

Peer Tutoring with Boise State University

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The following building blocks and guidelines came from workshops attended by the BSU TRIO staff.

Building Blocks of Effective Tutoring

1. **Good tutoring is based on mutual respect and trust...**never on an attitude of condescension. Curb any inclination to impress. You are there to help.

2. **Use reflective Questioning.** This technique will help you with many of the other building blocks that follow.

When you are asked a question, rephrase it, break it into parts and reflect it back to the group or student for response. The purpose of this is to generate discussion, get students to make connections *themselves* and pull information together. It may be easy for you, a knowledgeable tutor, to answer questions directly. However, if students reason out the answer or put the pieces together themselves, they are far more likely to remember:

Example

STUDENT:

I don't understand Islam. What is the Koran all about and how does Mohammed fit into Islamic doctrine?

TUTOR:

That is a complex question. As you understand it, what are some of the basic doctrines of Islam? We will discuss Mohammed and the Koran after we discuss the first part of your question.

3. **Teach students how to learn.** Don't just solve the student's problem. Work the concepts.
4. **Make sure the student understands** the problem and the associated

"Have fun while tutoring and learning"

"Build on what the student already knows..."

vocabulary.

5. **Be understanding of student needs.** Pay attention to student reactions and learn to "read" them.
 6. **Tutor to the situation.** Don't go beyond the immediate need.
 7. **Develop a sense of empathy.** Recall a class that was difficult for you and remember that not all students find the same subjects easy to understand.
 8. **Use different approaches** in problem solving. Up
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Guidelines for Tutors

1. **Develop a sense of trust.** Do not laugh or make fun of the student. Everyone has a subject or class that they do better in than others.
2. **Tutors should make things easy** for the student to understand. Give different examples. Think of alternative ways to explain the idea or subject.
3. **Do not be afraid to admit that you don't know something.** Do not give incorrect information to "save face."
4. **Ask questions** that require more than a yes or no answer. *Examples:* Can you tell me why this happens? Why is it done this way? What do you think should be done next?
5. **Your students should be able to explain** what they have learned to you and what they do not understand or feel they can't learn. Ask the student to explain what they've learned from you.
6. **Be a good listener** and a good role model.
7. **Have fun** while tutoring and learning.

8. **Never do the student's homework** or answer the questions for them. This does not help them or teach them.
9. **Build on what the student already knows.** Simplify the process as much as possible. Often students over-complicate the material.
10. **Just because** they look like kids doesn't mean that they live like children.
11. **Bad attitudes** often make up for the fear students feel when trying to compete in class.
12. **Emphasize that mistakes are corrected,** not used as an excuse to quit.
13. **The only attention most kids know** is negative, and positive strokes are something they don't understand.
14. **When they tell you it's boring,** they may mean they are having a hard time and would rather turn their attention to something else. **Take a short break.**
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