Tips and Strategies for Successful Tutoring

To avoid confusion and misunderstanding we have outlined below the client (tutee) responsibilities as well as the Tutor’s Code. Please contact JoAnn Brewer (brewer@middlebury.edu) if you have any questions or concerns.

Client Responsibilities

- Attend class, take notes, and do (or attempt to do) assigned work. Remember, your teacher is your primary source of information. Your tutor can help you review and clarify trouble spots but your tutor cannot fill in for your missed classes.

- Do your own work. The tutor is willing to instruct, direct and advise you. However, the tutor will not do your work for you.

- Attend your tutoring sessions. The tutor cannot help you if you don't show up.

- Have a positive attitude. Approach each session with the objective of learning as much as possible. You should have questions ready and reading assignments completed. Your tutor is willing to help; you must be willing to try.

It is your responsibility to notify your tutor EARLY if you cannot make an appointment.

The Tutor Code

We do...

- explain concepts that students have difficulty understanding.
- use alternate methods and examples to explain content and help students understand
- help students identify patterns in their speaking and writing
- share successful study strategies based on experience and training.
- believe a student’s work should reflect his or her own ability—not yours.
- give positive reinforcement - help students become more confident in their own abilities.
- keep careful records of each student-tutor contact.
- honor the confidentiality of the tutor-client relationship.
- help students become more independent as they go along

We do not...

- do assignments for students
- simply “edit” a student’s work (vs. helping them to see areas of improvement)
- assist in take-home exams.
- grade assignments or discuss assigned grades.
- attempt to judge the acceptability of work from the instructor's point of view.
- comment on an instructor's grading policy, teaching style, or personality.
- discuss a client’s achievements or abilities with faculty or other students.
What do students value most in a language tutor, according to client evaluations?

- Friendliness
- Patience
- Encouragement and confidence-building
- Ability to explain challenging rules/ concepts/ vocabulary in new ways
- Long-term, supportive relationship
- Availability/ flexibility in scheduling

**Tutoring Tips**

**Preparing for a session**
- If possible, find out what the student wants to work on BEFORE you meet
- Exchange contact info in case there is a last-minute cancelation (We pay 15 min for no-shows)
- Choose a quiet, well-lit area (not dorm rooms, for professional reasons)
- Bring pen/ pencil, notepad, other resources? (e.g., textbook? Laptop?)
- Plan to meet for no more than 1.5 hours each time (1 hr preferred)

**When you meet for the first time**
- Introduce yourself and confirm the client's name.
- Get to know the student a bit (e.g. Why did you choose to study this language? How are you feeling about it?)
- Discuss their overall goals for working with a tutor
- Identify specific goals for that particular session
- Decide together (esp. 100/ 200-level) what language to use during the session

**During the session**
- Sit next to (rather than across from) your student, so the two of you can work together
- Learn a bit about how things are going with the class and the assignment before “jumping in.”
  - Make sure student work matches the expectations for the assignment!!
- Ask questions and offer clues, rather than simply providing answers.
- Give clear explanations and feedback.

**Other suggestions??**
Tutoring Tips (continued)

Cultivate independence
· Demonstrate HOW to do something, and then ask the client to re-teach you.
  · Make sure the student is the one actually doing the work (i.e. Don’t just take over!)
    o Offer additional examples/questions to “quiz” the student
    o Bring something to read/work on in case the student needs space to practice
  · Aim for improvement and long-term growth—not perfection!
    o Help them do the best work THEY can do (not the best YOU can do)

Be a good listener
· Listen to what the client is asking for.
· Look at the client—not just at the paper
· Ask for explanations of answers—particularly incorrect ones.
· Observe and use nonverbal cues (body language, tone of voice, etc.)
· Know when to answer student questions regarding social, academic, personal issues, and when to direct the student to another resource.

Offer praise and encouragement, but without being phony
· Acknowledge progress, even if there are still struggles/errors
· Never ridicule incorrect answers
· If things are not going well, don’t be afraid to take a break or end early
· Share your own struggles and strategies, if the student seems frustrated

Be OK with not knowing
· If a student asks a question you cannot answer, follow-up later, or take some time to look up the answer online or in reference books.
· Help students formulate questions for the professor, if there is information you both are lacking

Near the end
· Review main points
· Ask for feedback on the session and the assignment
· Set up goals and date for next session, if applicable

Afterward
· Take a few notes for yourself
· Fill out the online logsheet completely (go/flit)
· Submit logsheet and Banner hours by Sunday at midnight, every 2 weeks