

How to Be An Effective Peer Tutor

TUTORING BASICS

Effective tutors set good examples for students when it comes to being responsible and coming prepared to sessions. That's why it's important for every tutor to start with nailing the basics, namely:

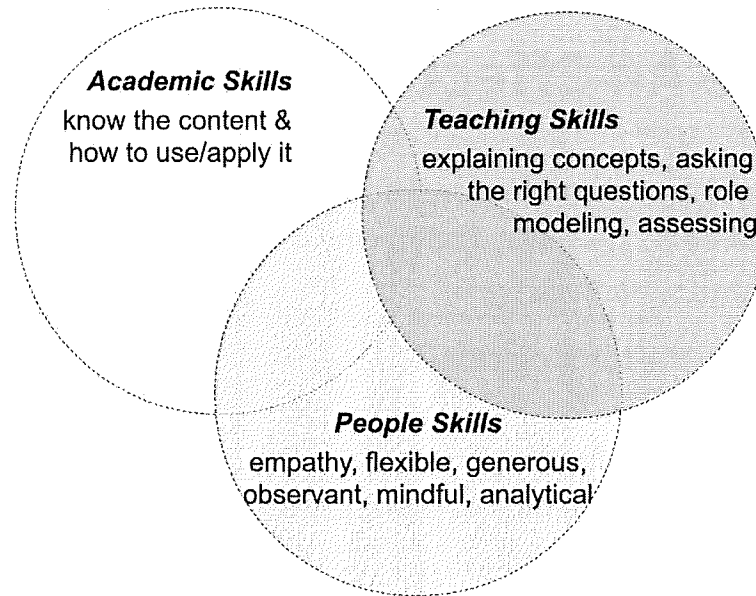
- Arrive early to the tutoring session
- Arrive prepared
- Have a plan, but be flexible
- Assess where the student is at currently by probing with questions and checking for understanding
- Encourage spaced practice and retrieval practice
- Stay patient, consistent, and positive
- Be a role model!
- Make the student do the work.
- Follow-up

PREPARATIONS AND TUTORING SESSION AGENDAS

Although tutors support students generally with existing school work, it's important they come prepared to sessions with an agenda and, ideally, a goal. Here's a basic session agenda scaffolding:

- Personal check-in/warm-up
- Organize & prioritize
- General tutoring
- Check for understanding/recap/debrief
- Calendaring/scheduling for next session

Tutors may want to bring workbooks or other enrichment activities in case their student doesn't have specific school work to do but could use the time to brush up on skills. It always helps to have backup content as needed. Tutors should also come to sessions prepared with a notebook (or laptop), writing utensils, and paper.



HELPING STUDENTS GET MOTIVATED

A good tutor will move students toward a place of not only feeling confident about their ability to learn, but also feeling engaged in what they're learning and motivated to learn. Here are some tips for how tutors can help students feel authentically interested, cared for, and successful:

- Make learning relevant
- Build your relationship
- Give specific, positive feedback
- Break down big tasks & establish realistic goals
- Have students do the work

HELPING STUDENTS GET FOCUSED

Tutors often spend a portion of their sessions helping students optimize their study time by focusing on what needs to get done. In order to help students get focused, tutors should try to:

- Identify and remove physical and mental distractors
- Take breaks and block focus times into 5-10 minute chunks
- Agree on session goals
- Be physically present (if in person) sitting beside the student, saying their name, using eye contact
- Keep the student working and provide encouragement

SUPPORTING SELF-ADVOCACY

The number one most important rule for tutors to keep in mind is allowing the student to “hold the pencil” for as much of the session time as possible. There may be some “I do, we do, you do” exercises peppered into the session. But for the most part, the tutors should only be facilitating what the students are able to do on their own.

Supporting self-advocacy also means helping students be proactive in communicating with teachers, and instead of doing that work for them, help them draft emails (but have the student send the email) until the student gets more comfortable with doing the communications work independently.