



The Tutor Session

Guidelines when working with a Tutee

- 1) Be positive and use compassion to engage students and avoid causing harm:
 - Be friendly but avoid over socializing
 - Listen to your tutee's needs
 - Work WITH your tutee to allow them to contribute to their own learning

- 2) Identify the task:
 - Ask what is happening in class and what the professor is asking
 - Ask to see the assignment (Access Canvas)
 - Set goals for the session
 - Focus on one task at a time
 - Keep tutoring interactive and authentic

- 3) Be the coach not the savior:
 - Keep student engaged in the work
 - Use tools/resources conveniently and effectively
 - Supplement and don't supplant the instructor

Tutoring "Don'ts"

1. Don't edit or simply proofread the student's paper
2. Don't provide a thesis for a paper or do the student's work
3. Don't master a few exercises that you use on all students
4. Don't assign inauthentic tasks
5. Don't undermine the instructor's comments, assignments, or engage in instructor bashing.
6. Don't speculate on the grade you think the assignment will earn
7. Don't violate a student's privacy
8. Don't assist tutees with take home tests and quizzes
9. Don't hover over your tutee
10. Don't just verbalize your comments to your tutee



Tutor Sessions have a Beginning, Middle, & End

Starting a Tutor Session (Beginning)

Remember that first impressions count! Tutees arrive for tutoring with many expectations, questions, and sometimes fears.

1. Display your sign so that tutees know who you are and what you tutor.
2. Acknowledge all tutees with a smile and a friendly greeting.
3. Find out if this is the student's first visit or not. If it is, let the tutee know what to expect. This will help put them at ease. Don't forget record keeping—did they sign in?
4. If the tutee seems upset, allow them to vent briefly, then try to refocus them on positive steps to solving problems and gain understanding.
5. Try to establish common ground. (i.e. Have you taken a course with the same instructor? Have you done a similar assignment? Did you also find the problems difficult at first?)
6. Ask the tutee what specifically they would like from you in order to support them. Set one or two initial short-term goals for the tutoring session, encouraging the student to lead the way: "What would you like to accomplish today?"
7. Another words, identify the task.

Identify the Task (Middle)

- Encourage tutees to initiate the first task: *What do you want/need to cover today?* Use probing questions if needed to clarify the student's immediate concerns. (i.e. "What is the hardest part for you?")
- Restate the problems to insure you understand what was requested as this helps you focus your approach for the session.

➤ Break the Task into Pieces

- Help tutees break the task into manageable pieces.
- Help tutees plan the session by analysis of the pieces.

➤ Be Aware of the Thought Process (metacognition) and Gauge Tutee's Comprehension

- Ask your tutee to explain the general approach learned in class.
- Address all possible materials or resources such as organization of learning materials (notes, textbook, video, Canvas, and other) that might enhance success in learning.
- Promote independence! Guide the tutee to explain the method, strategies, and presentation of the task.
- Scaffold the task by allowing the tutee to work the pieces of the task and to explain them to you.
- Observe for signs of learning style preferences (See Learning Styles Grid).



Summarize and Reinforce Confidence (Ending)

- Encourage students to summarize what has just been learned: “OK, let’s review for a minute” or “Show me what we just talked about.”
- Listen! Listen! Listen! Wait for student’s explanation to run its course without interrupting or correcting. This is an opportunity for them to self-correct by asking questions, then waiting.
- After your tutee explains, offer positive reinforcement and confirm their comprehension and/or demonstrated improvement.
- Comment on progress (i.e. “We got a lot done!”)
- Congratulate them for working hard and not giving up.
- Reassure them that they can now do similar tasks independently.
- If time allows, encourage them to do another example on their own.
- If additional help might be indicated, suggest other learning opportunities, such as student success workshops, group tutoring, and/or study groups.
- Thank students for contributions (i.e. “You really came prepared”)
- Or if necessary, make suggestions for next time (“Be sure to come prepared, bring your books, read the chapter; try the homework before the next session”)
- End session on a positive note (“You made a lot of progress!” or “Even though we got off track, we learned what to do for next time.”)
- Remind tutees to sign out!

