not discuss students in front of other students
- Do not betray a student's confidence

- Remember that you are a peer, not a teacher - you are not here to replace instructors, but to supplement their work
- Do not judge teachers or disagree with a teacher's approach.  If students are unhappy (with a grade, for example), suggest that they discuss the problem with the instructor
- Model appropriate behavior – show students how to deal with professors professionally

This is a professional office job.  As tutors come into close contact with students, it is expected of you to arrive clean and presentable.  There is no dress code, but tutors and their clothing must be clean. Shower, use a deodorant, and don't overdo cologne or perfume.  Set a good example for the students you work with.  Look like a professional that they'll want to spend some time with.

**Relating to other staff members**

Tutors are part of the Student Success Center team and it is important for team members to work towards common goals.

- Do not distract others by socializing with staff members when people are working
- You are welcome to come to the Student Success Center on your free time, however, remember that others are working – this is an academic area of CCRI
- Do not eat in the SSC - breaks, eating, and socializing are to take place outside of the SSC
- If you are not sure about how to handle a situation, ask a more experienced staff member or the SSC Coordinator

**Confidentiality Policies**

The Community College of Rhode has a policy for administering and maintaining confidentiality of student records in compliance with federal and state laws.  Tutors can be held to federal and state violation for deliberate or accidental release of student information.  As a student employee of the Student Success Center, it is important for tutors to maintain the confidentiality of any information which they may have access to in the course of their employment.

*Confidential Records and Information*

1. All educational and financial aid information such as grades, class schedules, transfer credits, etc.
2. Demographic information such as address, phone number, date of birth, etc.
3. Personal identifiers such as social security number, race, height, weight, etc.
4. Personal records for faculty members, supervisors, and administrative staff.
5. Security information regarding students or college personnel.
6. Anything that a student tells you privately

Please be sure to strictly adhere to these confidentiality policies as you access and utilize the information and records which have been entrusted to tutors.

**Parameters of Tutoring**

1. All tutoring will take place in the Success Center or approved classrooms or labs primarily during the Centers' hours of operation.

   a) All tutors are limited to working five (5) hours a day and a maximum of fifteen (15) hours per week – exceptions are made on an individual basis with prior approval of coordinator. The actual schedule of an individual tutor is determined by demand.
   b) Tutors may be allowed prep time for special courses or workshops (e.g., facilitating the How to Study for Anatomy workshop).

2. Tutoring sessions are fifty minutes in length. Students are allowed up to three hours of tutoring per week per subject. We encourage students to sign up for one session initially because there are more students than tutors – especially in high demand courses.

3. All tutors must complete an employment authorization form to be employed by CCRI. CCRI's fiscal year is July 1 to June 30.
   a) Tutors enrolled in 6 or more credits in the spring semester can tutor through June 30 of each year
   b) Tutors enrolled in 6 or more credits for the fall semester prior to June 30, can tutor as of July 1 of each year.

4. Tutoring is not permitted during College breaks or exam week without prior approval of the Campus Coordinator.

5. Tutor's schedules are built into an online scheduling software called Tutor Trac. It is the tutor's responsibility to check their tutoring schedule several times a week if not daily. Do not rely solely on the Tutor Trac email and text reminders as a means of checking your schedule!

6. Tutors are required to exchange contact information with all their students in case the tutor or student needs to cancel or postpone a session due to illness, previous engagements, traffic, etc. *Tutors and students should make every effort to provide 24 hour notice through Tutor Trac. Emails and texts are automatically sent out when sessions are cancelled through Tutor Trac.*

7. In case of emergencies, and tutors are not able to contact the student directly, tutors are requested to call the main telephone number of your home campus and speak to an Office Assistant or leave a voicemail regarding your absence.

8. If a student misses two or more scheduled meetings with a tutor, without cancelling through Tutor Trac or directly with a tutor, he/she can be suspended from the program. Report missed appointments to the Coordinator by email for written documentation.

9. If a student is excessively canceling meetings, the Campus Coordinator should be notified.

10. Any conflicts between a tutor and their student should be brought immediately to the attention of the Campus Coordinator. This includes scheduling conflicts as well as personal or professional concerns.

11. Always remember…Passing the course is the responsibility of the student NOT the Peer Tutor.

**Attendance Policies**

1. Be reliable:  It is important that tutors show up promptly for work, meetings, and other scheduled activities –students, fellow staff members, and the supervisor depend on your regular attendance
2. Be in Contact:  If tutors have to be absent or late:
    a. *Be sure to cancel your session through Tutor Trac*
    b. *Contact your student(s) directly.*
    c. Call the main line of the SSC to speak with or leave a message for your supervisor
3. Exchange contact information with your students: telephone, email, text, social networking, etc.
4. Tutoring occurs on-campus:  Tutoring is scheduled in the SSC unless you are working as a class or lab tutor or your supervisor has arranged to use another room on campus.
5. Attendance:   Tutors and students are required to sign into and out of Tutor Trac for each session.  Students are considered a "no show" or a missed appointment when they do not cancel their appointment online through Tutor Trac or contact you or the SSC when they will be absent – students are dropped after 2 consecutive no shows
6. Tutors are asked to wait approximately 15 minutes for students to show up:  Please check with the office assistant if your student has not shown up to be sure that the student is not sitting in a different area of the SSC or if the student called the Center directly about their absence.

**The Work Schedule**

Tutors are required to submit their schedule of work availability *prior to the start of the semester* they plan to work.  Tutors are allowed to work up to 15 hours per week.  The SSC coordinator will work around your schedule of availability so it is important to let the coordinator know if your availability changes during the semester.

