

# Tutoring Tips

## Successful Tutoring Sessions

### Assignment of Tutee and Initial Contact

- After receiving a Tutor Request Form from a student, the PLTC will assign a tutor and contact both the student and the tutor. It is the student's responsibility to contact you. Try to schedule the first meeting within 2-3 days of this contact.
- Agree on a time and location for the tutoring session. Choose a quiet place with plenty of workspace and few distractions: the PLTC, a library study room, or an empty classroom, rather than Schneider or the Science Center Lounge. Select a place where a message can be left if something unforeseen happens, and you or she can't make the meeting or will be late.
- Ask the student to bring all relevant materials, including texts, the course syllabus, and class or reading notes.
- In the initial conversation by phone, ask the student what specific kinds of academic help she needs and what her expectations for the tutoring sessions are. Jot down notes about the concepts and skills with which she is having difficulty. Student self-analysis is an important part of the process.
- Review the student's file in the PLTC before you meet with the student. This is the first step in diagnosing the problem.

### The First Session

- Get to know the student by finding out her interests and background. This is time well spent in establishing a relaxed atmosphere and helping the student feel comfortable asking for help.
- Begin to diagnose the problem by listening, observing, and questioning. You will need to help the student analyze both the course tasks and assignments, and her behaviors. Analyzing the tasks and assignments with the student may be time consuming but is very important for setting the stage for your work. Review the syllabus and texts. Look at the major and minor concepts and then the skills the student must have to complete the tasks. You might see if the student understands the discrete steps of a task. During this process you'll be working back to the basics and to where the uncertainty or questions begin.

Analyzing the student's behaviors involves asking the following types of questions:

- Are you differentiating between the critical and less relevant concepts?
  - Are you using your study time well?
  - Is the reading overwhelming or difficult to understand?
  - Are you have difficulty with writing?
  - Are your class notes detailed and complete?
- Share your responsibilities and general goals as a peer tutor. This explanation of your job and its limits will help to ensure that the student does not become over-dependent on you. Once again ask the student what her tutoring expectations and needs are, and explain her responsibilities as a tutee. ("A Tutee's Role in Tutoring" card was attached to the "Tutor Request Form" the student completed. You might want to review the card with the student.)
- Set short term goals for the session and be clear about the amount of time you have to work together. Tutoring sessions are one hour long. Work with the student for about 50 minutes and save 5-10 minutes for record keeping and notes to yourself about future work together.
- Consider whether the difficulties are specifically defined by the subject or involve broader study skills problems. You may always refer a student to the PLTC Director of Programs or her dorm APT Advisor for a more detailed study skill evaluation.
- At the end of the session fill out your log sheet and take notes on what you think you'll address in the next session. This will save time in the long run.

## **Subsequent Sessions**

- Be prepared and plan ahead.
- Follow up on previous sessions by asking specific questions about course assignments or what you suggested the student do at the end of the last session.
- At the beginning of each session establish priorities, set clear goals, and agree on the amount of time you will work together. Although you might discuss long-term goals with the student, you need to focus on short-term goals.
- Take time at the end of each session to review what you have covered and to clarify the tutee's next steps and specific study goals.
- Be a role model of an efficient student by being on time for appointments, coming to meetings prepared, setting goals, and keeping to the schedule.