Learning Strategies

Tutors play a critical role in helping students develop effective learning strategies. Tutors accomplish this in many ways:

- Identify step-by-step instructions that explain how to solve a problem.
- Model how to approach a problem: “I find it helpful to” “While reading, you might find it helpful to”
- Ask a series of questions which build to the solution.
- Conversation (talking the problem out)
- Outlines (organizing, grids, T-graphs, and categorizing)
- Visual Representations (drawings, charts, graphs, etc.)
- Note cards, Models, & Flash Cards
- Audio Recorders
- Utilize other technology (assisted software, video, etc.)
- Textbook Reading Strategies
- Lecture Note-taking Strategies
- Test-Taking tips
- Changing Study Environment



Questioning & Listening Techniques

Questioning is one of the most important dimensions of teaching and learning. It gives tutors the chance to find out what tutees know and understand, and it allows tutees to seek clarification, support, and help.

There are many types of questions. One dichotomy is the closed vs. open question types. Closed questions require only a yes/no or single answer, factual response, while open questions require students to reflect thoughtfully on the subject.

Another way of understanding question types is in terms of lower vs. higher order questions. Lower order questions are usually "what" questions. They typically test the knowledge students have about definitions or meanings. Higher order questions tend to be "why" and "how" questions which encourage students to think more deeply about a concept or the reasons for an answer. Your tutor sessions should include both types of questions, with an emphasis on higher order questions, which challenges your tutee and makes them think.

Example Questions

➤ Open-Ended Comprehension Questions

- **Amplify:** "Tell me more about that."
- **Clarify:** "What do you mean when you say such and such? Explain that a bit more."
- **Paraphrase/Summarize:** "Tell me what happened in your own words."
- **Cause/Effect:** "Which happened first? Did that lead to something? Why? What were the causes?"
- **Compare Contrast:** "What do these two have in common? How are they different? Have you learned anything like this before? What does this information remind you of?"
- **Example:** "Can you give an example of this?"
- **Characteristic:** "What's a characteristic of this?"
- **Qualification:** "When is this not true? Are there any exceptions to this?"

The next key is to ACTUALLY LISTEN to your tutee's responses. This sounds easy, but it is harder than you may think. Listening is an acquired skill. In normal conversation, we sometimes don't really listen to others. We hear what they say but don't listen carefully enough to read between the lines. **In order to be an effective tutor, you have to slow down and concentrate on both what your tutee is saying and how they are saying it.**

- Are they grasping the concept?
- Can they explain it easily or does it take some effort?
- Is their body language saying anything?



In order to get the answers to these and other questions, you must listen carefully and observe purposefully. **As you listen, be sure to actively summarize what the tutee says such as repeating the steps, emphasizing the right order, or the solution, or the main concept, etc. depending on the situation.**

➤ **Listening Tips**

- The ten second rule—after asking a question or follow up question, or beginning a problem, allow at least ten seconds for your tutee to respond.
- Putting down your pencil—and allow your tutee to write and be more active in the learning process.
- Echoing—sometimes, distortion develops between what a speaker intends to say and what a listener actually hears. To improve communication and help your tutee clarify what they are trying to say, restate what you just heard. For example, “I hear you say...Am I right?” “Are you saying that...” “In other words...”
- Remember to encourage students to explain and/or paraphrase using their own words to enhance comprehension. Having your tutee summarize will help you determine if you can move on to another topic or need to stay with the present one. If the summary is difficult for the student, another review might be needed, offering another opportunity to have the student increase their involvement in the process until they can repeat it with ease.

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 a stronger understanding for differences in background, personality, and intellectual style.

➤ **Tips for Successful Group Tutoring**

- *Inclusive Seating:* Arrange seating to include everyone.
- *Face the whiteboard:* When using the whiteboard, be sure everyone can see.
- *Students Explain:* Have students explain answers, concepts, and definition to each other.
- *Equalize the Talk Time:* Make sure everyone in the group gets a chance to participate. Control vocal students by granting the floor to others. For example: “We’ve heard your thoughts on the previous point, Shawn, let’s see if someone else wants to suggest a different perspective.”
- *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.



Embedded Tutoring

What is an embedded tutor? An embedded tutor works closely with the instructor for the duration of the course to help students understand course concepts and enhance student engagement. The tutor may attend certain class meetings each week, and class attendance is based on the needs of the students and the structure of the class. In the classroom, the embedded tutor functions as a mentor and a model for successful academic strategies and habits. Embedded tutors use “best practices” learned during the tutor training they receive. The embedded tutor may also hold study sessions for students outside of the designated class time in the ASTC only. An embedded tutor may help facilitate small group exercises or discussions, assist in a laboratory settings, or provide one-to-one tutoring.

