



Teaching the Tutor

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Project Mission



- Give student tutors the skills they need to make tutoring sessions more effective
- In the process, teach tutors lifelong communication and problem-solving skills
- Support struggling students by creating more efficient tutors

So, Why become a Tutor?

- To earn money
- To help a friend in a subject they struggle with
- To receive community service hours

Whatever reasoning you may have, there are many resources for tutors who want to improve their teaching ability. This is one of them!

First Impressions Count!

1. Introduce yourself, and allow your student to do the same.
2. Ask about your student's interests (it will help you make the work more interesting and meaningful to them).
3. Ask about their best and worst subjects, and what about each they like/dislike.
4. Begin the tutoring session! Ask what they are specifically struggling with, and work from there.



Wait!

There are a few things you have to check before you can start teaching!

- Is this a good learning environment for the student? (Is it clean? Quiet?)
- Is the student ready for and focused on the session? (Are they hungry or thirsty?)
- Have you had a conversation with the student's guardians, and gotten their contact information? This is especially important for scheduling future sessions and gaining insight about your student!

Learning Environments



A “learning environment” may be different things to different people. Some students need active, populated environments in order to feel energized and accountable, while others need total isolation. Some people need clean, spotless rooms, and some need to be somewhere familiar. It depends!

Remember that YOU are a part of their learning environment; that's why it's so important to establish trust between you and your student (be honest!), and to adapt to their personality. It's also generally better to stick with one student for an extended time.

Preparing to Learn



Before the session:

- If your student is young, contact their parents ahead of time to work out a schedule that maximizes your student's energy and ensures that food and drinks are available
- If your student is exhausted, the most efficient option might be to reschedule

During the session:

- Feeling tired? Power pose! You may look odd, but if it works, it works.
- Keep snacks/beverages nearby
- Be an active listener. Gauge how your students is feeling (frustrated,eager,etc.) and adjust your teaching accordingly.

So, what are you teaching?

It's more than just subject material, that's for sure.

1. Independence
2. Skills and Strategies
3. Confidence.

1. Independence

The biggest problem in tutoring is being too hands-on. People want fast results and are paying you for them, so it's tempting to show the student exactly what do by having them watch you. However, this only gives the illusion of success; you won't be there to tutor them forever, so it is crucial that you teach your student how to learn on their own.

To encourage independence, have the student be the one holding the pencil, and make sure they are speaking as often as you.



2. Skills/Strategy

You cannot teach a student how to answer every single question, so it is important to give your student the skills they need to take on any type of problem:

- using the process of elimination
- breaking a complex problem into smaller parts
- reviewing old tests
- re-writing questions in your own words
- using flashcards
- getting a study-buddy
- etc.

There are different strategies for doing homework, studying, taking tests, and being in class.



3. Confidence

Sometimes, the course material is not the main issue. A student may know more than they think they do, but are hesitant to be wrong and end up overthinking. Destroy that fear by encouraging them to voice their conclusions to you as they work.

On the other hand, students can also be overconfident. When a student insists that they have already mastered parts of the material, it might be a good idea to make them briefly explain the material out loud.



How to Teach Course Material

Now that we've covered the lesser known aspects of being a tutor, here is how to improve your ability to teach the subject itself.

Things to consider:

- Learning Modalities
- Step-by-step instruction process

Learning Modalities

Many students take tests to determine how they learn best, be it visually, audibly, etc.

However, the tests aren't always accurate, or they may not have taken one, or their modality isn't working for the subject at hand.

If you and your student hit a roadblock and you're not sure how to explain any further, try using a different modality!

- Visual: flow charts, PowerPoints, posters, reading
- Audio: songs about the subject, lectures, audiobooks
- Verbal: Lecture, debate, acronyms, repetition
- Physical: gesture/charades, model construction
- Logical: Tables, charts, graphs
- Social: Discussion, peer-editing/teaching
- Solitary: classical study, self-talk, mind-mapping

Have the student explain what they specifically do not understand, or do the problem until they cannot proceed

To ensure understanding, have the student solve multiple example problems

Have the student verbally explain the concept to you. Now, on to the next topic!

Pinpoint the issue

Explanation

Practice

Integration

Review

Try to guide them towards their own discovery; if that does not work, lead by example

Specific issues often connect to broader concepts; have the student tackle more complex challenges that use the skill you just practiced

Remember that as you teach, you are building a relationship with your student. Listen when they speak, be optimistic and encouraging; you are working together, as a team.

Be honest when you do not know something, and be confident when you do, so that your student trusts your advice.

Be prepared and have any materials you may need, including whiteboards, markers, paper for recording your progress and taking notes for future sessions.

Be attentive. Show your student that you genuinely care about helping them by listening to what they have to say and remaining patient. Make your student understand that they are worth helping and deserving of the chance to improve.

That's All, Folks!

Now go give someone an education!