

## TUTORING TIPS

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### GIER'S TIPS FOR TUTORS

- I. Before the Session Begins
  - A. Arrive before the start of session
  - B. Review your notes, texts, and references
  - C. Get all your materials ready for the session
- II. During the Session
  - A. Be sure your tutee takes notes to refer to when studying and/or doing the assignment on his/her own.
  - B. Be sure that both you and your tutee ask questions, be sure that you are both involved in the tutoring session, not just you.
  - C. Maintain appropriate eye contact with your tutee.
  - D. Give your tutee enough time to answer your questions. If you have to, remove yourself for a few minutes so as not to interfere prematurely with your tutee's thought process.
  - E. Have your tutee explain how to do a certain problem or assignment.
  - F. Be sure to summarize the session before ending it. Highlight what was accomplished and what you expect your tutee to accomplish before your next session.
- III. After the Session
  - A. Go over your notes as soon as possible after the session.
  - B. Be sure to fill out any necessary paperwork concerning your tutee.

#### IV. Miscellaneous Tips to Pass On to Tutees

##### A. Attend all class meetings.

1. You cannot learn if you are not there.
2. Each class you miss makes it easier to miss another, until you miss so many that you fail the course.
3. You do not get your money's worth out of a class if you do not attend.
4. Professors usually take a large percent of their test questions from their class lectures.

B. Complete any written assignments ahead of time so that you have an opportunity to have a professor in your learning center go over your assignment before you turn it in.

C. Remember that many professors grade an assignment both on its content and its appearance, i.e., typing, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

D. Be sure to follow the directions given for an assignment.

E. Be sure to turn in your assignments on their due dates.

F. Get to know your professor and at least some of your classmates since you will be spending the next four months locked in a classroom with them.

G. Be sure to read all the handouts your professor gives you, particularly the course syllabus.

H. If a professor gives you an example of how an assignment should be written/completed, be sure to do your assignment in the same manner. Do not make up your own format.

I. If you have any questions or concerns about an assignment, lecture, or chapter, then be sure to get assistance from your own professor, a professor or tutor in the learning resource center, or a classmate.

J. Remember those students who succeed are those who get assistance if they have problems.

### HANCOCK'S TIPS FOR TUTORS

Tutoring is fun, exciting, challenging, helpful to you and the tutees, creative, productive, and heartwarming. Tutoring can also be frustrating, overwhelming, irritating, exasperating, stressful, and sometimes even depressing.

#### Tip One: Remember You Can Only Do Your Best

You can do your best by preparing as well as possible, being patient, and keeping your sense of humor. You can be almost certain that the tutees will not be as prepared as you would like; will probably not be as patient as you would like; and will probably not have a sense of humor about seeing you. Do your best to help the tutee relax especially during the first session. This will pave the road for future sessions. If you always do your best, the tutees will soon follow suit.

#### Tip Two: Realize You Cannot Help Everyone

For some tutees, you may not have the expertise or experience to help, but you can help by referring the tutees to someone who does, so be sure to keep an up-dated list of references. Likewise, even though it may seem harsh to say: be aware that some tutees may not be ready for the help a tutor is trained and able to provide. Some do not want help — they want you to do whatever needs to be done with minimal exertion on their part. When you say that this is not what tutoring is — be ready for “wild words” from them. They may

complain and grouse to you and about you to your supervisor, their professors and friends, and everyone else within ear shot. It's easy to say "don't take it personally," but tutors do take it personally. Just try to keep your sense of humor about it — these people probably complain about most things anyway. For every one "grumble-grouse" who crosses your path, there are literally dozens of fantastic people who really appreciate you and your help and tell you so!

### Tip Three: Take Care of Your Own Stress Levels

If you begin to dread going to your sessions or if you find yourself complaining about tutees, then it is time for you to take a break from tutoring. You could take a "sabbatical" from tutoring, but whatever you do, be sure to discuss the issue with your supervisor and maybe ask to do something else in the tutoring center for awhile. Maybe you could update files, recruit and train new tutors, or rewrite pamphlets. There are many things that could and need to be done in a tutoring center and a "change of pace" may be just what you need to help you regain your enthusiasm and refresh your outlook.

### Tip Four: Reading Worksheet

When students came to me for help with textbook reading, I discovered that many had very few "reading attack skills." Most would just open the book to the chapter to read and start reading. Of course, I would take them through the SQ3R and its many variations and for many this was a real boon. I found that many liked to have a worksheet, so I devised one that each could adapt to suit individual preferences and courses. I did mine in worksheet fashion with lines, but like the tutees, you could adapt the style to your own preferences.

(See example at end of article.)