Primary Goals of Embedded Tutoring

- To help students understand course concepts and enhance student engagement
- To inspire students by having a class tutor who also acts as a guide and models academic behavior
- To give students a chance for more individualized attention and feedback during class activities
- To expose students to tutoring who may not seek it otherwise
- To improve a student’s self and academic efficacy
- To improve retention, persistence, and student success
- To support the growth of Solano tutors in their educational and professional goals and offer a rewarding experience that will allow them to build their interpersonal and leadership skills through mentorship by a experienced instructor, and expand their resume

Embedded Tutor Responsibilities

- Have compassion and be positive role model
- Be patient and polite with students
- Get to know the classroom culture well
- Guide students, provide feedback, and answer questions during in-class hands-on practice
- Help students understand materials, but not do the work for them
- Sit in the periphery of the classroom (at the side or at the back) to have a good view of the room and be able to walk around to help students
- Optimize classroom learning by working one-to-one and/or in small groups, including going over an assignment, reviewing a key lesson or skill, and preparing for exams



- Take on an advocacy and intermediary role with students. A tutor's presence in the classroom enables students to better understand their instructor and the course concepts
- Use "best practices" learned in tutor training, staff meetings, and embedded instructor
- Be proactive in communicating with the instructor any questions and/or concerns
- Follow the instructor's directions and promote the activities the instructor has planned
- Remind the students that you are present to offer supplemental help and not as a replacement for their class or instructor
- Adhere to the policies and procedures for a student worker at the ASTC and Solano Community College
- Do remember your role as an ambassador for the ASTC and encourage students to use the ASTC
- Be responsible for timesheet accuracy and obtaining your embedded instructor's signature before turning in your timesheet to the ASTC Specialist. Embedded tutor timesheets will not be accepted without your instructor's signature. Embedded timesheets are due to the ASTC Specialist on the main campus by 5pm on the 19th of the month (dates and times subject to change).

Embedded Tutor will not:

- Explain new concepts the course instructor has not already introduced
- Take on any teaching responsibilities
- Lead the class without the instructor present
- Assign grades, proctor quizzes or test, prepare lessons, enforce class management, or discipline policies
- Sit idle or disengaged in the classroom or lab
- Run errands or make copies
- Meet with students outside of class time without prior approval by the ASTC coordinator and embedded instructor
- An embedded tutor is a Solano College student and not a teaching assistant. A teaching assistant has a different role than an embedded tutor



Types of Learning Styles

| Learning Style | Characteristics | Tips for Accommodating |
|----------------|--|---|
| Visual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone with a Visual learning style has a preference for seen or observed things, including pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, handouts, films, flip-chart, etc. • Visual learners will use phrases such as <i>show me, let's have a look at that</i> and will be best able to perform a new task after reading the instructions or <i>watching someone else do it first</i>. • Visual learners work from lists and written directions and instructions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use maps, flow charts, or webs to organize materials • Highlight and color code books/notes to organize and relate material • Have students pick out key words and ideas in their own writing and highlight them in different colors to clearly reveal organizational patterns • Write out checklists of needed formulas, commonly misspelled words, etc. • Write out and use flash cards for review of material • Draw pictures or cartoons of concepts • Write down material on slips of paper and move them around into proper sequence. (Can be done on PC too) • Use the whiteboard (them and you) to note important information • If using the computer, have the student experiment with different font sizes and styles to enhance readability. |



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| Auditory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone with an Auditory learning style has a preference for the transfer of information through listening: to the spoken word, of self or others, of sounds and noises. Auditory learners will use phrases such as <i>tell me, let's talk it over</i> and will be best able to perform a new task after listening to instructions from someone else. Some Auditory learners are happy being given spoken instructions over the telephone, and can remember all the words to songs that they hear! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the student in conversation about the subject matter Question students about the material Ask for oral summaries of material Have them record lectures and review them with you Have them record themselves reviewing material and listen to it together Read material aloud to them Use a talking calculator Have them put material to a rhythm or tune and rehearse it aloud |
| Tactile | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone with a Tactile or Kinesthetic learning style has a preference for physical experience - touching, feeling, holding, doing, and practical hands-on experiences. Tactile learners will use phrases such as <i>let me try, how do you feel?</i> and will be best able to perform a new task by going ahead and trying it out, learning as they go. These are the people who like to experiment, hands-on, and never look at the instructions first! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write out checklists of materials to be learned or looked for Use role play or dramatize concepts. Students can move objects around to dramatize a concept or act out the concept themselves. Ask the student to envision a scene in which the material to be learned is being used or acted out somehow. For example: a student could imagine being a character in a novel. Have the student take notes (on paper, use technology, in textbooks) while reading or listening. |