Because of the nature of tutoring (the amount of tutoring requests and subjects requested vary from semester to semester) SSC coordinators cannot guarantee a minimum number of hours that a tutor may work each week.  Tutors who choose to work as a class or lab tutor are able to count on a minimum number of work hours each week.  If you are interested in becoming a lab tutor, you must speak with your supervisor.

**Using Tutor Trac**

Tutor Trac is a scheduling software.  Tutors and students may access schedules by using their CCRI username and password to sign into the system.  Your schedule will be posted on Tutor Trac each semester you work.  Please notify your supervisor immediately if your work availability changes so that we can update your schedule.

It is the tutor's responsibility to check their schedule, email & text for new appointments each week.  Tutor Trac is set up so that students may not book their first appointment with a tutor:
- **within a 24 hour period**
- **beyond 30 days**

*If there is no student booked on a day or time, do not report to work.*

**Checking Your Schedule**

A brief description is below.  Tutors will receive a separate handout on how to use Tutor Trac that includes screenshots.  To find your schedule, click on Switch to Consultant Profile button.  Your name should appear under the calendar.  Select date to view your schedule.  To see the name of your student click on the blue triangle next to the time.  A drop down window will appear with the names

of the students in that time slot.  In this drop down box you or the office assistant may mark attendance or cancellations.

**Student Attendance**
Unfortunately, many students fail to appear for their tutoring appointment.  If you have a scheduled appointment and your student does not show up within 15 minutes you may leave – be sure to tell the office assistant that the student did not show up.  For no show appointments, you may put half an hour on your timesheet.

Directions on How to Request a Tutor
- Appointments are booked with tutors directly through a software program called Tutor Trac
- Students and Tutors receive an email and/or text confirmation once an appointment is booked
- A reminder email is sent to Tutors at 5pm the day before the appointment
- If you opted to receive a text reminder, you will receive the reminder as determined by the time you selected when you activated this service (e.g. 15, 30, 60 minutes prior to your appointment)

The confirmation email will ask the student to bring all relevant materials, including texts, the course syllabus, and class or reading notes to each tutoring session.  Many students not only struggle with the course content, but they also have poor study habits.  ***It is vital that during the first appointment tutors review the Peer Tutor Contract with their student and ask to see the student's course materials (text, syllabus, etc.) as well***.  The Peer Tutor Contract will help the student to understand what they can expect from their tutor.  By reviewing the student's class materials, the tutor will become familiar with the requirements of the professor and also demonstrate the importance of being familiar with the course requirements and course resources.

How to Request a Tutor
1. You may request a tutor from any computer, tablet, or cell phone with internet access
2. Visit: tutortrac.ccri.edu
3. Log in with your CCRI username and password
4. "Opt In" for the text message reminder service so that you don't forget your tutoring session
5. Follow the directions on how to select a tutoring appointment
6. You will have immediate access to tutoring schedules
7. Select the day and time of your weekly tutoring session
8. You will receive a text and/or email reminder
9. You may update your contact information, leave a note for the tutor as to what you are struggling with in class, and view your visit history

*Typical Length of a Tutoring Session*
Most tutoring sessions are 50 minutes in length.  Tutors must set short term goals for each session and be clear about the amount of time available to work together.  Work with the student for about 50 minutes and save 5-10 minutes for record keeping and notes to yourself about future work together.

- At the beginning and end of each session remind the student to sign in & out of Tutor Trac
  - *This is how SSC Coordinators track your hours for your pay raise!*
- Tutors should use a notebook or Tutor Trac to record their observations and the topics addressed for each student or group session.  These notes do not have to be extensive, but this practice will help tutors keep track of their multiple assignments and make sessions more productive.

## Payroll, Timesheets, and Tutor Trac

*TutorTrac – Signing into and out of Tutor Trac is not related to your timesheet!*
**This is a customized software tracking system that the SSC uses to schedule tutoring appointments**.  All tutoring activity in the SSC, class, lab, or drop-in tutoring must be entered into Tutor Trac.  Please be sure to stop by the check-in desk before and after each tutoring session, lab or drop-in tutoring to record your activity.  You may also use your phone, tablet, or PC to remotely sign in and out of Tutor Trac.  See your coordinator for directions on how you may sign into Tutor Trac remotely.  This is usually only used for open lab or drop-in tutoring.  The SSC coordinators use Tutor Trac to monitor your hours of actual tutoring and use this information to determine pay raises.

*Timesheets – Are located in your MyCCRI*
Once a tutor's employment papers have be approved, a "For Employees" tab will appear on their MyCCRI page.  Electronic timesheets are used to submit the hours tutors worked.  Timesheets are accessed through your MyCCRI account.  Tutors can access their electronic timesheets from any device connected to the internet.  Tutors are encouraged to put their hours in each day you work so that you don't forget hours!  Your supervisor will remind you to submit your timesheet for approval.

If a tutor submitted a timesheet for approval but forgot to add or delete hours, contact the SSC coordinator and that person will return your timesheet for correction.

*Paychecks*
All student employees of CCRI are paid bi-weekly.  Paychecks are distributed every two weeks.  Paychecks are mailed to the address you gave to CCRI or deposited into your bank account if you sign up for direct deposit.

Student employees are strongly encouraged to sign up for electronic deposit.  Forms for electronic deposit are available from your supervisor or the Payroll Office.

**If a paycheck is not received, call the Payroll Office at 825-2180.**

SUCCESSFUL TUTORING STRATEGIES

The goal of tutoring is to show students how to be an independent and proactive learner. Tutors not only address content questions, but they model effective and successful study and learning strategies. The ultimate goal of tutoring is for tutors to instill knowledge, study skills, and self-confidence in struggling students so that they will not require tutoring in the future!

*What is knowledge?  What is Thinking?*

**Six Levels of Thinking**
For tutors who have taken Psychology or Education courses, they may already be aware of the six levels of cognition of Bloom's Taxonomy. Cognition refers to thinking. Knowing these levels of thinking can help tutors develop their questioning techniques.

*The lower levels of thinking are knowledge, comprehension, and application*

1. Knowledge:  requires memory only, repeating information exactly as memorized (define, recall, recognize, remember, who, what, where, when)

2. Comprehension:  requires rephrasing, rewording and comparing information (describe, compare, contrast, rephrase, explain the main idea)

3. Application:  requires application of knowledge to determine a single correct answer (apply, classify, choose, use, write an example, solve, how many, which, what is)

*The higher levels of thinking are analysis, synthesis, and evaluation*

4. Analysis:  identify motives or causes draw conclusions determine evidence (support, analyze, conclude, why)

5. Synthesis:  make predictions, produce original communications, and solve problems (more than one possible answer).  Predict, produce, write, design, develop, synthesize, construct, how can we improve, what happens if, how can we solve, can you devise.

6. Evaluation:  Make judgments and offer opinions (judge, argue, decide, evaluate, assess which is better, give your opinion, do you agree, would it be better).

Tutors will find it useful to ask lower order questions at the beginning of a session to establish the level of content that your students know.  As the session progresses, ask higher order questions that require the students to summarize patterns and suggest strategies for learning and retention.

*Probing & Open Ended Questions*

Good tutoring centers around asking probing and open ended questions. Questioning initiates different levels of thinking. When the higher levels of thought are emphasized, the most effective and meaningful learning takes place and information is stored in long-term memory.

If a tutor asks a question that requires only a yes or no answer, it won't help the tutor determine if a student really understands a concept. Open ended questions require the student to do the explaining or to demonstrate a skill. This will help tutors determine if the student really understands, and if not, it will allow you to go back and work on a concept again.

Probing, or open ended questions, can be useful for helping a student understand reading assignments, prepare to write, review a concept for a test or quiz, or for conversation in a foreign language or ESL. A probing response forces the <u>tutor to listen carefully</u>, and pushes the <u>student to think</u> and move beyond the first statement.

It takes time to learn how to develop good open ended questions. Don't stress out! Below are some samples of questions and questioning strategies that you may adapt for your tutoring style.

***Clarifying:*** Asking a student for more information or meaning, restate

> Examples: "What do you mean by that?" "Tell me more!" "Be more specific." "Anything else?" "So what's an example of that?"

***Challenging:*** Asking a student to justify, reflect, or think about answer

> Examples: "What are you assuming?" "How can that be?" "How would you do that?" "Are you sure?"

***Refocusing:*** Asking a student to relate answer to another idea or topic

> Examples: "How is that related to..." "If this were true, then what would happen if..."

***Prompting:*** Giving a student a hint, or rephrasing a question to help lead to the answer after a student has tried and failed to understand

> Examples: "Let me put it another way..." "Here's a clue..." "So what's the first step?" "Remember when we talked about..."

***Requesting Summary:*** Asking for a restatement of what has just been said or learned, in terms of content and process

> Examples: "OK, now you explain back to me what we just said." "Now <u>you</u> teach it to <u>me</u>." "Summarize the steps for me."

**Additional Things to Consider**

1. Be careful not give too much information in the questions you ask.
2. Formulate questions starting with "why" or "how" or "what are the factors", "what contributes to" what is the cause and effect" etc. These questions starters challenge critical thinking.
3. Phrase your questions carefully so that you are clearly asking one question at a time.
4. When students indicate that they do not understand the question, rephrase the question to clarify it.  Avoid asking the same question again.
5. When students answer a question incorrectly, ask them to explain their answer.  If there is a misunderstanding of the question, clarify the question. If it is a lack of understanding of content, either direct the students to the text or ask a question that breaks the content into a smaller part.

THE FIRST SESSION

The first tutoring session sets the tone for the entire semester.  Getting started on the right foot with a student is very important.  The following tips will help tutors set up an effective tutoring session that will benefit your student.

**Peer Tutor Contract**
Tutors are required to review the written Peer Tutor Contract with each new student during the first appointment.  The Peer Tutor Contract outlines the responsibilities and expectations of both the student and tutor.  Any student who wishes to receive tutoring must read and sign this document.

Tutors may use the Peer Tutoring Contract as a way to initiate a discussion with the student about what specific kinds of academic help he/she needs and what his/her expectations for the tutoring sessions are.  Jot down notes about the concepts and skills with which he/she is having difficulty.  Student self-analysis is an important part of the process.

It is important that students realize that tutors are not going to correct their homework or watch students doing their homework.  Make sure that your students understand that to get the most out of tutoring, they have to have attempted all of the reading and homework assignments prior to their tutoring session.  If a student is not prepared for their tutoring session, tutors may cancel or reschedule the session until a later date to give the student an opportunity to be prepared.

**Assessing the Student Need for Tutoring**
Get to know the student by finding out his/her interests and background.  Tutors can use this information to assist them in devising examples and study strategies that the student can relate to easily.

Begin to diagnose the student's learning issue, by listening, observing, and questioning.  Tutors need to help students analyze both the course tasks and assignments, as well as how their behavior affects their success in the course.  Analyzing the tasks and assignments with the student is time consuming but is important for setting the stage for future tutoring sessions.  Review the syllabus and texts.  Look at the major and minor concepts and then the skills the student must have to complete the tasks.  Tutors might see if the student understands the discrete steps of a task.  During this process tutors be working back to the basics and to where the uncertainty or questions begin.

Analyzing the student's behaviors involves asking the following types of questions:
1. Are you differentiating between the critical and less relevant concepts?
2. Are you using your study time well?
   a. How many hours per week is the student allocating for homework?
3. Are you reading the textbook?
   a. Is the reading overwhelming or difficult to understand?
4. Are you having difficulty with writing?
   a. Has the student used the Writing Center?
5. Are your class notes detailed and complete?

Consider whether the difficulties the student is experiencing in this class are specifically defined by the subject or involve broader study skills problems.  You may always refer a student to the SSC Coordinator for study skill workshops.  A complete list of workshops is found at www.ccri.edu/success.

**Model strategic thinking and learning**
Share a wide range of strategies that you have found effective and explain that developing effective study strategies leads to independence.  There are many study skills that are discipline specific, so part of your job is helping students understand and practice how to read, write, and study effectively for that specific discipline.   For example, share memorization techniques and tricks that work for you or others and might be specific to the discipline.

Also, make sure you build on the skills and strategies that the student is already using.  Research suggests that if a student has a strategy that is partially working, it is more effective to help the student adapt, adjust or refine that strategy, rather than introducing a totally new strategy.

**Effective Tutoring Behaviors**
1. Be friendly.  This may seem obvious, but remember that some students feel very uncomfortable and insecure about asking for help.  Being friendly is the first step in helping students feel comfortable and welcomed.
2. Be clever, creative, and flexible.  Tutoring is hard because you have to constantly devise new ways of presenting information and strategies, as well as ways to have the student practice.
3. Be patient (and encourage the student to be patient).  Learning takes time.
4. Build confidence.  Don't always focus on what the student is doing wrong but give equal time to what the student is doing right.
5. Be sensitive, respectful, and understanding.  Student's background, work experience, or previous educational experiences may influence their learning and attitude towards learning.
6. Empathize with your students.  One of the reasons peer tutoring works so well is that tutors can share their recent experiences in learning a new concept or skill, making mistakes, feeling pressured, and struggling with learning.
7. Don't be afraid to make mistakes and admit that you don't know.  Mistakes are a necessary part of learning and discussing them is an excellent teaching tool.
8. Don't feel guilty if your student doesn't do well on an assignment or task.  Review what she did well, the mistakes she made, and the next steps to getting back on track.
9. Maintain confidentiality about students and professors.  Be careful of where conversations take place and who might be listening.
10. Be dependable.  Be on time for your appointments and expect the same from the students.
11. Be organized.  Prepare material for your tutoring sessions.  Log tutoring contacts regularly.
12. Be professional.  This includes being respectful of professors.  Help students develop constructive strategies for dealing with issues or frustrations they might have with professors
13. Don't do the work for the student!  Students need to understand that a tutor's job is to help him/her develop effective learning strategies and find answers for themselves, not for tutors to give answers.  In this process tutors will need to focus both on asking questions and on modeling clear thinking, strategies, and behaviors.

## Get started and on task right away

Tutors want to set the expectation that 50 minutes has been set aside for tutoring and that they intend to give the student the full 50 minutes of time helping him or her.  Follow up on previous sessions by asking specific questions about course assignments or what you suggested the student do at the end of the last session.  *Set the agenda.*   Establish priorities, set clear goals, and agree on the amount of time you will work together.

## Set goals for the session

This can be as simple as saying, "Today we'll take a look at the homework you did and see if you had any problems. Then we'll look ahead to the next session of your book. If we have any time left at the end, we'll go back and review the problems you had trouble with last week." By saying this, the student now has an idea of what to expect in the session and is prepared to stay the entire time.

## How to Get Your Student to Talk More Than You!

*Put the Pencil (or Marker) Down!*

Tutors should guide the session, but student should *do most of the talking and writing*.  Sometimes tutors believe they aren't doing a good job unless they spend the entire hour explaining and demonstrating problems on the board or worksheet. The fact is that students learn more when they are the ones doing the explaining and working out problems. The tutor should ask guiding questions that prompt the student. This is as simple as saying things such as, "What do you do next? Why?"  "What happens after that?" "Show me on the board"

Make sure the paper, book, or monitor is in front of the student, not the tutor.  Do not stand in front of the white board talking and writing for the entire session.  Make the student stand at the white board and demonstrate to you that they can do the work themselves!

*Ten second Rule*

After asking a question or follow up question, or beginning a problem, allow at least ten seconds for the student to respond. This may seem like a long time, but if you are patient, often the student will have time to think of a response. Don't be afraid to allow an awkward silence to occur before you jump in. This will let the student know that you are listening and expect him or her to participate.

*Proof of Learning*

Ask the student to demonstrate learning – If you ask a student, "Do you understand?" he or she will invariably say, "Yes" whether it's true or not. It is human nature to not want to admit not understanding something.  At times students may just want to hurry up and get through the session and will not admit having trouble with a concept.  To avoid this happening, tutors should always say things such as, "Now, show me how to work this problem" or "Now, you explain this process to me." If a student doesn't understand a concept, it will be apparent and you can go back and continue working on it.

**Don't be afraid of admitting you don't know an answer!**
The SSC coordinator does not expect tutors to be a subject matter expert.  That is the role of the professor.  There will be times during tutoring when a tutor does not know an answer.  Perhaps your instructor did not cover that information or you just plain forgot!

This is an ideal time to demonstrate to your student that even tutors don't know or remember everything and that it is ok to ask for help!  When a struggling student reads information that is confusing to them, or does not know how to complete their homework assignment they stop the activity *because they do not know where to find the answer or how to ask for help.*

When a tutor receives a question from a student that they do not know the answer, or the tutor is confused by an assignment, this is an excellent opportunity for the tutor to model their thought process.  By modeling their thought process, tutors demonstrate to the student how to break down the task of finding the answer into manageable parts.  A sample of how this might be done is listed below.

**Modeling a Thought Process**
Modeling can be useful for solving problems in math and science, doing grammar exercises, teaching study skills, studying for a test, reading a textbook, or revising a paragraph.

It is also an excellent method for tutors to demonstrate how they learn to overcome barriers to learning.  This method shows students the steps to overcome obstacles while learning new material.

1. First, ask the student how he or she would approach the problem.  Look in the book and class notes.  She/he may not realize how much they already know.
   a. Examples: "What did you learn in class?"  How would you start this?"  "Then what would you do?"

2. Next, model your own processes for the task by thinking out loud as you SLOWLY do the task.
   a. Examples: "Hmmm, what do I do now?"  "I usually begin by..." "Then I figure out if..."

3. Do another example together slowly, step by step, asking the student what to do for each step.

4. Have the student do the task alone, observing, giving encouragement, and coaching him or her along the way.
   a. Examples: "Good, keep going!"  "Remember what you do next..."  "Do you want to write down the steps so you can remember them?"

5. Finally, fade into the background and let the student take on responsibility for the task.
   a. Examples: "Great! Now you can do it on your own!"  "Show me how you will do this when you are studying this by yourself"

As noted earlier in this document, sometimes a tutor may not be able to answer a student's question.  If modeling a thought process does not help the tutor to locate the information needed to answer a student's question, do not hesitate to seek assistance from another tutor or ask permission to contact the student's teacher.  By doing these activities, the tutor demonstrates how a proactive learner will use all resources available to become a successful learner.

**Monitor your communication with your student.**
Tutors may use certain words or phrases which may mean something entirely different or may mean nothing at all to the student. Think about the subtle as well as more obvious ways people communicate information. Consider body language, nonverbal communication, tone of voice, pace, and wait time when you ask questions. Focus on critical vocabulary. Confusion often can be traced back to misunderstandings about the major vocabulary of a discipline. Don't be afraid to go back to basics if the student does not have a clear understanding of the basic skills.

If a tutor has difficulty communicating concepts with a student, consider the idea that there may be a difference in learning styles. Think about ways to share information in several different formats, for example auditory, visual, or kinesthetic methods. The SSC Coordinator will be able to help you if you are struggling to communicate effectively with students.

**Consider language or learning issues**
Consider whether the student's difficulties might be the result of a language based problem. If the student is not a native speaker of English or has a learning disability, speak with your supervisor.

**Suggest a variety of ways the student might practice.**
Tutoring may include working with texts, notes, learning aids or showing students how to access online resources, MyCCRI, or Blackboard.

**Encourage the student to attend the professor's weekly office hours**
It's important for students to continue asking the professor for help while working with a tutor. Encourage students to develop a rapport with the teacher and to seek help from the instructor as well as the tutor.

**Suggest that the student join or form a study group**
Study groups help everyone, those who are working successfully in a course and those struggling. Students can seek help from the SSC coordinator in establishing study groups.

**Correct the student's mistakes in a positive manner**
At times you will have to correct a student's mistakes, but this can be done in a way that will not be discouraging. Always find something positive to say first and follow it up with a suggestion for correction. Ex. "You did the first three steps of the problem perfectly, but I'd like you to take another look at step four. Do you see what you need to do differently?" If the student is unable to detect the mistake, the tutor needs to ask guided questions to help the student see what to do. When the student arrives at the correct answer, the tutor should give genuine praise such as, "Yes, that's right. I knew you'd figure it out!"

**Use extra time constructively**
At times tutors may cover all problems the student has and still have time left over in the tutoring session. If goals are set for each session, the student will not expect to leave early. Tutoring sessions are one hour long (fifty minutes plus a ten-minute break) and the student should expect to spend the whole session working. Use the extra time to review previously learned concepts, do more challenging problems related to the material, or look ahead to get a start on new material.

**Bring closure to the session**

Take time at the end of each session to review what you have covered and to clarify the student's next steps and specific study goals. Simply say something like, "Today we really worked hard on factoring and, I think, you really understand it!"

**Set goals for the next session**

Tutors need to let the student know what to expect for the next session and what he or she needs to do in the time before the next tutoring session. By saying something like, "Next week we'll work on using commas correctly. Before next week, be sure and do the practice exercises in your book and bring them with you to tutoring." Tutors need to set the expectation that the student is responsible for learning the material outside of the tutoring session, as well as in the session. Be sure to confirm the next session and remind the student to sign out of Tutor Trac.

TUTORING ACTIVITIES

**The Informal Quiz**
The informal quiz is not to be used to formally evaluate student work, but to determine where the student's skill level may be. Also, quizzes may be used to develop and reinforce comprehension, or encourage student participation in the tutoring session.

The informal quiz frequently is used at the beginning of the session. The quiz should take no more than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The results of the quiz may be used for discussion questions and make the session more focused on the skill lacking in the student.

**Post Exam Survey**
The following are some questions students might like to think about after taking an exam. Answers to these questions may help them focus on effective exam preparation strategies. Do not use this as a formal handout, but as a basis for discussing exams and exam preparation.
1. Which part of the exam was the easiest for you? Why? (May get into essay, multiple choice, true/false, short answer type questions. If so, explore the appropriate areas as you continue with the questions.)
2. Which part of the exam was the most difficult? Why?
3. Which of the following activities did you complete prior to the exam?
   a. All required reading assignments
   b. Preparation and review of all reading notes
   c. Review of lecture notes
   d. Self-testing of material to be covered by the exam
   e. Prediction of possible questions by you prior to the exam
   f. Study with friends
4. Which of the above did you find most helpful in preparing for this exam?
5. What activities work best for different types of questions? (True/False, Multiple Choice, etc.)
6. How much time (in hours) did you spend preparing for the exam?
7. Did you feel prepared when you walked into the exam? Why or why not?
8. How might you study differently for the next exam?

**Note taking in class and Note Processing**
Have students read their notes. How does the professor indicate what's important to know? What shape are their notes in? Are their notes organized? Will they be able to read their notes to prepare for an exam? Would a loose-leaf notebook be better to use than a spiral one? Would graph or plain paper be better to use for particular subjects?

Note taking can be made easier if students prepare for lectures by reading or at least previewing the material to be covered in advance. The vocabulary will then be somewhat familiar which allows for better spelling and organization of notes. Every person will take notes differently. But whatever they do, it should be consistent. If abbreviations are used, a key should be placed at the top of the page to avoid confusion. (ie. Vit.= vitamin, m = mole, e = electron, etc.)

As soon as possible after a lecture, notes should be reviewed and edited. Incomplete areas can be filled in from reading the text. Key points can be highlighted and extra definitions inserted if necessary.

Share your thoughts and ideas on note taking. What helped you and how do you process your notes? Remember our goal is to help students learn appropriate study skills so they can become effective

learners. Students cannot apply themselves until they have the skills to do so. Integrate the Cornell Note-taking Strategies and encourage students to sign up for the note taking workshop.

## Review The Textbook

Discuss the process of previewing and reviewing chapters. Talk about the benefits of taking chapter notes vs. highlighting/marking textbooks.  Whenever possible, refer students to their textbooks for information and answers to questions.  Most students do not know how to use their textbook and often avoid using it at all.  Give them a tour of their text; show them the benefits of how the text is formatted and how to use the chapter summaries, captions charts and graphs to their advantage.  Also try to help them make connections from chapter to chapter.  Ask them to identify how content from a previous chapter relates to next chapter.  Ask them to compare lecture note to the text.  How does the textbook differ from or similar to the lecture?

Reading involves physical and mental participation.  The goal is to comprehend, understand, and assimilate the material.  Help students to avoid this mechanical process just to get the assignment completed.  Reading paragraph headings, graphs, pictures, and summaries is not only helpful to do prior to lectures, but will also help students read with improved comprehension.  Integrate the PARROT or SQ3R strategies.

## Reversing Questions/Transferring Information

The following questions could be asked to help students focus their attention on the general principles of new material covered, homework problems or test questions.  These are especially useful in the math/science area and can be adapted for the other disciplines.
1. What are the different kinds of problems and how can they be recognized?
2. What is the format of the problem?  Do the directions indicate the specific technique to use?
3. How are these different problems related?
4. How can this problem be restated?
5. What are some other ways to word the question?
6. What changes in the wording of the directions that would indicate different procedures?
7. Is there only one method to work this type of problem or are there several techniques applicable? If several techniques are appropriate, how does one choose which to use?
8. What means (if any) are available to check your answer other than reworking the problem the same way?
9. How are the problems from this section/chapter different/alike from the problems of previous sections/chapters?

## Predict Test Questions

Students have great difficulty preparing for tests.  Help them to learn how to predict test questions by using their notes, textbooks, and homework.  Let students develop their own questions and quiz each other.  Encourage them to find old exams and practice with them.  Some texts offer study guides and can be most useful in preparing for exams.

Cramming for tests is common.  Homework and reading assignments are often left to the last minute, leaving areas of confusion ignored.  Students will look to others for "the quick fix": "Tell me what I need to know for this test so I won't have to study anymore."  They become focused on the answers and not the process.

Encourage students to meet with their professors several days in advance of a test.  Try to time it so that the exam has probably been written.  Sometimes professors may subtly direct students to study

the appropriate material by how they answer questions, give extra information and sometimes say: "And don't forget to review…."

**Work on Vocabulary and Terminology**
Use flash cards or develop other memory games to help students learn difficult concepts, vocabulary, etc. Students often do not know "how" to approach learning something.  If they haven't been exposed to a technique or a "trick of the trade" then they have no basis from which to work.  Share your ideas. When working on vocabulary, be sure students can give the definition in their own words instead of repeating "the textbook version".  This helps tutors to determine whether the students really do understand the material.

**Brainstorm Ideas**
This is a very effective method in promoting discussion of ideas and concepts.  Often students will discover that they really do not understand something as a result of the discussion and it will prompt them to dig further for information.  We often "think" we understand until we have to actually make applications!  Students need to "say things out loud".  If they can successfully explain a concept to someone else, they have accomplished two things.  First, they have demonstrated that they understand the concept. Secondly, they have used another "sense" to reinforce that knowledge.

**Paired Problem Solving**
Have students work on different or the same problems and compare methods and results.  You will be amazed at the different approaches students will take.  Paired problem solving also avoids one student being put on the spot and causing embarrassment.

When discussing the answers, stress the importance of writing down all the steps in an orderly, neat fashion. Often students become sloppy in their work, skip steps, do not label points on graphs or make inadequate drawings of their work.  This causes them to make needless mistakes and professors have difficulty grading their work appropriately.

**Give Assignments As Appropriate**
Assignments do not have to entail more of the same that an instructor would give.  Use your imagination and use assignments to get your students involved in the learning process.  Require them to go to the library to find out more about a particular topic.  Ask them to see their professor to clarify some points brought about by a tutoring session.  Students need to learn how to use the available resources on campus to learn how to take advantage of them.

**Subject specific websites and on-line videos**
Showing students how to access the course and/or publishers website is a valuable use of tutoring time.  Many students do not use all of the available resources to help them learn and study for their classes.  Tutors are encouraged to share with their student websites or online videos that can be used to help students learn course content.


**Use Popular Games, Models, Pictures and Graphs**
Many tutors have adapted games such as Jeopardy, Pictionary, Scattegories, Name That Tune, Wheel of Fortune, Monopoly, Scrabble, Parcheesi, Sorry, Dominos, etc. to the subjects they tutor.  Using games is an excellent method to help students learn material and apply it, learn to self-test and have fun at the same time!

Use models, pictures and graphs to help students "see" or visualize "what is happening". Ask them to draw their own pictures of what something means to them. For example, in Biology, ask students to draw pictures of photosynthesis. During an exam, they will remember "their picture" as opposed to a complicated graph from the text. Students need to utilize all of their "senses" in learning. Try to incorporate ideas/strategies where students constantly reinforce their doing it and most of all— thinking it!

**Empty Outlines**
Use their lectures notes and textbook to complete the outline. This helps students recall and organize the main points of a lesson within an appropriate knowledge structure, making retention more likely. It also provides a model for organization that could be used with other material.

**Pro and Con Grid**
This activity provides important information and analysis of information.

**One Sentence Summary**
Students are asked to synthesize an entire lecture into a single informative, grammatical, and long summary sentence.

**Documented Problem Solutions**
Students are asked to identify the specific steps taken to solve the problem. By analyzing these detailed protocols, students can identify other ways to solve a problem.

**Student Generated Test Questions**
Students are asked to generate possible examination questions. Questions should start with "What are the factors," "What contributed to," "What are the causes and effects," "Why…" "How…" Students begin to understand how well they can answer the questions that they have posed. It also empowers students to believe that they can predict and study for examinations in a proactive manner.

TIPS FOR MATH TUTORS

Five basic steps for assisting math students

1.  Always look at the problem in the book.  Never trust that a student has set it up correctly.

2.  Ask student to explain the procedure she/he is using to solve the problem.  You can troubleshoot and listen for erroneous logic or incorrect procedures at that time.

3.  Reinforce any correct procedures (e.g. "This part is done correctly", or "You are target here".)  Then identify incorrect logic and ask the student to consider what else she/he might try.  You can provide a hint, but avoid explanations until after the student has attempted a guess.  (E.g. "When you evaluate an integral, what do you evaluate first, the upper or lower part?")

4.  To check for understanding have students re-explain the procedure to you.  Avoid asking questions like, "Does that make sense to you?" and "Do you understand now?"

5.  Disengage!  Encourage the student to work the next problem on his/her own, but let him/her know you will check back.  Do not get drawn into working the next problem with an insecure student.  She/he needs to develop the ability to apply what she/he is learning without your supervision.

Five tips for math tutors

1.  **Guide student**
    A math tutor should guide a student through the solution process.  Ask the student leading questions that will direct the student towards the correct steps.

    *Avoid doing problems for the student.*

    If the student cannot get the correct answer and asks for help, the tutor should look at what the student has done and try to locate the error.  Then have the student work a similar problem to make sure he/she has grasped the concept or procedure.

2.  **Teach Concepts**
    *The goal of tutoring is to help students become an independent learner.*  In mathematics, it is important to teach concepts rather than just processes or procedures.  For example, the tutor should explain why it is important to follow the "order of operations" rule, PEMDAS, rather than just showing the student how to do it.  Understanding the concepts makes remembering the procedures easier.

3.  **Encourage Students to Attend Class or Lab**
    Some students believe getting help from a tutor is a substitute for attending class or Math Lab.  Students having difficulty in math must realize time spent with a tutor is additional to classroom or Math Lab time.

4. **Address Math Anxiety**
   Tutors will deal with students with varying degrees of math anxiety.  Tutors should avoid using phrases such as, "this is easy."  Such phrases intimidate the student.  If the student suffers from a high degree of math anxiety it may be helpful to refer the student to the Student Success Center Coordinator.  Sometimes it is helpful to learn about the student's math background.  If the tutor believes the student is enrolled in a course that she/he is not ready for, talk to your coordinator.

5. **Don't Confuse the Student!**
   If the tutor is unsure of a mathematical procedure or concept, the tutor, after consulting with the coordinator, may wish to reach out to the student's math instructor for clarification.  A tutor using the same technique as the text or instructor will reinforce the concept or procedure.  Resist the urge to show students "short cuts" because using a different approach than what is in the book or done by the teacher can be confusing to the student.

### Index Card Questions

At the beginning of the session, hand out index cards to each student and have them write down three questions that they from the textbook chapter, from lecture notes, or from class handouts. Then have them trade cards and answer each other's questions as a whole group. Tutors might breakup the material, and assign each individual or pair a specific topic. Tutors may also make this into a game, or do it in pairs. This is a good technique to prepare for an exam.

### Scribe Notes

At the beginning of each session, appoint (or ask for a volunteer) to take notes on the discussion. The notes can be informal, funny, or serious, and should include all the information the note-taker thinks is important. At the beginning of the next session, have the note-taker read his or her notes. This promotes "group memory" and helps connect current topics to previously covered material. This is a good activity to give to the quiet person in the group to make sure that they are participating.

### Board Notes

Try to make good use of the white board during discussions. Whenever possible, have a group member write or draw on the board to illustrate concepts. Seeing material displayed on the board helps visual learners, writing or drawing on the board helps kinesthetic learners, and the process of summarizing information models effective learning strategies.

