

Tips and Strategies

Tutoring can be a very rewarding experience for both you and the student. To achieve the most from your sessions, keep these tips in mind.

- ❖ Meet the student in a relaxed and friendly manner.
- ❖ Learn his or her name and pronounce it correctly.
- ❖ Begin by letting the student know you are interested in him or her by asking about interests, friends, or problems.
- ❖ Keep your schedule. If you cannot meet with the student let both the teacher and the student know.
- ❖ Give the student your full attention. Listen to what s/he says.
- ❖ Be prepared. Check to see if materials are ready in the tutoring room (if there is one). If necessary, ask the teacher if you have a question about what you are doing before getting the student.
- ❖ Have a work plan. “*Today we are going to _____ and _____*”. Give the student the opportunity to add to the plan. Write it down and let them check things off as they get done.
- ❖ Let the student know you are human. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes.
- ❖ Know the school rules and follow them.
- ❖ Keep the lesson moving. If the student loses interest, change how you are working with the student.
- ❖ Let the student know you expect them to do well.
- ❖ Ask for help when you have a problem, or are unsure how to handle something.
- ❖ Be patient. With the student, and with yourself.
- ❖ Give students limited and sensible choices. “*We need to work on _____ and _____ today. Which do you want to start with?*”
- ❖ Vary the sessions.
- ❖ Respond to the student’s interest. Bring a book about football or animals.
- ❖ Acknowledge when things aren’t going well. “*This is hard—that’s okay*”. Involve the child in the problem-solving process.
- ❖ Assume that when a student doesn’t understand something you have to find a better way to explain it. If a student is really stuck—move on. Often the more you stay on one point, the more anxious it makes the student. Children learn best in an environment they perceive to be safe.
- ❖ When you know a student is pressing your buttons—be an actress or actor and don’t let on. Once you are in a power struggle, you have lost—even though you might win.

- ❖ Articulate the issues for the student. “I have noticed that it takes you awhile to settle down. Why don’t we spend the first few minutes talking about your favorite book or something fun you have done recently.” Remember that reading is a language-based skill. Any time spent talking with a student is helpful.
- ❖ If a student comes to tutoring and is obviously upset about something, ask her if she wants to talk about it. Acknowledge the feelings the student may be expressing.

Other Things to Consider

ENVIRONMENT: A quiet spot free from distractions (i.e. other people, TV) will help your student concentrate better on the material.

YOUR ATTITUDE: How you present yourself to the student is important.

1. Offer lots of encouragement and praise when appropriate. Positive reinforcement is much more effective than negative. By the same token, do point out when your tutee is wrong and help him/her to correct the problem.
2. Be attentive. Your undivided attention must be given to your tutee even when s/he is working on a problem or reading.
3. Be sensitive. Let the tutee know you want him/her to succeed. Understand their needs. And remember, empathy does not necessarily mean sympathy.

YOUR TECHNIQUE: Although all tutors have different tutoring methods, here are some general guidelines.

1. Ask open-ended questions. Ask questions like “Would you explain to me how you got that answer?” and “Why do you think the boy hid under the bed?”
2. Provide your tutee with the opportunity to ask questions. Get them to ask you questions or quiz them to get interaction.
3. Body Language is important for effective communication. Make eye contact, speak slowly, face the student squarely if possible. Above all, appear relaxed. If you are uncomfortable, your student will feel the same.
4. Tutor for the future. Help your student overcome the immediate difficulties while teaching them to teach themselves. Help your tutee to get along without you by instilling good study skills and self-confidence. In general, the less work you do for the student, the better. Although it is quicker, easier, and less frustrating to do the work for him, it is of little permanent value.

LEARNING DISABILITIES: It has been estimated that one out of ten children have learning disabilities (LDs) to some degree. Dyslexia (reading), Discalcula (numbers), Dysgraphia (writing) and Attention Deficit Disorder are some of the common LDs. Keep in mind that all parents react differently to the knowledge of learning disabilities. Some may not even be aware of a problem. Recognition of this may help you to understand why your student may be having trouble. If you suspect a LD, let the teacher know,

who can talk with the parents. If you've been told the student has an LD, make sure you adapt your technique to accommodate them.

FRIEND OR TEACHER: You are both. Make sure you know the end goal—that what the tutee learns is preserved. When a tutee/tutor relationship becomes too friendly, learning may be sacrificed.

ENDING THE SESSION: End the session on a positive note. Make certain your student understands the material you have gone over during the session. Set goals that your tutee can accomplish before the next session, or before the session is over.

FRUSTRATION: There may be times when you feel like you are making little or no progress with your tutee. Don't worry...you are! Any one-on-one time a student can spend with a caring adult is valuable. Strive for high goals, but don't be disappointed if you can't achieve all of them. If you have given your best effort and have truly tried to help your student, then you have been successful.

ASK!

Why?

WHAT IF?

How do you know?

What is it like?

If...,
then.....

Is that a fact?

Do you agree?

What
does
that
remind
you
of?

What would you do?

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