1. Note the chapter title. Jot down three to five things you already know or think you know about the main chapter topic. This can be done in several words or complete sentences. The purpose of this is to help the tutee to start thinking about the chapter and to create a positive mind set about what might be coming in the chapter.
2. Take five to 10 minutes to preview or skim the chapter (do not forget to demonstrate and explain what skimming involves. Jot down three to five things you noticed by skimming the chapter. Again, this can be as detailed as the student wishes. Stress the point that not everyone is going to notice the same things. One might notice a cartoon, another a formula — it does not matter as long as the student notices something! This is a good activity to go through in the tutoring session, one-on-one, or with a group.
3. Have the tutee decide how she/he will divide up the chapter into at least three sections for reading and then the reading of each section will be done. Stress specificity and remind the tutee that a 20-minute time chunk is a good idea and a good starting point; the tutee can then decide how this is working. I found that this gives the tutee some control over the chapter and is a good time management enhancer. Be sure to suggest that the tutee jot this information down on his/her calendar.
4. After reading each of the sections, jot down three to five things learned from reading this section. Once again, this can be as detailed as the tutee wishes to make it. It also gives the tutee a reason for reading the section, a sort of built-in “self-test.”

5. Ask students, “What is one thing you learned from reading each section that you would share or could explain to a classmate or to a tutor? Be as specific as possible.” This item is really interesting — each tutee will have something different, and I never get tired of the variety. This can give you a place to begin the next tutoring session.
6. The reader/tutee is then asked, “What question(s) do you have from reading each section?” Like number five, this can be a great way to start the next tutoring session.
7. For each reading section, write one or two possible test questions and be sure to include an answer. I stressed that tutees write a variety of types of questions: true-false, multiple-choice, fill-in, definition, short answer. This gives the tutee another opportunity to take charge of the information. It is a great activity when working with a group of tutees — they test themselves, discuss possible answers, research when there is disagreement, re-word them into other test question forms — in other words, it is a great way to review and something tutees can do on their own to review. For those who have test anxiety, it is a very good simulation activity that can let them rehearse an actual test for a particular course in a less threatening manner — it’s their own test they are taking.
8. The last item on the chapter worksheet is the opportunity for the tutee to jot down personal thoughts or comments regarding the entire reading assignment. This may be shared with the tutor or not. Comments shared with me ranged from: “Phew, that’s over!” to “That wasn’t so bad, after all” to “I still think the stuff s \_

\_\_ s!” Oh, well — this gives the tutee an opportunity to vent, complain, kvetch about, or even sometimes compliment the book.

Tip Five: Remember, Remember, Remember!

Remember how you felt as each semester started: eager and full of ambition with that “wow, I’m here and ready to go!” attitude. Remember how you felt with an armful of new books? Yes, they were heavy, but what did you expect? Look at all the knowledge they contained. Remember their smell and how they sometimes snapped when you opened them and how most of the time you couldn’t wait to “get into them?” Remember the not unpleasant tingle of anxiety you felt when you turned in your first assignment and the pride you felt when it was returned with “Well Done” written boldly across the top? Remember how you felt when you aced that exam you studied for but, nonetheless, just knew you were going to fail? Remember how happy and grateful you were when you had a helping hand when you needed it?

NOW, remember how you felt when you just flat out had no idea of what was going on in class or why you were even there? Do you remember how you felt when you had read, and read, and re-read that textbook and still did not know what it was about? Do you remember that lump in the pit of your stomach growing larger and larger when you turned in that assignment and how gigantic it felt when the assignment was returned with a “needs more work” written boldly across the top? Remember how you felt when you studied and studied for an exam and still “BLEW IT”? Remember how you felt when you could not find anyone who understood how you felt or who could help you get over the hurdles?

NOW, remember why you became a tutor!

**READING WORKSHEETS: Print or Write Clearly**

Class:

Chapter name & number:

Must be read by:

1. Write down three to five things you already know or think you know about the main chapter topic.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

2. Did you take five-10 minutes to preview/skim chapter? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Jot down three to five things you noticed by skimming the chapter.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3. Decide how you will divide the chapter up into at least three sections for reading and decide when you will do the reading. Be as specific as possible. Remember 20-minute chunks of time are a good idea.

1.

2.

3.

4. AFTER reading each of the sections, jot down three to five things you learned from reading each section.

SECTION 1: pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

SECTION 2: pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

SECTION 3: pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

5. What is one thing you learned from each section that you would share with or could explain to a friend or your tutor? Be as specific as possible.

Section 1:

Section 2:

Section 3:

6. What question(s) do you have from each reading section? Be as specific as possible. Be sure to discuss these questions with your tutor or professor. Do not leave them unanswered.

Section 1:

Section 2:

Section 3:

7. For each of your Reading Sections, write one or two possible test questions and be sure to include an answer. Go for a variety of types of questions: true-false, multiple-choice, fill-in, definition, short answer.

Section 1:

1:

Answer:

2:

Answer:

Section 2:

1:

Answer:

2:

Answer:

Section 3:

1:

Answer:

2:

Answer:

8. Your own personal thoughts or comments regarding the entire reading assignment: