**TUTORING WRITING AND READING** *(6-2020, R. Jewell & A. Ludlow)*

**1. Read and discuss these excellent resources:**

* [www.webpages.uidaho.edu/bestpractices/peer\_train\_code.html](http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/bestpractices/peer_train_code.html)
* [www.webpages.uidaho.edu/bestpractices/peer\_train\_guidelines.html#Guidelines%20for%20Tutors](http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/bestpractices/peer_train_guidelines.html#Guidelines%20for%20Tutors)
* [www.cmu.edu/gelfand/education/cmu-students/tutoring-guide/i-general-guidelines.html](http://www.cmu.edu/gelfand/education/cmu-students/tutoring-guide/i-general-guidelines.html)
* <https://tutorful.co.uk/guides/how-to-become-a-tutor-a-guide-on-starting-a-tuition-business/first-tuition-session-top-ten-tips>

**2. Train as tutors with each other:**

* Read the guidelines above (in “1”) and below (in “3,” “4,” and “5”).
* Practice together in pairs. In each pair, take turns being tutor and tutee, usually at least 10-15 min. each.
* Before each 10-15 min. practice, tutor and tutee should agree on a role the tutee will act. For example, the tutee could choose his or her age, level of difficulty, type of assignment, type of personality (happy to learn, neutral, or resistant), and ability (quick or slow to learn).
* In role playing, start practicing with 2-3 roles that are easier. As each tutor learns how to deal with each tutee role, choose 3-6 increasingly difficult-to-handle roles. In 1-4 weeks, try more.

**3. Plan your online apps before using them:**

* Avoid using cell phone apps, if possible, as seeing each other on a larger screen is better for fuller and more realistic exchanges. In addition, you may need to view assignments or writing.
* Use an app that allows your student to share or show you his/her assignment (or the writing). If this is not possible, then your student may need to hold the assignment (or writing) up to his or her camera for you to read. If neither of these are possible, then have your student read the assignment to you (in the language your student most easily understands).
* Use email, attachments, or online links to see your student’s assignment (or their writing), if necessary. But to save time, it may be wise to have your student email these at least half an hour ahead of time. You may want to allow time to look at these emails before tutoring starts.
* And before tutoring starts, prepare your microphone and camera, adjust your volume, and know the app well enough to give your student directions if he or she has trouble making it work.

**4. Conduct a tutoring session using these general plans:**

* **In every session**, it is very important to show kindness, friendliness, and–visually and in tone of voice–your patience, patience, patience. Open your arms wide; speak from your heart.
* **In the first session**, start by getting to know each other a little. Introduce yourself, tell your student a few of your interests, where you live and go to school, etc. Then ask your student some questions–age, age, school, hobbies, etc. for a few minutes. Next, ask what he or she wants to accomplish. Explain to your student that often, several sessions may be needed.
* **At each session** after the first, ask your student what he or she remembers from the previous session. (Sometimes you may need to spend as much time reviewing a previous session as offering something new, especially if your student didn’t learn enough in the previous session.) Then ask what he or she wants to accomplish in this session, and explain what you can do.
* At the beginning of each tutoring session, ask what the assignment is (even if it’s the same assignment). Does your student understand this part of the assignment? If not, help him or her understand it before proceeding. Also talk with your student about what the teacher expects, how hard or easy the teacher is, what tests are coming up and when, etc.
* Once the assignment is clear, ask what your student’s goal is for this one tutoring session. Help your student understand how you can help him or her in this session, and what needs doing later.
* Generally, do *not* do your student’s work. Show your student where on the web he or she can go to learn the definition of a word, spelling, or pronunciation—he or she must learn these things on his/her own. Your job is NOT to do your student’s work for him/her, but rather to help your student be an independent learner. If s/he is almost right, you may show him/her the proper pronunciation; then always be sure s/he then pronounces the word correctly at least three times.
* Watch for your student’s “Aha!” moment—the moment when s/he really “gets it,” especially if it’s something difficult. You may see it in your student’s eyes or in how s/he pauses. If you see it, use it: have your student repeat it in 2-3 other ways. If s/he now gets it, offer congratulations!
* **At the end of each session**, allow a few minutes for your student to verbally describe or write what s/he learned. Either or both activities help your student better remember the learning.
* Suggest to your student, if appropriate, that s/he sign up for more sessions for continuing with this assignment, or invite your student to sign up for working on later assignments.

**5. Tutor in reading or writing from general to specifics:**

* **Begin with overall structure.** Do *not* start with reading or writing the text right away.
* *Do* start, instead, with the reading or writing’s most basic, overall structure. Be aware that different cultures prefer different basic structures, so know the preferred structure of your student’s culture. Ask many questions. What is the overall thesis or main idea of the reading (the chapter)? (It’s usually in the first paragraph or two in non-fiction texts in English.) If your student is writing, what is the overall argument or idea s/he wants to make?
* What are the main points of the chapter (usually revealed in the first sentence of each paragraph of non-fiction texts in English); or what are the 2-5 main points your student wants to make for the writing? What does the teacher want? (Most essays have 3 main points, no more than 5-6.)
* Have your student identify and then write or explain the main thesis/idea and the points that he or she wants to make. (A few students may first need to write about a past experience.)
* If your reading or writing student can’t identify a single thesis or main idea for a reading or a writing in one sentence, ask your student to talk about what the reading means or what s/he would like to write. Keep asking questions that help your student clarify the subject until s/he offers a main thesis or idea; then help your student narrow it down into a meaningful sentence.
* If your student is writing, tell your student *not* to write the introduction first, except for just a beginning, first-draft sentence of his or her main thesis or idea. Encourage your student to write the introduction *last*–*after* your student discovers everything s/he will say in the whole paper.
* **Next, move to the reading or writing itself.** If your student is reading, ask your student to try reading the assignment first on his/her own before the tutoring session, using the main points s/he has discovered in it. If your student is writing, ask him/her to make a rough draft using the main points s/he has chosen, step by step, with each main point starting a new paragraph or two.
* In the tutoring session, what does your student want to accomplish? Ask him/her read out loud the you specific parts or places of the reading or the writing that s/he want to work on. If your student falters or pauses when reading, ask your student if s/he has questions about those spots.
* If your student is having trouble understanding a concept, ask him/her to read the paragraph out loud where the concept is first introduced, and then ask your student what s/he thinks it means. If your student isn’t sure s/he is writing something well, help him/her use a parallel structure for each main point: main point first, then a description of its meaning, an example, and then perhaps another example.
* **Finally, take care of small details in a reading or in a *final* draft.** Do this step by step.
* **After reading**, ask your student to summarize in his/her own words what the reading says. Then ask your student if you can help explain any final questions about individual sentences or ideas.
* **For writing**, if your student is having trouble editing a paragraph, ask him/her to *read it backward, sentence by sentence*. After each sentence, ask them what they think might need fixing and why. Working *backward* helps them see each sentence more clearly as a single unit.
* If your student is working on editing his/her writing and there are a lot of mistakes, especially have your student read the paper *backward, sentence by sentence*. For many mistakes, you should go over the paper several times *backward* on just one to two types of errors at a time.
* For ESL writing students, edit backward using the a “VAP” order: verbs, articles, and prepositions. (Prepositions often are idiomatic, so you simply can explain them.)
* For writing students with few problems with VAP, try working, first, on sentence structure (alone); then proper word choice (alone); then spelling errors (alone); and finally, punctuation such as commas (alone) and then colons and semicolons.