### Team Debate/Quiz

Divide the group into two teams and use a quiz or game show format to have team members ask and answer course-related questions posed by the opposing team. Have the teams consult for a few minutes to develop their list of questions before playing the game. Make sure everyone agrees on the rules, and then keep score.

### Free Writing

Begin a session by having students write for three minutes on a topic related to course material. Potential topics include how they applied specific learning strategies during the last week, their thoughts on a specific concept covered in lecture and readings, what questions they have for this session, or any other topic that might help focus their minds on the discussion to follow. Tell them to write as much as they can, as fast as they can, without worrying about grammar, spelling, or sentence structure. They do not have to share their writing unless they want to. The goal is to have students focus their energy and clear their minds so that they can concentrate better during the discussion.

### Process Summary

One goal of group tutoring is to provide students with the necessary confidence and skills to eventually initiate and conduct their own study groups for their other courses. By focusing attention on group *process*, students can become more conscious of how to lead these groups. Though it may seem awkward to discuss these questions at first, in time group members will become more comfortable taking risks within the group and taking responsibility for the group's success.

About five minutes before the end of a session, stop the discussion. Ask the group to summarize the process they just went through. Use the following questions to get the discussion started:
1. How and when did the group begin to discuss the material?
2. Who talked and who did not?
3. Did the discussion stay on track or did it stray into less important topics?

4.  Did students refer to and help each other or did they try to get the group leader to answer all the questions?
5.  Overall, was the discussion productive and fun? If so, why? If not, what can be done next time to improve it? Have someone write these suggestions down and remind everyone of them at the next group meeting.

If students seem shy about discussing these issues, have everyone in the group to either free write about the group or write down some observations about the group process.  Tutors might ask students to write two or three positive observations, and two or three areas for improvement.  At the next meeting, use these comments to lead a more focused discussion.

**Rotating Leader**
When tutors begin to know the students in your group, invite one of them to lead the discussion.  Point out that the most important role of a leader lies not in mastery of course content, but in the ability to include the whole group in a focused and productive discussion.  Tutors might want to sit down with the student leader for a few minutes before the session and help him or her think of some questions to guide the discussion.  During the session, resist the urge to jump in; just sit back and let the group take over.  A few minutes before the end of the session, stop the discussion and ask for feedback about how the session went.

TYPICAL TUTORING PROBLEMS

**Failure to show up for an appointment**
Send an email to the SSC Coordinator.   If possible, contact the student and set up another appointment. Stress to the student it is their responsibility to let you know ahead of time if they can't keep an appointment.  Students who "no show" twice will be removed from your schedule

**Repeated tardiness to sessions**
Remind student of their responsibility to arrive for tutoring on time.  Suggest the student sign up for the time management workshop.  Inform the SSC Coordinator of tardiness if students don't respect your request to be on-time.

**Unprepared students**
Students may be unprepared at the first session because they don't understand what to expect from tutoring.  A well-structured first session that reviews the Peer Tutoring Contract may eliminate this problem for future sessions.  If the student continues to be unprepared or shows little effort, explain his/her commitment and responsibilities to tutoring, as well as yours.  The student needs to make a commitment to prepare for the tutoring sessions and to show some real effort. Talk with him/her about this and remember to let him/her do the work.  Inform the SSC Coordinator if the student continues to be unprepared for the tutoring session.

**Student who tends to get off the subject**
Many students will attempt to get the tutor off subject as a way of avoiding working on the material. It is a good practice to keep redirecting the student back to the material. An example of how to do this might be, "Yes, I did see that movie and I really enjoyed it. Well, I guess we'd better get back to math since we have 20 more minutes." If you consistently redirect the student, often the off-task behavior will diminish significantly.

**An angry student or one who is overly demanding**
Some students might get very frustrated and even angry if they don't understand your explanations or can't apply your suggestions.  Be patient.  Try analyzing the concept or task in more detail to see where the problem really occurs.  Go back to basics.  Try another method.  Share your responsibilities and general goals as a peer tutor and just how far you can go in helping him/her.  If his/her anger becomes an issue refer the student to the Student Success Center Coordinator.

**A student demanding an immediate session when you don't have time**
For most people, it is hard to say no.  Students who apply to be hired as a tutor have a general concern and interest in helping students succeed.  Please make sure that your good nature is not taken advantage of by demanding students.  The SSC has limited resources and it is often unable to assign students more than one hour per week for tutoring.  Also, tutors are students as well and the SSC coordinators do not want tutors to put their own studies in jeopardy by helping other students.  If you have trouble saying no to demanding students, work with your supervisor, (the SSC coordinator), to receive help in saying no to demanding students.

**A student whose academic difficulties are extensive than you can cope with**
Don't hesitate to refer students to the Student Success Center Coordinator for an extensive study skill evaluation.  A full list of the study skill (and other College workshops) is listed at www.ccri.edu/success.  Simply click on the request a workshop link to display a list of workshops with their description.  If a student needs a study skill workshop, don't assume they will sign up for the session on their own.  It's best to physically walk the student over to the SSC coordinator's office and have the student schedule an appointment at the conclusion or start of the tutoring session.

**A student who is becoming too dependent**
If you feel the student is becoming over-dependent on you or you are too involved with his/her needs, begin by reviewing your responsibilities and goals with him/her.  This explanation might help the student to see the limits of your job as a peer tutor.  Also consider ways you can wean the student by doing less and less for him/her.  You might need to suggest another tutor.  Remember that as a tutor you must learn how to maintain professional objectivity.  If you have difficulty with this issue speak with your supervisor.

**A student who complains about the professor**
Don't allow a session to become a complaint fest.  Tutors may need to take some time to calm down a student or discuss their options, but quickly refocus on the tutoring tasks.  Don't share your personal feelings about faculty members.

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